More than the sum of its parts

10 years of the

Leadership

Development

for Women

Programme

at UWA

Jennifer de Vries editor

Preface

Leadership Development for Women — Tenth Anniversary Publication

The Leadership Development for Women programme has been extremely successful in improving the status and position of women at The University of Western Australia.

It has developed in its participants a greater knowledge of the University, stronger internal connections, greater confidence and increased self-awareness.

Furthermore, it has benefited the University, by ensuring more women make their mark within the institution by moving to senior positions and contributing to decision making. This is an extremely important outcome for the University as it seeks to attract and retain the best staff, while at the same time redressing any gender imbalance. It also means there is an established network of pro-active women leaders and others concerned with women's opportunities across the campus.

Beyond these direct benefits, the programme has transformed the 'culture' of the University, particularly regarding equity in relation to recruitment and selection, promotion, equitable workloads, policy development, and inclusive curricula.

In addition, the fact that the programme is seen as an exemplar for women's leadership development – drawing interest and queries from the public sector and other Universities – is another indicator of the high regard in which the programme is held.

However, while the Leadership Development for Women programme continues to produce outstanding results, we know that more can be done to ensure that all our female staff are provided with appropriate opportunities to contribute more fully to the activities of the University.

We need to continue to examine the cultures of our work environment to ensure that we are actively seeking the diverse inputs and perspectives of women. And we must ensure that in all its activities, the University reflects on where we need to change or modify current practices to be inclusive of women.

Finally, my congratulations to Jennifer de Vries, Claire Webb, the Leadership Development for Women Planning Group, and all those who have put much hard work into the programme over the past 10 years. May the programme continue to prosper and continue to produce positive results for the women who join the programme, and The University of Western Australia which benefits from their greater engagement.

Alan Robson

Vice-Chancellor
The University of Western Australia

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Thanks again for a great programme — I've never been to a programme where so many of the participants got so much out of it!

School manager, 2004 participant

A transformational programme?

> " *Very few things happen in an institution that could be said to transform that institution, but LDW has transformed UWA.*
>
> Alan Robson, Vice-Chancellor — UWA*news* 17/5/04

A noteworthy milestone

When one is engaged in a large task, where progress can be slow and hard to measure, it is particularly important to mark the milestones. Redressing longstanding and sustained disadvantage for women in universities is such a task. In 1994 the Leadership Development for Women (LDW), an affirmative action programme, was created by women and men with this vision. In 2005 it is celebrating and reflecting on the ten years of that journey, a substantial and noteworthy milestone.

The purposes of this 10th anniversary 'milestone' publication are many. Firstly, it celebrates success through glimpses of the stories of individual women participants. Secondly, it documents the programme — what is it, what does it do, how has it evolved, and what place does it hold in the life of the University? Thirdly, it evaluates — what works, where are the problems, and what could work better? Importantly, what is the impact of the programme on the participants and the wider University community?

Do programmes such as LDW make a difference? Are they, indeed, transformational?

> " *The 10th anniversary provides a moment for reflection, for looking back in order to look forward.*

Over its ten year life LDW has established a reputation as one of the finest in-house women's programmes in higher education, nationally and internationally. Is this reputation justified? What makes LDW different or unique? This publication aims to strike a balance between sharing what we know and have learned over the ten years with the broader community and celebrating the achievements of the programme. The process of publishing this report is intended to discourage complacency by opening our efforts to broader scrutiny and encouraging critique. Only in this way can LDW remain dynamic and responsive to the ever-changing needs of the University of Western Australia.

Finalist in The Australian 2004 HR Awards; The NETg Award for Best Learning and Development Strategy.

The task of celebration, documentation and evaluation is presented in multiple ways. Formal documentation and evaluation processes sit alongside the voices of the participants. In these pages you will find photos and occasional archival materials. There are many stories and comments from women whose working lives have been changed in small and large ways by their participation. It is not an historical record of the programme, nor does it claim to be a definitive evaluation. It does, however, attempt to be a rich collection of stories, perspectives, data, memories, snapshots and moments in the life of the programme. The authors hope it will paint a picture of what has made LDW special over the years.

Gender equity

UWA takes gender equity seriously. Support from the Executive has been unwavering since 1990, the period of the most recent three Vice-Chancellors (Professors Fay Gale, Deryck Schreuder and Alan Robson). Support from the top is consistently cited in public, private enterprise and higher education research (Palermo 2004; Ramsay 2001; Singh 2005; Chesterman et al. 2004) as one of the most critical factors in successfully addressing gender equity. But it is something that we at UWA should not take for granted.

The longevity of the LDW programme should be seen in the context of an organisation with considerable gender equity maturity. A programme such as LDW cannot be successful as a stand-alone strategy in an environment where the equity agenda waxes and wanes according to organisational whim. It would soon be seen as tokenistic and cynical. Women would know their time was better spent on other career development opportunities or other work-related activities.

But why do we need a women-only programme? What was the position of women in the University prior to LDW? The story of LDW is best told in tandem with the bigger picture for women and with other equity initiatives and progress over the same time period. Indeed, the genesis of LDW is linked to the activities of the Equity and Diversity Office and it continues to be so. To elaborate this parallel history Chapter 4 provides an overview of gender equity at UWA over the same time period. The statistics in Chapter 4 also serve as a reminder of where women are and are not in the current UWA organisational structure.

> **"** *LDW was a sign that management realised that all was not well with females at UWA.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *I am very impressed with the amount of work done in order to support and assist women at UWA.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *I think it is fantastic that the University is prepared to invest so much in us.*
> 2000 review session

Programme evaluation — a slippery slope?

How can a programme such as LDW be evaluated? This is a vexed question for which there is no simple answer. Firstly, what sort of programme is it and what are the aims? As explained in more detail in Chapter 2, LDW is a development programme with dual aims, to develop individual women and to contribute to changing the broader management and University culture. It is difficult enough to investigate any lasting impact on participants; not surprisingly, it is even harder to assess the impact of the programme on the University culture. How does one measure organisational culture change and isolate the impact of a single factor? Knowing how to tackle the broader culture change 'mandate' of the programme has proved more difficult and elusive over time than delivering an effective programme to a group of participants. Evaluating that culture change has proved even more elusive.

But firstly, what of the women who appear in this account? Some women completed the programme last year, others in 1994. There are no before and after tests, no matched control groups. How does one investigate programme impact? What are some of the issues to be considered? If one begins to claim any positive programme effect, the first issue to address is the 'cream of the crop' problem. Perhaps women who are attracted to the programme are special, more pro-active, or already have enhanced leadership potential in some way prior to participation. While this argument is difficult to prove or disprove, it can be countered by the fact that 360 participants over ten years goes beyond skimming the cream. What, too, about things that would have happened anyway? Changes occur for all of us in our working lives, perhaps just as a result of time or chance. We grow in confidence, opportunities arise. What, if anything, can actually be attributed to the programme?

What kind of changes would we be looking for? When we are talking about women's working lives, their careers, their leadership development, what might constitute success? It will surely be different for different people, particularly for different groups of staff. For example, promotion and retention issues are very different for general[1], research[2] and academic staff[3]. Wherever possible, survey data and analysis will be provided separately for different staff groups. Even within a particular staff group, success can be difficult to gauge. While retention of academic staff could be considered a positive, and is an often cited University priority objective (*to recruit develop and retain the highest quality staff*), the reality is many academics gain promotion by changing their employer, and women's reluctance to do so has been shown to work against them (Chesterman 2004).

As we work further through the layers, more and more becomes contested. The initial aim of *developing women's leadership skills and knowledge, in order to increase their participation in positions of leadership and in the University's decision-making processes*[4] has an emphasis on formal leadership that is increasingly being called into question. Leadership as a concept is being re-defined through the work of scholars such as Sinclair (1998) and Eveline (2004). In this evaluation what kind of leadership are we referring to when we use the term 'leadership'? The programme may be effectively preparing women for a 'post heroic' leadership that is not labelled or perceived as leadership by the participants themselves or others.

The previous evaluation of the LDW programme, conducted in 1998 (de Vries 1998) seems, in retrospect, to have occurred when these things seemed more clear and simple. Most participants had only recently completed the programme, contested meanings of leadership were on the more distant horizon, and the focus on culture change was less prominent. At that time, the analysis of promotion and retention data using a control group approach, where LDW participants were compared with women who had not participated in LDW and with men, was ground

breaking. With the benefit of hindsight, with the added complexities of longer time elapsed, and with fewer women in the control group, these statistical approaches are no longer adequate. In addition, initial attempts to provide a control group did not take account of differences in levels. Claims regarding promotion and retention rates attributed to the programme may have been enthusiastic and optimistic, given these limitations. In addition, the 'cream of the crop' issue, regarding pre-existing differences between the women who participated and those who did not, was not addressed.

Secondly, there is the issue of evaluating culture change. While this is a complex issue largely beyond the scope of this publication, it has been in part addressed by Eveline (2004) (see Chapter 3 for further details). It is an aspect of the programme that has repeatedly been commented on by both participants and mentors, and their stories and comments reflect their views.

Evaluating a programme such as LDW is not a straightforward task. It has been easier to identify problems with the previous approach than to forge a new methodology that does greater justice to the questions we would like answered. There are no easy answers offered in this publication, just honest attempts to hold these issues in creative tension, and to draw on a multiplicity of approaches, none of them perfect in conveying the LDW programme to you.

Gaining perspective — toeholds on the slippery slope

Given the difficulties of programme evaluation, it has been important to look for ways of 'grounding' this review of LDW and its impact within a broader context, while remaining true to the original purpose of the programme. This has been done in two main ways. Firstly, there is a large and growing body of literature investigating and addressing gender issues and inequalities in the workplace. This relates to women in the workplace more broadly, but includes a significant focus on women in higher education. Unfortunately the literature has an emphasis on academic

women, with relative neglect of general staff women. Most chapters begin with a brief synopsis of what is known from the literature regarding the issues being considered, so that the current programme approach can be judged against the latest understandings. Additionally, LDW can be benchmarked against the small body of literature evaluating women's development programmes. Secondly, the evaluation measures the programme against the original programme objectives. This has the advantage of putting the original programme objectives under scrutiny, examining their long term relevance and providing a marker against which changes in thinking and approach can be judged. It also allows for the more modest question — 'does the programme meet its original objectives?' — to be addressed.

Previous documentation of LDW

LDW is a programme accustomed to scrutiny. There were three evaluation reports published early in the life of the programme. They are:
- *An Interim Report on the 1994 LDW Programme*
- *Evaluation of the Leadership Development for Women Programme 1996,* and
- *Creating Opportunities: An Evaluation of the Leadership Development for Women Programme 1994 - 1997* (de Vries 1998).

This last report, plus a conference paper entitled: *Creating Opportunities: The Difference a Women's Leadership Programme Can Make* (de Vries 2002), and *Promotion and Retention Rates for the Leadership Development for Women Programme, 1994 to 2003* are all available and downloadable from the LDW website http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/ldw

Creating Opportunities, despite some of the limitations in regard to promotion and retention noted above, created a benchmark in using both a qualitative and quantitative approach to programme evaluation. Participants self-reported numerous significant changes in their working lives, which

they attribute to programme involvement, including greater participation in networks, increased visibility, becoming mentors to other staff, participation in special projects, taking on secondments and increased committee involvement.

The report concluded that LDW participants enjoyed greater success and increased their contribution to the University community.

The LDW programme is highlighted in a recent ethnography of UWA, *Ivory Basement Leadership (Eveline 2004)*. Chapter 5, 'Inside Agitators?', outlines the foundation in Australia of women-only programmes, and the history of their development in WA, before going on to provide a detailed account of LDW. The kind of account provided by Eveline goes well beyond the scope of this publication and will not be replicated here. It is, however, an excellent complementary source of information regarding the programme.

Sources of material

There are multiple sources of material for this publication, which will be further detailed in the appropriate chapters. In brief they are:

- A survey[5] of previous participants, exploring their views about effectiveness and impact of the programme for them, with a separate section on mentoring
- Human Resources extract data[6]
- Interviews with mentors[7]
- Interviews and focus groups with participants identified as belonging to minority groups[8]
- Interviews with women who did not complete the programme[9], and
- Interviews with LDW participants[10].

Quotes are used with permission and taken from post programme follow-up lunches, LDW anniversary reunion lunches, interviews and focus groups, and unsolicited emails sent to LDW staff.

The publication in overview

Chapter 2 *Meeting the challenge* outlines the nuts and bolts of the programme. It begins with the original vision and programme foundations, looks at how LDW has evolved over time, and focuses on what the programme is now. It examines the profile of programme participants over its ten year history and introduces the survey and survey respondents. Survey respondents' views on reasons for programme participation, the components of the programme and their impact on leadership development are presented.

Chapter 3 *Gendered organisation: from theory to action* provides the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings to the programme. It explores gender, the concept of the gendered workplace, leadership and organisational culture and their application in the programme content and design. This approach and the profile of the LDW programme is put into the broader national and international context. The chapter expands on particular programme components, complemented by data from the survey.

Chapter 4 *Essential ingredients: 'critical acts', 'critical mass'* provides a broad brush look at gender equity from about 1990, outlining the challenges, the progress and future priorities facing UWA. This parallel story highlights the synergies of multiple approaches to gender equity and acknowledges the context within which the programme is operating.

Chapter 5 *Creating opportunities* builds on the title of the 1998 publication by focusing on changes in women's working lives. The chapter explores the impact of LDW, using broad definitions of career and

leadership, and acknowledges different career opportunities, paths and choices for different staff groups.

Chapter 6 *How am I a minority?* examines the applicability and effectiveness of the programme for women from minority groups. This chapter uses the voices of these women to explore their experiences of the programme. It asks the question, 'how can we maintain an inclusive group that moves beyond our experiences of gender, in order to embrace diversity?'

Chapter 7 *Sharing the journey* looks at mentoring in greater detail. Mentoring is the aspect of the programme that most involves the broader University community and mentors' voices are included here, alongside survey material specific to mentoring.

Chapter 8 *Critical to cultural change* takes stock of progress to date and looks to the future of LDW and gender equity at UWA. It deals with issues such as 'what about the men?' and looks at the overall impact of LDW. Is it more than the sum of its parts?

Footnotes
1 General staff is used, for lack of a better term, as an all encompassing term for technical, professional, administrative, management and research staff employed under the General Staff Agreement.
2 Where research staff data is available, it refers to academic research staff only.
3 Academic staff refers to academic teaching and research staff, and academic research staff unless stated otherwise.
4 First point in LDW mission statement.
5 The survey was designed, conducted and reported on by the Institutional Research Unit.
6 Provided by the IRU.
7 Conducted by Marie Finlay with direction from Jennifer de Vries and Claire Webb.
8 As above
9 As above
10 Conducted by Lindy Brophy, UWA journalist and Victoria Zakourkina, Arts practicum student. Undertaken with support from a Diversity Initiatives Fund grant.

Meeting the challenge

This chapter provides an overview of the LDW programme. It begins by articulating the original vision and the programme foundations. Subsequently it examines the evolution of LDW over time, concluding with a clear exposition of the programme as it is now. It also reviews the profile of participants over the ten years of the programme and introduces the survey and survey respondents. Survey respondents tell us why they participated in the programme, and offer their views on its components as well as commenting on its impact on their leadership development.

Vision and mission

The LDW programme was introduced in 1994 in response to the continuing under-representation of women at senior levels of University decision making. In 1994 women constituted 22.0% of academic appointments and 56.6% of general staff appointments, but were clustered at the lower levels in both cases. Chapter 4 provides a useful overview of the situation for women on campus prior to LDW.

The LDW programme is based on a vision of a university workplace where women have the opportunity to aspire to and play leadership roles at all levels, and in a multiplicity of ways. Since its introduction it has been a key strategy in assisting the University to achieve its priority objective *to recruit, develop and retain the highest quality staff*, and has been a significant contributor to making the University an employer of choice in the Australian community.

The mission of the LDW programme is threefold:
- To enable women staff to develop the leadership skills and knowledge required to increase their participation in the University's decision-making processes and to facilitate their leadership at all levels
- To contribute to a culture change in the University that encourages and welcomes women's involvement in leadership and decision making matters, and
- To encourage an organisational culture that recognises the value of self-development and reflection, and that encourages inclusive management styles.

Ramsay (2001) refers to developing the women and changing the culture as interconnected challenges, noting how if pursued together, they become mutually beneficial. The objectives or outcomes as outlined in the strategic plan, therefore are twofold, incorporating outcomes for both participants and for the University.

Expected outcomes for participants

- Enhanced understanding of the concept of leadership, leadership culture and the roles and expectations of leaders at the University
- Increased knowledge of how the University functions as an organisation
- Acquired strategies for accessing information
- Identified personal leadership development goals and needs, and developed plans to achieve these goals

- Enhanced skills and strategies to contribute more fully as leaders
- Increased self-confidence in leadership abilities and future opportunities within the University, and
- Access to a strong women's support network.

Expected outcomes for the University

- Increased representation of women in leadership positions within the University
- Development of a more open, non-gendered concept of leadership
- Improved quality of leadership through increased participation of skilled women leaders
- Encouragement of more representative decision making
- Establishment of an ongoing and well documented development programme with links to mainstream staff development activities
- Creation of an established network of pro-active women leaders and others concerned with supporting women's opportunities
  - Expansion of women's contacts amongst male and female colleagues, leading to new networks and a greater sense of community, and
  - Enhanced understanding in the University community of gender differences and equity issues, and recognition of women's talents and contributions.

History

The LDW programme originated from a submission to the Commonwealth Staff Development Fund in 1994. It was funded on

Professor Fay Gale at the LDW launch in 1994

this basis for three years. Initial group intakes consisted of 20 academic women and 10 general staff women at level 6 and above. When Commonwealth funds were no longer available, the University funded the programme on a year by year basis until 2001, when the LDW budget was mainstreamed. The importance of this is underlined by the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) project on *Strategies for disseminating outcomes of projects.* It recently studied LDW as a case study of a programme that was successfully seeded by external funds and mainstreamed. The ratio of general to academic staff in the programme was equalised under University funding and the barrier for general staff was lowered to level 5 in 1999 and then dropped completely in 2001. This recognised the view that leadership can be practised at any level within an organisation. The programme is now open to all female staff at UWA with a fractional appointment of 0.5 or more and a minimum contract period of one year. Groups of 30 women are selected, (mostly with a view to equitable distribution across the institution, and a good spread across levels and groups of staff) to participate in each year-long programme.

In 1998, an Executive Development Programme (EDP) targeting a small group of senior women was introduced. While successful for general staff women, it did not appear to meet the needs of senior academic women and has not been repeated. The programme had an action learning focus with

funded projects. From 2001 streaming was introduced in order to better meet the diverse needs of those eligible to apply. The focus in 2001 and 2003 was *Developing Personally and Professionally*, targeting less experienced and established staff. In 2002 and 2004 the focus was on *Leadership and Management,* targeting more experienced and established staff. A peer learning group component was introduced in 2002 and has been continued in subsequent programmes.

Coordination

The programme, located in the Equity Office for the first year, was re-located to Organisational and Staff Development Services (Human Resources) and has been managed by three part-time coordinators since 1994:

Ms Sally Jetson
1994 – 1995

Ms Jennifer de Vries
1997 – present

with

Ms Vicki Caulfield
1995 – 1997

Ms Claire Webb
2000 – present

The first Planning Group, L-R: Judith Chapman, Gabrielle Yates, Maria Osman, Lyn Abbott, Sally Jetson, Trish Todd, Philippa Maddern, Barbara Black (absent: Sally Zanetic, Delys Bird)

The programme is also guided by a Planning Group comprising academic, research and general staff women from diverse areas and backgrounds. There is also representation from the Equity and Diversity Office, Organisational and Staff Development Services and unions. At least 50% of members are past LDW participants.

The Planning Group is guided by the LDW Mission and Vision statement. Its role is to provide an overall vision and strategic direction for the LDW programme to achieve its mission through:

- Establishing strategic direction and priorities
- Recommending changes to the strategic directions and aims of the programme as required
- Monitoring and evaluating programme effectiveness in relation to the mission statement
- Ensuring adequate resourcing and support, and
- Advising on matters relating to individual programmes, including participant selection, programme structure, content, timing, progress and evaluation.

Lyn Abbott
Chair 1994–97

Planning Group Members: 1994 – 2005

Judith Chapman	1994	Cheryl Praeger	1997-2004
Phillipa Maddern	1994	Sandy McKnight	1998
Gabrielle Yates	1994	Miranda Grounds	1998-2003
Barbara Black	1994, 1999-2000	Karen Reynolds	1998-2003
Maria Osman	1994-2001	Samina Yasmeen	1998-2003
Delys Bird	1994-1995	Jan Fletcher	1998-2004
Judy Straton	1994-1995	Barbara Goldflam	1998-present
Trish Todd	1994-1996	Marion Cottingham	2000
Lyn Abbott	1994 -1997	Jane den Hollander	2000
Sally Zanetic	1994-1999	Wendy Edgeley	2000-2002
HY Izan	1995-1996	Glennda Scully	2001-2002
Ni Norton	1995-1996	Jan Stuart	2001-present
Judy Fetherston	1995-1997	Beverley Hill	2002-present
Marnie O'Neill	1995-1997	Kerry Adams	2004-present
Helen Stowasser	1995-1997	Sunalene Devadason	2004-present
Sue Dyson	1995-1998	Fang Liu	2004-present
Sarah Mann	1995-1998	Trudie McGlade	2004-present
Anne Kealley	1996-1998	Liz Tilly	2004-present
Carla Tarpay	1996	Terri-ann White	2004-present
Hilary Fraser	1997	Di Walker	2005
Joan Eveline	1997-present		
Thelma Koppi	1997-1999, 2002-present		

Sally Zanetic
Chair 1998–99

Cheryl Praeger
Chair 2000–04

Jan Stuart
Chair 2005

The different ways in which leadership is practised by UWA women is almost as numerous as the women who have participated in the LDW programme.

For Judy Fetherston, it was making her contribution to the University at a higher level than she had previously been able to do.

Judy had worked in what was then the Department of Medicine for ten years before taking part in the programme in 1994. In the past ten years, she has worked in three different faculties, learning new skills, and moving up the career ladder.

"Doing LDW definitely helped me with my career moves," Judy said. "I had always wanted to learn new things, and to make a contribution: LDW was the catalyst that got me moving."

She said there were so many women wanting to do the programme in that first year that their names had to be pulled out of a barrel, to choose the participants.

"It was good for me in so many ways. I was isolated from the rest of the campus, working over at the hospital, where I talked to lots of people on the phone but never got to meet them.

"The networking was, without doubt, the best thing about LDW. There is, and always will be, a bond between us. Another great advantage is that the programme helps to break down the barriers between general and

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This link to the broader community through the Planning Group has been vital to ensuring the ongoing relevance and credibility of the programme. The role of the Chair and group members in championing the programme and, on occasions, lobbying for funds has also been important.

Executive support

The programme has enjoyed exceptional support from the top since its establishment in 1994. The Vice-Chancellor at that time, Professor Fay Gale, was instrumental in its development. The programme continues to enjoy the strong personal support of the current Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University Executive, as well as other senior staff within the organisation. This support has been demonstrated in numerous ways, including the provision of ongoing funding, participation in key events each year, and involvement as mentors to programme participants.

Programme structure

The LDW programme has been customised to meet the needs of UWA women, as identified through the early programme planners, later needs analysis surveys and ongoing consultation. Most importantly, LDW is a cohort programme with 30 women who go through the programme together. It is substantial, comprehensive and multi-stranded, approaching development from a number of perspectives, as can be seen from the programme components listed below. While it has evolved over the years, the basic format and multi-dimensional character has remained. Core features of the programme include:

> " *Having general and academic staff together on the programme – influenced me in arguing against the structure of meetings [often separate academic and whole department meetings].*
>
> Reunion lunch

- A **launch**, providing an opportunity for strong visible endorsement of the programme by the University's Executive and a strong educational focus around the topic of *Why we need a women-only programme*, followed by an introduction to all aspects of the programme
- A two-day **core programme** exploring issues around leadership, gender and workplace culture, the introduction of the Myers Briggs Type Inventory, and the establishment of peer learning groups
- A series of one-day **leadership skills development workshops**, covering such topics as career building, managing workplace relationships, communication and assertiveness, visibility, networking and lobbying, strategic action and influence, work-life balance, and creating a better workplace culture
- **Peer learning**, where participants work in groups to explore issues relating to one of the skills development workshop topics, present progress reports to other group members, and have the opportunity to give considered and challenging feedback to the University based on their learning and experiences as women at UWA
- A **review workshop**, that integrates peer group learning through the development of a final presentation, and a review of future directions for participants, and
- A **mentor scheme** which matches each participant with a more senior male or female mentor from the University for a period of nine months, with training and support provided to both mentees and mentors.

Optional and ongoing components of the programme include:
- **Career information sessions** such as applying for academic promotion and career opportunities for general staff
- **Information sessions** on topics such as University committees, budgeting and human resources issues, and
- **Networking lunches, workshops, forums** and other functions for women who have previously participated in the programme.

Participants

One of the key features of LDW is that it is a programme catering for both general and academic staff. General staff were included at UWA from the beginning, despite the academic focus of the original funding guidelines. This was unusual at the time; Castleman et al. (1995:118) noted that general staff "are almost invisible in relation to special programmes aimed to improve women's position in the workforce". The number of general and academic staff places were equalised when LDW moved onto internal funds and this approach has continued. Despite higher numbers of applications from general staff in recent years, groups have been selected to maintain as close to equal numbers as possible to give balance to the group and the issues addressed.

Demand to attend LDW has always been high and, with only 30 places per programme, it has not always been possible to accommodate all applicants. When the programme was opened up to all levels of women in 2001 there was a significant increase in the number of applications, particularly from more junior level general staff. In 2001, 76 women applied and in 2003, 88 applications were received. To meet this demand, additional funding was sought and two programmes were run

concurrently in each of these years. Over 40 applications were received for each of the *Leadership and Management* programmes offered in 2002 and 2004.

One of the great benefits of the programme has been the opportunity it has provided for women from all areas of the University and all types of roles — academic, general, and research staff — to collaborate, network and share experiences. This spread of participants, together with participation rates across various staff groups of the University, are explored further through the statistics below.

> " *What a wonderful opportunity to meet women from all areas within the University.*
>
> 2002 review session

The programme has always offered activities that move beyond providing a programme to the current participants. In addition to a broad range of activities provided for LDW alumni, there is a strategic focus to engage with the broader University community.

An important example is the Senior Women's Network, which grew out of a consultation process LDW undertook with senior women in 1998. Many of the women did not know each

academic staff. When you get to know people on the other side, you can appreciate their positions.

"The programme was a great leveller. You realised that many people had problems, that you weren't alone."

Judy's mentor, Wendy Edgeley, helped her to achieve her goals. "She took me to lots of meetings, introduced me to lots of people with whom I could talk about work opportunities. LDW had confirmed for me that I wanted to stay on campus – Wendy's mentoring showed me how to do that and move up the career ladder at the same time."

Although LDW was the catalyst for moving on, it didn't make it easy. "I didn't realise how hard it would be to learn a different job in a different area," Judy said.

"I had confidence in my skills, but until I did LDW, I didn't have personal confidence. When I developed that, I was able to apply for secondments, try out new things and make the transition from departmental work to faculty work – it's quite different.

"I embarked on a huge learning curve: sometimes I stopped and thought: 'What have I done?' I couldn't have done it without the help and support of Wendy."

Judy is Faculty Manager for Life and Physical Sciences, on secondment, until the middle of 2005, when she returns to her substantive position in Medicine and Dentistry.

other and felt isolated within the University. Originally convened by Professor Margaret Seares and now convened by Professor Belinda Probert, the Network has been used as a lobby and consultative group, as well as a networking and support group. Activities have included forums, meetings with the Vice-Chancellor, meetings to discuss the University's restructure, events to welcome and occasionally farewell senior women, sessions with visiting senior women and sponsoring a 'committee skills project'.

LDW now maintains and updates an email list of senior women, HEE levels 9 and 10, and academic levels Senior Lecturer and above. In addition to publicising events, the list is used to forward details of the Senior Managers Forum, to which all senior women now receive a standing invitation; to distribute details of opportunities that arise, such as memberships of working parties or reviews; and to encourage women to nominate for University committees.

The Committee Skills project arose from the shared recognition of difficulties that women were facing on committees in making their contribution. The project began by giving chairs of committees ways to be more inclusive. Dr Pat Klinck worked with chairs from a broad range of committees. Training was also offered to men and women about committee structures and effective committee practices, all with a view to sharing good practice and encouraging meaningful participation. This project, which extended over several years, has culminated in a soon to be released on-line resource for committee chairs, executive officers and members.

Another longstanding initiative of the LDW programme (since 1996) has been the hosting of a 'women-only' welcome and information session, run in conjunction with the twice-yearly orientation for all new staff. The welcome is given by our most senior female staff member and the session provides an overview of issues of concern for women, alongside particular

opportunities and networks for women on campus. Presenters include the Equity Manager and the Status of Women Group convenor; during the session the LDW programme is profiled. This acknowledgement of women new to campus has been warmly received over the years.

TABLE 1 **Appointment in LDW commencement year[1]**

Appointment	All participants		Survey respondents	
ACADEMIC[2]	N°	%	N°	%
Associate Lecturer/ Research Associate (Level A)	51	15.0	15	11.8
Lecturer/ Research Fellow (Level B)	81	23.8	30	23.6
Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow (Level C)	25	7.3	12	9.5
Associate Professor/ Principal Research Fellow (Level D)	3	0.9	3	2.4
Professor/Senior Principal Research Fellow (Level E)	2	0.6	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	**162**	**47.6**	**60**	**47.3**
GENERAL				
HEE 1	0	0	0	0
HEE 2	1	0.3	1	0.8
HEE 3	3	0.9	2	1.6
HEE 4	14	4.1	4	3.1
HEE 5	53	15.5	24	18.9
HEE 6	46	13.5	14	11.0
HEE 7	32	9.4	13	10.2
HEE 8	10	2.9	4	3.1
HEE 9	12	3.5	3	2.4
HEE 10	8	2.3	2	1.6
Other	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	**179**	**52.4**	**67**	**52.7**
Total	**341**	**100**	**127***	**100**

*One respondent did not answer the question

More recently LDW was actively engaged in sponsoring the publication of Dr Joan Eveline's book *Ivory Basement Leadership*. Since publication there have been several events (see page 29 for details) where the book has been used to encourage dialogue regarding gender and leadership within the University and the wider community. The mission of LDW is to educate and stimulate debate, with a view to encouraging organisational culture change.

The programme was also very actively involved in the *Diversity Dialogues Symposium*, hosted by the Institute of Advanced Studies in 2004, and again in 2005. The work of visiting scholars such as Dr Carol Bacchi and Emeritus Professor Joan Acker, alongside that of local scholars, was showcased through public lectures, a two-day conference, an early researcher's day, and various networking events. This provided excellent opportunities to bring staff and students working in these areas together, in addition to providing opportunities for the University community to engage with the issues. It also built bridges with many public and private organisations, working with gender and diversity issues. Papers from early career researchers are being published in a special edition of UWA feminist e-journal, *Outskirts*.

The LDW programme has been established on the assumption that gender equity can and should be supported by broader University activities. Re-stimulating the debate through events such as those mentioned is critical to keeping gender on the agenda, to maintain the ongoing education of the University community, and to guard against the complacency that can often occur with the passage of time.

Ten years of LDW participation

This section reviews the profile of programme participants and then moves on to introduce the survey respondents and present their views on the LDW experience.

Table 1 (facing page) provides an overview of appointment level at the time of commencement, for all LDW participants over the ten years of the programme. There is an almost equal spread across academic (47.6%) and general (52.4%) staff groups. While participants cover the range of levels in both classifications, the majority of academic participants were at lecturer level and general staff clustered around levels 5 and 6 (although in early years of the programme the median level was level 7). This accurately mirrors where the largest groups of women have been, and still are, located in the organisation.

Since LDW she has moved from her departmental job in Medicine, to the Faculty of Economics, before the equivalent position became available in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.

"This current job (Life and Physical Sciences) is at the next level up from my substantive position. It's a different type of job and I've learnt so much that I'll be able to put into practice when I return to my permanent position.

"I'd like to do LDW again. I've learnt so much in the past ten years: I'm using different skills, and yes, I do consider I have a leadership role. I only ever wanted to make a contribution, rather than to be a leader, but making that contribution at a higher level is a form of leadership."

Judy was on the LDW Planning Group for two years. "I possibly wouldn't have put my hand up for something like that, if I hadn't done the programme and learned so much from it" she said.

Table 2 summarises the current classification and levels of women who are still employed at UWA, and illustrates that, of the 358 total participants, some 257 (71.8%) remain employed at the University[3]. LDW 'alumni' are compared by level with the overall distribution of female staff at UWA. This allows us to see the percentage of staff at various levels who have participated in the programme.

TABLE 2	Level of appointment for LDW participants still employed (2004) compared with overall female staff profile 2004					
		LDW participants*		**Female staff ****		**Participation rate**
Appointment		**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**%**
ACADEMIC						
Associate Lecturer / Res. Associate (A)		16	13.7	142	31.0	11.3
Lecturer / Res. Fellow (B)		45	38.5	168	36.7	26.8
Senior Lecturer / Snr Res. Fellow (C)		41	35.0	98	21.4	41.8
Associate Professor / Prpl. Res. Fellow (D)		10	8.6	30	6.6	33.3
Professor / Snr Principal Res. Fellow (E)		4	3.4	18	3.9	22.2
Other		1	0.8	2	0.4	50.0
Total		**117**	**100**	**458**	**100**	**25.5**
GENERAL						
HEE 1		0	0	29	2.5	0
HEE 2		1	0.7	30	2.6	3.3
HEE 3		1	0.7	197	17.1	0.5
HEE 4		10	7.2	222	19.3	4.5
HEE 5		38	27.2	316	27.4	12.0
HEE 6		31	22.1	176	15.3	17.6
HEE 7		22	15.7	76	6.6	28.9
HEE 8		14	10.0	38	3.3	36.8
HEE 9		15	10.7	31	2.7	48.4
HEE 10		8	5.7	20	1.7	40.0
Other		0	0	17	1.5	0
Total		**140**	**100**	**1152**	**100**	**12.2**

* 3 women changed staff classification between commencement and 2004
** Female staff data taken from Equity Office annual report 2004

Of currently employed academic women, 117 have participated in LDW giving an overall participation rate for academic women of 25.5%. The lowest participation rate is at level A (11.3%) and the highest at level C (41.8%). For general staff the overall participation rate is much lower at 12.2%, with very high participation rates at HEE levels 8, 9 and 10 (from 36.8 – 48.4%). These high participation rates also reflect the much smaller number of women at these levels. The current equal allocation of places to general and academic staff, wherever possible, despite large differences in the numbers between these two groups, will continue to support higher overall participation rates by academic women.

Table 3 illustrates the spread of LDW participants across faculties and administrative areas. Data is drawn from LDW records at the time of participation. The restructuring of faculties in the intervening period has created some minor inaccuracies. It should also be noted that faculties vary enormously in size.

LDW survey

A survey of all previous participants, not including the 2004 group which was nearing completion, was undertaken in November/ December 2004. The survey was designed, conducted and reported on by the Institutional Research Unit (IRU). It included women for whom there were contact details including

TABLE 3 **LDW participants by faculty and administrative area**

Administration: Finance and Resources	25
Administration: Registrar's Office	45
Administration: Vice-Chancellery	11
Library	7
Halls of Residence	1
Architecture, Landscape & Visual Arts	1
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	35
Business	24
Education	13
Engineering, Computing & Mathematics	34
Law	9
Life and Physical Sciences	42
Medicine and Dentistry	74
Natural and Agricultural Sciences	37
Total	**358**

those who had left University employment. In total 293 women were contacted. Of these, 128 women responded including 48 academics, 56 general staff and a further 24 women[4] who had left UWA. This was a response rate of 44%, sufficient for reasonable conclusions to be drawn.

Data for the whole group of LDW participants (not just respondents) was extracted by the Institutional Research Unit from the Human Resource System (HRS), and appears in **Tables 1 and 2** above. This data forms part of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) statistics submitted at March 31 of each year.

It is clear from **Table 1** that appointment at commencement for respondents to the survey is not substantially different to the composition of the whole LDW group, allowing us to feel confident that the respondents are representative of the classification and level of women who participated in the programme.

Eighty-five percent of respondents worked full-time. Age of respondents ranged across the full spectrum with smaller numbers in the youngest and oldest groups: 20-29 (5%) and 60 or over (3%). Most women were 30-39 (27%), 40-49 (37%) or 50-59 (25%). This age range to some extent reflects years elapsed since programme completion. Average age at commencement of LDW across all groups varied between 38-44 years, with no obvious trend over that time.

Respondents to the survey were weighted toward more recent years of participation, accentuated by the doubling up of programmes in 2001 and 2003. In total, 51% of respondents came from the five programmes run between 2001 and 2003, a further 29% from the years 1998 to 2000 (three programmes) and the remaining 20% from the earlier years. This closely matched the number of surveys distributed, with 47%, 26% and 27% respectively for the time periods mentioned above. Response rates were

While the LDW programme was clearly filling a great need in its first few years on campus, a different need was soon identified. As female staff embraced the programme, some yearned for an added dimension.

In 1998, the first — and only — LDW Executive Development Programme was run, for ten senior women.

Diane Christensen, Business Manager for the Centre for Offshore Foundation Systems, and School Manager, Civil and Resource Engineering, had done the first LDW programme in 1994. "The Executive Development Programme was completely different," she said.

"The first time on the programme I benefited, as most women do, from the networking and the contacts I made across the University. But four years later, I was ready for something more.

"The Executive Development Programme started me thinking about things I wanted to do. I had made the contacts and heard about opportunities. I changed to a different faculty probably as a direct result of doing the programme."

Diane was the Faculty Executive Officer in Engineering and Mathematical Sciences and moved, through a secondment, to a project to set up what is now the Oral Health Centre of WA, before taking up her present position.

Participants in the Executive Development

reasonably consistent across the time period, once programme numbers and survey distribution are taken into account.

The remainder of this chapter, using survey data, explores why women do the programme, how they perceive the usefulness of various components of the programme, and the impact of the programme on their leadership development. Survey data is also reported in later chapters. Chapter 4 contains respondents' views to several questions on the current climate and future issues for women. Chapter 5 examines influences on career development and changes in respondents' working lives, while Chapter 7 uses survey data specific to the mentoring experience.

Why do LDW?

Table 4 lists the most influential factor in choosing to participate in the LDW programme. The top eight items cover 93% of the reasons given and give some insight into how the programme is perceived by participants. Some 32% cite *develop leadership skills* and *leadership knowledge* as the main factor. A further combined 20% cite *reviewer/supervisor* and *peer suggestion*, indicating a strong reputation and 'word of mouth' factor in maintaining demand for LDW places. For academics, *peer suggestion* was more important and for general staff this was reversed, with supervisor suggestion being more important. This fits with anecdotal evidence suggesting that LDW is being recommended during performance development reviews for general staff. *Career advancement/promotion*, and *networking* were higher for general staff with *personal interest* higher for academic staff.

Table 4 summarises data regarding the most influential factor; however, data was also collected on the three most influential factors[5]. When these are combined, *to develop leadership skills* is still the most frequently given influence, closely followed by *to increase my networking opportunities.* Networking, while not the most influential reason for many participants, is

obviously an important part of the broader picture regarding programme participation.

Please note that wherever respondent data is broken down by staff classification to look for differences between general and academic staff, respondents no longer employed at UWA are not included as their previous classification was not provided. Therefore their views throw no light on the differences between staff groups.

TABLE 4 | **Factor of most influence on participation in LDW**

Most influential factor	Number	All respondents	Percentage Academic n=47	General n=50
To develop leadership skills	29	24	28	24
To advance my career/facilitate promotion	16	13	9	16
Reviewer/supervisor suggestion	15	13	9	14
Personal interest	13	11	13	8
To increase my networking opportunities	13	11	6	12
To increase my leadership knowledge	10	8	4	14
Peer suggestion	8	7	11	2
To improve my self-confidence/self-esteem	7	6	8	6
To improve my knowledge about the university	4	3	6	2
Other*	3	2	2	2
To improve my work/life balance	2	2	4	0
To gain entry into a management position	0	0	0	0
To increase my gender equity knowledge	0	0	0	0
To increase my salary	0	0	0	0
Total	**120**	**100**	**100**	**100**

*Other includes — nothing else to do; to develop ability to ensure projects were accepted; non-self interest.

The current Planning Group, L-R: Barbara Goldflam, Kerry Adams, Jan Stuart, Beverley Hill, Joan Eveline, Di Walker, Liz Tilly, Thelma Koppi (absent: Sunalene Devadason, Fang Liu, Trudi McGlade, Terri-ann White)

Programme components

This section draws on survey results to explore the effectiveness of various components in more detail. Mentoring, a major component, is not considered here in detail as it is the focus of Chapter 7.

Table 5 summarises respondents' views on the LDW component that most influenced their leadership development. Overwhelmingly the *core programme* is seen as most important (cited by 58% of respondents), a view which is re-iterated in focus group feedback and also canvassed in Chapter 6. *Mentoring* (16%) and the *skills workshops* (11%) come a distant second and third place. If the percentages for

> " *Attending LDW can change your work life and personal life, and it gives [you] confidence in pursuing things that you might never have decided to go for.*
>
> 2001 review session

Programme all took on a research project, on which they worked during the programme.

Diane's focused on research centres. She was already on a working party looking at centres in the University. She took a whirlwind tour of centres at seven universities in eight days, covering campuses in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia. She spoke to research directors and administrators as well as the universities' equivalents to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

"That project really helped me in my current position as business manager of a centre. It also provided the contacts for networking with other centres," said Diane, who has since joined the Australasian Research Management Society.

Jan Stuart, senior consultant in Human Resources, was another member of the Executive programme.

"I wasn't necessarily interested in career advancement," said Jan. "It was enrichment that I was after."

Her project looked at the area of university development and, in particular, university alumni and how they were managed in the UK and Canada. At that time, it was relatively new at UWA. Although Jan didn't change direction in her work, as Diane did, the knowledge she acquired was a help to Peter Leunig, who was at that time, just setting up the Office of Development. And, from her own perspective,

TABLE 5   **LDW component of most influence on participants' leadership development**

LDW component	Number	Percentage
Core programme	70	58
Mentoring scheme	19	16
Skills workshops	13	11
Career related information sessions	5	4
Information sessions about how UWA works	5	4
Peer learning groups (LDW years 2002 to 2003 only)	5	4
Action learning projects (LDW years 1994 to 1998 only)	3	3
Total	**120**	**100**

8 respondents did not answer the question

peer learning and *action learning* are reworked to reflect the number of people for whom this was applicable, it becomes 12% for both. General staff rate *skills workshops* more highly than academics (14% and 5% respectively) and *peer learning* is nominated by academic staff only. Interestingly, those who left, rated *career information* and *peer learning* more highly, but respondent numbers are very small.

All aspects of the programme are nominated by at least three respondents as being the most important aspect, even when they are minor non-compulsory components such as the information sessions. Clearly, one of the strengths of LDW is this multi-strand nature of the programme, which caters for a diversity of needs.

The strength of the multi-strand nature of LDW is further reinforced by **Table 6** which details respondents' agreement or disagreement with the contribution of various programme components to their leadership development.

Leadership development

Ninety percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the core programme assisted their leadership development. Although few respondents mentioned skills workshops as their most influential component, 89% agreed or strongly agreed that they were beneficial. As will be seen in the chapter on mentoring, some mentoring partnerships never develop, and this is reflected in the 32% who did not agree that mentoring was helpful for their leadership development. Interestingly, academics rate all aspects of the programme below general staff, except in relation to career information. This lower rating by general staff in relation to career information possibly reflects the unclear career paths within the University for general staff, or possibly they already know more about how the system works.

Both the *Career information* and *How the University works* information sessions are optional. They are available each year independent of year of LDW participation, with some participants accessing these sessions in other years or not at all.

> ❝ *[The] first time I felt part of the University. The programme gave me a much clearer sense of where I fitted in and how the University operated.*
>
> Reunion lunch

It is important to note that, in reference to **Tables 5 and 6**, the term leadership, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter, has traditionally referred to a more masculine upfront leadership style, whereas leadership in the LDW programme, particularly in later years, has been re-defined as a broader concept. There may be, as a result, some ambiguities or differences across cohort groups in how this question was interpreted.

TABLE 6 Contribution of programme components to participant's leadership development

	Number		Percentage		
Contribution to leadership development		N/A*	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Mean
Core programme	126	2	90	10	3.2
Skills workshops	125	6	89	11	3.1
Mentoring scheme	127	10	68	32	2.9
Career information sessions	127	15	72	28	2.8
Information sessions about how UWA works (committees, budget, etc)	125	8	73	27	2.9
Peer learning groups (*LDW years 2002 to 2004 only*)	76	40	64	36	2.8
Action learning projects (*LDW years 1994 to 1998 only*)	67	50	71	29	2.9

* NA excluded from percentage calculations
Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree =2, Agree = 3, Strongly agree = 4
Mean of 2.5 represents a neutral rating

> " *I realised that we all have the capacity to lead. Leadership takes many forms and can be done in many ways.*
>
> 1998 review session

Table 7, reports on respondents' agreement with statements regarding LDW participation. The statements refer to the original programme objectives, in order to assess the success of LDW in meeting these objectives. On average,

> " *[LDW] gave me confidence in my opinions and showed me that I can contribute to UWA in a positive and meaningful way.*
>
> Reunion lunch

all statements received a rating of 2.8 or higher.

The scores of academic staff, not reproduced here for the sake of clarity, are between 0.1 and 0.3 mean points lower than for general staff. Interestingly, general staff scored lower than academic staff only on two items — *Developed plans to achieve my leadership goals* and *Developed skills/strategies so as to contribute to UWA as a leader*. This may be a reflection on the more ambiguous career paths

it was enriching – just the outcome she had been seeking through LDW.

The third member of the group, which has continued to meet regularly since that Executive Development Programme, is Jackie Massey, the University Secretary and Director of the University Secretariat.

Her project was examining the desirability of involving students' parents in the life of the University and researching a vehicle for welcoming them into the University community. Her research showed something was needed in this area at UWA. Her model for the annual Parents' Welcome was taken up by Public Affairs and has been an extremely successful event each year since then.

Action learning is the tag given to the development of these three and the other women on the Executive Development Programme. They would work on their projects (as well as their current jobs) during the week, and get together on Fridays for an action learning seminar, in which they reflected together on their projects and their working lives.

These three found those sessions so enjoyable and fruitful that, after the conclusion of the LDW year, they continued to meet regularly. They now meet for drinks about once a month and while they still talk about their work, they also share other parts of their lives as well.

They all agreed they had learned the value of reflection through LDW.

TABLE 7 **Benefits of LDW participation, based on programme objectives**

Programme objectives	Number	N/A*	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Mean
			Percentage		
A better understanding of the concept of leadership	126	1	91	9	3.3
Identified personal leadership needs	125	5	87	13	3.3
Increased my knowledge / understanding about how the University functions	126	2	90	10	3.2
A better understanding of the roles of leaders at UWA	125	3	88	12	3.2
Increased my understanding of the gendered workplace culture	126	2	86	14	3.2
A broader understanding of leadership culture	126	4	85	15	3.2
Increased my acceptance of a diverse range of leadership styles	122	3	87	13	3.1
Improved my understanding of gender equity issues at UWA	126	3	85	15	3.1
Contributed to university activities	125	7	84	16	3.1
Increased my sense of belonging to the University community	125	4	83	17	3.1
Increased my confidence in my leadership abilities	121	0	81	19	3.1
Developed skills / strategies so as to contribute to UWA as a leader	125	6	81	19	3.0
A better understanding of the expectations of leaders at UWA	126	3	78	22	3.0
Acquired strategies for accessing information	126	3	78	22	3.0
Developed plans to achieve my leadership goals	124	6	77	23	3.0
Undertaken informal leadership roles within the university	124	4	73	27	3.0
Encouraged representative decision making in my workplace	123	11	74	26	2.9
Enhanced my skills and knowledge so as to aid my promotion at UWA	124	7	73	27	2.9
Become a pro-active leader concerned with supporting women's opportunities	123	9	70	30	2.9
More fully realised my potential within the University community	122	4	68	32	2.9
Undertaken formal leadership roles within the university	125	4	61	39	2.8

* NA excluded from percentage calculations
Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree =2, Agree = 3, Strongly agree = 4
Mean of 2.5 represents a neutral rating

for general staff women, and the frustration commonly expressed in the information sessions, regarding career options.

The data in **Table 7** indicates broad endorsement across items based on programme objectives regarding the benefits of participation, and suggest that the programme is meeting its original objectives.

Support for and endorsement of the programme

In response to the statement *My LDW attendance was supported by my supervisor* 91% of women agreed or strongly agreed, giving a mean of 3.4 on a 4 point scale. This was echoed, although less strongly in regard to collegial support, *My LDW attendance was supported by my colleagues,* again with 88% agreeing — an average of 3.2. General staff felt more strongly supported by their supervisors and academics by their colleagues. Perhaps the strongest endorsement of the programme comes from the participants. Some 63% strongly agreed and a further 29% agreed (92% total, mean 3.5) that they would recommend LDW to other women. While the differences are small, academic women respondents (94%) endorsed the programme even more strongly than their general staff colleagues (89%). The strongest endorsement of all came from

women who had left UWA (96%, mean 3.7). Perhaps there is a nostalgia factor here!

Conclusion

No other programme in Australian higher education is comparable to LDW in terms of participation, longevity, comprehensiveness and consistency of approach to women's leadership development. UWA is uniquely placed to evaluate the impact of a women's programme on both participants and the broader University. This allows us to ask the question, does a women's programme such as LDW assist in addressing women's historical disadvantage in universities?

Footnotes

1 Differences in the data between the table (a total of 341) and the number of women who have actually participated (358) is explained by three factors:

• staff from associated groups of the University such as the Institute of Child Health Research and Perth International Arts Festival (7), are eligible to do the programme, but are not included in the University Human Resources Information System;

• women who withdrew (6); and

• four women who did not show up on annual snapshot data.

2 Separate research staff data was available for survey respondents at commencement of LDW (7 level A's, 6 level B's and 3 level C's, 16 in total) but not for the whole group data.

3 This does not include women from associated groups such as ICHR and PIAF.

4 Interestingly, women who have left (24) are equally divided between academic and general staff, based on comparison between appointment at commencement and current appointment.

5 Where data referred to in the text is not available in the tables for reasons of clarity and brevity, it can be found on the LDW website: http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/ldw/

LDW Events
Some highlights

- Trials at the top: Amanda Sinclair
- Visit by Renee Redwood from the US Glass Ceiling Commission
- Profiling the leaders: a series highlighting UWA executive and senior staff, where leaders spoke about their own leadership styles
- Women at the top series – speakers such as Lyn Beazley, Cheryl Praeger, Sally Zanetic, Robyn Ahern, and Renee Redwood
- Stories of Success (in conjunction with Status of Women's Group): profiled the different career paths of UWA women
- Farewell to Professor Fay Gale – presented with a scroll of appreciation
- Graduation dinners: 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002
- Feminism: Does the dreaded f-word have a future? – Organised in conjunction with Centre for Research on Women (CRW). Debaters – Maxine Murray, Alan Robson, Jane Armstrong, Bev Thiele, Ed Harken, Robyn Daniels, and Jane den Hollander
- Welcome to senior women and 10th anniversary launch, a Sunken Garden 'garden party' welcoming Gaye McMath and Belinda Probert to the University
- 10th anniversary re-union lunches
- 'Ivory Basement Leadership' staff forum, where 6 staff presented their responses to Joan Eveline's book
- 'Ivory Basement Leadership' forum (LDW 10th anniversary/UWA Extension summer school event). Speakers – Joan Eveline, Karl O'Callaghan, Jane den Hollander, Judy Siddins

"Doing the programme gets you to reflect on your career and where you are going. It helped me to focus on my career development, and to take more control and be more proactive," Jackie said.

Jan agreed, saying LDW gave her the opportunity and encouragement to think about the bigger picture. "I suspect we all reflect more now," she said.

They also agreed there had been a subtle change in the culture at UWA, as a result of ten years of LDW.

"But it's difficult to see a direct link between an individual doing LDW and changes in the workplace," Jan said. "It's amorphous, slow and ongoing. That's the nature of cultural change."

And, after attributing changes in their lives to having participated in LDW, what are their impressions of views on leadership?

"I think a leader is defined by his or her followers," Diane said. "Are those followers really with you?"

Jan agreed and wondered whether, if you took the positions of formal authority away from the people who occupied them, what would be their capacity to get things done and to get staff 'on board' with them?

"A leader," said Jackie, "is a role model, somebody who can empower his or her staff, not tell them what to do."

Gendered organisation: from theory to action

There is extensive commentary regarding 'masculine culture' as the most critical barrier facing women in workplaces today. While people have some commonsense understanding about what this means, it requires unpacking to be useful from a practitioner perspective. What kinds of organisations do we want instead? What do we know about what women want and need in order to thrive? Where does a programme such as LDW fit and how can it contribute?

The work of Chesterman, Ross-Smith and Peters (2004b) provides a useful framing device to begin to answer these questions. Chesterman *et al* studied 255 senior men and women in the public, private and higher education sectors. Their analysis suggests that the characteristics of cultures that support and sustain women are:

• Strong formal support and encouragement from organisational leaders
• A critical mass of other women
• Networks
• Flexibility and family-friendly policies and practices, and
• Explicit commitment to values.

In 1993 the LDW programme was designed to build on and enhance supports that were already in place at UWA — such as backing from the Vice-Chancellery and women's networks. To achieve cultural transformation it was necessary to build a much-needed critical mass of women, while demonstrating a wide-ranging commitment to values such as new forms of leadership and family-friendly workplaces. Although initially based on the practical experiences of women's organisations and networking capacities, the programme design was successively enhanced by the introduction of tried and trusted theories and practices from feminist-inspired organisational studies.

A leading journal identified recently the difficulties women face in a male dominated environment. These include:

• *Lack of easy access to informal 'boys' networks*
• *Shortage of appropriate mentors*
• *Lack of workplace flexibility*
• *Poor job design, and*
• *Inability to navigate the political maze.*

(Palermo 2004, 'Boys club' bad for business', *Human Resources,* p.2)

Programme foundations

The gendered organisation

The programme structure outlined in Chapter 2 has remained substantially the same over the ten years of the programme. The foundations laid by the Planning Group in conjunction with Sally Jetson, the first co-ordinator, have proved farsighted and durable. The discontinuation of action learning projects (1997), which proved hard to fund, and the addition of peer learning (2002), have been the most substantial changes. While the programme structure has remained stable, the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the programme have refined and developed over time.

LDW has never been an ordinary leadership programme. It was customised to both the University environment and the actual experiences of women in their working lives here at UWA. This is in contrast to the still commonplace practice of presenting standard leadership programmes, usually designed for a mixed group or mostly male audience, to an all female group. This approach undermines women because it fails to understand or acknowledge that the workplace is gendered; and, as a result, it cannot be assumed that men and women experience leadership in the same way.

Another common trap is to deliver programmes designed to 'equip the women or teach them how to play the game' (Meyerson & Fletcher 1999). This approach, referred to as a Frame 1 approach, situates women as the problem. This is in contrast to their Frame 4 approach which situates the organisational culture as the problem. The work of the Centre for Gender in Organizations[1] (CGO), of whom Meyerson and Fletcher are a part, has been influential for the Planning Group and LDW staff and facilitators in providing a framework and theoretical underpinning to what the programme was already doing. The work of the CGO takes a systemic approach to re-visioning work cultures and provides a number of useful tools.

The programme begins unashamedly, as does the CGO, with the understanding that the workplace is gendered. Gender is not equated with sex or sex category but rather seen as a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interactions and constructed through psychological, cultural and social means. It is not a given attribute, a trait or a role but something actively constructed. It therefore becomes possible to be 'doing' gender and, indeed, necessary to keep 'doing gender' recurrently. (West & Zimmerman 1987).

This gendered perspective can be difficult for men to understand and the view that organisations are gender neutral is often encountered. Writers such as Acker (1990) contend that this is actually 'gender blindness'. When men are asked about the impact of their gender in relation to their career success, they are taken aback, whereas for women this is not an unusual perspective (Chesterman et al. 2004a; Currie et al. 2002).

> " *Each time I walk out with more understanding … I am becoming increasingly able to recognise behaviour which is gendered.*
>
> Email

Acker (1990) stresses the importance of linking work and gender, both as ways of understanding gender segregation, income and status inequality in the workplace, as well as organisations being a critical place where gender is created and reinforced. Gendered processes may be overt or they may be deeply hidden in organisational processes. As Meyerson and Fletcher suggest, a revolution will not work to drive out discrimination because most barriers today are insidious. "Rather gender discrimination is now so deeply embedded in organizational life as to be virtually indiscernible" (Meyerson & Fletcher 1999:127).

It is important to remember that this gendered workplace is historically created as a result of universities, as Burton (1997:17) describes, being "organised around the cluster of characteristics, attributes and background circumstances typical of men". In the case of UWA this history is poignantly recorded in *The Missing Chapters* by Crawford and Tonkinson (1988).

We are, as Acker (1990) points out, not 'disembodied workers'. It makes a difference if there are 11 men and one woman sitting around the table at a meeting, or the reverse, 11 women and one man. Not only do men and women have different expectations of themselves and each other in the workplace, women behaving or speaking in the same way as men will not necessarily be treated or understood in the same way.

> *I do sometimes think that if I was a man, things would be perceived differently. You know, if I say something it is not necessarily taken as seriously coming from a woman, than if I were a man, or if I do have to make tough decisions, I am the heartless bitch, but if a man comes along making the same decision, then he is a manager. That's what I sometimes come across and I find it frustrating.*
>
> Focus group participant

> *But for example, where you have got three grants allocated, we just had national grant announcements, and all the women in the department who applied got them and all the men were knocked out. So we're celebrating. And the head of school who is a man was saying "Oh, it's all the women who got them and not the men", and we were all laughing, but if it had been the other way around … It would have been normal, but you couldn't say it. The head of school couldn't have come out and said, "Oh, all the men got it, but not the women", you know.*
>
> Focus group participant

Cultures and cultural literacy

Once we have this understanding of gender, we can highlight organisational culture to see how gender is expressed and maintained. As Thomas notes,

> a cultural framework provides a lens through which the multifaceted layers of gender relations can be revealed and analysed (1996:143).

In developing what the LDW programme calls 'cultural literacy', the use of a 'gender lens' (Kolb & Meyerson 1999) to understand and critique organisational assumptions and practices is critical.

Cultural literacy is the capacity to read and understand the gendered workplace culture. This concept is an important emphasis of the programme. It allows women to see a bigger picture before they make choices as to how to respond.

Cultural literacy facilitates the realisation that women often articulate in LDW, that issues in the workplace they assumed to be unique to them are actually shared and systemic, and not nearly as personal and

individualised as they may have thought. The relief felt by programme participants in identifying shared experience is a common one, and also occurs when school managers or other functionally similar staff meet, for example. It is accentuated, however, when looking at cultural issues that can be hard to identify and name. This de-personalising of experiences is one of the major benefits of bringing together a diversity of women from across campus, and is particularly strong for women coming from numerically male dominated areas.

> " It has shown me that a lot of my ideas and approaches are valid and useful and that the problems I encounter may not be due to my own shortcomings, but a reflection of a less than ideal work environment.
>
> 1998 review session
>
> I was not alone in my feelings of angst and vulnerability.
>
> Reunion lunch

The focus on cultural literacy is one area where it is possible to fall into the trap of teaching women 'to play the game'. While cultural literacy can become the vehicle for being able to operate effectively and strategically in the workplace (reading the play and the players) it is also highlighted as a way of challenging the cultural assumptions and the status quo. Participants are asked to examine how their own behaviour might contribute to or support unwelcome aspects of the culture.

> " Cultures do not spring ready-made from above: people make cultures.
>
> Bacchi 1998:78

This examination of the culture, and cultural literacy, serves to highlight issues other than gender. The culture of the academic/general staff divide and the behaviours that create and sustain it can sometimes be more easily observed and named. These concepts are then applied to the construction of gender in the workplace. The everyday nature of behaviours that sustain unwelcome aspects of the culture is clearly articulated by a 2004 participant when she says

> I practice self censorship and think about how my actions are per-ceived, realising that UWA's culture of staff divisions needs to be tackled in the same way as sexism or racism, by each of us, every day.

When a group of committed professionals accepted the challenge to investigate Work-Life balance as part of their LDW peer learning group, they focused on making significant changes to their own lives.

Debby, Yew-Keng, Danni and Narelle met at LDW in 2003 and formed a group based on their joint ambition to achieve a work-life balance.

The four of them say they clicked with each other immediately, even though they represented different personality types and family situations.

"We met more often than any of the other peer learning groups," one member said. "I think that was because we were a small group and it was much easier for us to agree on a meeting time, rather than trying to get six or eight people together."

Another said she thought they all worked so well together because, while they all loved to talk, they also were willing to let others have their say.

They agreed that the trust created through LDW enabled them to be open and honest with each other, which enriched their growing friendship as well as helping their learning process.

"We did learn from each other," one said. "At times our meetings were like group therapy sessions, but we certainly learned from each other's experiences, ideas and advice. One of

Developing cultural literacy becomes the foundation for becoming a 'change agent' in the workplace. It is crucial, however, not to put the onus on the women to change the 'male dominated' culture as this can become a different version of 'fix the women'. Clearly the dominant group, in this case men, must carry a major part of the responsibility.

This focus on 'cultural literacy' is augmented by an emphasis on 'small wins' (Meyerson & Fletcher 1999) and 'tempered radicalism' (Meyerson & Scully 1995). Critical for developing a sense of agency for the women, that three-pronged approach maintains the focus on the organisation as the problem and not the women.

> *[LDW has been] paramount in pursuing the rights of female staff to seek and be successful in achieving leadership roles if they want to.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *I'm becoming an 'active' leader rather than a reluctant one.*
> 2004 participant
>
> *Our group examined how, in order to become an effective leader, it was important first to know yourself.*
> 2004 participant
>
> *[LDW] made me assess what leadership means to me and how I will use these skills in the future.*
> 2000 Review session
>
> *[I am] trying to model alternative leadership.*
> Reunion lunch

> *I could be proactive and benefit not only myself, but those around me.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *Leadership is not just about being in charge.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *Managing from underneath and being a leader from anywhere in the system.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *LDW provides a good opportunity to reaffirm personal values/ integrity, and therefore how to interact in the workplace with others, even where the broader culture is not very good. I tried to bring these to my leadership role to implement change [with] limited results.*
> Reunion lunch

Leadership

In the context of a gendered workplace, leadership becomes problematic. Leadership is a gendered construct, where masculine and feminine traits are differently valued, and where men and women experience different degrees of 'fit' with the predominant leadership style. Leadership as a concept within a women's programme, therefore, requires extensive deconstruction and reconstruction. Several key researchers can assist in this process. Bond (2000) highlights the complex relationships and interactions that exist between gender, positional power and structure (gendered workplace). Eveline (2004), in coining the term 'companionate leadership', explores models that move leadership beyond the heroic, while the work of Sinclair (1998) likewise assists in the re-visioning of leadership.

Traditional models of leadership such as 'Transformational Leadership', elaborated by Kouzes and Posner (2002), and 'Situational Leadership', described by Hersey and Blanchard (1989), are presented and participants have the opportunity to critically examine these dominant models of leadership and the behaviours they recommend.

It is clear from the literature (Bond 2000) that there is not one female (or male) leadership style. The examination, however, of the post-heroic models of leadership is done with an awareness that the capacity for women to take on prescribed leadership behaviours will be mitigated by the constraints embedded in the gendered organisational culture. Sinclair (1998) emphasises the expectations of followers, and this provides a useful reminder that women leaders are seen and judged differently to men. The work of Schein et al (1996) in their aptly titled paper *Think Manager — Think Male* explores the relationship between sex role stereotypes and characteristics perceived as necessary for management success, noting that these were more commonly ascribed to men than to women.

> " *[The penny really dropped for me] when I realised the personal is political — my poor time management had unforeseen political consequences. I was doing plenty, but not doing it strategically.*
>
> Reunion lunch

Specific leadership skills extensively explored in the programme include the ability to act strategically and to be mindful in approaching situations where there is a high investment in influencing the outcome. Women tend to be comfortable with and skilled in the 'glue work' of 'companionate leadership' (Eveline 2004) but need to recognise the requirement to engage with issues of power in their organisation. Leading from the front is at times a necessary behaviour, as is forming strategic partnerships and understanding the 'politics' of the organisation. These are behaviours that may be more difficult for women to adopt for reasons elaborated by Sinclair (1998).

Research by Mann (1995) noted three reasons for women's reluctance to engage in organisational politics and to acknowledge and fully exercise their power bases: these were their lack of confidence, a lack of competence, and a distaste of politics. LDW participants are encouraged to recognise that all behaviour in organisations is viewed politically, whether or not you are an active player. Opting out completely is not an option.

the things we learned is that, while our unbalanced working life was partly due to overwork and understaffing, we could be at fault at times because of our desire to pay attention to details and do the best job possible."

One member was able to achieve some work-life balance by writing things in her diary like 'Go home now', and doing it!

"If I had a family commitment, I would write it in my diary and then work around it. Before I did LDW, it used to be the other way around. I would try to change the commitment or just try to fit it in, without much success." This member works flexible hours and has a very supportive supervisor, but others in the group were not so fortunate.

Another member was embracing UWA's family-friendly policies by working one day a week at home. However, other staff in her work area felt it was an unfair arrangement and she was forced back to five days a week in the office. This change happened during the LDW programme. "My peer learning group really helped me to deal with it; they were very supportive," this member said.

The group agreed that sometimes the policies at UWA, which look so good on paper, are difficult to implement. In the above case, it was because of others' incorrect perceptions that this staff member was doing less work than she should be.

Strategies based on the work of Bellman (1992) that enable playing politics with principle are presented. The ability to read the 'organisational play' effectively and to build the appropriate alliances in an organisation are important leadership competencies.

Participants are encouraged to make choices about what leadership means to them and how best to match their own leadership skills and style with the needs of their workgroup and the behaviours that have currency in the University. They are supported in identifying, valuing and making visible the usually invisible skills and behaviours of 'companionate leadership'. Understanding the gendered workplace equips them to make more informed choices based on an ability to anticipate more accurately the response of the organisation to their behaviours as women leaders.

Support from the LDW group in developing leadership styles and skills that are effective, visible and a 'comfortable fit' for the women is an important goal of the leadership components of the programme.

In tandem with this challenge to traditional understandings of leadership is the necessity of moving beyond gender, maintaining, as Itzin (1995) argues, a multifaceted or prismatic lens that includes other patterns of oppression. The necessity of maintaining a lens wider than gender is explored in Chapter 6, *How am I a minority?*

These core concepts — gender, the gendered workplace, cultural literacy and gendered leadership — become strands woven and developed as the programme progresses. They inform sessions such as those developed around communication, organisational politics, influence, acting strategically and networking.

> " *Women need a forum. If you bring in men you change the nature of things … as long as it's producing results it's silly to change it.*
>
> Female mentor
>
> *I think the men in my department feel left out. It is like there is this women's club and the men aren't included. And I think because it has got leadership in the title, I think they feel we are getting special privileges in terms of advancement, which I mean, I don't think that was the case. But yeah, it has been mentioned quite a bit.*
>
> Focus group participant
>
> *But the other thing is that a lot of the women who have done LDW have such a good experience that they are always talking about it, so the men get to hear about it more than things that apply to them only. For example, my former head of school did it and when I was having a difficult time, she suggested that I do it, and I did. And I talk about it now.*
>
> Focus group participant

Women together — secret women's business?

There are many who refer either positively or negatively to LDW as "secret women's business". Those who are disparaging are perhaps threatened by the women-only nature of the programme. The women who use it positively, play up the 'mysteriousness' of the programme while enjoying the novelty of a women-only space and the different, more supportive (Limerick et al. 1995) environment that it provides. Clearly there are ways that women can speak about and understand the gendered organisation,

which probably would not, or perhaps even could not, occur in a mixed group.

> " *I still remain in contact with my peer-learning group. … even if we have not spoken for months — we just continue on from where we left off. It is great to share life stories with each other .*
>
> Reunion lunch

The LDW programme is designed to encourage connections between the women. It is a cohort programme, where a group progresses together, as opposed to a smorgasbord programme where people pick and choose from a menu of events, with no continuity of participants between events. The substantial nature of the programme in terms of time commitment, the two-day core programme, combined with dinner or drinks and, most particularly, in recent years the peer learning groups all contribute to building strong group connections. The building of a learning community is essential to the nature of the programme. As Martin (2004) emphasised at the Australian Technology Network Women's Executive Development (ATN WEXDEV) conference *Senior Women Executives and the Culture of Management*, women need to connect with each other, both those who have very dissimilar experiences and

those who are more similar. Women need to look beyond individual women's leadership styles to realise that the problems and barriers are shared, and they can pull together and support each other. This is not an individual issue.

Peer learning

The concept of peer learning groups is an adaptation based on ideas taken from the action learning literature. Action learning, often project based[2], is based on the work of Revans (1982) who described it as 'the development of self by the mutual support of equals'. Its aim is to develop 'questioning insight', the ability to ask 'fresh and useful questions'. Multidisciplinary teams are assembled to work on a shared organisational problem. The problem and the learning process both become the focus of the groups as they work in a disciplined way through a learning cycle of reviewing and reflecting on what has been done, developing a new plan for action, and then trying actions in line with the learning gained. Also commonly used in management development programmes, the focus has, on occasions, shifted to individual projects, still using the group to assist the learning process.

Peer learning groups were introduced to LDW in 2002 to assist the learning process in several

The group agreed that LDW had motivated them to keep trying to achieve a work-life balance, and the friendships they made and what they learned from the group were the greatest personal gains. They felt that whatever was achieved personally would indirectly flow through into their respective workplaces and to the University at large.

ways. Participants often carry heavy workloads and can be tempted to dip in and out of programmes with little reflection or development occurring between sessions. This approach encourages surface learning which, while enjoyable at the time, is soon forgotten in the hurry of ordinary working life. Peer learning, on the other hand, deepens the learning process by providing a developmental focus for each participant, and strengthening connection and accountability with the group.

> *We didn't have peer learning groups when I did it, so we didn't have to — we just sat back.*
>
> Focus group participant

Peer learning, without adding an unwanted project to people's busy lives, asks participants to engage in a group learning process organised around a theme. During the two-day core programme themes are identified and these provide both the topics for group formation and for workshops during the year. They vary between the two strands of the programme and can include managing upwards, managing others, acting strategically, visibility, work/life balance, communication and assertiveness, and changing workplace culture. Peer learning groups allow for an individual learning focus within a group of women exploring a similar issue.

Peer learning encourages learning to occur at several other levels. Leadership, particularly in a university setting, is often exercised with colleagues who are peers, through meetings and in other less formal settings. Additionally, good leadership relies on the person's capacity to reflect and learn from mistakes. Peer learning allows both of these to occur in a supportive environment. Participants are introduced to a 'critical friend' process where they are asked to engage with their own issues by talking and reflecting with the group, returning to the workplace to try something new, and then using the group once more to reflect on the results of their intervention.

There are two further layers to this learning experience. Participants are asked to report back on their learning process to the larger group at the time of the workshop where their topic will be covered. This keeps the group on task and grounds the learning from the workshops in the lived experiences of the women who have presented. The workshop facilitator can refer to their examples in framing the issues. At the end of the year, all groups present to the larger group and from this work, which summarises a great deal of their learning processes during the year, a combined final presentation is crafted.

> *I think our peer group is really good when we do get together, but then there was always this "Oh, we have to do this presentation — Oh, we have to do this presentation — Oh, we have no progress on this presentation". Always this stress factor and I find that really frustrating. It is like, you know, we have been asked to present what we experienced through our peer group and how we work towards the topic that we have chosen, we don't have to have this flash thing at the end of the day. We don't all have to stand up there in a neat line for our presentation. You know we can be creative and do something, but we don't have to from day one, concentrate on how it should evolve, but we had people who were really stressed about that.*
> Focus group participant
>
> *We have a brief and we chose that because that is affecting lives, so how do we deal with it, what do we change, how do we change it? — let's talk about that.*
> Focus group participant

A critical, but not necessarily popular, component of the learning for participants is reflecting back or mirroring to the larger University community the issues and concerns for women in the organisation. While

this presents enormous opportunities for leadership, visibility and strategic influence, women are sometimes resentful of this aspect of the programme. This is exacerbated if the learning process has been deep and personal, in which case their feelings of vulnerability and exposure are heightened. Encouragement is provided to ensure that these presentations do not become dominated by the more accomplished presenters or by the dominant academic discourse of the University, where knowledge is constructed in particular ways. The learning has often occurred in very creative ways and the power of women's stories always shines through. Preserving this learning, despite the anxiety of presentation to senior University staff, mentors and colleagues, can be difficult.

The introduction in 2002 of peer learning did not proceed smoothly. Participants struggled throughout the year, unable to focus on their learning process, instead becoming focused on the end of year presentation. Feedback post-presentation included comments from participants indicating that they felt like they were engaged in 'show and tell', had not connected as well with people in the larger group beyond their peer learning groups and, as a result, had not had as much fun as previous years! The huge variability of presentations on that occasion, which

LDW Heaven — *Peer learning group presentation 2004*

As a chemist and biochemist, Susan Barker likes to use the image of a catalyst to describe her experiences with the LDW programme.

"I see the whole process as something that's familiar to chemists: the catalyst that changes something from one state to another, without changing the individual components."

Susan's LDW experience was the start of a major personal reassessment and development which she has used to change the culture of her workplace.

"I had no idea that communication skills were what I was lacking," she said. "But the programme showed me that was the core of my problem with my manager. At an LDW workshop, we did a model exercise in trouble shooting, and everything changed from there.

"I modelled how to present myself to my supervisor. Then, when the session was over, I went straight to his office and I took the first step in turning our whole relationship around. I told him how I saw myself fitting into the future of the school. I hadn't been able to communicate that to him or even see that it was important, until I learned it at that workshop.

"Until you can communicate clearly, you can't move ahead. We now have an increasingly positive relationship, and he is also getting better at interacting with his staff. I feel it's a positive, rather than a negative relationship now, thanks to LDW."

coincidentally was attended by all five members of the Executive, led to some revisions in process. Individual group presentations are now synthesized into a combined presentation. This allows the whole group to prioritise and select what they want represented for the broader public. Time is built in for practice and confidence in using alternative ways to communicate a message has grown.

This final feedback loop to the University, while occasionally nerve-wracking for the women and the facilitators, provides an important reality check for the University, maintains programme accountability and builds community support. It dovetails in with the dual aims of the programme, which includes impacting on the organisational culture.

While the presentation aspect of the programme, after an initial steep learning curve, has become easier with experience over the four groups, it is by no means wholeheartedly embraced by all participants. It adds administrative complexity and requires a greater degree of commitment and involvement on their part. Feedback from the 2004 participants, (their views will not be reflected in the survey as they had not yet completed the year), has been the most enthusiastic so far regarding their experiences in their peer learning groups; however, scepticism regarding the final presentation was still strong. From a facilitator's perspective, the introduction of peer learning has deepened the engagement and learning of the participants although it does not, of course, suit everyone and not every group functions well. In a development programme such as LDW peer learning provides opportunities for valuable, although not necessarily comfortable, experiential learning.

> ❝ *If I'd known how good it was going to be I'd have asked more people to come.*
>
> 2004 participant

> ❝ *One thing that I would have liked to do more at that time, and we didn't have the peer learning groups, would have to have been to have a bit more concrete tasks to work on, because it was all in my head there and I could see — but to commit yourself … We had this little thing where we had to write what we hoped to achieve by the end of the year, and actually I did most of it. When I opened my envelope I had done this, but perhaps to work a little bit more concretely on one aspect of our work life, or life/home balance or something like that and to report on that and show some kind of change, because unless you do it you think, Oh yes that's a good thing to do, but if you don't actually do it then it may not work as well. But maybe the peer learning groups are about that. I don't know.*
>
> Focus group participant, prior to the introduction of peer learning

LDW in context

Now that the conceptual framework and substance of the programme have been examined in some depth, it is useful to consider how LDW is situated both nationally and internationally.

A recent report compiled by Dr Jasbir Singh (2005) provides an overview of gender equity initiatives in higher education in Commonwealth countries. Australia is most notable for its leadership programmes, both in-house programmes such as LDW and inter-university programmes as is the case with the Australian Technology Network Women's Executive Programme (ATN WEXDEV). LDW was one of three in-house programmes cited as being comprehensive, (others were Queensland University of Technology and Monash) and was singled out as being an evaluated programme. Singh commented on the often explicitly stated dual agenda of Australian programmes; to both develop the women and change the

culture, noting that 'tackling the culture of Higher Education is the toughest and most complex task'. Overall the paper notes that empirical research, preferably including before and after measures, of best practice initiatives is needed.

The participation of the author in an overseas study tour in 2000 (UK, Europe and Canada) along with attendance at the European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education (Zurich 2000) confirmed the impression that Australia is leading the world in its in-house programme support for women. While several national women's associations or groups provided women-only development opportunities for senior women[3], even these were not longstanding or ongoing. In the UK and Europe the focus remains on women in science, technology and engineering, despite under-representation of academic women across all disciplines. In-house support programmes were small, sporadic and not well supported institutionally.

It is not intended to give an overview of Australian programmes here, nor to review the evaluations that have been done. Women's programmes tend to operate on the edge of the equity office or staff development unit, or even sometimes part of research units or linked to Vice-Chancelleries. They are not often considered to be the core business of anyone. Co-ordination is often a part, sometimes even an incidental part of people's roles; indeed, it is unusual for it to be the defining feature of a person's role as is the case with LDW. Practitioners, budgets and support from the top come and go, and continuity is often lost.

In 1998, following the University of Technology *Winds of Change* conference at which there was an enthusiastic gathering of practitioners, the LDW co-ordinator convened a national higher education practitioners network. This network, with the acronym *sdfw* (staff development for women) has a current membership of around 70, and a regional focus on Australia and New Zealand, with a few members further afield. Two national meetings have been convened, the first in Canberra in 2001, the second in Tasmania in 2003. Both were organised to coincide with the EOPHEA (Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia) conference to cater for individuals who belong to both networks. On both occasions practitioners presented best practice work, shared dilemmas and issues, and formed and strengthened links with the Senior Women's Colloquium and the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (AVCC).

Susan said she felt the programme strengthened women's capacity within the system. "But I'm only just seeing now some of the benefits of the programme. At the time, I didn't see some things as useful to me.

"Perhaps it would be worth restructuring the programme, to do a short one, for say, three months, then go away and put what you've learnt into practice and really see the benefits, before you go back, at a later stage, for a longer programme, by which time you're open to more learning opportunities."

She said at first she couldn't see herself using the skills learned through LDW, but, now that she's moved on, she can see their benefit.

"I didn't get much from the mentoring or the peer learning group, but I did get a lot from modelling alternative leadership.

"I am not a classic academic supervisor. I tend to have emotional responses that make it difficult for me to give negative feedback. I couldn't bring myself to say something negative to a student, even though it might be helpful in the long run.

"I didn't have this understanding of myself before doing the programme but, once I did, I still didn't feel this should discount me from being part of the system.

"I've been practising giving negative criticism with a smile and I am now aware that it is necessary. The raising of that awareness has made me a better supervisor."

While the practitioner's network is useful, more could be done. Low priority within institutions, as described above, results in a fragmented field and it is often difficult to get a good picture of what is happening. Surveys conducted by the AVCC in 2000 and 2003 provided a more comprehensive picture of programmes in the sector; however, they have been spasmodic and have not been delivered in a timely fashion, thus limiting their usefulness for practitioners. A greater level of national support or co-ordination would be useful. Certainly the ATN WEXDEV model, providing part-time national support and liaison between the five Technology universities, has been extremely successful in encouraging healthy in-house programmes in the universities involved.

Within Australia universities, there is a wide range of programmes on offer. The most recent AVCC data indicates there are a number of universities without programmes, with the remainder offering a mix of occasional events, short programmes (eg a programme that lasts several days but does not extend over a period of time, smorgasbord programmes (range of events over time) and cohort programmes (a defined group meeting over a period of time). Interestingly a recent study, (Browning 2004) replicating the 1998 LDW programme evaluation, but comparing cohort and smorgasbord programmes, concluded that cohort (referred to by the author as structured) programmes achieved better results.

Convening the *sdfw* practitioner's network, the comprehensiveness, longevity and stability of LDW and the continuity of co-ordinator has led to a significant national leadership role and profile for the LDW programme. There has been significant role modelling and active mentoring of programmes by LDW, as well as adoption of models similar to LDW in the last few years. The University of Auckland programme used LDW as a starting place for their programme design and the LDW co-ordinator was involved in delivering training for its first intake of mentors. More recently Griffith University, The University of Tasmania, and Charles Sturt University have all customised the LDW model for their own use. In the UK, the University of Exeter has expressed interest in the LDW model and a funding submission to the European Union for a programme encompassing a number of Business Schools was submitted, again based on the LDW model.

Interest in LDW has also come from outside the higher education sector, with a particularly high level of interest in the mentoring component of the programme. Public and private sector organisations have consulted with LDW and, for the first time in 2004/5, the LDW programme in its entirety is being delivered for an external organisation, the WA Police Service. The nature of the LDW model, which focuses on the workplace culture of participants, appears to be well suited to translating across organisational cultures. Consideration is being given to trade-marking the LDW programme, an initiative which would open up possibilities for delivering the programme to other organisations, while ensuring that the intellectual property of the programme is preserved and some funds return to the University's LDW programme.

Conclusion

This chapter has articulated the broad philosophical and theoretical underpinnings for LDW and has positioned the programme as being a particular 'kind' of women's programme. It has explored the inherent tensions of a programme that works primarily with women, but does not position women as the problem. The chapter has also articulated the major themes of gender, the gendered workplace, organisational culture and cultural literacy, and a re-visioned leadership. Incorporating these in every aspect of the programme is an ongoing challenge.

LDW initiatives

A Selection of Workshop Titles

- Mentor network: Neither frogs nor princes
- Power and the politics of talk
- What works? Changing the culture
- Taking a place and making it your own: Agents for change
- Pausing for breath
- Keeping afloat: Time management skills to keep you sane
- Gender differences at work
- What makes my research feminist?
- Reflection: Sharpening the saw
- The balancing act: Finding and maintaining wellbeing

- Secrets of effective leaders
- Reflections on the history of women staff at UWA
- Powerful networking
- Coping with transition in a changing world
- Making sense of the restructure
- *Fathering from the fast lane*
- Emotional intelligence
- Sleepless in academia
- Dare to dream
- Gender differences in communication styles

LDW helped Susan to recognise her communication difficulties and to overcome them; to successfully manage upwards; and to achieve a supportive academic environment.

"That's what keeps me here. I am aware, through LDW, that what I am doing is OK, that I am not a failure, and that I shouldn't listen to the voice inside me telling me that I'm a failure, because that is what makes some women drop out."

She said that having a family stopped the ego problem in wanting, but not having, a leadership role at work. Her leadership role at home is well established and satisfying.

"The LDW programme is fantastic – there's nothing like it anywhere else in Australia or overseas. Fay Gale and Alan Robson were the reasons I came from Adelaide to UWA, and their support of LDW has resulted in my staying here."

Footnotes

1   At Simmons Graduate School of Management, Boston.

2   Wells, J. & Townsend, J. 1997, *The WAR Story: Enhancing the Careers of Women*, Women's Action Research (WAR) Program, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur is a good example of using this in a women's program

3   'Room at the Top', developed by UCoSDA, UK; The Glass Ceiling Group, UK; Senior Women Academic Administrators Canada (SWAAC); Centre for Higher Education Research Development (CHERD), Canada.

Essential ingredients: 'critical acts', 'critical mass'

While the LDW programme has played a pivotal role in the University's journey towards gender equity, its story needs to be placed in the larger context of organisational change within the University. In the early 1990s the University became serious about creating a workplace where women would want to work and where their contribution could be fully realised. Commentators suggest that such journeys are as much about the 'critical acts' taken by an organisation to achieve gender equality as they are about recruiting and developing a 'critical mass' of female staff in key positions and in all aspects of the organisation's activities (Dahlerup 1988; Chesterman 2004).

For the University of Western Australia the 'critical acts' have focused on three major areas. Firstly, the University had to identify and dismantle the structural barriers and subtleties of bias that served to either limit women's participation or to undervalue or ignore their contribution. Secondly, the University needed to address the issue of its workplace culture and the degree to which it was 'masculine' in orientation, that is, reflecting male values and preferred ways of working. Finally, structures that supported women's traditional dual roles of worker and primary carer of family responsibilities, as part of an opportunity for all staff to achieve 'life balance', were required.

Making up ground

In 1990, the year when Professor Fay Gale commenced her term as the University's first female Vice-Chancellor (and only the second woman to hold such a position in Australia), she is reported to have asked 'where are the women?' While women comprised 55% of general staff they formed only 22% of all academic staff. By comparison, women comprised 48% of the student body. Women were not only under-represented on academic staff, but were notably compressed into the lower classification levels of both the academic and general staffing streams. Women were also significantly less likely than their male colleagues to have an ongoing appointment or even a contract of longer than one year.

Those women may well have responded with scepticism and disbelief if they had been told that within 12 years the University would be ranked among the top 3% of organisations in Australia demonstrating a genuine, sustained and effective commitment to improving the position and opportunities of their women employees. Since 2002 the University of Western Australia has been awarded the annual citation *Employer of Choice for Women* by the federal organisation EOWA (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency).

When Professor Gale became Vice-Chancellor the University had one of

the lowest proportions of women on the academic staff in the nation's university system. This had arisen through a combination of factors. Historically the University had offered traditionally male-dominated disciplines such as medicine, agriculture and engineering and, unlike many other universities, had not engaged in mergers with institutions comprising the then predominantly female-dominated disciplines such as teaching and nursing.

There were also systemic barriers within the University that contributed to the invisibility of female staff. The combined roles of women as workers and caregivers, for example, were not easily adapted to the traditional ways of gaining academic recognition such as a singular focus on research. For women on the general staff, the task of balancing work and family obligations was made more difficult by limited flexibility in working arrangements and no provision for paid maternity leave (until 1994).

Overall UWA was marked by a workplace culture with clear expectations that young men appointed to junior positions would develop a career; there were no similar expectations of young women (Crawford & Tonkinson 1988).

A quick demographic snapshot of the staffing profile in 1990 illustrates the position of women:
• 81% of female general staff were employed at salary levels 1 and 2, compared to 45% of their male colleagues
• Female general staff were found in narrow and traditional employment classifications. Women accounted for 88% of clerks, but only 12% of tradespeople (eight out of 68) and 13% of managers (nine out of 68)
• Only two of 13 employees at HEW level 8 or above were female, and
• Only 34% of female general staff were in ongoing employment compared to 54% of their male colleagues; 45% of female general staff were employed on a contract of one year or less, compared to only 18% of their male colleagues.

In the academic stream, the picture for female employees was even bleaker:
• There were two female professors out of a total of 74 (2.7%)
• Only 16% of female academics were tenured compared to 59% of their male colleagues
• A staggering 64% of female academics were employed on contracts of one year or less, compared to 24% of male academics, and
• Only at tutor level, the lowest academic rank and one that, at that time, had very limited or non existent career prospects, were women more numerous than their male counterparts.

Thus the University was starting from an extremely low base when it began to introduce strategies aimed at ensuring high calibre female academic and general staff were attracted, retained and promoted in numbers that more appropriately reflected their representation in the student body, workforce and community generally.

Reaping the benefits

Fifteen years later the University's staff profile has changed dramatically. In 2002, for the first time, women achieved equitable representation (50.5%) on the overall University staff, with that representation increasing to 51.5% by the 2004 staff census. Women now comprise 35% of the academic staff and are over-represented on the general staff (63%).

LDW 10th Anniversary launch. Back row (L–R): Gaye McMath, Lyn Abbott, Cheryl Praeger Front row (L-R): Margaret Seares, Belinda Probert

As women's representation in the workforce has increased so, too, has their visibility and positioning. With that increased visibility has come a number of significant 'firsts' in the staffing profile, particularly in the senior management team.

In 2004 the University appointed its first female Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Margaret Seares, and its first female Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Ms Gaye McMath. The executive was also expanded to include the appointment of a Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) with Professor Belinda Probert as the first incumbent. These appointments have resulted in the first gender balanced Executive in the University's history. The University's governing body, the Senate, has also seen an increasing number of women in recent years bringing it close to gender balance. In 2005, for the first time, four of the nine Faculty Deans are women. The two remaining Dean positions (Graduate Research School and Undergraduate Studies) are now also held by women.

Women now comprise 63% of the general staff and are in the majority at most classification levels with the exception of levels 2, 7 and 10. Women also hold 59% of the School Manager positions.

Dismantling structural barriers

Promotion and tenure for academic women

The traditional barriers to women's participation and success within the University could be found within the way that staff were recruited and promoted. The promotion process for academic staff, for example, contained a number of seemingly gender neutral structural barriers that, in fact, impacted negatively on the career aspirations of female academics. The primary focus on research output, for example, failed to acknowledge those aspects of the academic role, teaching and service, where women were perceived to do well. Moreover, research productivity was a particularly male domain, requiring the space to think, the time to network and the opportunity to gain visibility and international networks through travel and conference participation. This set of favourable conditions was more likely to occur for an academic whose partner had prime responsibility for their children. The promotion criteria were expanded, therefore, to focus on the quality of teaching, and research *and* service. Factors such as years of service and the emphasis on the volume of publications (in contrast to the impact and location of such publications) were removed from the Promotions and Tenure Committee's considerations (Eveline 2004).

The University's revised promotions procedures are now well regarded in Australia. While some significant structural changes occurred in the late 1980s (such as the removal of the 15 year rule which allowed for 'automatic' promotion to Senior Lecturer), changes in the 1990s were largely around a more generous interpretation of the promotion criteria.

Key features of the revised system and criteria as summarised by Eveline (2004), and Todd and Bird (2000).

- The criteria for promotion were broadened to also include an emphasis on 'the ability to promote a supportive collegiate environment'
- While applicants who worked part-time, or whose careers had been hindered, broken or delayed for family reasons, were expected to produce the same calibre of research, their absence from the workplace was taken into account in the assessment of the Promotions and Tenure Committee
- The promotion process was extended to include promotion to professor with no quotas at any level, so that each applicant was considered on their merit
- The Promotions and Tenure Committee met monthly rather than twice a year
- The gender balance of the Promotions and Tenure Committee has improved, and care is taken to achieve an arts/science balance on the Committee
- The Chair of the Promotions and Tenure Committee directly encourages women to apply, including making a presentation on promotion at the Leadership Development for Women programme, and
- Staff can seek feedback on their application from the Chair of the Committee and the

Vice-Chancellery both during and after the process of applying. This not only provides encouragement and expert advice, but also sends the important message that promotion applications, particularly from women, are supported.

Changes made to the UWA academic promotion system have been critical in removing previous inequities. This is reflected in the promotion application success rates; while they have increased for both men and women, the improvement has been greater for women.

Opportunities for general staff women

The commitment by members of the Executive in the early 1990s to gender equity and improved human resource management, in general, led to the removal of obvious barriers to women's participation. It also saw the introduction of innovative strategies such as a salary progression scheme. Unlike academic staff, members of the general staff can not be automatically promoted on the basis of their merit and achievements, but must compete successfully for a higher level position. Many excellent and talented employees looked outside the University due to a lack of promotion opportunities. The salary progression scheme provides a means to reward general staff who have demonstrated

Loretta Baldassar laughs now when she recalls the big discovery she made through the Leadership Development for Women programme

"It dawned on me that I didn't have to work on the weekends. It sounds ridiculous, but I had always felt I had to, and what I learnt through LDW made me see that I didn't have to, and I have tried hard not to work on the weekends since then."

Loretta came to UWA from ECU in 1995 but, although she was interested, she couldn't find time to do the LDW programme until 2001, soon after her first son, Xavier, was born.

"By then, I had a store of lectures I could draw on and I could take the time to do LDW without feeling under stress."

She had been working on an international research deal with the Cassamarca Foundation, headed by an Italian philanthropist, which involved millions of dollars and many academics throughout Australia. The contract was signed the day before Xavier was born and Loretta became Chair of the foundation in Australia.

"So I had already been thrust into a leadership role through Cassamarca, the most junior of all the academics involved. I needed some help with that, and I also needed some guidance with my work-life balance.

"I knew that, sooner or later, I would have to take on some head of department

excellent performance by facilitating their progress to the next classification and salary level.

Women in the lower classifications have been the major beneficiaries. As has been the case with many of the structural changes the University instituted, the 'bar' has been lifted for all; the salary progression scheme has also been successfully accessed by men on the general staff.

Recruitment and selection

The University also re-examined the way it recruited its staff, recognising that the reliance on networks, predominantly male, would only serve to attract and value 'more of the same'. Selection panels were required to have gender balance, and there was a requirement that panel members, most particularly the Chair, would have undergone recent selection training that included a discussion on the concept of 'merit' as a social construct rather than an immutable instrument with which the 'best' applicant would invariably be selected.

In the early 1990s the University also instituted a review of staff who had been employed for long periods on short term contracts (in one case for thirteen years). As a consequence a number of the senior female tutors who had been on a series of one-year contracts were converted to Lecturers and offered tenure. Funding was also provided by the Vice-Chancellery to support 'affirmative action' appointments of meritorious women into areas where there was little or no female representation in the workforce. This occasional practice continues and provides the means by which women's contributions can be extended to discipline areas where there are few or no women staff but a substantial presence within the student body.

Nevertheless, when women are appointed to areas where there have been few women in the past, it is helpful to have an examination of the workplace culture into which they are being placed. If the culture is unsupportive, if it does not allow for career development, an equitable opportunity to accrue merit, or the opportunity to balance work and family/life commitments, then women will leave or, at best, not flourish. So the recruitment and promotion of women can not be seen in isolation from mentoring, support, career development and the workplace climate. The University's achievements in addressing these areas, most particularly through the ongoing commitment to the LDW programme, have contributed to its reputation as an organisation committed to gender equity.

Creating a campus culture of inclusivity and respect

The early years of the 1990s were not easy times for women on campus. The early affirmative action appointments and changes to the promotion system caused consternation in some quarters. There were suggestions that merit was being compromised and that, similar to other workplaces where such proactive steps were being taken, women heard that they had only got the job/promotion because 'they were a woman'.

Some women staff at this time would have experienced an unfriendly, even hostile, workplace climate. Indeed women in some areas of the workforce reported that the culture was not just unsupportive but also sexist and, sometimes, a place where sexual harassment occurred. In 1994 Advisers were trained specifically to provide advice and support on sexual harassment to staff and students, predominantly women.

Auditing change

While some progress was made in the first half of the 1990s, change was slow. In recognition that cultural change in an organisation takes time, and may provoke resistance, the University through the Senate initiated a

review or 'audit' of gender equity for women staff (Stuart 1999). A review of academic women was conducted in 1995, followed by a review of women on general staff in 1997.

The recommendations were often hotly debated across the campus, particularly in the case of the review of academic women staff. While there was no consensus, the process encouraged further change. A number of new, often innovative, strategies to support gender equity were identified and introduced. Many were beneficial for men as well as women.

Mainstreaming change

The reviews served the purpose of placing gender equity firmly and very publicly on the agenda. 'Equity' became incorporated into the University's strategic planning process at all levels and into the performance requirements of senior academic staff to be measured and evaluated.

A greater level of accountability for the achievement of gender equity at the faculty and organisation unit level was expected. Faculty Deans began to set aspirational targets for the representation of women within their areas, especially in those areas of the University where there were few or no women. These targets and other equity considerations became matters for discussion

between the Deans and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in their annual performance reviews. The underlying assumption was that discussion and consultation are crucial to culture change; unless men in senior positions are involved and supportive then change will not occur.

By 'mainstreaming' equity, responsibility for cultural and systemic change was shared across the institution, to be addressed in ways that were appropriate at the local level. Equity also became a centrepiece in collective bargaining negotiations and has led to important gains for staff with family responsibilities (to be discussed later in this chapter).

Selection committees were also required to prepare search plans that documented how they would identify and attract suitably qualified women, casting the recruitment net as widely as possible. Simply advertising positions and relying on traditional networks neither guarantees the best applicants nor gender equity.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor took an active role in such recruitment exercises and often personally spoke or wrote to outstanding people identified as prospective candidates for senior positions to encourage them to

responsibilities (even if only filling in for short periods while other people were on leave) and I didn't feel ready to do this.

"And I'd applied for promotion to senior lecturer and anticipated that it would bring some committee work with it and I really didn't have much of an idea of how the rest of the University worked."

During the programme, Loretta's promotion came through — a double promotion to Associate Professor. "It was entirely unexpected and I felt rather insecure about people's reactions to it. My promotion was announced at one of the LDW sessions and I got some great support and warmth from some of the women, but I could feel some surprise and even antipathy among some others.

"That was unexpected, given the feeling of support and generosity that was an innate part of the programme. I felt the programme overall was a bit patchy, but I learnt and gained a lot, including some very concrete advice on chairing the foundation across distances, via the Internet."

Loretta said something she has carried with her since the programme is the realisation that you are part of a system that is greater than your department.

"The mini-kingdom of the department can be a bit stifling and determining for some people. LDW introduced me to another

apply. This personal approach served to reinforce the message that the University was serious about recruiting more women, particularly into leadership positions where they could drive the journey towards gender equity.

It became apparent that for women to succeed in areas where there had been little representation in the past, a supportive culture offering career development and work/life balance was necessary. If this was not in place women would leave. The recruitment of women, therefore, could not be seen in isolation from these factors.

The University began to actively encourage high profile women from other institutions to spend their study leave at UWA and brought out many outstanding women academics through a Distinguished Visitors Scheme. The Raine Re-entry Fellowship was established in 1988 to assist staff to re-enter the academic workforce after taking time out to bear and rear children. The Fellowship is now also open to men whose family responsibilities have taken them away from their work, and academics who have had their careers interrupted while caring for elderly parents or other family members. To commemorate Fay Gale, who retired from the University as Vice-Chancellor in 1997, a Fellowship scheme was also established to support members of the University's staff with family responsibilities at an early stage in their career to spend a period, normally of not less than three months, working in a university or other educational institution overseas.

Other strategies have been introduced to encourage culture change at a local level. In 1995 the Equity Initiatives Fund was established (later renamed the Diversity Initiatives Fund) to assist departments and work groups to initiate their own projects. Equity and Diversity Advisers located across faculties and locations on the University campus provide a source of informed and confidential advice to staff or students grappling with an

equity issue. As the University has become 'equity mature', the focus of their role has moved towards fostering good practice at the local level, keeping equity matters on the agenda, identifying gaps, and translating policy into action.

From equity to diversity

At the beginning of the 21st century there was a strategic shift in focus to expand the equity agenda to incorporate diversity, helping to spread the message that the women and men on campus and in society generally, are not homogenous. Indeed, the 'one size fits all' approach to addressing the needs of staff had not served women well, often creating systemic barriers to their advancement.

In 2001 the Workforce Diversity Strategy, an employment initiative to actively recruit staff from communities under-represented on campus, was launched. The strategy, focused on the recruitment of staff at entry level in the general staff stream, was designed to provide a more diverse workforce that better reflected the diversity of the student body and the Western Australian community generally. The strategy has been extremely successful; to date the University has recruited more than one hundred employees from the priority areas of Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (with a particular focus on recent immigrants from refugee or humanitarian backgrounds). Not surprisingly, two thirds of the recruits have been women as the main employment opportunities have been clerical and administrative positions. Importantly, however, many of the men recruited through this strategy have taken roles traditionally occupied by women, such as in the Library and in administrative/clerical positions.

> " *…nothing that the organisers did I felt was stressful to me, because I am sure there would have been things that would have been more, or less comfortable for people, but they were always careful to tell us, "Look if you are not comfortable doing it this way, you can do it that way", or "If you don't want to do that part of it, don't do it". We were really very much at ease in that sense. There was nothing stressful about it. Yeah.*
>
> Focus group participant

The strategy has been particularly successful in attracting more Indigenous staff to the University, doubling the existing numbers. The UWA Diversity strategy has since been emulated in other organisations in the state public sector and in the higher education sector across Australia. It has also earned the University the prestigious Prime Minster's Award for the Employment of People with Disabilities for two successive years.

It is a testament to the University's aspiration to best practice, rather than being driven merely by compliance considerations, that 'sexual preference' has been included in the University's *Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy* since 1990, twelve years before

Western Australia amended the *Equal Opportunity Act* to render it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of their 'sexual orientation' or 'gender identity'.

In 2001 the University launched its ground breaking Rainbow Project to assess the 'campus climate' for staff and students with regard to sexual orientation and to identify key issues and behaviour that might give rise to discrimination. While the Rainbow Project report revealed that UWA generally represents a tolerant and accepting environment, it highlighted the need for a greater level of awareness and proposed that development programmes address sexuality issues.

In response the University, in 2002, launched the Ally Network. The Ally Network seeks to create a more diverse and inclusive culture by promoting greater visibility and awareness of lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and intersex staff and students (LBGTI), and their concerns. In keeping with other University equity initiatives the Ally Network has received active and visible support from the highest levels of the University leadership. It has stimulated considerable interest in the Australian higher education sector and has already been emulated by another university from the Group of Eight.

community, and my excellent mentor, Colin McLeod provided another perspective on things for me, a different take from some of my colleagues in the department.

"So, as a result, my orientation now is definitely outside the department, within the wider sphere of the University as a whole. LDW made me realise the value of that."

She said doing the Myer-Briggs personality test during the programme helped her to realise more about the way she thinks, works and communicates.

"I tend to focus on the big picture and get to the end point before those people who spend more time on details. The test was very helpful in understanding how different people work and how I should broach subjects and explain myself to people who think differently from me."

Loretta is now working from home, after the recent arrival of her second child Felix "making the most of the University's family-friendly work policies." With grant money for her research and writing, she has been able to subsidise a break from most of her undergraduate teaching this semester, and her postgraduate students meet her at home, while a nanny looks after Xavier and his younger brother Felix.

"I'm here if they need me, but really, I get fewer interruptions from the children than I would from other people on campus."

In 2003 the University began the practice of flying the 'rainbow' flag during Pride Month to support LGBTI staff, students and members of the community. This powerful symbolic and highly visible act supports the University's commitment to inclusivity. The Rainbow and Ally strategies have made the campus a 'safer' place to be as a 'minority' member of the community.

> " *I mean the whole LDW is about the barriers that just women in general experience and commonly having a family contributes to that. But I don't think the women in the group had any idea about the additional barriers that being a lesbian is in addition to being a woman. They didn't have any idea about coming from a culturally different … I mean we did talk about cultural backgrounds, different cultural backgrounds a bit.*
>
> Focus group participant

Achieving life balance – work, flexibility and family responsibilities

Creating an inclusive workplace culture is clearly more complex than just removing unsubtle barriers such as sexist or unwelcome behaviour. For staff to flourish there needs to be a genuine balance between their work and the rest of their life. The final set of 'critical acts' to be explored, therefore, is the University's response to the growing needs of a workforce with family responsibilities. The University has also adopted a broad definition of 'family' in recognition of the diversity reflected within the workforce.

While women on the academic staff had been entitled to paid maternity leave some years earlier, it was not until the 1994 Enterprise Agreement that women on the general staff were offered a similar entitlement. Successive iterations of the Agreements have since provided for an expanded emphasis on work and family initiatives resulting in improved access to child care, part-time and shared employment, home-based work, flexible hours and more supportive and flexible leave arrangements.

Unicare, the first child care facility situated on the perimeter of the campus opened in 1972 with twenty places, expanding to 100 places within a decade. It was only in 1992 that the University provided a child care centre for staff. Its original 35 places increased to 47 when the facility moved to purpose-built premises in 2000. While demand continues to outstrip available places, it should be noted that this facility was Western Australia's first work-based, employee child care centre. Importantly, too, the University has long supported other child care initiatives on campus such as after school care and vacation care. Discussions have begun to further expand child care places in response to staff and student need.

> " *I'm doing things differently … letting things go when I can have no impact on them … recognising that there are only 24 hours in a day and some things might not be possible in the timeframe.*
> 2004 participant
>
> *A policy is no good without 'traction'… maybe we need to train our managers in ways to make family friendly policies, like job sharing, really work.*
> 2004 participant
>
> *I am now brave enough to demand a fair go.*
> Reunion lunch

> " LDW caused me to stop and think: working at the University does not have to be too "all-consuming" as I have allowed it to become.
> Reunion lunch

> [Peer learning group discussions] allowed [me] to clarify what I wanted in terms of work/life balance and to respect and to accept other people's work-life balance or imbalance. Everybody is different and you need to find in yourself what you want in life, work, family, etc.
> Reunion lunch

> Even when I am not at work I feel like I should be working just because there is all this work to do. After participating in LDW I realise that I am not the only one struggling this way. There are many others learning to set the boundaries like I am.
> Reunion lunch

> For the first time I compared work/life balance with general administrative staff and got an idea of what their jobs entail. This should make me a more pleasant colleague.
> Reunion lunch

While providing work-based care made it somewhat easier for some staff to juggle their work and family responsibilities, academic women in particular continue to express concern that work practices and heavy workloads make it difficult to manage their roles. These concerns were confirmed in the 2003 Working Life Survey which revealed that only 52% of academic staff were satisfied with the balance between their work and the rest of their life compared to 74% of general staff.

These concerns around a lack of life balance were echoed in the 2004 survey (conducted for the 10th anniversary) of LDW participants who identified work/life balance (62%) in response to the question *What are the main issues for female employees at UWA in the next ten years*? Higher workloads and family responsibility scored 57.5% and 28% respectively. By comparison, *childcare*, the next most frequently cited issue was listed by only 17% of respondents. While this figure appears low it may be explained by the fact that a high proportion of LDW participants do not have pre-school children.

The University's most recently certified Enterprise Agreements (January 2005) provide greater flexibility in the way staff balance their parental and family responsibilities to address

LDW can be a life changing experience.

After the programme, some women have succeeded in their careers, some have found a new approach to old issues while others have simply got to know themselves better.

Claire Webb was an early participant and now is involved in running the LDW programme. She has her own story to tell.

The concept of leadership is one of the key ideas of the programme and Claire has found her own definition of it. She refers to a good leader as someone who has a clear vision of the goals and directions in which an organisation should be heading, the ability to communicate to colleagues the way forward and the rationale for achieving this, while inspiring them to follow that vision.

But leadership was not the reason for her taking part in LDW. Claire says she did not see herself as a leader and was unsure if she wanted to be one. Recommendations from colleagues and information on the aims of the programme were just part of the reason she chose to participate in LDW. Being unclear about the future of her career and her work/life balance were also compelling factors. Once involved in the programme, Claire says she didn't regret her choice.

LDW presented an opportunity to meet new people, to hear different opinions, to voice concerns about common issues and to try to address them. Above all, for Claire the LDW

these concerns. The Agreements now offer some of the most extensive parental leave provisions in the country and were recently applauded by the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner. Paid partner leave has doubled. Paid parental leave has increased from 12 to 14 weeks, and provides a return to work bonus of up to an additional period of 22 weeks paid leave that can be taken in a way that suits the primary carer. Importantly, the terminology used in these parental leave clauses is gender neutral.

The Agreements have also expanded what was already an extremely wide choice of flexible work practices, although take up has been limited. This highlights the challenge for the University to encourage 'life balance' amongst staff and to mean it. For example, it is important to counter the perception that staff who work part time are not serious about their career as this creates legitimate fears for future career prospects. Because they are funded by external grants, women on the research staff feel particularly vulnerable around pregnancy and family responsibilities as there are no surplus funds to backfill a position when the incumbent takes leave.

Challenges for the future

This chapter has chronicled a number of the 'critical acts' engaged in by the University in its journey towards gender equity. Since the representation and distribution of women on both the academic and general staff still remains an issue, it is timely now to reflect on the concept of a 'critical mass' of women that make a workplace responsive to, and inclusive of women.

The research of Kanter (1977) and Pettigrew and Martin (1987) suggests that there are critical points in the levels of representation of women in the workforce that will determine their experience of gender relations. Below

20% and women are a small and insignificant minority. Above 20% representation they are likely to experience a backlash from the dominant group as the glass ceiling begins to crack. This was the position of women on the academic staff in 1990. When women reach 40% of the workforce their morale soars, and gender relations are much more likely to be balanced and equitable. By 2004 women comprised 35% of the academic staff.

Kanter provides a warning, however, for those workforces where women become the predominant sex, at about 60% representation. It is then, she suggests, that women are in danger of their contribution becoming devalued and stereotyped as 'women's work'. History has shown us that a lack of wage parity and diminished employment conditions possibly follow. The employment conditions and status of teachers may give weight to this theory.

The dilemma for the University now is that women comprise 62% of the general staff. While the increasing recruitment and retention of these women has assisted the University to achieve a gender balanced workforce, there is a danger that there will be diminishing opportunities for men at lower classification levels to make a contribution and that the work of the general staff will be undervalued or taken for granted. Some members of the general staff would suggest that this may already be the case, and that concerns about the general/academic divide remain some years after it first surfaced in the reviews of women conducted in the mid 1990s.

A further and related challenge for the University is to ensure that women are distributed more equitably across classification levels rather than compressed into the lower salary levels. The University carefully monitors the Equity Index[1] score for its male and female workforce. The Equity Index (EI) reveals the extent to which a certain occupational or identity

group are inequitably clustered in the lower salary ranges despite their level of representation generally. An equity index score of 100 would indicate that whatever the percentage representation of people in the group being measured, they are distributed proportionally across the classification levels. A score higher than 100 indicates the extent to which the group being measured is over represented in the senior classification levels. While the University's equity index scores for general staff women are now consistently the highest in the WA university sector, and the equity index for female academic staff has dramatically risen, there is still room for improvement.

In 2004 the EI for academic women was 55 and for academic men 130. The index for women general staff was 81, while the EI for men was 120. Highlighting the advantaged position of men in the University workforce is indicative of the increasing sophistication with which the organisation is addressing the issue of gender equity. The focus is no longer on the deficit, on what needs to happen to or for women in order for equity to be achieved. Rather, the focus now is also on the 'privilege' that flows to men where there is a gendered workforce that more consistently meets the needs of, and shapes itself to the preferred working styles of, men (Eveline 1998).

The increasing number of appointments made of women into the senior levels of University management, including Deans and on the Executive, was noted previously. For senior women on the general staff, however, the picture is less positive. Women comprise only 36% of the staff at Level 10 and above, the highest classification band for the general staff and the group from which senior management is drawn. In particular there are female-dominated areas of the predominantly general staff workforce, such as the Library, Student Services and Human Resources that do not currently have a woman in the top job and, in one instance, have not had one for forty-five years.

A further challenge for the University is to create a culture where working flexibly or part time does not hinder career opportunities. The results of the LDW survey demonstrate that some women continue to feel vulnerable around adopting flexible work practices or extended parental leave because it may give the impression they are not serious about their career. Thirty-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I have experienced gender-related barriers to my career progression at UWA in the last 5 years*.

programme became a place to take time out from work to consider her life, goals and career options, and to share ideas and experiences with others.

One of the strongest points of the programme, Claire says, is giving participants confidence in their professional skills and personal choices. "Getting to know themselves through the programme encourages women to try different strategies to succeed in their careers or find their niche in the workplace," she said.

Claire gives the example of her situation as a part-time worker. "Having a good mix between your work and personal life and not being stretched in too many directions at once is what I define as a good work/life balance," she said.

To create that balance she chose to work three days a week, keeping her working time flexible when necessary and separate from her personal time where possible. She has tried to maintain the balance by not taking work home or working too many extra hours, except at very busy times.

"I used to get negative comments from colleagues about my choice to work part time," said Claire. "People would say things like 'we'll see you when you next decide to come in' or 'I never know when you're going to be at work'. Some colleagues would jokingly imply that I didn't work hard because I wasn't

These concerns were documented in the 2003 Working Life Survey, most particularly amongst the female research staff. Almost 30% of the female research staff respondents experienced a 'great deal' of difficulty arranging parental leave, and 62% of female research staff were dissatisfied with their opportunities for career progression or promotion, compared to 47% of male respondents.

The generous parental leave provisions contained in the 2005 Enterprise Agreement will not, for the most part, benefit academic research staff, 45% of whom are women, given the funding sources of their salaries and fixed-term nature of their employment. These employment arrangements do not appear to be 'family friendly', which is particularly disturbing given that 71% of these staff are under 40 years of age.

Over time the University has changed its equity focus. Increasingly it sees that a workplace culture characterised by inclusivity and respect is central to building a harmonious and productive organisation. It cannot, therefore, tolerate bullying, increasingly seen as a major workplace issue across Australia. The effective management of bullying has become a priority for the University. It is being addressed in the context of Australian research that suggests bullying is often the product of increasing workload pressures and workplace stress, compounded by underdeveloped people-management skills, conditions manifest in most contemporary workplaces.

Although bullying is strongly linked to workplace power differentials, not only women complain of bullying, and not only men are perceived to exhibit this behaviour. It may be the case, however, that women are particularly vulnerable to such behaviour. The University is developing a strategy to better align the workplace climate with the principles espoused in its Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. It will also be addressed through the newly developed performance management processes.

A beacon of light

> " I have noticed a big culture change, especially the increased number of women who now hold positions in the decision-making roles/areas.
>
> Reunion lunch

While women continue to report that gender is still a barrier in their careers, their level of satisfaction with the University as a workplace for women is high. Over three quarter of respondents (77%) to the LDW survey agreed or strongly agreed that the current culture was 'women friendly'. This satisfaction has been reflected elsewhere. In a 2002 National Tertiary Education Union (Winefield et al. 2002) survey of academic and general staff in 17 Australian universities UWA respondents had the highest work satisfaction ratings of all participating institutions.

A survey conducted in 1999 by Craig McInnis (1999) found that women academics in Australian universities were less satisfied than their male colleagues. The reverse was true, however, in the data gathered from the 2000 UWA Working Life Survey[2], and confirmed again in the 2003 survey[3]. Research staff in general appear particularly satisfied.

What accounts for this high level of satisfaction with the University as a place to work? This account of the movement towards gender equity argues that it has been the significant 'critical acts' supported by unswerving commitment from the Executive and senior staff as well as the groundswell of support and energy provided by a 'critical mass' of women, most notably the LDW graduates, who have seen the beacon of light and stood strong in the journey.

> *I made a positive change to my workplace culture; I stood up for what I knew was right.*
>
> 2004 participant
>
> *Encouraging inclusiveness, social interaction and team building led to a better workplace culture.*
>
> 2004 participant
>
> *[Being a manager/leader] includes recognising the power of a positive workplace culture.*
>
> 2004 participant
>
> *struggled to impact on cultural change in my department and largely gave up … except the insights were useful in terms of thinking about new staff and how I might be of assistance to them.*
>
> Reunion lunch

at work all the time. It was also frustrating when meetings that I needed to attend were organised on days when I didn't work". But LDW gave her confidence in her decision to work part-time without feeling guilty.

It reaffirmed Claire's choice of a good work/ life balance. She has become more strategic: making clear her working hours to colleagues, leaving messages on her answering machine, making people aware when she is and isn't available. "Working part-time is a matter of give and take. I'm flexible and will fit my time around work commitments if I can, but I've also learned not to feel guilty if that's not possible. I'm not afraid to request that meetings be scheduled on days when I am at work, and I make a point of standing up for others who work part time if necessary".

Claire's experience is just one example of how LDW impacts on the lives of its participants and the kinds of changes that can occur in women's lives as a result of the programme.

Footnotes

1 The Equity Index (EI) was first developed in Canada in 1990 by the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service. The EI, as defined by the Task Force, is a measure of 'compression';

• the extent to which women in a given occupational group are primarily to be found at the lower classification levels

• Subsequently the EI was significantly modified by the WA Office of EEO to make it more stable and to enable statistical analysis.

2   http://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/publications/discussion_docs/working_life_surveys/2000

3   http://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/publications/discussion_docs/working_life_surveys/2003

Creating opportunities

This chapter takes its title from the previous LDW evaluation published in 1998. We have used it again because it lies at the heart of the LDW experience. LDW is about women growing, thriving, belonging and making a place for themselves. It is about women leading, women making decisions, women contributing, women excelling. It is about women overcoming barriers to success and it is about the institution welcoming women and offering equal access to success. It is about both the women and the institution creating opportunities.

The quotes give an indication of this awareness, both from the point of view of the participants and the mentors.

> When I reflect on my past experiences at UWA, the importance of LDW as a personal guidepost is obvious. It is true that LDW enables and inspires. One learns to think outside the box and to have the confidence to seize opportunities.
> Email - 2000 participant

Being a leader, exercising leadership, achieving career success, clarifying career direction, obtaining promotion, identifying opportunities — these are very different concepts for different groups of staff and different people. It can be difficult to steer away from the notion of career success as being synonymous with climbing the 'ladder'; this, however, is not the view that LDW promotes. Nor is it the view of many of the women who have participated over the years. Leadership is not something exercised only formally and at certain levels of seniority in the organisation. It can be

> *The LDW programme has broadened my horizons and widened my field of view. There are now wide open vistas in front of me.*
> 1998 review session
>
> *I feel more confident in my ability to recognise and grab hold of opportunities with both hands and do something with them.*
> 1998 review session
>
> *What a catalyst - one sees opportunities one never knew existed.*
> 1998 review session
>
> *When I say the words 'the LDW programme what is your immediate reaction to that?*
>
> *Opportunity, learning, development, networks and career.*
> Female mentor

easy to fall into this mindset by default in a hierarchically organised workplace. Sometimes assumptions are made that have the effect of making some women feel excluded. On the other hand, some women do wish to climb the 'ladder' and that can be equally difficult to claim.

It is important to recognise the diversity of women, their life stages and circumstances, their different aspirations. Women in our society, and women in our universities, (Currie & Thiele 2001; Probert et al. 2002) still carry the majority of caring and domestic responsibilities, and the impact of this on their working lives needs to be recognised. It makes it more difficult for women to engage in the 'workaholism' that seems integral to 'success' in western societies, and which is certainly evident in university life. The adage that 'women can have it all but they can't have it all at once' can be difficult for women themselves to accept and many women (and men) compare women's career patterns with those of men, and find them wanting. As Bailyn (2003:139) notes, in relation to academic women, they have great difficulty fitting the "current male model of the ideal academic." Perhaps in the way we talk of 'post heroic' leadership we also need to talk about and build 'post heroic' careers.

Chapter 4, in exploring the importance of a 'critical mass' of women, argued that it is necessary for this to occur at all levels. It also discussed some of the 'ingredients' women require in order to pursue fulfilling careers. This chapter will explore women's working lives, starting with the research literature, then examining the impact of LDW using survey data and women's stories and quotes. It will cover some of the less tangible outcomes — connections, networks, visibility, feelings of belonging - alongside the more obvious career changes such as promotions and secondments. In order to make best sense of the different context

> " *Well, for most women it is quite common to have a kind of higher level in your career in the second half of it rather than in the first half of it, whereas men would go up quickly and then stay up, so just having the feeling that no, I am not a total failure, it is kind of a normal pattern to do it that way rather than have everything worked out, which is like almost impossible, and so that was a good boost for the morale thinking that no, I am not a totally hopeless case, you know, I can still make it, and I think in some other environments where there is less sensitivity and you expect everyone to do everything at once, you might not have had that kind of support …*
>
> *Yeah, that's been great to give a sense of hope, and very good for me to see it from the perspective of a group that's really analysed women's needs and has looked at the historical trend and see that there is a slower progress in women's careers …*
>
> *In a sense I don't particularly mind, as long as we are given the opportunity at some point. You know, we may not be able to do everything at once, and have the little babies and the full time career with professorship within five years. No, but having sometime the opportunity to move up I think is great, and this programme supports it tremendously well.*
>
> Focus group participant

and the data, parts of the chapter will consider general and academic staff separately.

General staff

The term general staff[1] does not do justice to the skills and expertise of this group, and creates the perception of homogeneity. The term professional staff is increasingly being used but is also inadequate for the task. As previously noted, while far less is known about career barriers, career patterns and opportunities for general staff women than for academic women, several more recent studies have included general staff. Castleman et al. (1995), in their NTEU-sponsored study, identified clustering at lower levels, the lack of a career path and lower levels of permanency and seniority for women in comparison to men. Probert, Ewer and Whiting (1998) found a similar pattern in their gender pay equity study, asking the question, 'why do these differences in level exist?' Some women appeared to be at a lower classification level than their responsibilities warranted.

> **"** *I found it harder with administrative staff, their career prospects are constrained by promotional opportunities and reclassifications.*
>
> Female mentor

Unlike academics, who have a clearly delineated promotion path, career paths for general staff are far less tangible. Promotion can occur through successfully applying for a vacancy at a higher level or re-classification. Temporary improvements in status include secondments, while salary progression is a recent innovation at UWA to recognise the skills and contribution of general staff. Currie, Harris and Thiele (1995), in their study of a WA university, found that few general staff planned a career and that women were less likely than men to do so. One of the main reasons cited

for being reactive rather than proactive was to allow family or partner to take precedence.

The previous LDW evaluation report, *Creating Opportunities*, found that for general staff the biggest changes in their working lives since LDW were increased visibility and participation in UWA networks (82%), followed by the opportunity to undertake special projects (45%). Changes in working life that participants attributed directly to their programme involvement were secondments (100%), special projects (90%), increased networks, visibility and becoming a mentor (89%) (de Vries 1998:17,19).

The availability of opportunities and the importance of opportunities to general staff careers was highlighted by the Executive Development Programme, run by LDW in 1997/98 for senior women. The programme was project-based and it soon became clear that, while senior academic women had an excess of opportunities available to them, the general staff relished the projects and the opportunities to extend themselves beyond their 'geographical' and 'content expertise'. General staff feel they can become boxed into specialist areas, while having a multitude of generic skills to contribute. Participants at that time wanted to be stretched and have their skills recognised.

Academic staff

As outlined in Chapter 4, the early impetus for LDW came from the low presence and status of women in academic ranks in the early 1990s. Under the guidance of Fay Gale, UWA made serious attempts to redress this; one of the most significant of these changes was the progressive overhaul of recruitment, promotion and tenure processes, which has been well documented elsewhere (Eveline 2004; Todd & Bird 2000). Coincidentally Everett (1994:172), in the same year that LDW began, completed a study of four universities, including UWA, and concluded that

"women hold consistently lower rank than men of comparable age, service, publication and degree qualification".

Todd and Bird, who interviewed 30 men and 30 women in their 2000 study, comment on LDW as a significant development, noting that it encouraged women to consider and work towards promotion (2000:11). The LDW *Creating Opportunities* report, based on a survey covering the first three years of LDW, concurred with this. It noted that women reported "LDW influenced both their decision to apply for promotion and the quality of their application" (de Vries 1998:21) . They did not attribute their success in achieving promotion to the programme; rather, the issue had been to overcome either the lack of encouragement or sometimes active discouragement.

What of the literature from outside UWA? While Probert, Ewer and Whiting (1998) found many similarities between men and women

(valuing of career, research productivity, teaching loads, success in applying for promotion), they also identified a major difference. Male academics are more likely to seek promotion than female academics at a similar level (Probert et al. 1998). Probert, Ewer and Leong (2002) also found this in their UNSW study, noting the cumulative difference this can make over time, becoming particularly marked around the 14 year mark. One of the recommendations of their study is the development of a programme to encourage women to apply for promotion at the same rates as men. They also note that,

> … as long as men do not have the same levels of family responsibilities as women, current working practices in universities will make it harder for women to maintain the same career development patterns as men (Probert et al. 2002:33).

> " *A lot of the PhD students and the junior research assistants who I deal with, or even junior academic staff, don't think that LDW is necessary, because things are so good for women, but I thought the same way like 10 years ago when I first started and as you get more senior you start noticing the barriers. When you are more junior it is accepted that women can be junior and they can be academic staff or PhD students and whatever, but it is when you want to break that invisible barrier that you start noticing the differences.*
>
> Focus group participant

Lucette Cant is a single mother of two children.

"I was happy just to sit in my job and make a living for my family, until I did LDW," she said. "Talking to other people made me realise that I was intelligent, that I could do something with my career, and that it wouldn't jeopardise my family."

Always categorising herself as an introvert, Lucette surprised herself and others when she took a leading role in her peer learning group's presentation. "Doing the programme had so boosted my confidence that I could do something like this that I never thought I would do," she said.

"I didn't see the importance of networking before I went on the programme. But simply talking to other women about their work/life balance helped me with so many practical things in my life."

"Then I was offered a secondment by somebody I had gotten to know through LDW. She believed I could do the job, even though it was at a higher level than my own job and it involved learning lots of new skills.

"I was flattered at first. Then I realised that, yes, I did have the confidence to take it up."

Lucette, who works in Human Resources as an employee relations officer, took up a three month secondment in the School of Population Health. It was work with which she wasn't familiar. "I had to learn as I went, things like

The Probert et al. (1998) study also noted differences in women's level of appointment, holding of a PhD and years of experience in higher education.

Chesterman (2004), in her study of senior academic and general staff in the Technology Network universities, also found differences in the career paths of academic men and women. Men were more likely to be in their current position because they had applied (2/3 of men, 1/3 of women). A larger proportion had applied from outside the institution (30% of men, less than 20% of women), and they were more mobile, both interstate and overseas. The study noted that while promotion procedures may have been improved, more needs to be done.

> We have identified issues such as lacking confidence, reticence, ambivalence, seeking balance and resistance (to what are seen as not doable jobs) as playing a part in women's avoidance of senior jobs (Chesterman 2004:18).

Encouragement, the tap on the shoulder, overcoming discouragement, recognition of talent, peer role modelling and support — these become important in assisting women to seek promotion. It is here that a programme such as LDW makes an impact.

Applying for academic promotion is an information session, initiated by LDW, that is open to all staff. A follow-up *Tips for success* session has been maintained as women-only, to provide a space for women to discuss aspects of the promotion process that they would not necessarily share in a mixed group. For example, a recently successful candidate related how she wrote her application while on maternity leave, making notes of her achievements when she went out with baby in pram. A second applicant spoke at length about overcoming her reticence to put herself forward for promotion, while the third spoke about dealing with the backlash of being successfully promoted.

Factors that influence career development

Table 8 shows what general and academic respondents view as the primary factor influencing career development. For general staff the most important factor is *competence* (39%), followed by *availability of opportunities* (20%) and *hard work* (16%). *Support provided by the supervisor* is also seen as important by 10% of the general staff respondents. As expected a different pattern exists for academic staff, with *hard work* (23%), *competence* (19%) and *publications* (16%) as the top three. *Securing research grants* and *teaching* (both 9%) are also important. The groups are not directly comparable because academic staff had more options to choose as ways in which they demonstrate competence, such as through publications, research grants and teaching. Apart from this difference, the most important difference between the groups is *availability of opportunities*, rated more highly by general staff.

While the table above refers to career development and the tables following highlight changes in working life, including promotion, it is important to keep these in context. A focus on the women, (as the problem) as suggested by the Frame 1 approach in Chapter 3, would focus almost exclusively on measures such as promotion, as indicators of programme success. To a large extent this was what occurred in the 1998 *Creating Opportunities* report, which paid particular attention to issues of promotion, retention, and changes in working life. The evaluation emphasis was strongly focused on what individual women gained from participation. A Frame 4 approach, again as outlined in Chapter 3 demands a different approach. Frame 4, in effect, moves us from an approach focusing on the women to an approach focusing on the organisational culture, where success needs to be measured in cultural change terms. This has become more evident and recognised by the LDW Planning Group over time, as it has continued to grapple with moving from an exclusive focus on the cohort programme to the wider organisational challenge of culture change.

TABLE 8 **Factor of most influence on career development by staff classification**

Most influential factor	Percentage Academic n=43	General n=49
Competence in your job	19	39
Hard work	23	16
Availability of opportunities	2	20
Support of supervisor/manager	7	10
Publication of books, papers, etc	16	0
Ambition	7	6
Securing research grants	9	0
Teaching/lecturing	9	0
Networking	0	6
Participation in LDW	2	0
Knowledge about UWA	2	0
Other	2	0
Involvement on boards, committees, etc	0	2
Study/education	0	0
Supervision of students	0	0
Flexible work environment	0	0
Participation in other development activities	0	0
Higher profile/visibility	0	0
Total	**100**	**100**

This publication is navigating the delicate balance between documenting the partici-pants, the changes that have occurred for them, and their stories of the impact of the programme, while not losing sight of the institutional change 'story'. Statistical data has a tendency to pull us back into more traditional notions of career development, career success and leadership.

These should not be over-emphasised for a cultural change programme such as LDW, as turning women's working lives into replicas of men's is not a sign of cultural change.

This sensitivity to the more qualitative aspects of change can be difficult to maintain. Chapter 4 makes it clear that the LDW programme, although essential to the changes we can map today, is but one part of a wider strategy to make UWA more welcoming to women. It is difficult to separate out the influence of LDW participation on any changes that occur, and such false separation would promote an inadequate understanding of the multiple, and connecting, value-adding components of cultural change. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the difference LDW has made to participants' working lives within this context. Survey data casts some light on what LDW has achieved. The voices of the women, however are more powerful in communicating the qualitative differences.

Changes in working life and their attribution to LDW: Academic women[2]

Table 9 indicates the percentage of academic respondents who indicated that a change in their working life had occurred. Of those who said 'yes', the question then asked them to indicate to what degree this was influenced by LDW participation.

web editing and supervising staff, student administration work — planning, timetabling, exam processing — and the SRS system. It was a steep learning curve but it was really good to be out in the schools and seeing things from a different perspective from Human Resources.

"I received really good feedback from doing that secondment, which has given me confidence to realise that I can operate effectively at a higher level and I can learn new skills."

As a result of the secondment, Lucette's manager is now considering avenues to develop Lucette further in her role. She has presented at the HR briefings to senior management and has been involved in the enterprise bargaining process.

"I felt safe during the LDW programme and that gave me the confidence to speak out, to learn and to realise that I was capable of bigger and better things."

An added bonus for Lucette, and one that many women treasure, was the forming and keeping of friendships with other LDW participants.

All events occurring for more than 10% of respondents have been included in the table and ranked in order of highest occurrence. The scale used ranged from no influence to high influence and only *medium* and *high influence* are reported here. It is important to note that women are answering this question in relation to very different time periods, ranging from two to ten years post programme. While it would be expected that women who completed the programme a long time ago would attribute less to programme participation, the scores remain reasonably high.

The events most influenced by the LDW experience have been listed below. The percentages represent the sum of those indicating that LDW participation was of medium or high influence.

- Increased participation in women's networks/groups (91%)
- Improved work/life balance (73%)
- Provided mentoring support to others (70%)
- Become more pro-active in exercising leadership (69%)
- Increased participation in UWA networks/groups (68%)
- Applied for promotion (64%)
- Increased your profile/visibility at UWA (64%)
- Achieved promotion (59%)

The first item *increased participation in women's networks* occurred for relatively few women. More women reported an *increased participation in UWA networks* (54%), than *women's networks* (25%), although both are strongly influenced by LDW participation as can be seen above. The greater occurrence for mixed, rather than women-only networks, runs counter to criticisms that women-only programmes lead to increased segregation. As a measure of cultural change it also has some value, since it could mean that women are, in their opinion, less ghettoised than they were in 1990 when Fay Gale arrived as Vice-Chancellor to comment that 'women spoke behind closed doors' (Eveline 2004:56).

TABLE 9 **Occurrence of events/changes and LDW influence on these for academic women**

Event	Yes	Medium influence	High influence	Med/High combined
Attended a conference/s	93	13	3	16
Provided mentoring support to others	84	28	42	70
Become more pro-active in exercising leadership	81	45	24	69
Applied for a research grant/s	78	24	6	30
Increased your profile/visibility at UWA	76	49	15	64
Secured a research grant/s	70	24	3	27
Increased participation in University committees	65	36	7	43
Applied for promotion	62	21	43	64
Applied for study leave	59	16	8	24
Received study leave	58	13	8	21
Achieved promotion	58	21	38	59
Become more strategic in committee involvement	57	39	9	48
Increased participation in UWA networks/groups	54	48	20	68
Received higher duties	54	25	25	50
Completed other training courses	45	26	0	26
Improved work/life balance	44	56	17	73
Increased participation in national or state committees	36	37	6	43
Renegotiation of your workload	28	23	15	38
Increased participation in women's networks/groups	25	82	9	91

While the impact of the programme on *application for promotion* (64%) is expected, impact on success in *achieving promotion* (59%) is positive and somewhat surprising. In the *Creating Opportunities* report, two thirds of academic women who applied for promotion attributed their decision to do so to their participation in the programme but, not surprisingly, fewer women attributed their success in achieving promotion to the programme. They accredited their success to their own achievements, as is borne out by **Table 8** where competence and hard work are nominated as the two most influential factors on career development.

Becoming more pro-active in exercising leadership and *providing mentor support* occurred for more than 80% of respondents. They also attributed high influence to participation in the programme. This translation of the programme to practical leadership outcomes confirms that the programme is meeting its objective of leadership development.

Additionally, for the 44% of women who indicated they had *improved their work/life balance*, 73% were influenced by the programme. This is clearly a critical and growing issue for the University (as has been explored in Chapter 4) and one about which women, carrying a disproportionate amount of the domestic and caring responsibilities, feel strongly.

LDW is also influencing committee involvement. Committee membership is always a difficult decision for academic women for it is easy to become overcommitted to committee work, as the University struggles to correct historical gender imbalance. Respondents reported changes in *increased participation in University committees* (65%), *become more strategic in committee involvement* (57%) and *increased participation in national or state committees* (36%) with combined medium/high influence scores of between 43-48%.

For academic women, many of the events in Table 2 are those which would be expected to occur in an academic career, such as attending conferences, applying for research grants and taking study leave. It is interesting, however, that even these events are influenced by LDW participation. For example, 21% of the women who received study leave attributed medium or high programme influence to their success.

Changes in working life and their attribution to LDW: General staff women

Table 10 indicates the percentage of general staff women for whom a change in working life had occurred since programme participation. Those who responded 'yes' were asked to what degree this was influenced by LDW participation. Data presented in the table below includes all those changes that occurred for more than 10% of respondents.

The programme has been most influential for general staff (based on combining medium and high influence ratings) on:

- Increased participation in UWA networks/ groups (84%)
- Become more strategic in committee involvement (83%)
- Become more pro-active in exercising leadership (80%)
- Increased your profile/visibility at UWA (80%)

Before she turned 40, Susan Prescott was Head of School of Paediatrics and Child Health, had been promoted to Associate Professor, and was the recipient of a prestigious NHMRC Career Development Award.

She is the sort of person who probably would have achieved all these eventually without the help of the Leadership Development for Women programme, but Susan says LDW gave her confidence to do things her way.

"The way I deal with my staff and students has always been collaborative and consultative but LDW reinforced that and confirmed for me that a peculiarly female pattern of leadership – being generous with my time and resources – pays off. If you give people respect and autonomy, they work hard for you in return, and we are all more productive and efficient as a team."

Susan said she heard about LDW at a staff orientation session soon after she joined UWA. "It was 1999 and, although the programme had been going for a few years, nobody in my department had heard of it. But I heard from some inspiring women at that orientation morning and decided to apply to do the programme."

"Working off campus (at the School of Paediatrics and Child Health, which is based at Princess Margaret Hospital) I felt a bit isolated.

- Improved work/life balance (79%)
- Provided mentoring support to others (78%)
- Renegotiation of your workload (76%)
- Increased participation in women's networks/groups (73%)
- Increased participation in University committees (70%)
- Applied for a secondment (70%).

It should be noted that general staff tended to rate the influence of LDW participation on changes in their working lives more highly than academic staff. As expected, the profile of events and changes in working life are different between staff groups. Obtaining research grants and study leave do not feature, committee work is somewhat less prominent, and secondments are now a feature.

Those events that occurred for more than 70% of general staff women, and that were strongly influenced (80% or more) by programme participation, were *increased participation in UWA networks/groups*, *increased your profile/visibility at UWA* and *become more pro-active in exercising leadership*. For general staff this participation across the University is important, changing the 'being employed by a school or faculty' mentality to one of 'being employed by the University'. It is an important precursor to mobility and opportunity. *Applying for secondments* and *achieving secondments* is also part of this broadening perspective process, which occurred for just over a third of women, and which was also influenced by LDW participation (70% and 66% respectively). Committee involvement, where general staff can be under-utilised, also increased for this group. *Increased participation in University committees* (51%) and *more strategic committee involvement* (49%) are both strongly influenced by LDW (70% and 83% respectively). *Participation in national or state committees*, which is less common for general staff, occurred for few staff and the level of influence was much less (43%).

TABLE 10 **Occurrence of events/changes and LDW influence on these for general staff**

Event	Yes	Medium influence	High influence	Med/High combined
		Percentage		
Become more pro-active in exercising leadership	76	68	12	80
Increased participation in UWA networks/groups	72	60	24	84
Increased your profile/visibility at UWA	71	49	31	80
Provided mentoring support to others	62	36	42	78
Attended a conference/s	55	15	8	23
Applied for promotion	53	31	31	62
Received higher duties	53	19	19	38
Completed other training courses	51	36	8	44
Increased participation in University committees	51	44	26	70
Achieved promotion	50	38	19	57
Become more strategic in committee involvement	49	54	29	83
Improved work/life balance	42	42	37	79
Applied for a secondment	39	30	40	70
Achieved a secondment	38	33	33	66
Increased participation in women's networks/groups	33	53	20	73
Renegotiation of your workload	20	38	38	76
Enrolled in further formal study	17	37	12	49
Increased participation in national or state committees	14	43	0	43

Interestingly, networking changes for general staff mirror those for academic women. UWA networks increased more than women's networks. The influence of LDW on increased networks for general staff, however, is greater for UWA networks in comparison to academic women and much less for women's networks than for academic women. This would suggest that pre-existing networks may be different for the two staff groups.

Improved work/life balance occurred for 42% of the respondents and *re-negotiated workload* for 20% of them. The influence of the programme on these changes, however is high (79% and 76% respectively).

Becoming more pro-active in leadership and *provision of mentoring support* are changes that have occurred for many academic and general staff respondents, although for a slightly smaller percentage of general staff. The influence of the LDW programme on both items is rated at a higher level for general staff (80% and 78%).

Clearly for academic and general staff women there are a variety of changes in their working lives that have occurred since programme participation, and respondents indicated that many of these have been influenced by that participation. Benefits include:

- Career building such as networks and visibility
- Increased contributions such as exercising leadership, mentoring, and committee participation
- Career steps such as promotions, higher duties and secondments, and
- Improvements to working life such as improved work/life balance and renegotiated workload.

LDW is clearly seen by respondents as being effective in assisting general and academic staff women in major changes and events in their work lives.

Career foundations, career building and career steps

In analysing the comments from participants, provided primarily through emails, re-union lunches and review lunches (which are held for each group approximately nine months after completing the programme), it was obvious there was a wealth of information regarding their working lives and careers. In addition to picking up and exploring further the themes of career building and career steps identified from **Tables 9 and 10**, there is an additional theme which can be called 'career foundations'.

Career foundations: directions, confidence and belonging

'Career foundations' is used here to refer to those attitudes, feelings or behaviours that are precursors to building a career at UWA. Again, that notion of career is not used here to imply progress up the ladder, but is used as a way of talking about a rich and fulfilling working life where women are able to develop their potential and make a full contribution through their work. Women commented on having a sense of career at UWA that was previously not clear or possible prior to LDW.

I wanted a sense of belonging, to meet people and to find out what they were doing in other areas. I had a curiosity about the University and felt very strongly that I wanted to belong, especially given my connections."

(Susan's grandfather was Sir Stanley Prescott, a former Vice-Chancellor, and her grandmother, Lady Prescott, was actively involved with St. Catherine's College for many years.)

At that stage, Susan was a senior lecturer and said she hadn't given any thought to promotion within five years.

"But Alan Robson addressed the LDW group and emphasised that the University recognised that in many schools women were often more involved in teaching than research, so did not have so many papers published. He said that this should not deter women from seeking promotion, because the criteria for promotion had broadened to recognise this.

"And that got me thinking. I had a serious research background but I was at that time more involved in teaching, so I wasn't thinking about promotion because the people around me had fixed ideas on what you had to have on your CV before you could apply for promotion.

"LDW gave me the confidence to keep on doing things a little differently from my mostly male colleagues. So I applied for promotion to Associate Professor, and was successful."

LDW provided support and encouragement and the opportunity to take control of my circumstances and turn them into a career I never anticipated in my wildest dreams.
Reunion lunch

I feel very much in control of what I am doing, where I am going/ could go, what I can improve on, etc — before LDW I wouldn't have had the same clarity of thought.
Email

I realised "life is short". That I'd better take charge of my life if I want to achieve my goals.
Reunion lunch

Alongside this were comments regarding an increased sense of empowerment or confidence to achieving these careers.

The programme gave me a real sense of feeling valued, of knowing that there were opportunities out there, of personal empowerment.
1998 review session

[I realised] that I needed to step forward to help make the changes I wanted.
Reunion lunch

[I found this programme to be] immensely affirming and extremely useful to my career.
2001 review session

[LDW] has given me the confidence to try new things and to think constructively about how I want my life and career to be.
Reunion lunch

Another important component to laying the foundations for a career were the cluster of comments relating to 'belonging' at UWA, to finding a place, a niche for oneself. Issues of inclusion and exclusion in the academy have been extensively explored in the literature in regard to academic women, and is closely related to women's traditional exclusion from informal mentoring and networks (Bailyn 2003; Brooks 1997; Ramsay 2000; Bagilhole & White 2003). This capacity for minority or non-dominant groups in the workplace to 'belong' is an important indicator of the workplace climate, and a critical part of women thriving in the University.

Being part of LDW enhances the sense of belonging to a much wider and most delightful group of people at UWA.
Reunion lunch

My contacts at UWA have opened up and given me a sense of being part of a community.
Reunion lunch

[LDW helped my sense of belonging] - this can be liberating and empowering.
Reunion lunch

Now I think I have made my niche - I still sometimes feel like an outsider, but not nearly as much as I used to.
Reunion lunch

In some instances this sense of broader belonging can help offset unwelcoming local cultures in schools or work areas.

> Being with a positive group has really helped improve my sense of place at UWA, which balances the often negative and unsupported environment in my own department.
> 1999 review session

Career building: networking and connecting

Having laid the foundations, clearly there are some building blocks that are important. The women themselves make this connection.

> LDW participants are more visible and network better and so are offered more opportunities. And it is the taking up of those opportunities, like secondments for special projects, that ultimately leads to promotion within the system.

Visibility and networking within the University are important, particularly for general staff women, to gain access to opportunities. For some women networking instrumentally, rather than socially, is a mystery. As has already been seen, improved mixed and women's networks

are an outcome for a majority of participants. The literature suggests (Hemmati 2000) that mixed networks have greater positive impact on careers than women-only networks.

> I mean I don't have personal links here, and I do feel a bit different from maybe Australian women, because I know I don't think exactly in the same way when we talk about things. So it helped me to understand perhaps a little bit better, this idea of a network, which I certainly didn't have when I first arrived here.
> Focus group participant

> The networks and friendships formed have been the most long-lasting benefit of the programme for me.
> Reunion lunch

> The networking experience was wonderful.
> 1998 review session

Career steps: priorities, promotion, secondments

For academic women, many of whom have an excess of opportunities, it is important to be able to prioritise and make space as part of taking career steps.

Her promotion was a very visible outcome of the LDW programme, but Susan also felt enriched by meeting women from all over the University, several of whom she still stays in touch with. "The programme was a wonderful opportunity to take time out of the office, to feel I was getting my head above water and to take time to actively reflect. It taught me about the importance of reflection and reinforced the need for creativity in strategic thinking."

Although it was not connected to LDW, Susan said that another staff development course has enhanced this aspect of her working life. "I enrolled in a course on journal writing, thinking that it was about writing for scientific journals. It turned out to be personal journal writing, but it was very useful and that skill became an active avenue for reflection for me."

"Now and then I pick up my journal and write about work, home, my feelings and thoughts; sometimes I even draw fun pictures of myself and how I'm feeling and what I'm doing. It helps to create some perspective for me and, surprisingly, it is one of the most useful things that I've carried with me."

Susan was appointed Head of the School of Paediatrics and Child Health Care at the end of 2002 and says she found this was a very rewarding experience. She was then subsequently awarded a five-year NH&MRC Career Development Award (and her fifth

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I have become better at saying 'No' and had several more publications last year. I don't think I would have achieved these without the motivation and skills that LDW gave me.
Email

LDW is a programme that continues beyond the time commitments and has helped me gain a measure of control over my life as an academic.
2002 review session

Applying for promotion can also be a formidable step. Often women have what is required to be successful in achieving promotion, but they are more reticent than men. Encouraging women to apply is an important LDW achievement.

Thank you for your great programme - it gave me the confidence and the necessary knowledge to apply [for promotion].
Email

I don't think I would have gone for my recent promotion if it had not been for the encouragement and support from you [Jen] and the LDW'ers.
Email

[If it wasn't for LDW] I would still feel a sense of isolation, and I wouldn't have the tools and strategies for promotion.
Reunion lunch

For general staff women networking and visibility are more critical for achieving secondments, and these can often prepare women for promotion.

[I met someone on LDW] who thought of me when she needed a maternity leave replacement, and so I was approved to go on a secondment to a higher level.
Reunion lunch

I was offered the opportunity, and had the confidence to accept, due to new ideas and changes in attitude on my part after attending the two-day [core] workshop.
Email

Many of the women who have participated in LDW have been promoted, as can be seen from the respondent quotes and stories reported in this publication and survey responses reported in **Tables 9 and 10**. It is difficult to know, however, if promotion rates have improved as a result of LDW participation without making some comparisons with a control group. An appropriate statistical analysis is unavailable for this publication. There is a rich and unique source of data, however, accumulated over the ten years of the programme, which may at some future date be analysed to cast some light on the impact of LDW on promotion.

Retention and moving on

Retention is an important consideration for any employer and it forms part of the University's priority objective. Losing staff is expensive in terms of replacement costs and the loss of institutional knowledge. High turnover is often an indication of an unsupportive workplace culture; conversely, retention can be an indicator of a welcoming workplace climate. The impact of LDW on women's sense of belonging and their capacity to build a satisfying career has a flow-on effect to retention.

I would not be still working here if it was not for LDW.
Reunion lunch

[If it hadn't been for LDW] I would not be at this desk typing. I'd be at another desk typing, but more than likely not at UWA.
Reunion lunch

The only one thing I considered worth staying for here at UWA was the LDW programme.
Email

The LDW programme also encourages women to expand their horizons. Staying at UWA is not always the best career move for LDW participants. It is important to acknowledge that, for some women to succeed, they need to be mobile and take up opportunities that arise elsewhere. Senior management is well aware of this and is prepared to see UWA take a leadership role for the wider benefit of higher education, allowing LDW to play a helping hand in women's mobility.

[LDW has] given me an understanding of my self worth, the means for improving myself and for solving problems in the workplace, and an ability to articulate my skills to other people in a confident manner.
Email from participant, on leaving UWA

[On her appointment as inaugural Head of School at another university] It has been a 'hair raising ride and a leap of faith" to move from my position and comfort zone of 27 years at UWA to contract employment in a private institution. LDW played an important role in all this, as it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my career to that point, and learn from others important strategies for taking control.
Email

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn together three strands, the literature, survey data and women's voices to explore general and academic women's careers. The chapter has defined careers broadly and looked at many of the factors that assist women in enriching their working lives. LDW influences these processes at every step on the way. It provides support, encouragement, goal setting, and confidence, alongside a sense of belonging, building networks and increasing visibility. Finally, it encourages women to make the career steps they wish, which sometimes entails moving on. Clearly the programme supports and enhances women's success, while also fostering cultural change around inclusivity and in broadened understandings of success and leadership.

successful NH&MRC grant in five years) which allowed her to release from administrative commitments in 2004. She is currently focusing on running these studies with the help of her research team, along with her responsibilities as a practising clinical immunologist and allergist at PMH.

"I really felt that I was appreciated as Head of School and it's something I will probably go back to later in my career."

Footnotes
1   General staff is used, for lack of a better term, as an all encompassing term for technical, professional, administrative, management and research staff employed under the General Staff Agreement.
2   Data reported here does not include respondents who have since left UWA.

How am I a minority?

Women and identity

No programme will meet everyone's needs at all times. While LDW is a women-only programme, women do not form a homogenous group. There are many other aspects of women's lives and identities which may, at any given time, take precedence over their identity as women. For example Indigenous women may have a much stronger sense of identity as an Indigenous person, and find little in common with a group of women who are not. There may also be times when they want to speak and position themselves as women first and foremost. In the same way lesbian women may identify at times more strongly with their gay male colleagues than with heterosexual women; yet, at other times, it will be what they have in common with all women that will be more pertinent. Women bring many identities to the LDW programme. For each individual woman, however, identity is rarely fixed or unified around only one set of interests or needs. Social identities are fluid, they are "multiple and constructed in relation to others as opposed to fixed, unitary and essential" (Holvino & Sheridan 2003:2). Instead, women regularly negotiate their way through different contexts of expectations, pressures and allegiances, all of which help to determine how they align and project their identity at any given time.

Why should this concern the LDW programme? The capacity of the LDW programme to be inclusive and relevant to the full diversity of women on campus, and to do so in ways sensitive to their multiple and complex needs and identities, has been a recurring point of discussion for the Planning Group. There have been no easy answers to their concerns, or to criticism levelled at the programme over the years. One practical small step that has been taken since 2002 is the placing of the following statement in advertising material: *Applications from Indigenous women and those from culturally diverse backgrounds are particularly encouraged*. Additionally, when the constitution for the Planning Group was reviewed in 2004, the inclusion of members with diverse backgrounds was added to the group composition requirements.

The claim that LDW is mono-cultural, for white women only, was most strongly voiced in the early years. It has been dispelled, at least in more recent years, by a quick glance at the group photos (taken since 1999). The LDW programme has clearly enjoyed a diversity of participants. It was a woman of colour, who when asked about feeling comfortable in the group noted, — *I wasn't the only one*. While the photos highlight visible difference, however, they do not allow us to know if the women have less visible differences; they may, for example, have an invisible disability, have English as a second language, be lesbian, or come from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds.

Respondents to the survey, as outlined in Chapter 2 identified themselves as follows:
• 6% spoke a language other than English as main language at home
• 17% consider themselves to be part of a racial, ethnic or cultural minority, and
• 4% considered themselves to have a permanent or long-term disability.
The University does not have University-wide statistics to allow us to compare this to the broader staff population.

Creed and Scully (2000) in their research exploring the conditions for creating a safe, equitable and welcoming work environment, note that,

> Inclusivity is a challenge when visible social identities trigger potentially judgemental and divisive reactions. A distinct set of challenges arises when employees bring invisible, marginalized, or even stigmatized aspects of their identity into the workplace (Creed & Scully 2000:391).

The accounts of difference, as reflected in the stories of the women interviewed, carry that subtext. Visible and invisible differences create different choices, different issues. Women with invisible disabilities share common dilemmas with lesbian women, for example, around disclosing their disability or sexual identity. Those with visible differences must deal directly with people's responses, while those with invisible differences spend time monitoring the climate and conversation for any signs of tolerance and safety that would allow disclosure.

It would be hypocritical of a programme working towards an inclusive and welcoming workplace for women to ignore other dimensions of diversity, other social identities, other aspects of women's experience of inclusion or exclusion. Issues of dominant and non dominant groups, differences in privilege or advantage, dominating knowledges — these all occur inside an all-female group. Surfacing and acknowledging this is, however, more difficult.

There are many parallels between the LDW programme seeking to embrace diversity and organisations engaged in the same process. The Centre for Gender in Organizations (CGO) has been actively engaged in research in this area for some time. They stress the importance of moving beyond gender to include other aspects of what they call 'identity group relations', that is, to attend to multiple aspects of identity, including race, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexual identity and religion (Ely & Meyerson 1999). Itzin (1995), as referred to in Chapter 3, describes this as maintaining a 'multifaceted lens', rather than a gender lens.

Surfacing diversity

> Most of what we come to regard as normal and commonplace at work tends to privilege traits that are socially and culturally ascribed to men while devaluing or ignoring those ascribed to women (Kolb et al. 1998:3).

This quote taken from *CGO Briefing Note #1* is our entry point to discussing advantage and disadvantage on the LDW programme in recent years. While it focuses on gender privilege, this concept is easily extended to include others who do not fit the prevailing norm. As Ely and Meyerson observe,

> 'Women' and 'men' are not monolithic categories. The nature of privilege and disadvantage that men and women experience are structured in large part by other aspects of their identity, such as race, ethnicity, national identity, sexual identity and class background (Ely & Meyerson 1999:2).

Ely and Meyerson go on to point out that organisations that keep many groups out of the mainstream create 'mono-cultural organisations', despite 'multicultural workforces'. In the same way it may be possible for LDW to create a 'mono-cultural programme' despite a broader participant mix. Of critical importance is the concern that the differences, visible or invisible, women bring to the programme are respected and acknowledged. Does the programme allow women to bring the fullness of themselves or do they leave some part of their identities outside the door? Do gender, white ethnocentricity, heterosexuality, and normative able-bodiedness become such overriding features of the programme that all other differences must become invisible?

Talking with the women

The tenth anniversary and the evaluation of the programme for this publication provided an ideal opportunity to explore these questions and concerns further. An external consultant, Marie Finlay, was engaged to interview participants and conduct focus groups with women that the LDW staff could identify as belonging to groups of interest. This was by no means a complete way of selecting the women identified as 'minority voices' (ie women of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds; women of diverse sexuality; and women with a disability) who may have wished to be included. A total of 47 women were approached to participate. Despite the relatively large number of women identified as culturally and linguistically diverse, or as women of colour, the take-up from them was relatively small, in contrast to the enthusiastic response of the lesbian women, who constituted a much smaller group. While LDW women were identified and invited from all programme years, participants in interviews and focus groups spanned the years 1999 – 2003.

Participants were women of all ages and with a range of family responsibilities. Three focus groups were conducted — with culturally and linguistically diverse women (group of three), lesbian women (group of four) and women of colour (group of three). In addition, interviews were conducted with three women with a disability, one transgender woman, and one Indigenous woman. The questions invited the women to reflect on their LDW experience and to identify what was successful for them in the programme, what in the process worked for them and what did not, and whether inclusivity was an issue both within the programme and in the wider University community.

Being singled out as 'different'

> I must say when I got the email I was quite surprised, because I suppose I had never internalised that I was a minority group.

> I don't really think of myself as a woman of colour.

The first response to calls for interviews for many women was the question, *how am I a minority?* The majority of women contacted did not see themselves as belonging to a minority group. In part this may have been due to clumsy language and categories that were inadequate. One woman expressed concern about how she had been identified. Most women identified themselves as professionals at work and women in general. Having a dis-ability, for example, was simply an additional aspect of identity. For others, such as the Indigenous woman, Indigenous identity was highlighted.

There were also different constructions of minority and difference. In our choices of 'identity groups', we have constructed 'otherness', making value judgements about the kinds of 'identity groups' that the

> " *Until you address the problems for women as a whole, … can't address issues of minority women.*
>
> Male mentor

programme was interested in knowing more about. It was useful to have that challenged and broadened out by the women themselves. Being in the minority occurred, for example, for academic women working in male dominated areas, for women working in disciplines where their research interest is seen as peripheral, or where 'soft scientists' are located in hard science areas.

Another issue that emerged, as a result of our small sample, is the difficulty in interviewing solo 'representatives' of particular groups, where, by default, they can be seen as speaking on 'their' group's behalf. This is the case particularly for the Indigenous woman and the transgender woman. Women can find themselves in this uncomfortable position in groups where they are the only women, with the choices of somehow representing all women or feeling silenced by their minority status both unpalatable. However this experience may also be paralleled in the programme itself, where to identify as belonging to a minority group can present this same dilemma.

LDW has only had one Indigenous woman participate in the programme, and would welcome further participation. Feedback received through this evaluation process may be useful in furthering dialogue with the

When we hear about age being an issue in the workplace, we assume its older people who are being discriminated against.

But one UWA staff member found it very difficult being young. She doesn't want to be identified, so we'll call her Heather.

"I started research work in Faculty X at the age of 24, in a management role," she said.

"I'd come from private enterprise and I was used to dealing with management and working in a position of management. But working on a research project off campus, I was discriminated against to the point that I felt uncomfortable going in to work each day."

Heather was the co-ordinator of the research project. She said it was not the norm for someone with her background to co-ordinate projects, so, along with her age, it meant that she was viewed with suspicion.

"I kept out of the tea room gossip. They just didn't include me because of our age difference."

Heather said the team she worked with saved her from walking out, but she still felt isolated, so she applied to do the LDW programme, needing some self-development and wanting to see what was happening on campus.

"LDW became such an important support group because I was under such stress in my work," Heather said.

She had responded to the discrimination

Indigenous community on campus. While it has been suggested that a separate programme may be appropriate, given the small numbers of women, a modified programme model may be required. A 'women only' programme may also not be considered appropriate (see discussion above).

Successes

In the focus groups and interviews the women did not talk about personal stories of achievement, but focused on the relationships and networks they developed and the shifts in perception that developed awareness and opened possibilities for them.

> Doing LDW was really good because it brought me into close contact with people on campus and I sort of realised although we work in different areas, we have a lot of similarities and face a lot of the same issues.

The most consistent story to emerge was the value of the networks that were established. These varied from forming deep and enduring relationships, ongoing walking groups, to occasional catch-up lunches and the comfort of *recognising people as you walked around the campus and at social functions*. The idea of a network was new to some of the women, and indeed, one woman remarked that she had had no female friends since coming to Australia.

As many of the women felt isolated in their workplaces and in the issues they were dealing with, there was relief at finding other women experiencing similar difficulties in their work lives. It meant they no longer felt or were alone.

They enjoyed the *connection* with the other women, personally and collectively, the openness of the group and process enabled them to *let their guard down* and the talking and connections across campus were very useful. Knowing other people in other offices made getting information easier**.**

> And it actually has worked in that I have established a lot of collaboration with some people in the department, and I am much happier in my work.

The opportunity to talk over issues with other women in the programme helped to keep at least one woman in the organisation.

> Before I joined the programme I was pretty close to resigning because I just couldn't cope with it any more [suffering under the leadership of the Head of School and feeling she was not being taken seriously as a professional].

One woman felt constrained by lack of time, not only to reflect, but to talk to other people due to the pressure of her work. For her the network provided the space and time to reflect and focus on her work life.

> One of the most important things I found in the programme was the time to actually reflect on your work and your career…it has left me with the idea that OK you can set yourself some goals, you can actually think about what is going on.

In this respect, reflecting on the connections that LDW makes possible, the women we had singled out as 'diverse' are echoing the survey data and other materials from the broader participant group.

Programme components

The programme has changed shape over time, adding peer learning groups (in 2002) with some variation in the range of ongoing workshops offered, so, to some extent, the women participating in focus group discussions had experienced different programmes. Coverage of diversity issues has also varied, with different presenters being used over time. In the late 1990s diversity was raised towards the end of the programme. In the last few years, however, it has been discussed earlier on. Diversity has not been a topic easily picked up by participants. Conversations and responses have focused on a huge range of differences including youth, older age, family responsibilities, private schooling, educational attainments, first language, general and academic staff status, born in Perth and so on. There has been a great reluctance to discuss racial or cultural background, sexuality, and disability, suggesting that these issues are 'undiscussables'. Proudford (2002:1), drawing on the work of Argryis, defines 'undiscuss-ables' as those "issues or dynamics within organisations that everyone knows should not be raised".

> As women, we have been taught to either ignore our differences or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than forces for change (Audrey Lorde 1983).

The two-day retreat at the commencement of the programme has remained constant throughout. Many women recall it as the 'best bit' of the LDW programme (as documented in Chapter 2). It did not suit everyone, however, with several women commenting that it did not suit their learning styles. Several did not maintain the early enthusiasm and intensity of the two-day core programme. These women drew particular attention to the loss of the larger group experience as attendances at ongoing workshops wavered according to work commitments, or to the inevitable absences of some participants due to travel and holidays. Any sense of not belonging, or a loss of an earlier sense of connection, became more apparent in these women as the programme continued.

> Toward the end of the year it is harder as your motivation and the momentum dies down and you think, 'Oh, this work is more important than LDW' whereas at the start it is, 'Oh, I really want to go so I will do this in the evening'.

against her in her workplace by working hard and becoming a high achiever. When she moved from there to a different school she was happier to be in a younger crowd, but was still feeling stressed.

"Somebody said I had dug my own grave: I had showed that I could achieve a lot, so it was expected of me from then on.

"I felt I was drowning, just keeping my head above water. I had asked for help but nobody heard me."

Learning new skills from LDW, Heather tried again asking for help and, this time, she was heard. "When I told them that I wasn't coping and that my pleas for help had been ignored, I was told that I needed to talk louder. I had thought I was screaming!"

She said LDW gave her strength, both to carry on and to make herself heard. Her peer learning group was made up of young academics, who all had problems with their work/life balance.

"We all benefited from sharing our experiences and helping each other to get the balance right. It was a great, supportive group and we still keep in touch. While doing LDW I made some decisions about my future, including doing my PhD. My peer group's honest advice and personal experiences about studying for a PhD helped me realise exactly what I was getting myself in to."

Heather said that what she learned from

Peer learning groups

The peer learning groups were applicable only for women who participated in LDW from 2002 onwards. Peer learning groups have the potential to exacerbate or overcome feelings of not belonging experienced by some of the women. While small groups could make it safer to disclose personal information, lack of acknowledgement of difference could increase feelings of isolation. It became clear in the focus groups that peer learning groups had worked for some of the participants and not for others.

> What I found really worked for me was the peer groups. To work very closely and to actually have to think outside your zone, and come up with something constructive — I really enjoyed that.

> The peer group learning didn't work, waste of time.

For this latter woman the peer group was dysfunctional, and she felt isolated and resentful about people not turning up to meetings. She wondered about their commitment. She also felt isolated in the small group: *[I] had nothing in common with the other women.* Even in the larger workshops they used to sit together and she lost the connection with the larger group.

For some there was too much focus in the peer learning groups on the presentation, (as discussed in Chapter 3) and this got in the way of the intended learning process. For others it highlighted their tendency to sit back and let the 'strong' women do it. This was expressed as both an issue of language and lack of confidence in public speaking.

Mentoring

Mentoring is examined in detail in Chapter 7. While the research acknowledges that cross-cultural mentoring adds another layer of complexity to the establishment of effective mentoring partnerships (Crosby 1999; Ragins 1999; Blake-Beard 2001), it was beyond the scope of this research to identify pairs where this was the case. Given the lack of visible diversity in senior management at UWA, however, and the number of mentors from the senior ranks, it is probably safe to assume this was a factor for most of the minority women. Mentoring proved to be a mixed experience (as it was for the larger group) with some of the women gaining a great deal from the relationship, and even continuing the relationship beyond the programme.

> I think it was just that tremendous moral support all the way through and then through the mentoring.

> My mentor ended up being a friend, a confidante and now Head of School.

For others it was a disappointing experience. There were a number of explanations offered for the breakdown. Some ascribed the 'failure' of the relationship to gender difference.

> " *People who, for some reason, cannot tell their story are at a great disadvantage.*
>
> *We need to be heard, to be affirmed and welcomed as one who shares the human condition.*
>
> *To be ourselves we must have ourselves — possess, if need be, repossess our life stories.*
>
> Oliver Sacks

I don't know, sometimes it doesn't work out and that's probably because of the difference in the gender between the mentor and mentee.

…..and for dealing with issues that may arise specific to women, you might have to have someone more senior, a woman you can talk to as well.

The match between the mentee and mentor was an issue for some.

Met a couple of times … We just didn't click.

I didn't have a strong sense her experience related to mine.

Lack of focus was another issue for one woman mentee: *I just didn't know what I wanted.* And finally, as in the wider survey data a lack of *time and commitment*.

Some of these comments mirror issues that are raised in the next chapter, such as time, lack of focus and mentoring partnerships that did not get started. It is not possible to tell if the mentoring relationships of this select group were more or less successful than other women on the programme. Keeping track of 'cross-identity' mentoring would be beneficial – to allow further exploration of any difficulties in future evaluations.

Inclusivity

Belonging is very very important. I don't think we could be happy if we didn't belong, and felt as though we were valued in whatever small role we do.

I can see that in the instances where I have felt on the outside, I don't feel comfortable going to work when I feel that way, when I know there is all this indifference even. You like to be more than just tolerated or seen as doing your job, but more proactively included.

While the majority of the women said they felt included in the programme, they generally felt that there was no room in the larger group to raise issues that were particular to their minority identity.

Most inclusive thing I have ever done … emotionally liberating.

We had a quite diverse group. I think everyone is very open and inclusive.

LDW had had a dramatic effect on her life. From being an overachiever to compensate for her youth, she now has a better work/life balance, is able to ask for help when she needs it, and is focusing on herself and her needs as she starts her doctorate.

"What was so hard was that I felt strong and confident but I just wasn't coping and I couldn't work out what was going on. LDW helped me to work it out."

79

I was interested in looking at the differences more.

For women of diverse sexuality issues regarding inclusion are related to issues of self disclosure. The work of the 'Rainbow' and 'Ally' projects at UWA have highlighted issues of 'coming out' and safety (from discrimination) for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) staff and students on campus (Goody & de Vries 2002). The relative invisibility of GLBTI staff is one indicator of 'the cultural climate' for this group of staff, indicating a perceived lack of safety, and there are known pockets of intolerance and homophobia.

For GLBTI staff managing their 'identity' comes at the cost of guardedness, discomfort, feeling unsafe and a constant fear of being 'discovered'. This managing of identity was reflected in comments made in the focus group where it was felt strongly that they could not participate in group or social conversations about work/life balance, husbands and children and, because they didn't have that life situation, they 'felt on the outer'.

> During those catch-up sessions, I would never reveal anything … I didn't feel that there would be reciprocity [in terms of listening] if I started to talk about my girlfriend.

> It was a bit galling. I want to have children and to hear others complaining was frustrating.

At the same time there was recognition that this would also be an issue for others.

> I did find that too much at times, you know, family and kids and just absolutely no recognition of women, whether they be lesbian or not, who don't have children.

The lesbian women chose not to reveal themselves in the group.

> The programme is geared to stereotypical women in the organisation. If I'd 'come out' I would have been a curiosity and that would have put me out further.

> [There is] just this issue of not ever actually talking about your life to them. It isn't really a big issue, but is something that just does make us behave slightly differently.

There were instances in relation to their careers where the women had felt subtly discriminated against, or feared discrimination might occur.

> [There are] invisible barriers, if you like, to advancing positions. There may be other things that prevent you from going forward, which need I think to be acknowledged. You know, disabilities and such. I think, I mean, it is a significant barrier to me, I think in my career. I mean, there is absolutely no way, for instance, that I could have a senior position in my part of the organisation and be openly lesbian. I mean, they wouldn't think it was good for the public image.

This feeling of exclusion was echoed by a woman with a degenerative disease, who did not feel included in the larger group, and said she *felt like a fish out of water a lot of the time*. This she attributed in part to her transition from wellness to disability, and to the fact that she felt that there was no opportunity on LDW to raise her issues. While she did disclose her condition at the time, she is much more reticent now, particularly in the workplace. She wonders if visibly disabled women are more acceptable, more able to discuss their difficulties and to have adequate assistance and consideration.

The notion of being visibly different arose in several of the groups; the sense that if you are seen to be different (ie a woman who is clearly Asian) that it is easier to both raise issues and to be excluded. For the transgender woman her sexuality was more visible than the lesbian women and this had resulted in a lack of choice about being 'out'. She had experienced periods of extreme isolation in the workplace.

'Women of colour' felt that their visibility was not so much in their colour but in their accent.'

> I think people react more to accent than to colour… with the result that they are not as open, because as soon as an accent comes out they think, "Oh we won't understand them".

These women felt that this closer scrutiny also applied, for example, to white women with European accents. One commented too on the way in which surnames became a marker of difference and unequal visibility.

> I guess for us Asians it is very easy to pick out because of our surnames. So you would just go by that.

Issues of voice

The issues of voice were most evident in the focus group for 'women of colour'. Initially one of the women expressed concern that she could have to say something negative about the programme, and she felt uncomfortable about that. Several women spoke extremely softly during the interview, which meant that their comments were not recorded. Some said that during the programme they often hesitated to put themselves forward because of a lack of confidence in language.

> We were quite happy to play a back stage role.

> ..because you feel that you don't speak as well, you know, like excellent or something, so you feel a bit uncomfortable and you might say, 'Oh I think I might as well not do it, let the other ladies who can speak better.

> I feel I am not discriminated against in anything. So I feel very comfortable there [in the workplace]. Except I think when it comes to speaking out. It just feels like…..I still don't feel comfortable standing up in front or speaking to a group. I guess it takes practice.

Inclusion in the wider organisation

In general the women felt that the University was more inclusive than the general population.

> People at the University are much more unbiased towards race and colour than the general public.

They applauded the organisation's policies and practices around equal opportunity, diversity and bullying, though they felt that these polices were often not adhered to by managers and senior people.

> … the organisation is big on policy….not with the nitty gritty of dealing with people with special needs … policy doesn't translate to management level, there is not much willingness to make adjustments.

Comments regarding the policy/practice gap were made particularly strongly by women with a disability, with particular reference to degenerative conditions and the associated transition process. There was

a perception that those employed through a disability programme were being treated with more consideration and care.

Improving the programme

All women agreed that they would like more up-front discussion of diversity and difference in the programme and more representation of their 'identity' group in visitors to the programme, perhaps in a panel, for example. There was little recognition that it had been discussed or addressed in the programme, with only passing reference to *we talked about it a bit*. It may be that having the session at a follow-up workshop where not all women attend is insufficient profile and that it needs to be consciously raised on multiple occasions.

> It would be good to have these issues in the consciousness rather than under the carpet.

A welcome to country and increased consultation with Indigenous women would be helpful.

Conclusion

It is hard to do justice to the women's stories, to feel confident that their stories have been sufficiently understood to be communicated in this format, and problematic to see their stories are representative of the 'identity groups' to which they belong. We have not asked to hear the stories of white women, or heterosexual women, or Australian women or able-bodied women and the ways in which they may feel included or excluded, both in the programme and in the wider University. There has been insufficient attention paid to the intersections of identity, as we chose people to fit into different groups on the basis of one identity, without querying other ways in which they experience difference.

Despite these limitations there are some important messages here for the LDW programme and the broader institution to hear. The stories above give a mixed picture. Women felt both included and excluded within the LDW programme and also within the broader institution. While for some women their minority group status is a non-event, others feel unsafe in the workplace regarding self-revelation about, for example, the existence of a same sex partner, anger at a lack of understanding or accommodation in regard to disability, and a lack of confidence that discrimination of various types would not occur. There are messages about issues of language and accent, about difficulties in meeting the needs of Indigenous women, and about ways in which 'otherness' can be experienced.

There are obvious difficulties for organisations when employees cannot bring their full selves to work or when they are unable to fully contribute because they lack confidence or feel they do not belong. Creed and Scully (2000) suggest that employees who 'can enact their authentic selves' might contribute more fully to the workplace. In attempting to create cultural change to make the University more inclusive of women, LDW must also address broader diversity and inclusivity issues.

This is the cutting edge for analysing and addressing organisational culture for programmes such as LDW.

> *If we have no story we are nobody. We are lost in the darkness, there is no light.*
>
> David Mowanjali, Aboriginal elder, *Yorro Yorro*.

Sharing the journey

Mentoring has always been an integral component of the LDW programme. This chapter explores the 'workings' of the mentoring component and reports on results from mentor interviews and the mentoring component of the LDW survey.

Why focus on mentoring?

Ramsay (2001), in commenting on Australian higher education, identifies lack of access to mentoring, sponsorship and patronage as a missing link for women in accessing information and the associated career advantages it offers. She considers this, along with women's unequal share of domestic and caring responsibilities, as the major and most pertinent differences impacting on women. This identification of differences in access to formal and informal networks and mentoring is echoed many times in the literature (Bagilhole & White 2003; Brooks 1997; Morley 1994; Morley et al. 2001) and explains in part the popularity of mentoring programmes for women. Most recent data on Australian higher education programmes show 16 of the universities offering mentoring specifically for women (AVCC 2003).

Men have been engaged in informal mentoring in the workplace for a very long time; the natural tendency for homo-social reproduction, where men mentor those who are like them, (Kanter 1977) has worked to maintain existing power bases and to disadvantage minority groups. These mentoring relationships often occurred on the basis of some natural affinity such as similar life experiences or shared experiences such as school, sports, company boards and professional associations (Mann 1995). Formal mentoring programmes work to 're-create' these informal partnerships for particular groups of staff, including women or other minority groups, who would not normally be included. Formal mentoring has been a popular staff development tool now for more than two decades. Kram, however, one of the early researchers in the field, suggests that mentoring has been "oversimplified as a relationship that is easily created and maintained", and as a solution to a multitude of problems (Kram 1985:195).

There is agreement in the literature that informal mentoring is more beneficial, as measured by career outcomes such as salary levels and

promotions, for the mentee than those that are formally assigned. Formal (assigned) mentoring has significant limitations (Chao 1997; Noe 1988; Ragins & Cotton 1999; Scandura 1998).

Researchers have also explored the mentoring 'functions' and the roles of mentors, as predictors of mentoring 'success'. These functions have been defined by Kram (1985) and built on by others (Noe 1988; Ragins & Cotton 1999) as:

Psychosocial functions — those aspects of the relationship that enhance a sense of competence, clarity of identity and effectiveness in a professional role. Behaviours include acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship.

Instrumental/career functions — those aspects of mentoring that enhance a person's learning of the particular skills and knowledge including the political and social skills, required to succeed within an organisation. Behaviours in this category include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments.

More recently, **role-modelling** (Scandura 1992) has been seen as a third function, that is, role modelling appropriate attitudes, values and behaviours to the mentees.

> " We philosophise and share, it often helps.
>
> I was a sounding board, worked with career and work/life dilemmas.
>
> Opportunity to make a difference to people's career progress.
>
> Mentors

Effective mentoring relies on both the psychosocial function and career functions being present, and Kram suggests the greater the number of mentoring behaviours the more effective the relationship. The question for formal mentoring programmes, therefore, is whether it is possible to 'match' mentors and mentees in such a way that both functions can occur.

> " Does formal mentoring in fact assist women in overcoming their "lack of knowledge of, and opportunity to enter into, the informal systems for career advancement used for so long and to such good advantage by male colleagues?" (Ramsay 2001:16)

Differences in outcome depending on the gender of the mentor, the mentee and cross-gender mentoring relationships have been explored (Noe 1988; Ragins & Cotton 1999). There is some evidence that female pairs emphasise the psychosocial aspect, while cross-gender pairs utilize the relationship more effectively. While male mentors appear to have a more beneficial impact on career progression, more research is required. Some of this literature is based on informal mentoring and therefore may not relate to formal mentoring. O'Neill, Horton and Crosby (1999), in their overview of the literature, acknowledge the general expectation that men will give instrumental help and women psychosocial support but

suggest that this is actually not the case. In fact, research with women professors by Struthers (cited by O'Neill et al) shows that differences in levels of instrumental support were related to the seniority of the mentor, not gender, and that these are often confounded. The clearest gender differences were that women were more likely to perceive female mentors as role models and that cross-gender pairs were careful to avoid socialising after hours. Blake-Beard (2003) suggests that the role model function is particularly important for women, describing a role model as "someone you respect who has achieved goals to which you are aspiring and is a source for strategies for both success and survival" (Blake-Beard 2003:2).

There is a wealth of excellent practitioner literature regarding mentoring (Lacey 1999; McKenzie 1995; Shea 1999; Zachary 2000) and, in some instances, specifically developed for higher education (Butorac 1998; Chesterman 2001; Fullerton 1998; Lublin 2000; McCormack 1996). There are also several evaluations of both stand-alone and combined mentoring programmes in universities (Gardiner 1999; Gustavson 1997; Johnston 2000; Tubman 1998). Maria Gardiner (1999), in evaluating the Flinders mentoring programme for early career researchers, uses a control group and pre and post test method with excellent results. She found that their programme was effective in breaking down barriers to informal power networks and research knowledge.

In the LDW case it was not possible to separate out the impact of the mentoring from the rest of the programme and, regrettably, no pre-measures were put in place.

Background and principles

From the very start of the LDW programme, mentoring was seen as a critical way of involving other UWA staff in the programme. Fay Gale (Vice-Chancellor at the time) was insistent that, unlike some other mentoring programmes, the programme should involve male mentors. This

decision, like many others made by the founders of LDW, has been important to the programme's success. Mentoring has kept the institution connected to LDW, has created supporters and champions, has made a space for men to hear women's stories and has changed men's understandings of gender. Importantly, too, it has spread the load and the responsibility, which too often falls on the few senior women, to mentor the more junior women of the University. The dual focus of the mentoring programme established this understanding from the outset: mentoring was to benefit both mentors and mentees. That strategic decision has influenced the way that the programme has been developed over time.

One of the reasons given by other programmes for not using male mentors was to avoid issues of patronage, and the possibility of men imposing a masculinist approach to leadership on their mentees. While certainly the possibility exists for male mentors to give advice, and to model behaviours that would not work for the mentee, this issue has not emerged at UWA over the years of LDW.

Mentoring programmes are often developed by consultants external to the organisation. Good mentoring programmes, however, rely on both an understanding of the 'business' and the complexities of mentoring (Alleman & Clarke 2000). While LDW relied on external consultants in setting up the original mentoring programme, over time in-house provision became the sole model. This strategy allowed the existing knowledge, networks and understandings of the University, along with those of the LDW staff and Planning Group, to be built into mentor relationships.

Mentoring is often used as a stand-alone staff development tool; however, with LDW it is a fully integrated component of a more far-reaching development programme. Mentoring as a 'one to one' aspect of the programme is seen as complementing the group nature of the rest of the programme.

Mentoring is presented to participants as one way of expanding their networks within the University, with mentors most often being selected from a part of the University to which the mentee would not normally have access. Most often this is not within the same department or, necessarily, even the same faculty. Indeed, care is taken to ensure reporting lines are not compromised. Closeness in discipline areas is not usually a priority. Occasionally informal mentoring relationships are formalised through the programme but, most often, women are encouraged to keep their informal mentoring intact and to use the LDW opportunity to access a formal mentor. This approach is supported by Ragins (1999) who suggests that favouring formal over informal mentoring relationships can be harmful for women and minority groups. No one mentor can magically meet a person's needs; the formal mentoring is but one component of a healthy network and support system.

Differences in cultural backgrounds between the mentor and mentee are acknowledged as an important consideration in the effectiveness of mentoring (Crosby 1999; Ragins 1999; Blake-Beard 2001). This is something we have been unable to explore here.

Who mentors at UWA?

Table 11 provides some basic details regarding the gender, number, level and classification of mentors. The 115 female mentors have mentored 212 mentees (66% of mentor matches), and the 63 male mentors have mentored 110 mentees (34% of mentor matches). Mentor matches that cross classifications (general staff mentoring academics or vice versa) and including research staff in either category, account for 48 (15%) of the mentoring pairs.

TABLE 11 **Gender and staff classification of all LDW mentors**

Classification	Male	Female	Total
Senior* academic	30	20	50
Academic	12	45	57
Senior** General	9	8	17
General	12	42	54
	63	**115**	**178**

* Senior academic staff refers to those holding positions such as Heads of School, Deans and Executive

** Senior general staff refers to Directors and Executive level staff.

Clearly there is an extensive network of mentors across campus, and the programme is very well supported by senior staff. Despite the emphasis on using male mentors, however, female mentor numbers are almost double. The

Jan Fletcher felt stuck in her job without career prospects — until she did LDW in 1994.

"I had been working at the University since 1986, with no career path or security, on one three-year contract after another," said Jan, Director of the Child Study Centre, part of the School of Psychology.

She said the first positive change came when former Vice-Chancellor Fay Gale introduced a policy of allowing staff to apply for their (tenured) position, after they had completed two three-year contracts.

So finally, Jan had tenure and could take on doctoral students, but she still seemed unsure that there was a future for her in her career.

"LDW started me thinking about a career, and I was lucky enough to meet up with a tremendous group of women, including Trish Crawford, Di Walker and Samina Yasmeen. Seeing Trish put in her application for professorship, which she did shortly after that LDW programme, made me think seriously about applying for promotion, but I still needed help to make that happen."

Jan was assigned Lyn Abbott (now Head of the School of Earth and Geographical Sciences) as a mentor. "Lyn was great. We met regularly right up until I submitted my application for promotion to senior lecturer, a process I found quite distasteful. But she kept telling me not to be so modest, that I had to promote myself." Jan was made a senior

proportion of male mentors who are senior, both academic and general is extremely high (62%). For women, this is not the case, partly because there have been many fewer women in formal senior roles. There is greater organisational depth reflected among the female mentors. To some extent this reflects the involvement of past LDW participants in mentoring women, particularly in the *Developing Personally and Professionally* stream of the programme. In some cases this is due to women requesting a female mentor. On the basis of these figures, however, it would be worthwhile for the programme to expand male mentor involvement at the less senior levels.

The importance of role modelling by Executive staff has been important in achieving the commitment of senior staff. Mentors also report delight and surprise at being invited to be involved. Seventy-seven of the mentors have mentored at least twice, with a smaller band of 14 mentors who have mentored four times or more. Two mentors, one of them the current Vice-Chancellor, have mentored eight times. The level of ongoing involvement and commitment on the part of mentors has been outstanding and is a vote of confidence in the worth of the mentoring programme.

Making it happen

Each LDW participant (mentee) is matched with a more senior person (mentor) within the University who can provide them with support, information and advice, and share professional and personal skills and experiences. The formal mentoring partnership lasts for approximately nine months. Mentoring, although not strictly compulsory, is understood as being an integral part, of the programme and, with only a few exceptions, participants are matched with a mentor.

Pairs are matched on the basis of needs and criteria identified by the mentees at a half-day workshop. Mentees are asked to identify goals for the mentoring, in the context of the overall programme, and to suggest

names of staff members who could be approached. They are also encouraged to talk to others in their group and to colleagues and supervisors for ideas about possible mentors. This information is combined for the whole group to eliminate overlaps, and mentoring matches are proposed drawing on both mentee suggestions and the knowledge of the LDW staff. Mentors are drawn from all areas of the University, including previous LDW participants.

The programme coordinators approach potential mentors on behalf of the mentees. Once matched, letters are sent to mentees and mentors, together with background information about the scheme and suggestions on how to get started. It is emphasised at this stage that either party may withdraw from the partnership if it is not working well. Mentees are encouraged to arrange the first meeting with their mentors and to be proactive during the partnership.

New mentors are encouraged to attend a two-hour workshop to help them focus on the role of mentor, to clarify expectations and to highlight common issues that need to be addressed. Workshops are also held for mentees after they have met with their mentors at least once. These sessions enable mentees to review how their mentoring partnerships are going and to consider how they can gain the most from the mentoring process.

The matching process is highly individualised and in some cases very time-consuming. Over the years the matching process has become more and more customised to meet the 'wish list' of LDW participants. In the early years the mentors were largely selected from a pool of people felt to be suitable mentors, with less attention being paid to the requirements of the mentee. Mentees are now encouraged, on the basis of their goals, to identify the background, skills and experience they would like to see in their mentor. Anyone employed by the University is in the 'pool' of

potential mentors and new mentors are recruited and trained every year. This intensity of 'customisation' of the mentor matching aspect of the programme is in contrast to mentoring programmes where matching is computer-based on a very limited set of dimensions.

> " *Being a mentor is listening to them, working out what they want. Mentees don't all want be in the same place.*
>
> Male mentor

Partnerships that work

The complexity of successfully creating a formal mentoring relationship that provides all aspects of what would previously have been a spontaneously-formed mentoring relationship has been somewhat glossed over in the practitioner literature. There is also little acknowledgement of the harm that may occur (Scandura 1998). Apart from the success or otherwise of the matching process, other issues and barriers may come into play in establishing and maintaining a productive mentoring partnership. These will be explored further using information gained through ongoing evaluations, the surveys, and mentor interviews.

The importance of ongoing support and monitoring of mentor relationships is highlighted in the literature, and LDW processes for this have become increasingly sophisticated. Both mentees and mentors are contacted by email at different stages during the scheme to confirm that the partnerships are working well, initially after six weeks, and again after four months. In addition, an email questionnaire is sent out to both parties half-way through the scheme, and again after 12 months. The aim of the second questionnaire is to encourage mentors and mentees to review what they have gained and to assist them in drawing their partnerships to a close. Feedback about the mentoring process is also sought.

What is happening in the mentoring relationship?

In order to explore the mentoring relationship in greater depth, 15 mentors were interviewed for this evaluation (including the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor). Most are well established mentors with 11 of the 15 recruited before 2000, and five of them involved since the first intake in 1994. They have mentored between one and eight times, and between them have mentored 59 times (refer to **Table 12**).

lecturer in 1997, and attributes that success to people she met and strategies she learned through LDW.

Jan is still fighting for a career path, this time for her colleagues who are on 12 month research contracts.

"There are still many career path problems in the University. There are people who have years of experience and PhDs but they are stuck without a career path because they are dedicated to making life better for kids. So they continue with their research, when they can't be guaranteed an income from one year to the next."

Even though Psychology is right in the centre of the campus, Jan knew very few other women at UWA until she joined the LDW programme. "Psychology was a very male-oriented department then. One year, I was the only full-time tenured woman in the school. It was great to meet women from outside the department, and to be able to compare how your department does things, with the way things are done in other areas.

"That sort of exchange, seeing the big picture, gives you a better idea of how and why things work. Before that, it was easy to get stuck because you didn't know of alternative ways of doing things."

Jan still retains the ideas about leadership that she learned back in 1994. "It was interesting to think about leadership not

TABLE 12 | **Gender and staff classification of interviewed mentors**

Classification	Male	Female	Total
Academic	4	5	9
General	3	3	6
	7	**8**	**15**

In addition, a section of the LDW survey, described more fully in Chapter 3, focused specifically on the mentoring relationship. Sixteen percent of respondents to the survey cited the mentoring scheme as the most influential programme component in regard to their leadership development (see Table 5, Chapter 2). Sixty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring contributed to their leadership development (see Table 6, Chapter 2).

Of the survey respondents 64% were matched with female mentors and 36% with male mentors; that exactly matches the gender breakdown of all mentoring partnerships. More of the academic women in the survey were mentored by men (43%), than general staff (34%).

Issues and barriers

The ongoing formative evaluations and monitoring undertaken by LDW mentioned previously have highlighted issues of concern in regard to the mentoring outcomes. Problems identified can be clustered under the following headings:

- Time and workload pressures, including a reluctance by mentees to take up mentors' time
- Commitment on the part of mentor or mentee
- Unclear expectations and uncertainty about roles and responsibilities
- Lack of, or unclear goals for the mentoring
- Deference or lack of confidence on the part of the mentees, perhaps reflecting differentials in power and status.

The recurring identification of these issues through our ongoing evaluations has informed our training approach and the materials we provide to both mentors and mentees.

Barriers to the mentoring relationship identified by mentors interviewed included the same cluster around availability and workload. Further overlaps included status, the mentee not wanting to bother the mentor, and lack of focus. Other issues mentioned included *resistance from the mentee's workplace, issues in the workplace that the mentee was reluctant to discuss, prior friendship, and personal doubt on the part of the mentor*. The importance of confidentiality and trust were mentioned several times, but only once as a problem.

Over time it has also become apparent that some mentoring partnerships never get established, and this is confirmed by the survey data. This is of concern both in terms of the lost opportunity for the mentor and mentee, and also the time, effort and commitment that has been made to set up the partnerships in the first place. It would be useful to be able to anticipate which relationships would be unproductive. Continuing to make mentoring a part of the programme for all participants may need to be reconsidered.

> *I'm pleased to be able to say that I think each worked out better than I might have expected, including the third, where the barrier (cultural) mentioned before existed. I have tried to get each of the mentees to 'set the agenda' for each meeting, but often by talking through what they liked and disliked about their positions, what their role was as they saw it and any accompanying uncertainties, etc. I don't think we had any problems of trust, and we always found time to meet. I gave it priority as best I could. I'm still on very friendly terms with each of them.*
>
> Male mentor

Meetings

Respondents to the survey met with their mentor, anything from zero to more than 20 times over the course of the programme (approximately 9 months), with the mean number of meeting at 5.2 and 62% of respondents meeting between two to six times[1]. There are differences based on staff classification (of the mentee) and gender (of the mentor). For academic staff the average number of times was 4.2 and for general staff this was higher at 6.2. This translated into average contact hours for academic staff of 7.7 and for general staff, 8.4. Male mentors met slightly more often (mean 5.6 compared to 5.0 for female mentors) and spent more time with their mentees (mean 8.8 hours compared to 7.3 hours). A few partnerships never met (5%) and these were more likely to be academics mentees.

Meeting arrangements as described by mentors varied in terms of location, amount of time, formality, frequency, initiation and regularity. While some met regularly on a defined 'plan', many others met irregularly, as needed, after the first few times. These could be described as a 'touch base as needed' arrangement. Scandura (1998) suggests such informality is a reflection of mentors and mentees preferring, and in some ways seeking to replicate informal mentoring, within a formal mentoring programme. Those who had mentored on several occasions mentioned varying arrangements, depending on the mentee. It is hard to see patterns in the data, except to note that the parties drank a lot of coffee.

Driving the relationship

The philosophy of the programme is that mentoring should be 'mentee-driven', although this approach has been questioned more recently. Mentee-driven refers to both the initiation of first contact and meetings, as well as setting the agenda and driving the process. In more recent times, mentors have been encouraged to be more pro-active, in recognition that mentees sometimes are deferential or lacking in confidence in making the initial contact and maintaining contact. This can be one disadvantage of a 'touch base as needed' arrangement, which requires initiation each time. Mentees can then easily decide that it is not important enough or that the mentor is too busy. Some mentors indicated a preference for mentees initiating, although in practice some mentors followed up if they hadn't seen their mentee for some time.

Mentors reported that the majority (approximately 85%) of their mentees were able to set the agenda and articulate personal objectives, with slightly fewer taking responsibility for initiating and planning meetings. All mentees were reported to be receptive to feedback and coaching.

necessarily fitting any particular model or mould. It was inspiring to talk with women who valued non-traditional leadership models."

TABLE 13 Statements about mentoring by gender of mentor and staff classification of mentee

Statements about mentoring	Female mentor % Disagree/ strongly disagree	Female mentor % Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	Male mentor % Disagree/ strongly disagree	Male mentor % Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	Academic Mean	General Mean
I had clear expectations about what I wanted to achieve from the mentoring process	48	52	2.6	42	58	2.6	2.6	2.5
I had a clear idea of the mentoring process and how it should work	38	62	2.7	44	56	2.6	2.6	2.7
I made my expectation of the mentoring process clear to my mentor	34	66	2.7	54	46	2.5	2.7	2.6
My mentor made their expectations of the mentoring process clear to me	35	65	2.7	44	56	2.6	2.6	2.7
I felt that my mentor had a clear idea of the mentoring process and how it should work	26	74	2.9	39	61	2.8	2.8	2.9
I would describe my mentoring experience as focused and clear about the purpose of mentoring	43	57	2.7	40	60	2.8	2.5	2.8
I was committed to making the most of my mentoring opportunity	26	74	2.9	20	80	3.1	2.9	3.1
My mentor showed commitment to the mentoring process	18	82	3.1	11	89	3.2	3.0	3.3
My mentor took an interest in my career development	19	81	3.2	19	81	3.2	3.1	3.4
My mentor helped me to develop career goals	37	63	2.8	34	66	2.9	2.7	3.0
I established a positive professional relationship with my mentor	29	71	3.0	15	85	3.3	3.0	3.3
I consider my mentor to be a friend	41	59	2.7	46	54	2.7	2.5	3.0
I trust my mentor	13	87	3.2	6	94	3.4	3.1	3.5
I have good rapport with my mentor	13	87	3.2	13	87	3.2	3.0	3.3
I was able to discuss confidential issues with my mentor	23	77	3.0	17	83	3.2	2.8	3.3
I was able to discuss my weaknesses with my mentor	20	80	3.0	13	87	3.2	3.0	3.3
I was able to discuss my strengths with my mentor	18	82	3.0	11	89	3.3	3.1	3.2
My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in viewpoints	15	85	3.0	11	89	3.1	3.0	3.1
My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in personality	8	92	3.1	8	92	3.2	3.1	3.2
My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in gender	44	56	2.4	6	94	3.2	2.9	2.9
The time spent with my mentor was useful to my development as a leader	29	71	2.9	22	78	3.3	2.8	3.3
Overall, I was satisfied with my mentoring experience	31	69	3.0	29	71	3.1	2.8	3.3

* NA excluded from percentage calculations
* Strongly disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3, Strongly agree=4.
* Mean of 2.5 represents a neutral rating

Table 13 presents a number of statements broadly grouped (see tinted bands) under the categories of:

- Clarity of the mentoring process and goals and communication of these
- Commitment to mentoring on the part of the mentor and the mentee
- Career development focus of the mentoring,
- Comments regarding the relationship, e.g. trust, confidentiality, and dealing with differences, and
- Overall mentoring satisfaction.

For many of the items there is little variation between means according to the gender of the mentor or staff classification of the mentee (which is not necessarily the classification of the mentor). As previously discussed, most, but not all mentoring pairs are matched within occupational groups.

Scores for clarity of goals, the mentoring process and communication of these are somewhat lower than scores for any other cluster of items. This fits with feedback received over the years regarding barriers to a successful mentoring relationship and suggests that, despite efforts to ensure clarity of roles and goals through the training, more work is needed. The 20% of mentees matched with male mentors and 26% of mentees matched with female mentors who disagree

with the statement regarding *commitment to mentoring* is a concern. It is not clear if the parties went into the partnership lacking commitment or if this lack of commitment was the result of a poor match or other circumstances. Rating of mentor commitment (with disagree at 11% for male mentors and 18 % for female mentors) is higher than for mentee commitment.

The bolded items in the table had a large number of NA responses and therefore the percentages presented are less meaningful. The large number of NA responses to gender differences is appropriate, as all same gender partners should have marked this as such, however the high NA response regarding differences in personality and viewpoint is unexpected. Given the relatively small amount of time that mentors and mentees are meeting it is possible that relationships are not developing to the point where conflict or differences emerge and need to be dealt with.

The mentoring partnership

As previously mentioned the mentoring literature looks at mentoring roles around three main clusters: psychosocial support, instrumental/career support and role modelling. When interviewed mentors were asked to reflect on these roles in relation to their own mentoring practices. Broadly

Jo Francis describes herself as opinionated – the sort of person, perhaps, whom others might see as a leader.

But Jo said that, until she did LDW, she didn't have the confidence to act on those opinions. "I didn't feel that my opinion counted for anything at UWA; I felt intimidated because I didn't have a university degree," she said.

Jo had been working happily for six years in Animal Ethics when her manager urged her to sign up for LDW.

"It gave me confidence and made me understand that my opinion did count," she said. "Some of the workshops were quite confrontational but one of the best outcomes I achieved was that I walked out of those workshops with the knowledge that it was OK to be happy with where I was at the university and in the great scheme of things."

She wasn't ambitious, didn't want to change her job. But the new confidence and fresh perspectives Jo gained from LDW opened up new possibilities for her. She is now administrative officer (scholarships) in the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office, and loving her work even more than she did at Animal Ethics.

"But I know I wouldn't have enjoyed this job if I hadn't done LDW. I'm working with students from many different cultural backgrounds. Often, the way they express themselves is quite different from they way we

speaking mentors responded that they used all three, with the balance between them depending on the mentee and their goals, and the stage in relationship. Several mentors were hesitant about role modelling, noting that it was up to the mentee if they saw the mentor in that way. A senior female mentor noted the critical importance of senior female role models in the broader University context. There was no apparent difference in the emphasis on psychosocial support between male and female mentors.

It is reassuring to note that many of the relationship items are scored highly by the mentees. Where differences do occur they support the pattern which is emerging. General staff mentee pairs are more committed, and have a greater focus on careers, and score more highly on relationship items, for example friendship and confidentiality. Where there are differences between male and female mentors, male mentors tend to score higher, except in communicating expectations. Overall, general staff participants are more satisfied with their mentoring experience.

Continuing on

In examining mentoring relationship data for the whole group, 41% met on a regular basis and 40% met on an intermittent basis as both parties were busy. For male mentors this was higher with 47% meeting regularly. General staff were more likely to meet regularly, 55% in comparison to academics at 29%, and academics were more likely to meet intermittently due to the busyness of both parties (49%).

Thirty-nine percent of mentoring relationships continued beyond the formal mentoring period. This was higher for general staff and for male mentors. Several mentors commented on how the mentoring petered out, and that this was unsatisfactory, a fact which has been identified in ongoing feedback. In more recent years mentors and mentees have been sent reminders at between nine and twelve months, encouraging them to review their mentoring partnership, and either finish or move into a more informal arrangement. This has become increasingly important with increased demand on mentors, and the need for mentors to finish in order to participate again.

Benefits of mentoring to mentees

> *Established a wonderful rapport with my mentor- we still meet regularly and he is still a wonderful source of encouragement, insight and plain common sense, with a dash of nurturing thrown in.*
> Reunion lunch
>
> *It is important to have somebody, who knows you at a deeper level, who can give your personality an objective evaluation.*
> Extract from interview
>
> *My mentor has been great — a flagship to follow and I am sure we will remain close friends.*
> Reunion lunch

Table 14 indicates benefits of mentoring reported by mentees. Generally the rankings for academic and general staff follow the same pattern, with the exception of understanding UWA which is ranked higher by academics. Those with male mentors cite more benefits proportionately than those with female mentors.

TABLE 14 | **Benefits of mentoring process for total group by staff classification**

Benefits	Number			
	Total	**Academic**	**General**	**Non UWA staff**
Encouragement from mentor	**83**	27	39	17
Networking opportunities	**57**	19	29	9
Increased self-confidence	**49**	17	25	7
Improved understanding of the processes, structure and culture at UWA	**48**	23	19	6
Reduced feelings of isolation at work	**44**	16	20	8
Improved access to information	**41**	12	20	9
Higher profile/visibility at UWA	**37**	12	19	6
Enhanced prospects for promotion	**26**	10	12	4
Increased job satisfaction	**22**	10	12	0
Other	**7**	2	5	0
Total responses	**414**	**148**	**200**	**66**
Number of respondents	**101**	**37**	**44**	**20**

Clearly mentees experienced a range and number of benefits. The benefit cited most frequently, *encouragement from mentor*, would be considered a psychosocial benefit. More instrumental aspects of mentoring, for example, *improved understanding of UWA,* were mentioned less often. This is encouraging given that the literature suggests mentoring relationships are more successful if the psychosocial aspect is well covered; not surprisingly, of course, this is the hardest aspect to 'match' for. In part it is dependent on the communication skills of the mentor and their willingness to move beyond providing instrumental support only.

Mentors, when interviewed regarding benefits they noted for mentees, most often cited changes in working life as tangible outcomes, including promotions, secondments, reclassifications, new jobs — sometimes elsewhere, career progress and career plans. Several noted assistance with grant applications, research proposals, work projects, and acting as a referee. Another group of outcomes mentioned were about resolving problems, managing a difficult leader, taking action, and moving on. Setting priorities, better use of time, a different perspective, better

networks, gaining a sounding board, feedback and advice were also mentioned. Male mentors mentioned more benefits than female mentors. In terms of less tangible outcomes, increased confidence was the most mentioned, with others such as different attitudes regarding opportunities, clarity of goals, knowing what they want, capacity to trust, ability to ask, a shift in thinking, willingness to speak out, and a big picture view. This focus on career and self-confidence is reflected in the mentee data.

Impact of mentoring on mentors

> Why mentor?
>
> *I was flattered to be invited.*
>
> *I thought I am getting older and had useful experiences.*
>
> *When asked I was surprised, I felt that someone had recognised I was capable.*

> " *I'd had a good experience as a mentee — we've met fortnightly for 2.5 years.*
>
> *I believe in mentoring and have benefited from mentoring myself.*
>
> *Why me? Rewarding to have someone have regard for my knowledge base.*

What impact does the mentoring experience have on the mentors? On the basis of anecdotes we believe that mentors, in particular senior male mentors, are changed by their experience of being a mentor; they become more informed about the impact of gender. While the practitioner literature, as previously cited, conceives of mentoring as being mutually beneficial, there has been little exploration of how the mentoring experience might change mentor attitudes and behaviours in relation to the minority group that the mentoring programme was designed to assist.

> " *This is the most important aspect of the programme; to connect with someone, help them and make a colleague.*
>
> *Both mentees have become good working colleagues.*
>
> *Want to learn more — this is a growth experience for me.*
>
> *It is important that as many mentors are available as needed. I am satisfied with the programme; I appreciate the knowledge I get and the personal satisfaction in developing a relationship with someone outside the faculty.*

In interviews, mentors mentioned benefits to themselves such as their enjoyment of 'colleague-making', the satisfaction of helping others and seeing them achieve, repaying assistance they have received and the new perspectives they gained, including a more accurate picture of how the institutional reform agenda is going. Some of the benefits were personal, such as *reflection on own skills, clarifying through articulating* and *developing better listening skills.* They commented on how their own skills became more visible to them. Many of the stated benefits impacted on others apart from the mentee, and often included their own staff, for example an increased *awareness of importance of mentoring for own staff,* that it was *instructive about how I assess my staff* and that mentors had *picked up approaches you can use with others*.

> " *Acknowledged women were disadvantaged by the organisation and need to find ways to overcome relative disadvantage.*
>
> Male mentor
>
> *I am a lot more aware of the issues women face in the workplace, almost all have children. It is difficult to combine career and family. Role of man in society hasn't really changed, it's the next major challenge.*
>
> Male mentor

Almost all male mentors articulated changes in their understanding of women's issues. They mentioned their *greater awareness and understanding of barriers*, *awareness of benefits of the programme*, *recognised it's been tough going for women*, and *got a better sense of what the work environment is like for women, particularly women administrative staff*. Mentors often informally remark on their enjoyment of being a mentor, saying things like "I don't know what the mentee got out of it, but I really enjoyed it". In interviews mentors expressed positive feelings, saying that it was a *warm collegial experience,* that they felt like a *good corporate citizen – warm and fuzzy, enjoyed the interaction,* and found it *interesting*. Mentor feedback through these interviews confirms what we have heard informally concerning changes in awareness, and

the ripple-on effect of this in the workplace.

> **"** *They are incredibly intelligent and motivated and keen to get the best out of their time. We meet regularly. Amazing how different each relationship has been, ranges from formal to informal. It has been interesting to me how many senior women find it hard to express their views in meetings — it is the one unifying theme. Now I'm more responsive to people in the meetings I chair.*
>
> Male mentor

There was a mixed response to the training offered to mentors, and what has been offered has varied over the years of the programme. There was some feedback to suggest that an opportunity to reflect afterwards with others is valuable. Follow-up sessions of this nature have occurred rarely, with most support being offered prior to or just after the commencement of mentoring. Given that most mentors go on to mentor again, follow-up training makes good sense.

The impact of mentoring on the broader University culture

> **"** *More people open to managing roles, performance and careers — lead to a better organisation.*
>
> *Having better informed, confident and assertive employees who are realistic about their opportunities in the organisation.*
>
> *If the staff become more knowledgeable and more self-aware and self-confident, then this is a considerable benefit to the University.*

Does a longstanding mentoring programme such as LDW, which has involved so many of its senior staff and Executive over time, influence the culture of the institution? The accumulated benefits of mentoring to the mentees, and the increased understanding of mentors, which ripples through to their own staff, as already discussed in this chapter, clearly benefits the institution as a whole.

Mentors, in commenting on the benefits of mentoring to the institution referred to both the impact on the institution of having more women, and the impact on the organisation more generally. Responses regarding the women included *retains high quality people*

do things in Western society. Some people see them as arrogant, but I can now understand that is just part of their culture, and accept it, and I get on well with them. I learned this understanding from LDW.

"Not only did what I learned help me to enjoy this job, but it encouraged me to apply for it, to go after what I wanted, even though I didn't think I wanted anything new!"

The networking that resulted in hearing about the new job also resulted in Jo's making and keeping many new friends. "We were isolated at Animal Ethics, but suddenly, through LDW, I knew lots of people. Five years after the program, a lot of us still keep in contact. I learned a lot about the University — that it was about more than just providing an education. I didn't feel so far down the food chain, not having a degree. I could see my place and it did matter."

Jo said she gained confidence from LDW to take on other roles in the University, including being a member of the Ally network and becoming an equity adviser.

"At last, I was acting on my opinions: I had the courage to do something about how I felt."

creating a *much better workforce.* They referred to the mentees as *diverse, dynamic, successful women,* and noted that there were *more women in senior positions,* more *role models,* and *more developed staff members.* LDW women were seen as *valuable employees who stayed and developed good careers.*

Mentors again noted the ripple effect in commenting on institutional change. They referred to *mentoring of own staff spreading throughout the organisation* and saw the programme as *changing the academic/general staff divide.* In the assessment of one mentor *'the critical mark of a mentor, is supporting objectives in their own area'.* This indicates that mentoring extends beyond the one on one relationship and implies broader responsibilities on the part of the mentor.

A strong theme to mentors' responses, sometimes mentioned as a tangible benefit and for others an intangible benefit, were changes to the culture of UWA. Mentors commented that LDW has been *part of a major stimulus to changing culture,* that there has been *a qualitative change in the culture* and that LDW has been a *transformational programme, has changed the style of UWA.* They saw the programme as *challenging the status quo,* giving the organisation a *more positive vibe* and it has resulted in *more committed and loyal staff* with *people feeling more a part of the organisation.* LDW is seen as UWA *doing the right thing by staff, being a good employer.* Clearly LDW mentors are committed to, and convinced of the worthiness of the LDW programme, from a personal and organisational perspective.

Conclusion

Mentoring works well for the majority of LDW participants, given the responses to this study. Some refinements to the programme have been highlighted in this chapter:

- Targeting of mentors to include a greater depth of male mentors
- Provision of follow-up training for mentors
- Encouragement of more structured mentoring to overcome problems associated with the 'touch base as needed' model
- Maintaining an emphasis on goal and role clarity for both mentors and mentees, and
- Allowing mentees who are not committed to opt out of this component of the programme.

It is interesting to note that different patterns of mentoring emerge, depending on mentee staff classification and gender of the mentor, with general staff mentees and male mentors spending more time in the mentoring relationship, meeting more regularly and more likely to continue beyond the formal mentoring period. It is also interesting that, with some exceptions, mentoring partnerships take up relatively little time yet a significant number of LDW participants rate it as the best part of the programme (16%) and around 70% agreeing that it contributed to their leadership development. It appears a small number of hours from a committed mentor can have a lasting impact.

Going beyond the impact of mentoring on mentees, this chapter has explored the impact of mentoring on mentors. Interviews with committed and experienced mentors does show that mentoring impacts on their attitudes and behaviours and that this has a ripple on effect to their workplaces, and more broadly to the institution. Mentors clearly articulated the benefits to themselves, to the mentee and to the institution and were committed to the mentoring programme and to LDW.

Footnote
1 Data not represented here in table form, will be available on the LDW website www.osds.uwa.edu.au/ldw

Critical to culture change

This book began with a question, captured in the title of Chapter 1: *A transformational programme?* Throughout the chapters LDW has been positioned as something unique, something special, a particular 'kind' of women's programme. This is not to say that there have not been issues raised, criticisms made, room for improvements noted, or women for whom the programme has worked less well than for others.

Frame 4: A transformational approach

The theoretical framework for the programme has drawn heavily on the work of the CGO, with their '4 Frames' (Ely et al. 2003:4-6) being used as a touchstone returned to on several occasions. Each frame has a different understanding of gender and of gender inequalities in the workplace, which requires a different approach or strategies to achieving gender equity. Traditionally programmes that focus on training women for leadership would fall into Frame 1, the fix or equip the women approach. This Frame focuses on women as the 'problem'; women are at fault in some way – if only they learned to play the game, if only they could be taught to make the tough decisions, if only they were prepared to work longer hours, if only they put their views forward more strongly, and so on.

Gender is seen in terms of socialised sex differences. The expectation is that women will change to fit the organisation and to fit a male model of behaviour and aspiration. Changing the organisation to make it more amenable to women is given no consideration.

By contrast, the LDW programme from the beginning was designed with a dual goal. The early planners not only wanted to provide a context for women's development, they simultaneously aspired to create a cultural shift at UWA, one that would welcome and recognise women's contributions (Eveline, 2004). By the early 21st century programme planners were calling this aspiration for cultural change, in line with the work of the Centre for Gender and Organizations (CGO), a Frame 4 approach.

In the CGO model, the focus of Frame 4 is a re-visioning of work cultures. This relies on a more complex understanding of gender - that gender is an 'organising feature of social life'. Gender, therefore, is socially constructed, something we do, rather than something we have (see Chapter 3). This re-visioning of work practices is based on understanding that historically-based practices in the workplace were designed by men. These practices disadvantage not only women, but also some men and

other 'identity' groups. For the CGO the focus of Frame 4 is no longer the women; the focus is on transforming work cultures.

In pursuing its dual agenda, of developing women *and* challenging the traditional/masculine culture, the LDW Programme goes beyond the sole emphasis on cultural transformation of the CGO model. For, while LDW was designed with an eye to the larger cultural change agenda, it has always been recognised that the women who undergo the programme are the primary means of carrying the transformational agenda forward.

Recognising the potential of women as change agents, however, has its pitfalls and must be handled with sensitivity and a good dose of critical questioning. It is one thing to enhance women's understanding of the gendered culture with talk of 'tempered radicals' and 'small wins', but is there evidence that participating in LDW makes a difference to participants' workplaces? Viewing every LDW participant as a potential change agent displays a high degree of optimism but is that optimism borne out in how every LDW participant sees herself? It would be foolhardy to answer with an unconditional 'yes'. Moreover, the question of organisational responsibility raises another key issue: placing the burden of cultural change on the shoulders of the women participants is not only unfair to them, it also denies the very real support of the men and wider group of women who mentor the women and sponsor and champion the programme.

The threefold mission of the programme (with one statement referring to enabling the women and two referring to culture change), detailed in Chapter 2, encapsulates the components of a broader culture change agenda which refuses to resolve into a women *vs* culture change approach. The programme has addressed these dual goals, both through programme design and through broader initiatives that reach well beyond the current cohort programme. Peer learning that includes a presentation to the organisation, mentoring that benefits and changes the mentors as

well as the mentees are two examples. The curriculum itself has an emphasis on workplace culture, cultural literacy and tools for cultural change.

Nonetheless, at the core of the stories told by so many women in these pages is a recurring theme of personal change. How they have a greater sense of belonging, are more connected with men and women on campus, have a bigger picture of the organisation, understand gender when they see it being played out in their workplace, are prepare to stand up for themselves and their rights, know how to get things done, have a stronger sense of career, are working to develop a leadership style that works for them. The list could go on. How does one have a final tally when so many have been involved, at all levels, in so many parts of the organisation, and over a sustained period of time?

The voices of the women are strong. They say that LDW has made a difference to them. However, in claiming that LDW is a transformational programme, there is clearly need for justification beyond the impact on the participants themselves.

What would be missing?

One way to think about this is to reflect on UWA without an LDW programme. We can scan back through the pages of this publication to remind us of what would no longer exist.

Firstly, let us subtract the Planning Group, the 42 women who have been involved in guiding the programme. Let us subtract the thoughtful and challenging conversations the LDW Planning Group has had over the ten years. Each year a group of 12 women from across campus have wrestled with culture change issues, with diversity issues, with the lobbying and politicking required to ensure ongoing funding and profile for the programme. Conversations would often take surprising and fruitful side

tracks. Where else on campus did a broad representation of men or women regularly make the time to have these conversations about gender equity and culture change?

Then let us subtract the programme 'spin offs': the women's welcome at staff orientation, the Senior Women's Network, the Committee Skills project, the numerous events as highlighted in Chapter 2, that have been held over the last decade. Let us subtract also the number of times that gender equity has been publicly championed at these events.

Certainly subtract the participants, some 358 women over ten years who have participated in the programme. Deduct their programme experiences — all those conversations about gender, about the gendered workplace, about leadership, about visibility and acting strategically, about reading the organisational culture. Subtract the connections created between the women, their shared experiences and understanding. Subtract also the role modelling that took place between the women, the encouraging, the recognition of rights in the workplace that were not shared or were denied, the increased understanding of differences between staff groups, the friendships across campus. Take away the peer learning groups, those peer learning presentations, the grappling with the learning that took place in them and the sometimes awkward attempts to present the learning in new and honouring ways.

Let us subtract any synergies that occurred with other equity and diversity initiatives — any ways in which they supported or sustained or encouraged or challenged each other. Deduct, too, the contribution of LDW to the Employer of Choice for Women award to the University.

Take away too many of the career changes, the career foundations, career building and career steps that were discussed in Chapter 5 — the taking up of opportunities, the influence of LDW in applying for promotion,

seeking and winning secondments, contributing new ideas to workplaces, exercising leadership, speaking up in meetings, taking up committee responsibilities, creating balanced lives, re-negotiating workloads. Then subtract the women who say they would otherwise have moved on.

The mentors and the benefits they have claimed both for themselves and the organisation would also have to go, along with the benefits of mentoring for the participants, the collegial connections, the bigger picture, the career encouragement. Let us also subtract the message that ongoing support for LDW gives to both the men and the women of the organisation.

It becomes difficult to imagine UWA without all of this: without the personal and collective changes, without their changes in careers, networks, contributions and leadership, not to mention the increased understanding of the men and the undoubted ripple-on effects. When so many women are changed, when so many people's working lives are touched, the culture is changed. Does the programme add up to more than the sum of its parts?

Does this add up to organisational transformation? UWA Vice-Chancellor, Alan Robson, believes it does:

> Very few things happen in an institution that could be said to transform that institution, but LDW has transformed UWA.
> UWA*news* 17/5/04

Clearly, in many tangible and subtle ways, LDW is part of the University community.

Looking ahead

The tenth anniversary celebrations and the production of this publication have been used as a reflection of a moment in time, an opportunity to look backwards in order to look forwards.

Both these views remind us there is unfinished business. Of course the institution still has a long journey towards an inclusive workplace for women, equitable distribution of power and resources and status and earnings, with balanced lives and diverse career paths. There is no room for complacency.

> " *Men who want "something like that for me", LDW could play a great strategic role in developing such a programme.*
>
> Female mentor

The first piece of unfinished business has not, so far, been discussed in this publication. Over the years a recurring question has been, 'what about the men?'. The motivations of the questioners are various. For some it is discomfort, a sense of displacement or missing out, a fear of change, a sense of jealousy, or even indignation. For others it is a sense of frustration. The 'what about the men?' is closely followed by 'they need it too'.

The question implies a recognition that there are limits to what the women can achieve on their own as well as a sense of wishing to have a shared understanding of programme learning. The Planning Group has also asked this question. How do we build allies and influence male colleagues? How can we increase understanding amongst those men who do not yet understand? And, then there are women who say, 'we need this, not the men', as they point to the preponderance of men taking other leadership options, such as the Heads of School Programme.

It is a critical question and, once again, we need to move beyond the Frame 1 approach. It is tempting to fall into a 'fix the men' approach, but what would a Frame 4 programme for men look like? It too would have gender, the gendered workplace, organisational culture, and gendered leadership as themes. There would be an emphasis on cultural literacy, raising awareness of advantage and disadvantage, and understanding masculinity. This certainly would be cutting edge development, but would any men wish to participate? Are there men who wish to learn about the gendered culture?

Secondly, listening to the voices of the women in Chapter 6: *How am I a minority?* reminds us that the programme has a tendency to revert to the 'mono-cultural' despite the diversity of the women in it. The focus on gender somehow precludes dealing with difference. While this has been an issue for the programme for some time and although some changes have been made, more work is required.

This publication has sought to look seriously at the LDW programme aspirations and achievements in its ten year history. It can be concluded that LDW has been successful on many fronts - from developing the careers and potential of individual women to the cultural transformations referred to by the Vice-Chancellor and others. Is there some kind of critical mass operating at UWA, where the number of people, men and women, with increased awareness and understanding regarding how gender operates in the workplace, provides the context within which cultural transformation occurs? Are there, as Joanne Martin (2004) describes, tipping points, where achieving gender equity becomes that little bit easier?

Finally then, the question can be asked, can organisational transformation take place without an LDW? Do we have an essential ingredient at UWA that others are missing? The success of LDW provides a strong case for building women's programmes into an

essential component of organisational strategies to tackle the ongoing gender imbalances in the workplace. This publication provides a model of what works.

> " I think the situation for women and for gender equality at UWA has improved steadily over the last ten or more years, and this should continue. However, the price of equality is eternal vigilance, and there are pockets of the University where hoary old attitudes can still be found. LDW is a proven success and one of the schemes UWA can be proud of.
>
> Male mentor

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