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.

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

*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
suggestion 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior* academic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior** General</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>178</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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
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).

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
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

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.

### TABLE 12 Gender and staff classification of interviewed mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements about mentoring</th>
<th>Female mentor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Male mentor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree/strongly disagree</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Agree/strongly agree</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Disagree/strongly disagree</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Agree/strongly agree</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had clear expectations about what I wanted to achieve from the mentoring process</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a clear idea of the mentoring process and how it should work</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made my expectation of the mentoring process clear to my mentor</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor made their expectations of the mentoring process clear to me</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that my mentor had a clear idea of the mentoring process and how it should work</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would describe my mentoring experience as focused and clear about the purpose of mentoring</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was committed to making the most of my mentoring opportunity</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor showed commitment to the mentoring process</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor took an interest in my career development</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me to develop career goals</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I established a positive professional relationship with my mentor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider my mentor to be a friend</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my mentor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have good rapport with my mentor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to discuss confidential issues with my mentor</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to discuss my weaknesses with my mentor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to discuss my strengths with my mentor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in viewpoints</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in personality</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I adequately dealt with differences in gender</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time spent with my mentor was useful to my development as a leader</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I was satisfied with my mentoring experience</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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 the way we

continued on page 97
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

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

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.*
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.

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...
MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

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