

Student engagement in university decision-making and governance - towards a more systemically inclusive student voice - OLT Strategic Priority Commissioned Project led by Professor Sally Varnham, Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney.

This project aims to develop more systemic approaches to the inclusion of student voice in decision-making and governance in Australian universities. This relates not only to the activities at the highest levels of governance, but also at faculty level, such as faculty boards, and input on curriculum reviews. The project builds on the research of Project Leader, Professor Sally Varnham, and her experience in governance roles within higher education - Chair of Academic Board, representative on the University Council and Student Ombud - and her activities in mentoring student representatives on governance bodies.

In the first phase of the project, Professor Varnham has worked with members of her extensive international network to identify good practices in the formal provision for student participation in university governance and decision-making in UK, New Zealand and Europe.

Phase 2 of the project is a survey to determine the range of approaches and the mechanisms for active student engagement adopted by Australian universities. We are aware that this may range from “no requirement to include students” to what we recognise as excellent practices, where student engagement is considered an ideal platform for structured leadership development. This phase is informed by a national survey undertaken by the University of Bath for the UK Quality Assurance Agency and we are fortunate to have ongoing input from the leader of the UK project.

The third phase of the project is to develop a national learning community which will develop and share good practice in this area. The project budget provides small amounts of funding to participating universities to develop good practice case studies.

Project contact details:

Project Leader:

Email: Sally.Varnham@uts.edu.au

Tel: +61 2 95143455; mob +61 415392834

Project Officer:

Email: Ann.Cahill@uts.edu.au