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# SEEKING YODA: MENTORING WOMEN LEGAL ACADEMICS

TERRY HUTCHINSON\*

Writing in 1994, Clark commented that ‘Notwithstanding the fact that mentoring is quite common, there has been comparatively little written about it’.<sup>1</sup> At this point in 2002, it may be more pertinent to ask whether there is really anything new to say? There are now a number of basic mentoring handbooks available, many of which are listed in the bibliography. There are informative websites,<sup>2</sup> and the number of universities that have run mentoring programs, judging by the published reports, is numerous.<sup>3</sup> However, there are many variations in what is encompassed under the “mentoring” banner, so it is vital to this discussion of mentoring for female academics to define the parameters of mentoring, the roles of the mentor and mentorees, and also to look at the background against which the perceived need for mentoring of female academics has arisen in law schools. A mentoring scheme for female academics from the Faculties of Law and Arts was conducted at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 2000/2001. This scheme has been evaluated, and this paper tests the perceived outcomes of the scheme against the range of proposed objectives. It has also provided an opportunity for the organisers to compile a basic program that is transferable to other mentoring schemes involving varied cohorts such as students and practitioners.

## I DEFINING THE PARAMETERS

The word “Mentor” of course comes from Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, left his son, Telemakhos, in the care of Mentor who acted as advisor, protector and wise friend. Telemakhos went to look for his father accompanied by a new Mentor, Athena, Goddess of War and patroness of industry and the arts. There are examples through history of many famous academic mentors such as Plato and Aristotle, and

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\* Chair, QUT Faculty of Law Equity Committee and Director, Research Concentration in Women Children and the Law.

<sup>1</sup> E Clark ‘Mentoring: Its Potential for Staff Development and Learning Enhancement in a Legal Environment’ (1994) 12 *Journal of Professional Legal Education* 239.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Arizona Leadership 2000 and Beyond Mentoring Guide* <<http://www.igc.org/az/2000/alumni/guide.htm>> (30/10/2001).

<sup>3</sup> M Bodsworth and L Buys, *Faculty of Arts Mentoring Program: An initiative of the Faculty of Arts Equity Committee. Interim Report* (QUT, September 1997); *Monash University Mentor Scheme for Women: Final Report* (Melbourne:1994); F Rowland and A Butorac, *Mentoring Junior Academic Women: Project Evaluation* (Perth: Murdoch University and Curtin University of Technology, 1996); P Seitz *Pilot Mentor Scheme* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1992); Programs also run at QUT Faculty of Arts July 1996-, Monash University 1994, Murdoch University and Curtin University of Technology 1996, University of Melbourne 1992.

Marie Curie and her husband Pierre. Even in today's popular entertainment, there are mentors. Obi-Wan Kenobi, and the Jedi Master, Yoda, from *Star Wars*, exemplify the coach and mentor – watching, teaching, cajoling, affirming, critiquing and taking a personal interest in the achievements of the pupil. Even vampire-slayers have trainers!<sup>4</sup>

Mentoring encompasses formalized assistance of a less experienced person by another who is more senior in the organization and more knowledgeable about the work environment. It is a means of work socialization, career education, and introduction of the protégé into the academic environment.<sup>5</sup> Mentors are often the means of providing the protégé with an entrée to networks, and they are invaluable in providing guidance and encouragement. This process of 'accumulating merit' may be achieved through invitations to 'participate in research projects, to present guest lectures' or perhaps to join an influential committee'.<sup>6</sup> Tony Becher, in his sociological study of the academic world, underlined the importance of being able to sell yourself in order to 'get on', and the fact that 'it is not only what you write but who you are and where you come from that counts'.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, good mentoring can provide one means of gaining more opportunities, more visibility, more recognition, and enhanced work socialization.<sup>8</sup>

However, there are limits to what can come under the "mentoring" banner. Mentoring is described in some of the literature as akin to counselling and dealing with workplace stress, but this type of mentoring would seem to move beyond the normal boundaries of an organised work relationship.<sup>9</sup> No doubt mentors may have personal knowledge of their protégé and provide social support, in the same way as a research supervisor may have these types of connections to a doctoral candidate, and friendships may develop, but mentoring is an essentially work-focused relationship.

There is also the question of the overlap of workplace Performance Planning and Review schemes with mentoring. No doubt there are many who consider that career planning is a part of management's role. However, this often depends on the personality of the individual manager. In addition, it is not difficult to foresee situations where there may be a conflict of interest. For example, it may be in the manager's interest to have an academic teaching in a large core unit, whereas it may be in the staff member's best interest to have a non-teaching leave period to complete a large project, or to teach in a smaller elective unit. Thus, any underlying responsibility for appraisal under a managerial supervision role may impinge on the trust and honesty necessary for a mentoring relationship.

Therefore, while career based, mentoring is not an employment service, or a tool of management, but an individual's guide to career enhancement. A mentor may be happy to perhaps provide a reference or even an introduction, but mentors do not have the responsibility for finding employment for their mentorees. Thus, the mentoring relationship must be to some extent informal and certainly non-competitive, and while it

<sup>4</sup> Reference to the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Buffy's trainer Giles.

<sup>5</sup> See generally Clark, above n 1, 244-245.

<sup>6</sup> P Todd and D Bird, *Does Gender Make a Difference? Gender in Promotion Procedures at the University of Western Australia* (Perth: University of WA, The Graduate School of Management, 2000) 2.

<sup>7</sup> T Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories : Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989) 54 and 56.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> J Lewis 'Stress and the legal profession' (May 1999) 7 *New Law Journal* 670, 671.

is best achieved between those of unequal standing, it is not necessarily achieved with a supervisor.

## II FORMS OF MENTORING

Mentoring is an accepted mode of academic development. There are at least four identifiable versions of voluntary mentoring – spontaneous career nurturing of chosen protégés by senior academics, informal peer mentoring within groups of academics on the same career levels, group or organization mentoring and “assigned” mentoring programs. While the statement that “everyone who makes it has a mentor” may not be totally correct,<sup>10</sup> it is true that most successful people have had steady help and guidance from others of more experience.<sup>11</sup> Mentoring covers all aspects of life but the focus in this paper is on academic career mentoring in the areas of research, teaching and professional leadership.

In law faculties, spontaneous mentoring occurs where those students choosing academia, use their connections with undergraduate degree teachers to obtain references and advice in choosing postgraduate study, including placements at overseas institutions. The networks built at that point, can be called on once again when the person enters the workforce or enrolls in a PhD. Postgraduate supervisors may provide this role. Sometimes specific programs are put in place within faculties to identify the bright and committed who may work as research assistants and feed into the postgraduate programs of the school. Connections are formed and excellence is fostered.

This traditional mentoring relationship between senior academics and their protégés has often depended on personalities, so that ‘senior people in positions of authority would sponsor those they particularly liked, and stand aloof from the rest’.<sup>12</sup> This type of arrangement can lead to factional rivalry between groups. As a result anyone who has not attached themselves to one of the main groups may find that promotions are more difficult to attain without that group thrust or support. The consequent danger of this system is also that the mentors turn out clones of themselves - ‘followers instead of potential leaders’.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there are disadvantages in relying on this form of fostering staff development. Outstanding students are more likely to find mentors willing to help them, while those who lack the glow of imminent success, possibly because they are mature aged, or have broken careers, will be left to fend for themselves.<sup>14</sup> There is also a risk that some mentors may actually hold their mentorees back because they feel threatened by potential competitors – the ‘Salieri Factor’.<sup>15</sup> The protégé is not always blessed - their star may rise with the mentor’s, but correspondingly, their career may also fall when the mentor moves to another stage or

<sup>10</sup> Peter Doherty the Nobel prize winner for Physiology or Medicine in 1996 claims not to have had a single powerful mentor - ‘I have never had a powerful mentor who saw me as the product (or continuation) of his program ...’ <<http://nobel.sdsc.edu/medicine/laureates/1996/doherty-autobio.html>> (28/6/01).

<sup>11</sup> R Moayed, ‘Mentoring a Diverse Population’ in S N Davis, M Crawford and J Sebrechts (eds), *Coming into Her Own : Educational Success in Girls and Women* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999) 229.

<sup>12</sup> ‘What Makes a Good Mentor?’ (1997) 12 *Maine Bar Journal* 180, 181.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Clark, above n 1, 242.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

in some way loses influence. In addition, male/ female mentoring relationships can present special challenges.<sup>16</sup>

Peer mentoring can also be of some comfort to new staff. It occurs among staff on similar levels, and entails encouragement, networking, notification of new research or conferences arising in other's areas, group attendance at relevant functions and basically supportive activity provided by work colleagues. Of course one essential aspect missing within this model is the gatekeeper's key. The gatekeeper, of course, is the person determining 'who is allowed into a particular community and who remains excluded'.<sup>17</sup> Instead of the chosen protégé being ushered courteously through a door, peer mentoring is akin to a group of academics blindly searching for the door and then attempting to ram a way in through force of numbers. Sometimes the door opens wide enough for one or two to squeeze through!

Organisational mentoring programs provide general mentoring support for a whole work group. An example of this idea in action is the Visiting Professor Program at the Victoria University of Technology's Faculty of Business and Law. Professor Margaret Thornton was appointed first visiting professor in 2000 under VUT's new visiting professor program for women academics. This particular program allowed each faculty to invite an experienced woman professor from another university to work for a year 'as a mentor and role model for female academics, run seminars, develop a research culture and work with VUT's advisory groups and committees'.<sup>18</sup> Visiting adjunct's often provide this type of advice and encouragement in a less formal way. QUT's Research Concentration in Women Children and the Law recently hosted Ottawa's Professor Liz Sheehy, and her seminars and presentations provided a catalyst for debate and research project planning. The timeframe for such visits, being usually limited to less than two months, necessarily constrains any outcomes.

Group mentoring occurs when a formal program is organized with a larger group of mentorees and a small group of mentors, for example, ten mentorees and three mentors. The program may include presentations by mentors and mentorees, and visits to different workplaces where appropriate. There is no matching up process with an individual focus, but rather a broadening of experience and knowledge. This would normally be most effective where the mentorees are from different areas or organizations.<sup>19</sup>

Finally there is individual assigned mentoring. This occurs when funding is provided within an institution to organize a program, which identifies those who would like personal support in a stipulated area, and senior staff volunteers are then called on to provide that support within limited boundaries. This type of mentoring includes the 'deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser-skilled or experienced one, with the agreed upon goal of having the lesser-skilled person grow and

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<sup>16</sup> K Kram 'Complexities of Cross-Gender Relationships' in *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, c1985) Chap 5.

<sup>17</sup> Becher, above n 7, 60.

<sup>18</sup> M Cook, 'Women's career path – to a point', *The Age*, 16/8/2000, <<http://www.theage.com.au/education/20000816/A7500-2000Aug16.html>>.

<sup>19</sup> A O'Connor, 'Mentoring: a variety of options' (2001) 9 (3) *Australian Law Librarian* 220, 222.

develop specific competencies'.<sup>20</sup> Do artificial pairings work? Reports from these programs in the past have largely been positive, but as one organizer commented – 'I might (host) a dance but I'm not going to expect everyone who comes to it to then go on and get married'.<sup>21</sup> The next segment of this paper focuses on assigned mentoring of women academics and the outcome of one such scheme.

### III MENTORING ROLES AND OBLIGATIONS

Mentors are essentially volunteers, but are there any specific values that organizers look for in those participating in such a scheme? For the most part, mentors are the elders of the organization and in academic terms this will include those at senior lecturer level or above. There are basic qualifications for mentors, then, especially if the mentorees have specific projects in mind such as the completion of a PhD, the publication of refereed journals or books, or even a teaching portfolio. There are also a whole host of personal attributes. Eugene Clark lists these attributes as being: sensitive to the needs of others, an effective listener, knowledgeable about current educational issues and practice, committed to the mentoring process, open to new ideas, accessible, able to devote sufficient time to the mentoring process, cognizant of the political and organizational dynamics of the workplace, socially adept and a good one-on-one communicator, respectful of others achievements, discreet and ethical.<sup>22</sup>

Mentoring therefore is the process whereby a more experienced worker provides helpful advice and support to another person. It is about individual attention. It is directed. It is one on one. It is about the transfer of information and skills towards the development of another. It is confidential and it often makes calls on that very precious commodity – time.

It can include such issues as –

- 'helping the mentoree understand the norms, standards, values, ideology and history of the organization – particularly the informal rules about "the way we do things around here"',
- ensuring that the skills and competencies needed for advancement in ever-changing organizations are developed,
- providing information on paths to advancement and the blind alleys – that is, on where NOT to go,
- encouraging visibility in the right place at the right time',<sup>23</sup>
- introducing the mentoree to 'colleagues in suitable professional and social situations', and<sup>24</sup>
- being available for advice on work-related issues.

<sup>20</sup> M Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of mentoring: How to facilitate an effective mentoring program* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> S Keeva, 'Good Act to Follow' (April 1997) *Australian Legal Practice* 18, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Clark, above n 1, 242 quoting Carruthers 20.

<sup>23</sup> M Bodsworth and L Buys, *Faculty of Arts Mentoring Program, An Initiative of the Faculty of Arts Equity Committee, Interim Report* (September 1997) quoting from Limerick and Burgess-Limerick 'Women and Mentoring for Change' (Paper delivered at Training 2000 Conference, Scotland 1995).

<sup>24</sup> *The Law Society of South Australia Mentor Scheme Guidelines*, 1999, 2.

The expected positive outcomes for the Mentors include a sense of personal satisfaction in teaching and sharing, an opportunity to reflect on skills and practices, exposure to new ideas, incentives for staying current in one's field, and recognition of administrative talents of staff members.<sup>25</sup> It will likely lead to increased exposure and status throughout the university. However, it is another call on precious time and taking on another's career progress may be a burdensome responsibility.

What about training for the mentors? Is this warranted? At the very least mentors need some introduction to the process. In the QUT scheme, both mentors and mentorees were invited to the launch of the program and given some guidance and printed material on the parameters of the scheme. Some manuals suggest that separate orientation and information sessions should be held for the mentors.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps this might be considered too onerous given the voluntary nature of the mentoring role, but written information should be made available along with some avenue for having questions answered during the progress of the scheme. Some thought should also be given on how to thank the mentors for taking part in the program.

#### IV MENTOREES ROLES

The mentoree's role is initially an easier one including:

- maintaining regular contact with the mentor,
- confiding in the mentor about 'problems, concerns or questions and to discuss personal or professional matters', and
- 'sharing news of developments and successes and discussing reasons for failures or problems',<sup>27</sup>

The benefits for the mentorees are patent, and include on-going support and encouragement, clear expectations and constructive feedback, increased self-confidence and career aspirations, access to inside information and organization dynamics, association with a successful role model, help in building a professional network, career advice and direction, and development of a university / firm / department perspective.<sup>28</sup> There may be negatives in the process, too. There is no guarantee the relationship will be successful and if it is not there may be a sense of failure.

Mentorees, therefore, have to be committed to change and be willing to give energy and time to the process. This requires a good amount of honesty on the mentoree's part in order that they can assess their own skills, identify strengths and any weaknesses needing development, as well as being prepared to take advantage of available opportunities. There needs to be an honest assessment of any perceived threats or barriers to success.<sup>29</sup> The mentoring relationship will not work if the person being assisted refuses to act on the advice given – or indeed to move out of their personal comfort zone at all.

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<sup>25</sup> Clark, above n 1, 241.

<sup>26</sup> D Clarke, *Mentoring* (Sydney: Orange House Publishing Pty Ltd, 1996) see Activity 2.

<sup>27</sup> *The Law Society of South Australia Mentor Scheme Guidelines*, 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Clark, above n 1, 241.

<sup>29</sup> Belle Alderman refers to this as a SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, *Mentoring Relationships*  
<<http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/alia2000/proceedings/belle.alderman.html>> (8/6/2001).



## V BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH THE PERCEIVED NEED FOR MENTORING OF FEMALE ACADEMICS HAS ARISEN IN LAW SCHOOLS

Although mentoring programs are advantageous for all staff, there are several social factors pointing to the need for special support programs such as mentoring for women academics. It is a truism that women now make up more than 50% of university law graduates in Australia. However, in all areas of private and government practice, at the bench and at the bar, women tend to be over-represented at the lower end of the employment spectrum. Of a total 5060 solicitors in Queensland for example, 1480 or 29% are women. Women make up 106 of the 832 sole practitioners (12.75%). However, 91% of the partners in law firms are male. There are only 108 female partners in the firms (8.9%).<sup>30</sup> Women are similarly under-represented at the bar and bench. Much talk has centred on the “trickle-up” theory, which suggests that as more women enter the profession, the landscape would change and more women will reach senior levels.<sup>31</sup> However, this does not seem to be happening in reality and if the situation is to change it must begin in the law schools where the employment benefits and workplace flexibility are measurably different from practice.

However, women are entering the general academic workforce at the lower rung and do not seem to progress beyond senior lecturer. Federation of Australian Universities Staff Associations (FAUSA) statistics for 1983 show women holding 54.4% of the principal tutor positions, 21% lecturers, 9.4% senior lecturers, 4.6% readers and 2.4% professors.<sup>32</sup> There had only been a slight improvement by 1991 with women at 9.8% of academics senior lecturer and above.<sup>33</sup>

Australian law school statistics follow this trend. The 1994 Australian Law Reform Commission Report No 69 on *Equality Before the Law: Womens' Equality* stated that the effect of the lack of senior women academics on the education of law students reverberated throughout the profession:

8.10 In 1993 women represented 35% of total academic staff in Australian law schools. However, they are concentrated in tutorial and lecturer positions while men dominate the positions of associate professor and professor. Few women occupy the managerial positions of dean or head of department in law schools. This reduces the contribution women are able to make in the formulation of academic policies. One submission comments that the distribution of women academic staff has serious implications for students in reinforcing notions of women's inferior position in professional life. ... It means that women students lack role models or mentors in senior positions.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Queensland Law Society Statistics June 2001.

<sup>31</sup> H Sommerlad, ‘The myth of feminisation: women and cultural change in the legal profession’ (1994) 1 *International Journal of the Legal Profession* 31, 34.

<sup>32</sup> B Wilson and E Byrne, *Women in the University: A Policy Report of the University of Queensland Senate Working Party on the Status of Women* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1987) Appendix C, Table 18.

<sup>33</sup> See K Joyner, A Preston and I Saunders, ‘Concepts of Leadership and Management at QUT: An Analysis by Gender’ in *Women Culture and Universities: A Chilly Climate* (Conference Proceedings UTS: Desktop Publishing, 1995) 121-127.

<sup>34</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, chap 8 para 8.7  
<<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/alrc/publications/reports/69/vol2/ALRC69.html#ALRC69>> (12/10/01). In 1993 of a total of 132 tutorial positions, 82 were held by women and 51 by men; of 295 lecturer positions, 146 were held by women and 149 by men; of 218 senior lecturer positions, 64 were held by women and 145 by men; of 84 associate professor positions, 15 were held by



Little has changed in the last seven years. In Australian universities, women tend to be clustered at the lower rungs of the career ladder, with the July 1999 Australian Vice Chancellors Statistics (AVCC) showing women at 51% of academics at Level A (associate) level, 42% at Level B (lecturers), 27% at Level C (senior lecturers), and 14% at level D and E (associate professors and professors).<sup>35</sup> The statistics also demonstrate that women make up only 26% of Deputy Vice-Chancellors and 16% Vice-Chancellors.<sup>36</sup>

The monitoring of the ratio of women in senior positions to total women employed is now part of an Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) plan announced in 1999 to improve women's representation at higher levels. The plan, a joint project by the AVCC and the Colloquium of Senior Women in Australian Higher Education, has three objectives:

1. to exert the AVCC's leadership to promote the achievement of gender equity in Australia;
2. to develop strategies based on research for overcoming barriers to gender equity for university staff; and,
3. to refine the AVCC and university staff development services to target gender equity more effectively.<sup>37</sup>

Strategies include the collation of basic quantitative data on the position of women employed in higher education,<sup>38</sup> with stated performance targets including increasing the ratio of the percentage of academic staff at level D and above who are women to the corresponding percentage of all academic staff who are women, training for senior staff, and establishment of information, communication and mentoring networks. In 1999, the AVCC commissioned a survey of all Australian universities looking at their actions on gender equity issues. This material has been analysed and the report is available on the AVCC website. Note should be made of the Australian Technology Network Women's Program in which QUT participates and the schemes such as Quality Women in Leadership Program and Successful Women's Advancement Program developed at that university.<sup>39</sup> However, no formalised mentoring program was noted in the QUT response.

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women and 69 by men; and of 84 professor positions, 10 were held by women and 74 by men: C McInnis and S Marginson, *Australian Law Schools After the 1987 Pearce Report* (Canberra: AGPS, 1994) compiled from Table A5.31-A5.33, 459-461.

<sup>35</sup> This is not too dissimilar to the UK statistics which show women at 40% academics (49% lecturers, 14% Professors and 22% readers); From C McGlynn, 'Women Representation and the Legal Academy' (1999) *Legal Studies* 68, 75.

<sup>36</sup> Figures taken from Rosemary Calder First Assistant Secretary Office of the Status of Women Address to Victorian Women Lawyers 24/8/2001.

<<http://www.osw.dpmc.gov.au/content/resources/FASpeeches/lawyers.htm>> (8/6/2001); P Todd and D Bird, *Does Gender Make a Difference? Gender in Promotion Procedures at the University of Western Australia* (Perth: University of WA, The Graduate School of Management, 2000) 2; M Cook, 'Women's career path - to a point', *The Age*, 16 August 2000, <<http://www.theage.com.au/education/20000816/A7500-2000Aug16.html>>.

<sup>37</sup> *Promoting Women to Professor*, AVCC Media Release, No 22/99 (13 July 1999) <<http://avcc.edu.au/avcc/mediarel/1999/99mr22.htm>> (21/2/2000).

<sup>38</sup> Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's Action Plan for Women employed In Australian Universities, 1999 to 2003 <[http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public\\_statements/publications/wactplan.doc](http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public_statements/publications/wactplan.doc)>.

<sup>39</sup> Women and Leadership Programs in Australian Universities: Summary of Responses to AVCC Questionnaire, 4

The 2000 data for QUT reflects the stated national trends with women making up 41% of the academic staff overall, with 54% Level A positions, 42% Level B, 30% Level C, 30% Level D, and 19% Level E.<sup>40</sup> QUT Law Faculty figures also reflect these trends, with women accounting for 53% of the academic staff (including casuals). The proportion of women at Level C was 49%, which is higher than the university average. However, there has been little change to the numbers at Level D (2) and Level E (1) for some time. Staff changes in 2001 have seen the movement of the one Level E position away from the faculty for a protracted period, and the replacement of the two previous Level D's by two new incumbents, with no change in the actual numbers of women at that level. Overwhelmingly it was the female academic staff from the Law Faculty who decided to take up the University's Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) offer. These staff from Levels B, C, and D will be replaced with Level A appointments. This will necessarily change the Faculty profile coming in to 2002.

Comparatively speaking, the situation for women legal academics in other countries appears no better. Clare McGlynn's study of the UK situation begins with a snapshot of women academics across all faculties. In 1996-97, only 8.1% of professors in the United Kingdom were women. Women made up 35% of all other staff.<sup>41</sup> The 1997 examination of the Higher Education Statistics Agency figures in the UK revealed that 29% of men were employed as senior academics compared to 12% of women.<sup>42</sup> Apparently this inequity also flows over into pay levels with a 1992 UK AUT study concluding that 'women are systematically paid less than men in universities'.<sup>43</sup> The results of the McGlynn study of UK law faculties reveals that women comprised 43 of 258 professors which represented 14% of chairs,<sup>44</sup> 22% of readers, 40% of principal lecturers, 42% of senior lecturers, and 49% of lecturers.<sup>45</sup> The situation is by no means consistent across the board, with the study finding considerable differences between law schools. Many law schools had no women law professors (63%).<sup>46</sup> Differences were also found between the old and new universities with readers being more common at the old universities and principal lecturers at the new. However, there were very few professorial appointments at the new universities. Clare McGlynn comments: 'as the vast majority of principal lecturers are in the new universities, and there are very few professorships in the new universities, the possibility for advancement for the 40% of women principal lecturers appear limited'.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, the new universities seem to have a base grade appointment as senior lecturer.

The Canadian Bar Association's 1993 landmark "Bertha Wilson Task Force Report", *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Change* looked at the status of women in the legal profession and handed down approximately 200 recommendations.<sup>48</sup> Chapter Eight specifically referred to the academic arena, and the

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<[http://www.avcc.edu.au/uni\\_staff/avcc\\_prof\\_develop\\_training/women\\_leadership\\_programs\\_sept01.doc](http://www.avcc.edu.au/uni_staff/avcc_prof_develop_training/women_leadership_programs_sept01.doc)> (12/10/01).

<sup>40</sup> *Report on Affirmative Action Program for Women 2000* (Brisbane: QUT Equity Section, May 2001) 5.

<sup>41</sup> C McGlynn, 'Women, Representation and the Legal Academy' (1999) *Legal Studies* 68, 69.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid quoting AUT *Sex Discrimination in Universities* (London: AUT, 1992) 2.

<sup>44</sup> McGlynn, *ibid* 76.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 75.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid 77.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid 79.

<sup>48</sup> <<http://www.cba.org/Equality/Equality/default.asp>> (18/10/01).

implementation of the following recommendations are being overseen by a Standing Committee on Equality of the Canadian Bar Council:

- 8.1 That law schools should give priority to the recruitment of members of minority groups into faculty positions.
- 8.2 That law schools undertake regular reviews of recruitment practices to ensure that sufficient progress is being made toward gender parity and full representation of minority groups in teaching appointments.
- 8.3 That law deans make full efforts to ensure that affirmative action recruits are recognized as fully qualified appointments.
- 8.4.1 That law deans, subject to recommendation 8.4.2, make every effort to include female faculty members on law school committees, particularly in leadership roles, and that participation on committees be recognized in evaluating faculty members for tenure positions.
- 8.4.2 That law deans, in making such efforts, regularly review the burden of committee work in faculties to ensure that junior and senior women are not over-burdened.
- 8.5 That law schools demonstrate leadership in adopting and implementing model workplace equity policies that ensure equal treatment to women and other minority groups.
- 8.6 That law schools give due consideration, which might include affirmative action, to women, minority faculty and feminist scholars for decanal appointments.
- 8.7 That universities develop and implement plans to eliminate systemic differences in salaries between male and female members.
- 8.8 That law faculties monitor starting salaries, qualifications and promotion rates of new female and male faculty members in order to ensure that inequities are not institutionalized.
- 8.9 That law faculties put in place programs to grant reduced teaching loads in the first year of appointment for men and women faculty, combined with half-year pre-tenure sabbaticals at the approximate midpoint between recruitment and the tenure decision.
- 8.10 That law deans recognize and reward the "invisible work" as role models and in counselling done by women and minority faculty members.
- 8.11 Deleted: see 8.4 above, which incorporates the original 8.11.
- 8.12 That law schools jointly, through the Canadian Law Teaching Clinic or other fora, develop video tape materials and seminars to illustrate the challenges experienced by faculty members who teach material involving gender and minority issues, with the purpose of exploring student and faculty responses, as well as remedial strategies.

These recommendations include a number of initiatives aimed at equalizing opportunity for those entering law faculties and in so doing recognize by implication the institutional inequities that may occur in the system.

The Association of American Law Schools Statistical Report on Law School Faculty 1999/2000 demonstrated that whereas in 1994-95, 2,343 (28.5%) of the faculty in the Directory were women,<sup>49</sup> by 1999-2000, the number had increased to 2,781 women, representing 31.5%. These included 48% assistant professors, 46% associate professors, and 21.9% professors. The American scene is very idiosyncratic, and there are differences to the Australian academic hierarchy nomenclature. There appear to be

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<sup>49</sup> <<http://www.aals.org/statistics/#women>> (22/10/01).

pockets of great inequity, especially in subject areas where women academics are employed predominantly.<sup>50</sup>

Some of the barriers said to affect women's progression include:

- Lack of networks,
- Dual role burden requiring more daily household responsibilities and ostensibly therefore less time for paid work,
- Atypical career patterns, including career breaks and part-time work,
- Masculine organizational culture unfriendly to women's issues,<sup>51</sup>
- Gendered power imbalance and management within the workplace,<sup>52</sup>
- Less years employed at universities,
- Perceptions of women as being less ambitious, less aggressive and less confident,<sup>53</sup>
- Inequitable promotion procedures,<sup>54</sup>
- Lower proportion of women holding PhDs at a time when the qualifications' ceiling is rising,<sup>55</sup>
- Perceived publications and research deficit as a result of heavy teaching loads and time devoted to teaching in large compulsory units outside subject specialties,
- Time taken in student (and staff) pastoral care duties such as acting as student affairs director or organizing guest speakers and conferences,<sup>56</sup>
- Entry appointment at lower academic levels and at the bottom of the academic scale,<sup>57</sup> and
- Specifically within law faculties, the type-casting of research interests with "black letter" doctrinal work (hard law)<sup>58</sup> being perceived as more meritable than theoretical, skills or "other" research (soft law) often favoured by women.<sup>59</sup>

Universities, as bureaucracies, can provide an unwelcoming atmosphere for women. Margaret Thornton, in *Dissonance and Distrust* commented on the increasing bureaucratization of universities and drew an analogy between bureaucracy and male values. She suggested that this would work against women who did not conform to the stereotype of the "Dutiful Daughter".<sup>60</sup> Thornton suggests that bureaucracies favour the

<sup>50</sup> A number of journal articles have recently appeared taking issue with the so-called "pink ghettos" in legal academic life in the United States in particular. See HV Samborn, 'Legal Writing Institution: The Pink Ghetto of Academe' (2001) 10 (1) *Perspectives* 8.

<sup>51</sup> On the masculine law school, see generally, F Cownie, 'Women Legal Academics – A New Research Agenda?' (1998) 25 (1) *Journal of Law and Society* 102.

<sup>52</sup> P Todd and D Bird, *Does Gender Make a Difference? Gender in Promotion Procedures at the University of Western Australia* (Perth: University of WA, The Graduate School of Management, 2000) 2, 3. Identified first four in list.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid 2.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid 1. The UWA study showed removing many of the gender inequities in promotion practices, reduced inequities in outcomes.

<sup>55</sup> A Edwards, M Gardner and E Ramsay, 'Report to the AVCC' (Academic Womens Forum, 1998) <<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/awf/avcc.html>> (8/6/2001).

<sup>56</sup> M Thornton, *Dissonance and Distrust: Women in the Legal Profession* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996) 112-114.

<sup>57</sup> McGlynn, above n 41, 69 citing UK research.

<sup>58</sup> Thornton, above n 56, 77.

<sup>59</sup> F Cownie, 'Women in the Law School – Shoals of Fish, Starfish or Fish out of Water?' in P Thomas, *Discriminating Lawyers* (London: Cavendish Publishing Ltd, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> Thornton, above n 56, 113.

elite at the top and entrench disadvantage in those at the bottom – in this case, women.<sup>61</sup> As an example of entrenched cultural difficulties, one study demonstrated that when an identical resume with a male name and a female name was circulated to assessors, the male applicant rather than the female applicant was more likely to be given a positive assessment by both male and female assessors. Thus, ‘organisational culture’ and ‘objective’ perceptions of merit is still a challenge.<sup>62</sup> Some of these issues can be addressed by more equitable promotion procedures, though Patricia Todd and Delys Bird’s study found that the initial recruitment and selection process was less amenable to effective change than internal promotion procedures.<sup>63</sup> Sheila McIntyre’s writing, detailing some of her experiences teaching in law schools in Canada, illustrates this aspect of law faculties, especially in regard to the challenges provided to female teaching staff by sexism and anti-feminism in the academic environment.<sup>64</sup> Fiona Cownie has also cited Clare McGlynn’s argument that ‘a major problem for women legal academics is that peer review and professional support from those in senior positions play very important roles in academia, determining, for example, teaching requirements, sabbatical leave and promotions, as well as invitations to conferences and to contribute to collections of essays. Her main point is that these gatekeepers are mostly men, who tend to make choices which are advantageous to those in their own image – other men’.<sup>65</sup> Richard Collier also points to the effect of the ‘male club ethos’ on access to the oil of academic careers including organizational trends information and basic academic experience advice, a say in decisions affecting academic life, and most importantly access to resources such as incidental research assistance. Denial of these may have detrimental effects on both women and men who do not conform – ‘One of its effects is to promote the exclusion of women and men whose masculinities might deviate from the normative hegemonic ideal, an exclusion which has material consequences in the denial of access to information, input to decision-making, access to resources’.<sup>66</sup>

Some emphasis has been placed on the importance to success of conforming to a typical academic career. Sandra Holton, in her study of the professional development of women academics in South Australia, set out a model of the ‘ideal academic career’. The first stage involved ‘rapid transition from school to further study, completion of an initial degree without significant interruption, rapid transition from undergraduate studies to postgraduate enrolment, completion of a higher degree, gaining a full-time academic post before age thirty’, and finally ‘securing tenure’.<sup>67</sup> The second stage encompasses ‘publishing, research, and professional activities, establishing collegial networks and friendship circles, acquiring experience in administration, establishing a reputation outside the employing institution, preferably at an international level,

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid 271.

<sup>62</sup> Todd and Bird, above n 52, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid 14.

<sup>64</sup> F Cownie, ‘Women Legal Academics – A New Research Agenda?’ (1998) 25 (1) *Journal of Law and Society* 102 citing Sheila McIntyre’s ‘Gender Bias within the Law School: ‘The Memo’ and Its Impact’ in The Chilly Collective (eds), *Breaking Anonymity: the Chilly Climate for Women Faculty* (1995).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid 66.

<sup>66</sup> R Collier, ‘Masculinism, Law and Law Teaching’ (1991) 19 *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 427, 444.

<sup>67</sup> S Holton, *The Professional Development of Women Academics: A Case Study in South Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, 1988) 2.

community service, and promotion'.<sup>68</sup> Her study showed some interesting indicators of success for senior academic women. These included:

- successful publishing records,
- low attendance at conferences overall but some attendances at international conferences where they gave a paper,
- consultancies and names on women's registers,
- social interaction with work friends outside work environment,
- experience on selection panels,
- overseas academic qualifications,
- involvement in professional organizations.

Another indication of success seemed to be to obtain the first promotion within five years of appointment or 10 years as a maximum.<sup>69</sup> Mentoring as such was not mentioned. However, it was included in Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington's list of general rules for women academics, which include the need to:

- Read and study about the place of women in your profession,
- Organise appropriate women's groups and maintain contacts with other women,
- Plan strategically for your career,
- Publish,
- Participate actively in the life of the Faculty,
- Join professional associations,
- Find a mentor, and
- Persist in your endeavours despite setbacks.<sup>70</sup>

Women are progressing very slowly in academia. Although the numbers at professorial levels are low overall, there are now sufficient numbers of senior women to provide the required support and encouragement for others. Providing adequate numbers of these successful women are prepared to lend their expertise to the program, and this was certainly the case in the QUT experience, assigned mentoring appears one way of addressing some of the obstacles being faced in women's career advancement.<sup>71</sup>

## VI THE QUT PROGRAM

Recognising the need for additional support for female academic staff because of the range of obstacles being faced by women, the Chairs of the Equity Committees of the Faculties of Law and Arts established a mentoring programme. This aimed to provide support and direction in achieving personal career objectives. The programme provided confidential individual mentoring by more senior and experienced academics and administrators within the institution. The general objective of the mentoring project

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> N Aisenberg, and M Harrington, *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988) 145-152.

<sup>71</sup> Not forgetting or discounting the several men who acted as mentors in the QUT program too. R Moayed, 'Mentoring a Diverse Population' in S N Davis, M Crawford and J Sebrechts (eds), *Coming into Her Own: Educational Success in Girls and Women* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999) 229. (Citing Bova 1995; Halcomb 1980; Kim 1995; Merriam 1983; Missirian 1982).

was to facilitate the personal and professional development of staff by encouraging supportive working partnerships directed to enhancing career satisfaction and achievement of individual goals by those participating. Detail of this programme is provided here for the benefit of other organisations wishing to implement similar schemes.

The Faculty of Arts had already run such a program for their female academic and general staff, and they were keen to begin another round spurred on by their past experiences and enthusiasm for a joint program. The program also gained the enthusiastic support of the Deans of Law and Arts. The Equity Coordinators from the two faculties provided the administrative support and organisational know-how for the program. Applicants were given the opportunity to nominate senior staff members, male or female, from any faculty, school, division or campus at QUT. Applicants were then matched with appropriate and available mentors. Applicants were also given an opportunity to choose a specific project or goal to achieve with the support of their mentor.

The program was designed within the following parameters:

- The program was made available to female academic staff at Lecturer A, B and C levels. This scheme was perhaps unusual in including Senior Lecturers (Level C) but research demonstrates that women are facing major barriers in progressing to Associate Professor level. Those taking part included 6 associate lecturers, 16 lecturers and 3 senior lecturers.
- The organisers approached potential mentors from both academic and general staff of the university to take part in the program thereby increasing the networking value for all participants,
- Mentorees were given the opportunity to nominate senior staff who they would like as their mentor,
- Academic staff acting as mentors were for the most part above Senior Lecturer level, that is, the academic elders of the organisation,
- No mentorees were mentored by their Head of School or Dean as these positions are likely to include some supervisory instrumental mentoring role in any case,
- Mentorees were asked to choose a specific goal or project to achieve in order to provide a focus for the relationship, and
- Matching of the mentorees and the mentors was the responsibility of the organising group.

Planning for the program began informally with a morning workshop on 23 November 1999 called Promotion 2000. It was held at the Kelvin Grove campus to accommodate participation of all the faculties, and was a bridging day between the previous Arts mentoring program and the precursor to the Arts / Law program. There was a general invitation sent out to female academics in the Arts, Law and Business faculties. Speakers included panels on “The Process of Promotion” and on “The View from All Sides: Expectations of selection panels and discussion with recently promoted women”. An outline of the new mentoring program was presented to encourage those present to participate the next year. This was followed up by advertisements in the faculty newsletters, supportive emails from the Deans and the distribution of registration forms.



An official orientation session was held on the 22 February 2000. The Faculty of Law Equity Chair welcomed the group and introduced the Deans of Law and Arts who outlined their support for the program. The Equity Project Officers explained the concept of mentoring and introduced the group to some basic guidelines for the mentoring relationship. Prepared information sheets were provided to the participants along with a Mentoring Diary. The University Equity Coordinator spoke about the links between mentoring and equity. Those who had taken part in previous programs spoke about their experiences. In addition, this provided an opportunity for some of the mentorees to make the first contact with their mentors.

In April some pertinent journal articles were sent out to mentorees as a reminder of the program together with an informal letter from the Equity Project Officer inviting questions and feedback about the meetings and contacts made to date. Ongoing contact took place throughout the year including information and opportunities to attend conferences such as “Women Actively Managing their Futures” on 16 June 2000. To close the first year of the program, an Arts / Law Mentoring Lunch was held on Friday 27 October 2000 in the Council Room with Dr Cherrell Hirst as the guest speaker. This was a resounding success, especially because it underscored the importance of such programs to the university. The relationships continued into the next academic year. A survey was conducted early in 2001 to determine progress, and a final meeting was held in October 2001 to thank the mentors and gather views on the need for further follow-up programs.

## VII PROJECT OUTCOMES

The evaluation survey was prepared in March 2001 and sent out to both the mentorees and mentors. The object was to test the objective of ‘supportive working partnerships directed to enhancing career satisfaction and achievement of individual goals’. The questions in the survey were broadly based on an evaluation conducted by Dr Laurie Buys for an earlier program in the Faculty of Arts. Ethics approval was sought and given for this survey.

An analysis of the 15 completed surveys returned by mentorees demonstrate that:

46% (7) had worked in a university environment for less than 10 years and 53% (8) for more than 10 years. This latter group would of course include some senior lecturers. Of the group, 66% (10) had worked at QUT for less than 10 years and 33% (5) for over 10 years.

Meetings took place on average four times, with 73% (11) meeting under five times and 26% (4) meeting over five times. Communication was also made by phone, all replying that this occurred less than five times. Email was a more popular contact method with 46% (7) saying they had emailed less than five times and 53% (8) saying over five. The earlier 1997 program had reported more contacts by phone than email but this result obviously represents changing communication trends across the university.

The meetings were usually arranged on an ‘as required’ (85%), rather than on a regular basis, and these took place either in the mentor’s office (50%), or in coffee shops (42%). Most meetings lasted approximately one hour. This is a very similar result to the 1997

program. Meetings were initiated either by the mentoree or both parties, rather than by the mentor. Therefore, some initiative had to come from the mentoree.

The most popular issues for discussion included career development (92%), specific work strategies (92%) and organisational issues (75%) in that order. Interestingly the 1997 program results demonstrated more emphasis on personal issues and less emphasis on organisational issues. One main difference between the two programs was that the 2000 one required the mentorees to choose a specific goal for the program. This result perhaps reflected this difference.

The mentorees' goals centred on advice on career advancement (50%), personal promotion (50%), general personal and professional support (41%) and enhanced publication activity (33%). There was generally some progress made on these projects (76%) although some fully achieved their projects (30%). Two mentorees reported they had not acted on contacting their mentors at all.

Thirteen (92%) thought the mentoring relationship had been excellent or very satisfactory, and most were very satisfied with the time invested (100%) and frequency of meetings (93%) with their mentors.

I was lucky (and grateful to organisers) for my choice of mentor. We were quite perfectly matched. I was slow to initiate contact (a me thing) though I was also worried about how busy my mentor was and imposing on her time, when I felt she had many of the same issues as me.

My mentor has been great. It's been wonderful to be teamed with such a lively and vibrant individual.

My mentor is now also a mentor on a grant I received last year.

The end of year luncheon with Dr Cherrell Hirst was the most popular event in the program:

Underscored the importance of the program, that QUT values it.

I thought this was fantastic. I particularly found Dr Hirst's obvious and genuine interest in our project inspiring.

All but one of those who responded considered they had benefited from the mentoring program. When asked to comment about positive aspects about being involved in the mentoring program, the comments were very supportive.

Formal way of being involved in support relationship.

Getting out of the Faculty I found the most refreshing – I personally would encourage all mentees to have mentors out of the Faculty. I also found a (sounds goofy) a bit of a 'soul mate' and made a good friend.

Getting the right mentor.

Great mentor – achieved goals mentor assigned me for meeting with her colleague when she was away (very helpful).

Support outside my school! Encouragement and understanding. Sympathy.. Positive suggestions / strategies.

Getting to know my mentor – having her take a personal interest in my career – learning by example – making a personal friendship and close contact.

Knowing someone outside the faculty.

Advice from mentor based on personal experience.

An independent person with whom to discuss your work and career situation.

Enhanced personal organisational skills.

Networking.

I have learnt some things about organizational structure that I was not aware of previously.

Sage advice and support.

Having an introduction to a friendly committed colleague who is modelling how to be a successful woman academic and teaching me lots of things.

Support and guidance.

Participants were also asked whether there were any aspects of the program they had found disappointing. Some commented that their mentor had left QUT and another that there had been delay in making contact with the mentor because of ‘my own inability to be organized and assertive enough to make my first appointment’. Another comment was perhaps more reflective of the need not to expect miracles –

You discover after a while that your mentor doesn’t have magic answers to your problems. You have to be realistic about the process and its outcomes.

## VIII SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

There were several suggestions on how the program could be improved. These included the need for a formal way to exit the program if work and time commitments became unworkable. The spread of mentors and mentorees between campuses became a problem when arranging meetings.

In my case there is no time for mentoring activities. Secondly, it is almost impossible for me to go to Gardens Point or Kelvin Grove as I am at Carseldine.

There also seemed to be a call for more informal meetings among mentorees.

Need more than the Orientation – an event each semester would be good. I really liked the networking opportunities of the Orientation, and would like much more of this as I find I feel very isolated (partly due to overwork and location.)

More regular group meetings with group members eg monthly over paper bag lunch.

Specific talks at these lunches eg by Equity Section; one pair of mentor/mentorees to speak; senior university manager etc.

Getting together, sharing experiences would be very empowering.

There is currently a good balance between supporting us and letting us all do it our own way – this is great. One suggestion might be a half yearly or quarterly email reminder re whether we've been in touch recently with our mentor as it is very easy to get caught up with work and overlook it.

## IX MENTORS' RESPONSES

Mentors taking part in the program were asked whether their experience had enhanced job satisfaction through involvement in such areas as –

- sharing of expertise,
- helping mentorees to clarify work goals,
- contributing to the organisation's strengths by fostering professionalism through mentoring,
- gaining a fresh perspective and insights from the mentoree through collaboration or innovation,
- building networks and team projects throughout the university,
- increasing skills in academic leadership.

These were the indicators used in the earlier Faculty of Arts program.<sup>72</sup> All seven respondents indicated satisfaction in at least two of these areas. An analysis of the seven surveys returned by mentors demonstrates that the main positive ways in which the mentor thought they aided the mentorees was through sharing institutional knowledge and expertise and helping to clarify work goals.

On sharing of expertise:

It is particularly rewarding to be able to share one's knowledge of the system and academic matters with a newer member of staff.

This has been a major focus of the relationship and allowed for comparisons and options to be developed.

I think I was able to share expertise in relation to a number of areas: applying for PDP leave for PhD study, advice re PhD supervision problems and conflict within the school.

I did feel I was able to guide my mentee through the issues with which she was dealing. As an experienced manager, I was more knowledgeable about University procedures, team work and dealing with management.

On helping mentoree to clarify work goals:

I think that the mentoring system is very useful for junior members of staff who are hoping for promotion.

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<sup>72</sup> M Bodsworth and L Buys, above n 3, 7.

Yes, much of our discussion was around PhD study and its significance to the mentoree's career development.

Yes I think this was useful for her and myself.

My mentee and I spent some time on this. I hope I was able to help her consider fresh options and prioritise the options available.

On contributing to the organisation's strengths by fostering professionalism through mentoring:

Mentoree and I are from academic and general staff. We found it an enriching experience to build a relationship from different bases. I was able to contribute more to her situation than I had first thought.

On gaining a fresh perspective and insights from the mentoree through collaboration or innovation:

It helps to keep in touch with the career aspirations and interests of younger staff.

As above, I certainly gained some insights into an academic's working life, in particular, how isolated an academic can be from teamwork and support.

On building networks and team projects throughout the university:

Not really? – but a friendship formed and links to another area of the university – networks perhaps.

Building / adding to my network of women academics was very satisfying.

Overall the response to the program from both mentors and mentorees was very positive.

## X REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some basic recommendations flowed from this program. The earlier 1997 report had indicated that workshops should incorporate information on the different types of relationships so that participants might 'tailor their relationship to meet their particular needs'.<sup>73</sup> Although this was covered, one aspect that was not pursued in the QUT program was a negotiated mentoring agreement of the type recommended for agreeing on doctoral supervision relationships. It is important to agree on the parameters of a mentoring relationship right from the beginning. It is helpful to clarify ideas on such things as:

- The expected role of the mentor,
- Dealing with confidentiality issues,
- The mentoree's goals and expectations,
- Agreement on the duration of the relationship (usually no more than two years in an assigned mentoring scheme), and

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<sup>73</sup> Bodsworth and Buys, above n 3, 24.

- Frequency of meetings.<sup>74</sup>

In addition, the mentor needs to be provided with an updated resume at the beginning, possibly by the organisers. The organisers should also stipulate who is to make the first move so that the relationship does not stall before it is even begun. In some respects, it might be useful for the mentoree to also be given the mentor's resume. This should facilitate the first stage of any such relationship, which is of course the creation of a rapport. From there the mentoring relationship usually progresses through several stages including the formulation of objectives, and assessing the 'here and now', that is, the mentoree's point of departure, and deciding on the 'there and then', that is, the end point.<sup>75</sup> Together they can decide on how best to get from 'here to there'. More important even than this decision is the mentoree's need to perform and then the mentor can assess progress. In addition, appropriate arrangements should be set in place so that alternative placements can be made if the relationship fails for some reason. There needs to be a formal resignation process established.

A Reflective Diary of the meetings can also be productive. A Diary was provided to mentorees at the beginning of the program but most reported that they had not used it, possibly because of lack of time for reflection and assessment of progress over the time period. At least one response indicated that the diary was seen as a constraint on the flow of the relationship – 'I didn't use the mentoring diary – just not my thing – forms prescriptive'.

In addition, it may have been useful to add another level of administration to the process. This would involve the organisers in looking carefully at the nominated projects identified and discussing these further with the mentorees in order to determine if basic training could be put in place for the mentoree, rather than burden the mentor unnecessarily with skills training. Time management or assertiveness training can be provided in more efficient ways than through mentoring. Nor is mentoring a solution to dysfunctional doctoral supervision.

Timing also appears to be vital to success. It would seem that the best time to provide a mentor is at the beginning of the academic career. It is at that point that the most appropriate advice can be given and this will invariably result in the person wasting less valuable career planning time. This need has especially been recognized for the development of research by early career women academics.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps further help is required once the academic's position has stabilized, and promotion begins to appear realistically in sight, or a PhD candidate needs extra assistance to achieve completion. Researchers have identified four basic academic career stages. These are apprentice, colleague, mentor and sponsor, roughly equivalent to associate lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer and professor.<sup>77</sup> Academics may move from one rank to another without

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<sup>74</sup> Some of these were from a checklist in Belle Alderman, *Mentoring Relationships* <<http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/alia2000/proceedings/belle.alderman.html>> (8/6/2001) which she had based on M Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991) 158-159.

<sup>75</sup> Based on the Seven-Stage Mentoring Process from N MacLennan, *Coaching and Mentoring* (Gower 1995).

<sup>76</sup> J Niland, 'Staff Development in Relation to Research', Implementation Minute No 100, UNSW 2000 <<http://www.workingparties.unsw.edu.au/impmin/impmin100.html>> (8/6/2001).

<sup>77</sup> From M N Maack and J Passet, *Aspirations and Mentoring in an Academic Environment: Women Faculty in Library and Information Science* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994) 19 based on G

necessarily being promoted. Therefore, mentoring co-ordination needs to take into account the actual level of the mentoree and provide more expert mentors. It would seem that some mentorees may have entered this program at the wrong time for them personally because of their research and teaching schedules.

Another recommendation is to also examine mentoring alternatives. One challenge to the program was provided by the lack of senior women available to act as mentors. Research indicates that 'women tend to find it easier to approach other women as mentors',<sup>78</sup> and 'that same-sex mentoring relationships are most productive'.<sup>79</sup> A response to this situation may be to establish a limited peer mentoring activities program to support women's research development including advice on publishing academic work, the do's and don'ts of grant writing, how a research profile impacts on career advancement and how to balance teaching, research and administrative responsibilities.<sup>80</sup> Kram speaks of three types of peer mentoring relationships – Information Peer, Collegial Peer and Special Peer as representing a continuum of support relationships from low-level information provision to intimate self disclosure.<sup>81</sup> Peer mentoring may be another avenue to investigate in the future.

## XI TRANSFERABILITY

This mentoring program provided a basic framework in which to work in establishing other mentoring schemes. Mentoring as a process is a cost-effective and popular form of support within the university and the legal profession. Recently the Faculty has been approached for support and advice on mentoring projects from an array of different groups.

Members of the Bar were keen to form a Bar Mentoring scheme to encourage the participation of indigenous and other students at the bar by providing focussed support and guidance for individual students. This scheme has been through one iteration with students from several equity groups participating. The Oodgeroo Unit, which provides support for indigenous students, has also encouraged such schemes together with the mentoring type programs established for indigenous students wanting to work in the courts. These aim to provide shadowing opportunities so that students can work with the judges and their associates on a regular basis. This is happening in the Supreme Court in Queensland and places are available for students in the Federal and Family Courts and interstate.

In addition, the Faculty External Students Facilitator and the Equity Project Officer applied successfully for an Equity Grant to establish a mentoring scheme for external law students in the Rockhampton area. The scheme united seven external law students living in the Rockhampton area with local lawyers who were willing to act as their

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Dalton, P Thompson and R Price, 'The Four Stages of Professional Careers: A New Look at the Performance of Professionals' (1977) Summer *Organizational Dynamics* 6, 23.

<sup>78</sup> C Mitchell, 'Mentoring and Development' (1992) 66 (3) *Law Institute Journal* 172.

<sup>79</sup> R Moayed, 'Mentoring a Diverse Population' in S N Davis, M Crawford and J Sebrecchts (eds), *Coming into Her Own: Educational Success in Girls and Women* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999) at 229 citing Goldstein 1979; Tidball 1973.

<sup>80</sup> 'Women Share to launch career success' (1999) 8 (27) *UniNEWS* <<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExtRels/Media/UN/archive/1999/427/womenshare.html>> (8/6/2001).

<sup>81</sup> K Kram and L Isabella, 'Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development' (1985) 28 (1) *Academy of Management Journal* 110.



mentors. The project was designed to help students gain a real-world understanding of law by developing a support network with members of the local legal profession. Another student mentoring project has been established to give support and guidance to first year law students who applied for the equity-based Law Founder's Scholarship. This involved new law students being linked with younger solicitors employed in the firms.

Thus, the experience gained during this program has had spin-offs. In at least one case students have been advised against instituting a mentoring program because of the responsibilities entailed. Individual mentoring is not always the best vehicle. A less administratively onerous student organised support group, for example, can be less time consuming and a beneficial preliminary step. A group support program rather than individual mentoring might be more cost-effective for new graduates who are keen to meet a cross-section of practitioners and view varied workplace environments. This programme has provided a benchmark for other equity support projects.

## XII IN CONCLUSION

The QUT program benefited the individual mentorees taking part by providing them with both concrete outcomes, being the achievement of their own individual goals, and the added benefits of increased networking within the wider university community. They were given an opportunity to benchmark their own progress and achievements against the expectations of senior managers and experienced teachers and researchers from a variety of fields. The mentorees' responses indicated they had progressed their individually chosen projects and that they were very satisfied with the time spent pursuing the program. Some mentorees could count their success in terms of completed PhDs and successful grant and promotion applications. Other outcomes of the program such as increased self-confidence, enhanced morale, a greater sense of being supported within the university and better understanding of the university system, are more difficult to quantify.<sup>82</sup> Thus, this program benefited the university by providing cost-effective support for staff in the form of directed guidance and fostering of skills and knowledge in this committed contingent. It increased interdisciplinary communication. It is also a tribute to the calibre of the senior staff mentors working in the organization.

This project therefore has provided an awareness of the shared nature of academic endeavour across disciplines and the common difficulties facing women in academia. It has highlighted the need for more informal support apart from the Performance Planning and Review process. In this regard, Steve Colwell has pointed out the difference between the supervisor or instrumental mentor who has power over the mentoree, and the potential for such a relationship to be overshadowed entirely by the institution and institutional ambitions, along with the need for professionals to staff its programs in compliance with its strategic aims.<sup>83</sup> The difference between secondary mentors and this program lies in the fact that the scheme described in this paper was voluntary. It was not concerned with competence but with fostering excellence. It is therefore closer to the traditional "Yoda" mentoring role. Thus, this paper, and the example of the program described here, demonstrates that personal assigned mentoring

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<sup>82</sup> Bodsworth and Buys, above n 3, 6.

<sup>83</sup> S Colwell, 'Mentoring, Socialisation and the Mentor/Protégé Relationship' (1998) 3 *Teaching in Higher Education* 313.

programs are certainly one way of providing useful support and socialisation, as well as career guidance, for individual female academics who choose to take an active part.