

## Report on CAUTHE 2015 PhD/ECR Workshop

The Bill Faulkner PhD/ECR workshop entitled *“From Research Quality to Research Impact”* was held on 2 February 2015 at Southern Cross University (SCU), Gold Coast, as part of the CAUTHE 2015 Conference. The workshop was facilitated by Pascal Scherrer from SCU (the conference host organisation) and organised with the support of CAUTHE representatives Sebastian Filep and Aise Kim. The purpose of the workshop was *“To stimulate and facilitate informed, contextual and holistic academic career planning by taking a strategic approach to achieving research quality and impact”*. Cornerstones of the program were two academic keynote speakers (John Tribe & Susanne Becken) - each followed by facilitated small group discussions in groups arranged by stage of PhD (i.e. early, mid, late, post), individualised mentoring sessions, a keynote speaker from industry/government (Frances Cream) and a panel discussion (speakers + Sue Beeton and Bob McKercher). The workshop had a strong focus on mentoring with a targeted CV-focussed mentoring sessions after lunch. Each academic mentor was paired with two PhD/ECR mentees. Mentors and mentees were matched based on gender and research topic, subject to availability. They were introduced via email in the week prior to the workshop and mentors were provided with a copy of the mentees’ CVs and a discussion guide for the session. A total of 46 workshop participants (mentees) were matched with 23 academic mentors. Recruitment of mentors occurred via various means including: (1) personal invitation via email to all CAUTHE Fellows; (2) invitation to all Professor and Associate Professor level conference registrants (registered as at 6 Jan 2015) and (3) via self-nomination during the registration process (by selecting the tick box with the statement *“I am willing to become a Mentor to PhD or Early Career Researchers participating in CAUTHE 2015”*).

Prior to the workshop, concerns were raised via email by Elisa Bakker and Larry Dwyer regarding the self-nomination process. Larry stated that: *“the process is ‘too democratic’. In the past the committee has invited a selected group of very senior academics, 100% at full Professor Level (old farts!). ... the list of mentors did give a certain ‘gravitas’ to the workshops. ... I think the event will lose its special reputation if this situation [invitation of mentors at below Professor levels] were allowed to continue.”* The multi-pronged approach used by the organisers, however, facilitated a gender ratio of mentors that accounted for the high female representation of participants and the severe gender imbalance at Professor level which is male dominated (see also statistics below on workshop participants). It also enabled a 1:2 ratio between mentors and mentees to facilitate a personalised, contextual and in-depth mentoring session not possible in a larger group in the available timeframe.

Informal feedback provided by the workshop participants following the workshop and throughout the conference has been very positive and exclusively so. In terms of benchmarks, several participants also favourably compared the 2015 workshop to the previous year. Similarly, feedback from facilitators and mentors was very positive, with several making statements reflecting the following quote: *“the PhD/ECR workshop is the most important and enjoyable part of the conference, the rest is just fluff”*, thus highlighting the value and importance of this conference component. A formal evaluation will be conducted by CAUTHE (Aise Kim) via an online survey to participants and mentors/facilitators.

Following is a brief overview of the **type of participants** in the workshop program:

- PhD/ECR participants: 46
  - 12 early PhD; 11 mid PhD; 18 late PhD; 5 post PhD
  - Female: 59%; Male: 41%
- Table Discussion Facilitators: 6
  - Female: 50%; Male: 50%
- Mentors: 23
  - 13 Prof; 2 A/Prof; 5 SenLec; 2 ResFellow; 1 Lec
  - Female: 52%; Male: 48% (NOTE: only 3 (23%) out of the 13 available Professors were female)
- CAUTHE Fellows *involved*: 5 (2 participated as discussion group facilitators and mentors; 3 arrived mid-day and participated as mentors)
- CAUTHE Fellows *absent*: 5 (4 did not attend conference; 1 was unavailable on Monday)

I would like to acknowledge the many people who have contributed to the workshop in some form or another and in particular Sebastian Filep and Aise Kim in the development of the workshop program, the discussion group facilitators who skilfully managed the table discussions and generously shared their experience, the keynote speakers, the mentors and Bob McKercher and Catheryn Khoo-Latimore for their pro-active approach and actively seeking to assist and get involved.

It has been a pleasure to be involved.

Kind regards,

Pascal Scherrer 09/02/2015