Research Project

Recruitment and Retention of Academic Women at the University of Wollongong

Project Design

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Contents

- Aims
- Methodology
- Section One...........................................UOW patterns
- Section Two...........................................Positioning UOW
- Section Three...........................................Literature Review
- Section Four...........................................Focus Groups
- Section Five...........................................Strategy Development
- Section Six...........................................Reporting
**PROJECT AIMS**

- To research employment trends for academic women, particularly senior women at UOW which may impact on their recruitment and retention.
- To make relevant comparisons so as to illuminate UOW patterns.
- To compile and report on strategies to improve representation of academic and senior women.

**PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

The required information will be compiled using UOW, DEST & ODEOPE statistics, from project interview responses and focus groups with UOW existing staff.

Identified employment patterns and confounding factors will be mapped for women against corresponding patterns for men.

UOW profile for academic women will be located within the higher education sector in Australia.

Best practice universities will be identified and comparisons made in terms of staff profile and responses provided at interview from identified staff at these universities and with equivalent staff at UOW.

When making comparisons with other universities and organizations, Faculties and schools etc will be monitored for occupational segregation based on gender.

Tasks presented in boxes as ‘further research’ may be added to the research design in the future to provide significant depth and power to the research findings.
SECTION ONE: UOW PATTERNS, PAST 3-5 YEARS  
(KM to undertake, RW & MM to oversee)

a. Document and provide analysis UOW academic staff profile by gender and level for past 5 years including

- Academic staff numbers by gender and levels B through to E and above
- Percentage of total academic staff by gender and levels B through to E and above
- Percentage shift at levels B through to E during the last 5 years

Data source: Concept, UOW HR system, statistical reporting provided to ODEOPE, table 1

b. Document and provide analysis UOW recruitment patterns by gender and level for past 5 years including

- Employment applications received for academic positions advertised at level B, C, D, and E and above
- Employment offers made for academic positions at level B, C, D, E and above
- Appointments made for academic positions at level B, C, D, E and above
- External appointments made for academic positions at level B, C, D, E and above
- Internal appointments made for academic positions at level B, C, D, E and above and general staff positions at level 10 and above

Data source: Concept, UOW HR system, statistical reporting provided to ODEOPE, tables 3 & 4

c. Document and provide analysis of starting salary patterns at UOW by gender for the past 5 years including

- Academic staff starting at base salary of a level and above base salary of a level

Data source: Concept, UOW HR system, statistical reporting provided to ODEOPE, table 6

d. Document and provide analysis of UOW employment status patterns by continuing and contract employment and gender for past 5 years including

- Academic staff at level B through to E and above

Data source: Concept, UOW HR system, statistical reporting provided to ODEOPE table 2
e. Document and provide analysis UOW promotion patterns by gender and level for past 5 years including
   - Academic staff at level B through to E and above

   **Data source:** Concept, UOW HR system, statistical reporting provided to ODEOPE table 5

f. Document and provide analysis UOW voluntary separation patterns by gender and level for past 5 years including
   - Academic staff at levels B through to E and above excluding academic staff who separated from UOW at the conclusion of their employment contract.

   **Data source:** Concept, UOW HR system, special report

   Further research: Undertake corresponding analysis with general staff women and men at level 10 and above

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**g. Phone Interviews with UOW or ex-UOW academics.**

(1:1, record from speaker phone or tape, with permission)

This section of the project aims for a sample size of 30 women and 30 men. Therefore this number will determine the relevant chronological period. The sample group will include:

- senior academic women who have left UOW (level C and above)
- level B women who have left UOW
- senior women who have stayed at UOW (level C and above)
- level B women who have stayed at UOW.

   Further research: Undertake corresponding analysis with men
   Undertake corresponding analysis with general staff women and men at level 10 and above

   **Data source:** Phone interviews conducted by Kristy Muir.

Issues to be explored by phone interviews will include:

- Employment location prior to UOW;
- Reasons for joining, staying and separating from employment at UOW;
- Detailed tracking of career at UOW including level and step of appointment, employment basis, study leave experiences, nature of any career movements
- time spent at each academic level if relevant
- personal information which may provide insight to confounding factors
Interview Questions
General Information including confounding factors
- Length of stay at UOW.
- Period spent at each academic level, while at UOW.
- Age
- Educational attainments at first full-time academic employment.
- Was post-grad study undertaken concurrently with full-time academic employment?
- Do you have any children? If so, how many?
- Do you plan to have children?
- Have you taken parental leave? Number of times? Period of each time?
- Marital status; single, spouse, partnered, is your spouse/partner employed as an academic?
- Ages, & number of children living with you?
- Who is the main care-giver for the child/children?
- Main ‘breadwinner’ or ‘career’ (has the couple decided to follow, or to privilege one partner’s career?)
- Current Postcode (for travel analysis); postcode when employed at UOW?
- Carer status, other than children (eg ageing parents)

Employment experiences at UOW
- At what level and step did you commence employment at UOW? Was this negotiated?
- How long did you spend at your commencement level?
- Have you been promoted? How long did you spend at your post-promotion level?
- How many periods of study leave have you undertaken? What length was each period?
- How many international conferences have you attended? (‘International’ is taken here to mean outside Australia)

Open-ended questions for interviews
- Why did you leave UOW? (‘push’ or ‘pull’, or combination?)
- What attracted you to your current situation?
- What might have induced you to stay at UOW?
- Why are you at UOW?
- Would you consider leaving UOW?
- What would attract you away from UOW?
- If you plan to stay at UOW, why are you staying?

h. Consideration of possible ‘confounding’ factors.

Research team to discuss range of confounding factors which may impact on recruitment and retention levels of academic women and include in section f.

Data source: Phone interviews conducted by Kristy Muir.
i. Interviews with senior personnel, Vice-Chancellor and Director of Personnel/HR at UOW

- Interviews will be conducted by non-UOW staff member. An appropriate experienced external person will be identified.

**Interview questions**

- How are UOW's EEO policies and targets set?
- How is UOW's EEO policies and targets working? How effective is their implementation? Why?
- What are the advantages of EEO policies and targets at UOW?
- What are the UOW patterns with respect to the attraction, promotion and retention of senior academic women?
- Is it important to have significant numbers of academic women in senior positions? Why/why not?
- What are the characteristics of ‘quality academics’ at senior levels? What are the strengths/weaknesses of ‘quality academics’ at senior levels?
SECTION TWO: POSITIONING UOW AS TO NATIONAL PATTERNS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BEST-PRACTICE

a. Document national (all Australian universities) patterns, corresponding to those compiled in Section 1a

- Compare UOW data with other Universities.

Data source: DEST statistics

b. Make comparisons to best practice universities.

- Select one national University, and one ‘UOW-like/gumtree’ University that are ‘best-practice’ for recruitment and retention of women into/in senior academic positions.

- Select one NSW University, and one ‘UOW-like/gumtree’ University that are ‘best-practice’ for recruitment and retention of women into/in senior academic positions.

  - Compare UOW data with that of ‘best-practice’ Universities. (RA)
  - Consider available best-practice data for exit ratios. This might provide possible targets for UOW.
  - Note numbers of women as a percentage of academic staff.
  - Note numbers of women, and men, in Level B and senior academic positions.
  - Note proportions of senior academic women relative to senior academic men.
  - Note proportions of senior academic women relative to academic women.
  - Note ratios: senior women to junior women; senior men to junior men.

Data Source: Selection of best practice institutions will be based on consultation with EOWA and ODEOPE respectively and available comparative data from DEST, ODEOPE and relevant institutions

b. Interviews with academic women at other universities

- Conduct interviews with academic women at level B and senior women at other universities, including ‘best practice’ universities.

Interview questions

- What attracted you to your current University/situation?
- What would attract you to UOW?
c. **Interviews with senior personnel at other universities**

- Conduct interviews with senior personnel, (where possible the Vice-Chancellor, Director Personnel/HR and EEO Director), at best practice universities

- Use questions as constructed for UOW Vice-Chancellor & Director of Personnel, but modified to suit other universities if required.

d. **Compare UOW responses with responses from other universities**

- Compare relevant UOW responses 1g and 1i with responses for 2c and 2d
SECTION THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

- Conduct and document literature review, including material on relevant strategies in place at other universities and organisations.

SECTION FOUR: FOCUS GROUPS

a. Conduct focus groups with senior women academics at UOW
   - Focus groups should/might provide expanded, or more detailed material, possibly drawing from project’s previous research.
   - Focus Group Stimulus Questions: Use relevant open-ended questions as in 1g as guides.

b. Conduct focus groups with level B women academics at UOW
   - Focus groups should/might provide expanded, or more detailed material, possibly drawing from project’s previous research.
   - Focus Group Stimulus Questions: Use relevant open-ended questions as in 1g as guides.

SECTION FIVE: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Showing awareness of the project’s research and findings, develop a range of strategies to address the retention and attraction of women academics, particularly senior women academics, at UOW. Incorporate an interview with Rewards and Incentives Officer at UOW to explore current practice.

SECTION SIX: REPORTING

a. Prepare a detailed, written report including an Executive Summary providing recommendations for the UOW Equal Employment Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Committee.

b. Present report to selected groups.
   - Groups to be determined but could include the VC, HR Director, Deans & senior Executive, HODs & HOSs, Campus wide...

c. Prepare material and schedule for conference presentation and publication.

Further research: Follow up Study in 12 or 24 months time

Research project commissioned as part of EEO/AA Action Plan 2003