

## **ANU Engagement and Success Team**

### **Gaining a Better Understanding of Student Experience at ANU**

#### **Two internships available for Winter or Semester 2, 2021**

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The Engagement and Success team provides a range of programs and services to enable students to learn and grow intellectually, socially and professionally during their time at ANU. We undertake activities and provide resources that support orientation and transition, programs that foster extra-curricular enrichment and social connections through organised program's events and activities, provide opportunities to build leadership and community building for all students to help them find their place. Engagement and Success supports the University to meet its strategic objectives by ensuring an enriched student experience is accessible for all students. We aim to undertake activities under the Healthy University Strategy to promote various forms of student development, health and wellbeing within our community.

#### **Project: Gaining a Better Understanding of Student Experience at ANU**

##### **Internship Details:**

- Internship Availability: Winter or Semester 2, 2021
- Internship Discipline: Science communication; science communication outreach; psychology
- Internship Level: Undergraduate 3<sup>rd</sup> yr, or Postgraduate coursework
- Available to International Students: Yes
- Preferred Project Skills:
  - Data analytics
  - Strong writing and communication skills
  - Research including question design and qualitative data analysis
  - Running focus groups
- Clearances Required: Working with Vulnerable People Card
- Location: Level 3, Di Riddell Student Centre, ANU
- Host supervisor/mentor: Ash Dowling, Deputy Manager, Student Development (Ph: 6125 5416; E: ash.dowling@anu.edu.au)
- Project opportunities/benefits for the intern:
  - Exposure to systems, processes, and best practices for student engagement, orientation and transition
  - Engage with staff in a professional work environment

##### **Summary:**

The experience of transition is a unique individualised and personal experience (Schlossberg, 2007), as are the challenges experienced by students and the support required to overcome them. We cannot support students to overcome challenges and actively engage in the community if we do not have a better understanding of what presents as challenges for these students from the very start of their time as a student with an institution and how and what they want to engage with to enhance their student experience.

We are seeking to gain a deeper understanding of our students by learning about the challenges faced by several student cohorts at ANU, those from equity backgrounds and commuter/off-campus students, to assist to address challenges and barriers students face in transitioning to ANU and connecting into the community. We are hoping to have two interns running focus groups during Winter or Semester 2, each intern will focus on one group: those from equity backgrounds; or commuter/off-campus students.

At present, ANU does not currently have a clear understanding of the experiences and opportunities for improvement for these students. We would like to gather data on transition and support experiences of students at ANU to properly understand their situation, ensure students understand the current support available to them and implement appropriate new support and engagement mechanisms as required. This would include gaining an understanding of key challenges faced by different student groups alongside connections they have forged, mapping common challenges and support experienced by these students and outline opportunities for improvement. This project would result in a written report, include a recommendation of challenges and support mechanisms to focus on first, and would require ethics approval to move forward.

There is an opportunity for interns to support ANU in gathering and interpreting this data to better support students. The interns will learn skills in developing and implementing research-based data collection through focus groups and translating data into both written and visual representation to provide a clear indication of the current situation on campus as well as potential support mechanisms.

This is an opportunity for self-motivated students who can work independently, are passionate about helping others and have a keen understanding of interpreting data and research methods.

#### References:

Schlossberg, N. (2008). *Overwhelmed: Coping with Life's Ups and Downs*. Lanham, MD, USA: M. Evans.