

ENGAGING ALUMNI TO SUPPORT EMPLOYABILITY AND THE STUDY-WORK TRANSITION

Jessica J. Vanderlelie

Presenting Author: Jessica Vanderlelie (j.vanderlelie@griffith.edu.au)
School of Medical Science, Griffith University, Gold Coast QLD 4222, Australia

Abstract

Ensuring graduate employability is core business for Australian Higher Education Institutions and evidence-based strategies for embedding employability have been implemented across the sector. This work is particularly important in STEM disciplines where students are presented with a broad array of career opportunities. For universities interested in improving employability skills and graduate outcomes, it is imperative to move beyond requests of alumni to provide mentoring, membership on advisory boards, donations, and contributions to brand capital. To date, alumni are an underutilised resource in supporting employability and they are often left to fend for themselves in the transition from university.

This OLT National Teaching Fellowship proposes a redefinition of the philosophy of the alumnus and their role in Australian Higher education. By reshaping our notions of success and modalities for connecting with alumni we may enhance our capacity to maintain connection with our graduates. In return we will unlock their intelligences to support curricula and employability initiatives, ensuring graduate capabilities in future cohorts. This session aims to explore current alumni engagement methodologies, provide tools for connecting with alumni, and open dialogue around the role of alumni connection in facilitating graduate success and the study-work transition.

Objectives

- To develop participant awareness of the value of alumni engagement in STEM disciplines.
- To explore opportunities for alumni contribution to undergraduate curriculum and employability initiatives.
- To help participants facilitate improved relationships between alumni and their School or University.

Workshop description

Two hours with 50 participants maximum. The intended audience is (i) academic staff involved in the development of employability curriculum and (ii) university leadership interested in supporting alumni relationships.

Activities include:

- Identification of key areas in programs where alumni may contribute to employability.
- Discussion of current and emerging methods for supporting graduates in the transition to work.
- Strategies for developing and maintaining strong alumni networks.



Biography of workshop leader

Dr. Jessica Vanderlelie is a Senior Lecturer at the Griffith University School of Medical Science, where she coordinates the embedding of employability curriculum across the Faculty of Health. Jessica is passionate about supporting graduate success and as an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow, is currently leading a program of activities to 'Revision Alumni Engagement for Graduate Success'.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, The University of Queensland, Sept 28th to 30th, 2016, page 162, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-5-3.