

# Working with students for students: engaging all student voices in tertiary institution decision making in Australia

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Professor Sally Varnham  
University of Technology Sydney



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# The Student Voice Australia Pilot Project - 2018-2019

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A collaboration between ten institutions

- working towards a sustainable national presence for student voice – for networking and the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experience to develop a sector which incorporates all student views as ‘the way we do things’.
- assisting the participant institutions to facilitate processes based on the STEPUP Principles and Framework.

I am very pleased to be joined by student leaders and representatives

- Bijay Sapkota
- Lukas Kristen
- Dharlene Juan
- Pallavi Verma

# Background

- **National Senior Teaching Fellowship (began Sept 2016) - a sector-wide collaboration from April – June 2017.**
- **Formulated **STEPUP (Students and Tertiary Education Providers Undertaking Partnership) for Quality Enhancement****
- **Followed an OLT grant 2015-2016 which looked at international experience of authentic and effective student engagement in institutional decision making particularly:**
  1. Student partnerships in quality Scotland (sparqs);
  2. The UK Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP);
  3. The Irish National Student Engagement Pilot Programme (NStEp)
  4. The New Zealand Union of Students Association (NZUSA) MoU with quality agency (AQA). Research with Ako Aotearoa.



# What?

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**Student engagement means many different things to different people – depends on where they come from in the sector.**

**The elements of student engagement were identified by the Student Engagement Framework for Scotland:**

1. students feeling part of a supportive institution
2. students engaging in their own learning
3. students working with their institution in shaping the direction of learning
4. formal mechanisms for quality and governance
5. influencing the student experience at national level.

# *‘Student partnership is an ethos not an activity’*

It means authentic engagement of students in all aspects of the institutional life and student experience.



## Specifically it includes

- **Local level:** Engaging students in development of their learning in the classroom – designing their learning experience with them ...
- **mid level:** curriculum and course design and redesign, assessment, course moves and process changes ...
- **High level:** university strategy and policy eg learning and teaching strategies, governance

# Why? Regulation of higher education by TEQSA

*Higher Education (Threshold) Standards 2015 (from January 2017)*

CI 6.1.4 and 6.3 provide that:

students have opportunities to participate in 'deliberative and decision making processes' and academic governance



# Why? benefits for providers, students and staff

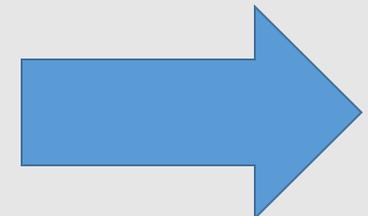
## Providers

- material to inform enhancement of courses and student experience;
- transformation from traditional relationships in higher education;
- development of self sustaining communities with shared goals and values;
- reputation as being an institution 'in touch' with its students



# Benefits for student representatives and the wider student body

- ✓ retention and success through belonging and empowerment;
- ✓ development of skills for critical thinking, innovation, leadership, citizenship – important for employability;
- ✓ seeing students can have a voice that is listened to and valued;
- ✓ seeing changes secured on their behalf



# Benefits for staff

- ❖ ideas for collaborative processes;
- ❖ enhancement of learning and teaching;
- ❖ understanding of student needs;
- ❖ learning from and incorporating diversity;
- ❖ developing relationships as a community



# Recent reports from UK

- **sparqs, 2017** – *Celebrating Achievement*
- **Flint, Goddard & Russell/TSEP, 2017** – *Architects of their experience: the role, value and impact of student academic representation systems in Higher Education in England*
- **HEA UK, 2015** – *Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership;*

# How?

- Common understanding of partnership; and
- Institutional commitment to working with students in partnership vital

“The implications of perceiving students as partners, rather than consumers are substantial and deep. The student as partner is an active member of an institution with which s/he shares a strong allegiance and commitment.”

*(2016. Embedding the Principles of Student Engagement, Ireland QQI/USI, IUA, IoTI, HEA)*

**A call for institutions to conduct audit to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities**



**Principle 7: A National Presence- for facilitation and support**

**Principle 6: Valuing student voice – recognition of formal and informal engagement**

**Principle 5: Every student's voice- diversity and inclusivity**

**Principle 4: Training and Support- as a partnership**

**Principle 3: Strong student leadership**

**Principle 2: Communication- honesty and transparency**

**Principle 1: Building authentic partnerships**

**Stepup  
For Quality Enhancement**

**Students and tertiary education providers undertaking partnership for quality enhancement**

# Thank you!



Contact me at: [Sally.Varnham@uts.edu.au](mailto:Sally.Varnham@uts.edu.au) or the  
Project Manager: [Kate.Walsh@uts.edu.au](mailto:Kate.Walsh@uts.edu.au)

The Fellowship website:  
[www.studentvoiceaustralia.com](http://www.studentvoiceaustralia.com)

Facebook: Student voice in university decision-  
making