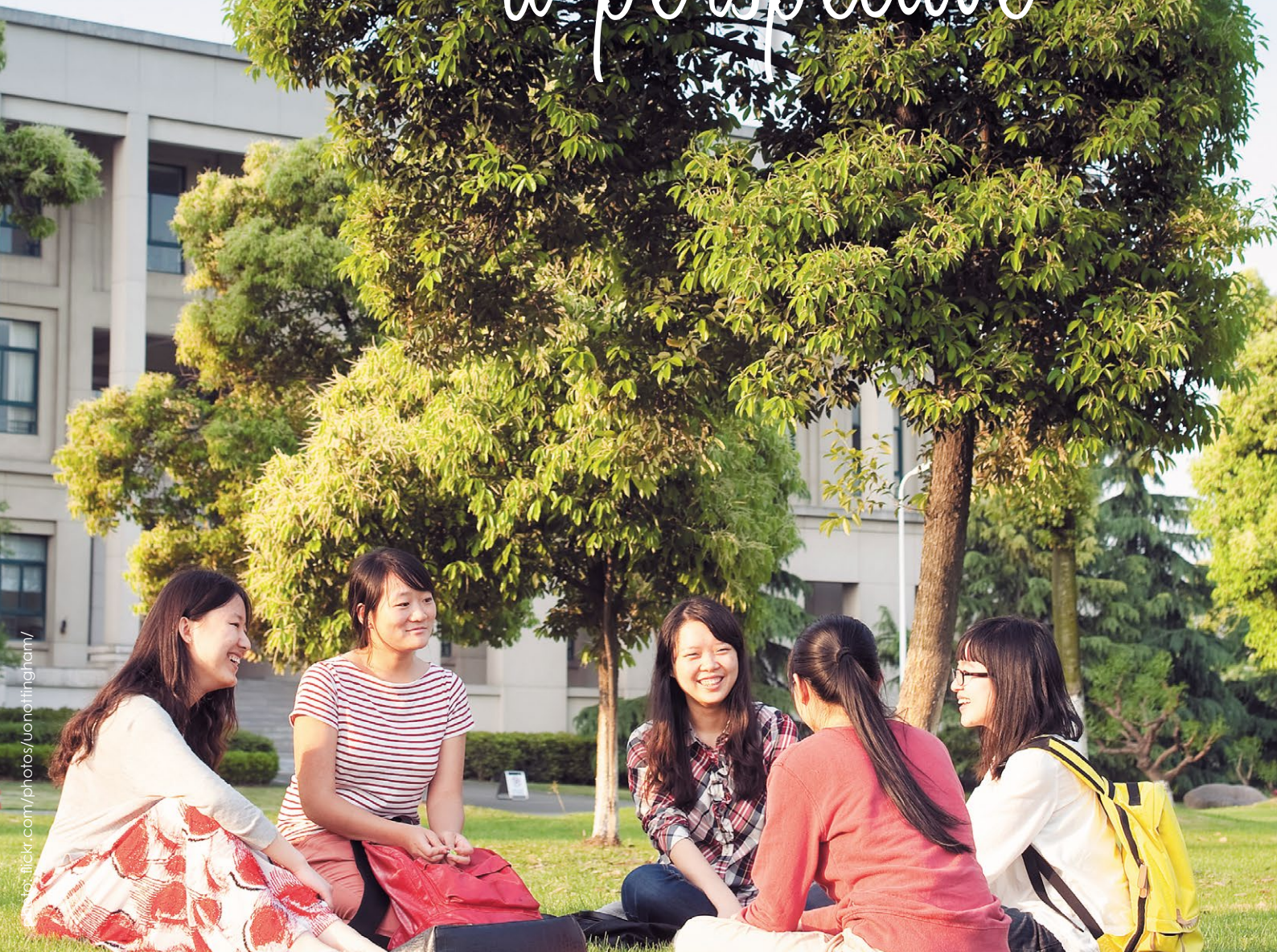




INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:

a perspective



part of Volunteering Qld's innovative engagement initiatives.

This paper evaluates the role student engagement and student volunteering play in university and tertiary education and further provides guidelines to creating and implementing the most effective student volunteering programs. The paper outlines student engagement and student volunteering, then provides criteria aimed to help deliver successful volunteering programs and events.

Report by **Priyanka Gupta, David McEniery and Mark Creyton.**
Literature Review by **Jessica Cuthbertson.**

Campus engagement and student volunteering

Student engagement has become globally recognised as a key marker for a worthwhile and fulfilling university experience.

Based on the research of various Australian and international academic and practical sources (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Lyons & McIlrath, 2011; O'Connor 2006; Radloff & Coates, 2009), the following is a definition of student engagement:

Student engagement is the mutually beneficial collaboration between universities, staff, students and community organisations that facilitates active student learning through beneficial participation in a range of activities. Student engagement enables students to make a valuable contribution to their education and make a difference in their community by acquiring lifelong skills, values and understanding.

As a result, universities would do well to emphasise and facilitate the development and sustainability of student engagement initiatives as a key part of their *modus operandi* for a number of reasons:

- Student engagement is an extremely worthy pursuit for university students as it positively and holistically contributes to student, university and community experiences (Shulman, 2002).
- Active and motivated participation in the enriching experiences provided by student engagement plays an important role in students' personal, educational and social development (Kuh, 2002, 2003).
- Tertiary and university education is recognised as the context where people learn and adapt behaviour, dialogue, decision-making and other higher-order social skills and knowledge that endows them as thinking, responsible and caring citizens (O'Connor, 2006; Radloff & Coates, 2009).
- High quality academic opportunities and experiences are increasingly being used as a valuable marker for student quality-of-life and university preference compared to just pure academic and research output (Kuh, 2003).
- Universities would greatly benefit from exploiting the positive correlation and synergies between academic performance and student engagement (Kuh, 2004).

Motivated and active student engagement provides students with an array of benefits at the personal, institutional and national level. Based on the research identified, which will continue to be outlined in this report, Australian tertiary education institutions would receive substantial social and economic benefits from uniformly promoting and facilitating student engagement.

University student volunteering

Student volunteering is a vitally important part of student engagement, and can be fostered at the university level. The range of resources now available covering volunteering (Student Volunteering England, 2004; Compact, 2009; Garver, Divine & Spralls, 2009; Darwen & Rannard, 2011) has been analysed to create this definition of student volunteering:

Student volunteering is any extracurricular activity in which students volunteer their time, effort and resources in order to benefit their community, their environment, or other individuals.

Student volunteering is often organised through university student unions and organisations, or externally through university-related community groups and social action initiatives. In this definition we are excluding service and community based learning activities – activities where students receive academic credit (thus compelled towards completion) – as these are not purely extracurricular volunteering pursuits.

Innovative student engagement and volunteering

Universities should consider the benefits of becoming more proactive in adapting innovative methods of promotion and facilitation in student engagement and volunteering. Furthermore, allocation of university resources to this area has the potential to extraordinarily further student experience and education. However, we believe that such innovation in this area must be linked to impactful and discernible results.

As such, implementing the following strategies may lead to more successful and innovative programs:

- 1. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach:** Student engagement and volunteering can be enhanced when a variety of students and organisations are involved. An interdisciplinary approach to student engagement ensures students are broadly based and acquire the multiple perspectives essential for the real world (Newswander & Borrego, 2009).
- 2. Provide opportunities for leadership:** Programs should provide opportunities for leadership for all involved parties – the students, staff, institution and community. These may be traditional methods of promoting and recognising leadership through roles and positions, but also include novel ways to acknowledge leadership in student engagement (Fielding, 2006). Programs and universities should recognise the wisdom of fostering a culture of engagement and leadership within the student experience, enabling students to transform their campuses and develop their own leadership capacities (Brown, 2008).
- 3. Create meaningful experiences:** It is important student engagement and volunteering programs are meaningful and beneficial for students. This will assist students to gain real world experience, motivate and give ownership to students, reinforce their studies, and allow them to gain a deeper understanding of how their coursework and skills can be utilised in the wider community (Christensen, Reschly & Wyley, 2012).
- 4. Recognise and reward:** In order to be truly impactful, these programs may include recognition and reward for student engagement and volunteering. This criterion would aim to privilege the importance of these areas in student life as well as to *incentivise* participation from university students. Recognition and reward also serves as a motivational factor in student participation by providing students and their careers with an essential stepping-stone for future advancement (Barkley, 2009).

5. **Be socially responsive:** Innovation in student engagement and volunteering must, as a necessity, be socially responsive to the changing needs and circumstances of university students and the community. Innovative student engagement would therefore require a certain sense of flexibility to change some or all components of the program in order to suit the needs of students and the stakeholders involved. This approach will maximise the potential for student involvement that is usually desired by university and program administration (Faitlin, 2001).
6. **Make your student engagement program meaningful:** Student engagement programs need to have a significant and meaningful impact in the community they occur in. This impact will require not only a focus on how students provide assistance for the community organisation and broader community but also how the program builds sustainable and meaningful partnerships with community partners. *(This element will be considered in depth by a separate publication).*

Student-led initiatives

At a basic level, student-led initiatives utilise teams of volunteers in the development and implementation of community-based projects. Student-led initiatives tap into the creativity and energy of the students allowing them to work towards social change. Proactive students can volunteer with an existing initiative helping it to remain sustainable or grow, or start new relationships with community partners that address a particular challenge (Sarah Lawrence College 2012, 1).

Halferty and Clarke's research (2009) into student-led campus climate change initiatives in Canada showed that the most common type of student-led initiatives is focused on raising awareness. They are usually a project in itself or are combined with other types of programming with the aim of facilitating behavioural change on campus and providing campus community members with concrete options for taking personal action to reduce their impact on the climate.

There is a growing interest by universities in encouraging and supporting student led initiatives both at an individual and group level. There are a variety of student-led programs across Australia that link student volunteers with community projects as well as initiating positively impactful projects in external communities. Student-led initiatives have the potential to demonstrate many of the criteria of innovative engagement, particularly through providing leadership opportunities for students to develop the programs in meaningful and effective ways.

FIVE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMS

1. CREATING INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS
2. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP
3. CREATING MEANINGFULLY BENEFICIAL EXPERIENCES
4. RECOGNISING AND REWARDING
5. BEING SOCIALLY RESPONSIVE



1. Creating interdisciplinary programs

Interdisciplinary has become an increasingly important pursuit among higher education institutions. The knowledge and use of a wider range of skills and disciplines within volunteering and student engagement programs can enable students to develop a broader understanding of what is necessary for the modern world. Recent studies suggest students around the globe are often trained too narrowly and some problems require a multi-disciplinary solution (Newswander & Borrego, 2009).

A quality university and volunteering program should facilitate the diversity, community, integration, and cultural change that include these and other requirements (Enders, 2005; Gizir & Simsek, 2005; Hodgkinson & Brown, 2003). Multiple perspectives are an important part of interdisciplinary cooperation, enhancing the quality and refinement of ideas and communication (Bromme, 2000). Haworth and Conrad's theory of engagement stands as a solid guideline for programs of interdisciplinary nature around the world, and its elements are explained below (Haworth & Conrad, 1997).

Are the participants diverse and engaged?

The creation of an engaging interdisciplinary volunteering program starts with the selection of the most appropriate and receptive participants and educating them on the values and qualities of the initiative (Newswander & Borrego, 2009). It is crucial to foster a sense of engagement and openness from the genesis of any interdisciplinary volunteering program. To enhance such programs, it is equally important that the program attempts to include faculty and university staff members who share and contribute to the program's vision and goals (Newswander & Borrego, 2009).

High quality volunteering programs involve the mutually supportive and active teaching, learning and working collaboration of students, faculty and administrators (Newswander & Borrego, 2009).

Does the program involve interactive teaching and learning?

Interdisciplinary volunteering programs need to be interactive, innovative and resourceful in order to become truly effective (Newswander & Borrego, 2009). For example, the implementation of an interactive pedagogy encourages and supports engagement, participation and risk-taking in university programs. Such an atmosphere is where students participate in volunteering activities and "connect theoretical and applied knowledge to complex problems, issues, and situations" with the support of other students and staff (Haworth & Conrad, 1997).

Is there a good flow of advice and collaboration?

Students and staff members should work together in a collaborative and fluid network, constantly sharing their areas of expertise and skill. This helps facilitate a co-operative environment that enables students to learn and reflect upon multiple skills and perspectives, and work together throughout their participation in the volunteering program (Newswander & Borrego, 2009).

Are there adequate funds and resources?

Volunteering programs work most effectively when they are well supported and free from the restrictions of excessive financial strain (Nettles & Millett, 2006). When participants are free from worrying about how to fund their collaborative activities, they can focus on attaining their goals and fulfilling the aims of the program (Newswander & Borrego, 2009). In this way, financial and institutional support for volunteering programs is essential in maximising and incentivising the time students devote to achieving their aims. It is clear that "faculty, students, and leaders who invest time and effort in their programs strengthen students' learning experiences in ways that significantly enhance students' personal, intellectual, and professional development" (Haworth & Conrad, 1997).

2. Providing opportunities for leadership

Student leadership involves students working together as agents for positive change in their university and community, in their student experience and education, and in some cases their local and global community (Brown, 2008). Positive leadership development is especially fostered in engagement programs and experiences that incorporate community service and volunteering, where active and effective action is emphasised and encouraged (Shriberg & Harris, 2012).

Are these leadership opportunities deliberately provided?

Universities and engagement programs should deliberately provide all students with the increased ability to connect with, fulfil and create student leadership opportunities (Brown, 2008). This should not be restricted to the select few in a limited range of degrees and programs, but must be open to all levels of age, ability, degree and background. This is particularly important for students in their first year of post-secondary education, as their likelihood to succeed and complete their studies is increased when allied with prominent access to the leadership opportunities that can be provided by student engagement and volunteering (Brown, 2008).

Some American studies have found students who volunteer are more likely than non-volunteers to have leadership ability, social self-confidence, and skills in critical thinking and conflict resolution (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Hence, an employer faced with many suitable applicants may use volunteer experiences to infer skills or increased productivity, thus enabling applicants to use their volunteering experiences as positive signals and to compete successfully, enhance career prospects, command higher salaries, and get better jobs (Freeman, 1997; Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987; Prouteau & Wolff, 2006). Universities and tertiary institutions can therefore use student engagement and volunteering to better prepare students for future employment and advancement.

Is there a culture of engagement and student leadership?

A university program's culture, style and atmosphere must inherently involve conditions that foster strong dedication and loyalty to the aims of the program, and the fluidity that allows students to fulfil and adapt to leadership positions (Brown, 2008). These are essential for the continued success and future development of any volunteering program, and this culture should promote student desire and commitment to student leadership opportunities (Brown, 2008).

Opportunities for leadership are becoming a critical part of tertiary education, and innovative student engagement and volunteering programs that succinctly and professionally provide these opportunities enable students to learn and experience effective leadership (Sprow & Haberski, 2011). Motivated students who have the opportunity to lead and develop a volunteering program are more likely to commit to making changes in their community and society over their subsequent lives and careers (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda & Yee, 2000). As such, this component of innovative student volunteering provides a clear mandate for the benefits of support in this area from universities and tertiary education institutions.

Is there a clear vision?

Student engagement and volunteering programs, as well as their associated universities and community partners, must have a clear and succinct vision for the future. They must always strive for goals and evaluate these, and provide the leadership and commitment to undertake them. Strong leadership can arise in students when they follow the values of their organisation and program as well as having the overall commitment, support and continual effort to further its vision (Brown, 2008).

Is there a supportive campus environment?

A supportive campus environment for leadership opportunities is created by the direction of campus resources to the personal development of students, and the creation of official leadership positions. These are important for student engagement and volunteering programs as it will foster the support and collaboration of the university with the program, and focus student perception on the value and benefits of these initiatives (Brint, Cantwell & Hanneman 2008).

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3. Creating meaningfully beneficial experiences

A meaningfully beneficial program will assist students to gain real world skills and motivation, allow students to gain a deeper understanding of their skills, experience and coursework, and enable their work to provide some 'social good' to the university and wider community (Christensen, Reschly and Wylie, 2012).

Does the program give students a sense of ownership?

It is clear that a sense of ownership and independence enables students to actively foster and develop the productivity and industriousness necessary for success (Harris, 1991; Bradford, 2005). Translating this proven approach to student engagement and volunteering programs will utilise this same potential and sense of ownership, and inspire students to perform better, learn more and make a wholesome contribution to their university experience (Aiman, 2005).

Furthermore, involving students in volunteering and engagement program planning and execution will engage them in their own learning and working experiences. This ownership excites students and often increases the effort and commitment that they are willing to put forth. Authentic projects with a student voice help connect the education sphere with a student's own experiences, making learning more relevant, more equitable, and more enjoyable (University of Kansas, 2012).

Is there sufficient collaboration between the university, community partners and students?

Partnerships in student engagement and volunteering programs that lack meaningful input from community-based stakeholders create ownership tensions and skewed priorities. Such problems arise when funding agencies or the university determine the priorities of partnership (Medved et al., 2001). This may effectively hinder the process of the program and therefore limit any mutually beneficial gain for the students and the community. Therefore, effective programs can only become beneficial via clear communication and collaboration between all partners.

Moreover, the greater amount of meaningful contact between students and the university, the greater the extent of student involvement, development and satisfaction (Kuh, 2001; Sax, 2005). This interaction leads to the networking of role models and the communication of ideas and methods that is essential for programs to be successful. It is clear universities that provide this openness and depth of student experience support and foster a true sense of dedicated and eager student engagement and volunteering.

Does the program allow students to gain vital skills and benefit from challenging and enriching experiences?

Students that are involved in meaningfully beneficial programs are, as a result, naturally better prepared to thrive in later life. They are better prepared to engage in activities, organisational development and leadership opportunities because they acquire a specific, professional skill set that more closely mirrors real world problem solving (Shriberg & Harris 2012,). Enriching experiences combined with a truly innovative academic challenge is essential in shaping and developing a concerned, capable and engaged student body. For example, programs can expect students to maintain high academic standards combined with commitment to the program's overall goals, and then support students to achieve and continually advance these benchmarks (Kuh, 2005).

Utilising higher forms of learning such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in engagement and volunteering programs can mirror the success of such practices in the academic life of students. Students who reflect, question, conjecture, evaluate and make connections between thoughts whilst drawing on the ideas, experiences and knowledge of others are most likely to be deeply engaged and committed to a meaningfully beneficial program (Coates et al., 2008; Hockings et al., 2008).

4. Recognising and rewarding

Recognising and rewarding participation and success in student engagement and volunteering activities is a key means of incentivising and adding value to these programs. Recognition and reward can assist students to enhance their personal value and commitment to the program, gain peer respect and develop a desire for further participation within their field (Prugsamatz, 2012). Whilst it is clear that there is reward enough from sincere participation within and dedication for volunteering programs, students may not be aware of this or sufficiently motivated to buy into such activities. Some students will feel satisfied with their participation without seeking rewards or recognition for their volunteering efforts. However other students, may be more inclined to participate if they know their involvement will be rewarded and/or recognised.

Does the program or university provide incentives and/or rewards?

Incentives and rewards are necessary to emphasise the importance of the students' participation as well as recognise their quality accomplishments within the program. Further, these serve as motivational factors and stepping-stones for future advancement and contribution to volunteering and engagement (Barkley, 2009). At the university level, recognising student achievement is a positive initiative that supports students and the program as well as fosters further achievement (Jones, 2008).

In a study by Flick, Bittman and Doyle (2002), it was noted the majority of volunteers commented that the appreciation of clients was the most satisfying part of volunteering. However, it was also quite important to receive recognition from the organisation. Increasing recognition in ways that are meaningful to individual volunteers is vital to keeping them engaged as well as continually motivated in their tasks (Flick, Bittman & Doyle, 2002).

Is the recognition or reward given within an appropriate context?

It is essential that rewards come as a result of sincere and sustained work and engagement on the part of the student. They cannot be distributed as a result of minimal effort as this will not foster the continued sense of volunteering and engagement that is the overall aim of this criterion (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). As such, the reward must be special and must hold meaningful value for the student and for the awarding institution. The Commonwealth of Australia (2011) states that people motivated by 'giving back to the community' or 'making a difference,' forms of recognition and reward may include:

- Making them feel like part of the team by listening to them, seeking their feedback and ideas, and including them in decision making.
- Personal, informal acknowledgement that shows their efforts are valued and that they are making a difference.
- Celebrating achievements through certificates or social gatherings.
- Nominating them for public awards.

The Commonwealth also states, people motivated by a desire to acquire skills and training, including those who are using volunteering to improve their employability, recognition could be provided through:

- Teaching new skills and sharing experiences on the job.
- Formal accredited training either directly or provided by subsidised external trainers.
- Duties or projects that challenge them and give them opportunities to gain new skills or take on greater responsibilities.
- Statements or certificates of attainment that recognise the skills they have acquired and the contributions they have made.
- References to use in future job or education applications.

Lastly, for people motivated by social interactions and the opportunity to meet people and make new friends, the best approach may be to create opportunities for them to share and network, such as through social media, to celebrate important occasions and achievements (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011).

5. Being socially responsive

As institutions of higher education are faced with increasingly complex demands to improve student retention, enhance the student experience, and bolster efforts to contribute to student success and satisfaction, they must be able to respond by adapting and reorganising structures, standards and institutional techniques (Brown, 2008). Similarly, engagement and volunteering programs must continually refine and develop their aims, goals, projects, and techniques in order to continually fulfil their roles and remain essential for the student experience.

Is the program sufficiently connected to campus culture and the university?

There is no template or structure that guarantees successful organisational impact and development. Programs must therefore carefully consider the ideals of campus culture and how they can exist and develop within it whilst still remaining active and dedicated towards their overall goals (Brown, 2008). This must be a continuous and sustained process in order to ensure that the place and relevance of the engagement or volunteering program is maintained within the university (Brown, 2008).

If alteration or redevelopment is necessary, culture is the single most important element that must be managed in order to change what an organisation values and how it acts. With a clearly established relationship between culture and organisational change, leaders require awareness of cultural norms, values, beliefs and practices of an institution prior to leading successful change (Brown, 2008).

It is important for universities to maintain strong networks and relationships with stakeholders within engagement and volunteering programs. Effective and socially responsive change cannot be a separated process, as it typically requires innovations across traditional organisational boundaries and restrictions (Brown, 2008). Without wide-spread engagement by relevant stakeholders in their efforts for redevelopment and change, the risk of failure and of falling into irrelevance is far greater (Brown, 2008).

Does the organisation or program involve continuous learning or improvement?

Socially responsive engagement and volunteering programs must comprise of people committed to continuous learning and improvement (Brown, 2008). A learning program continuously seeks greater and more powerful opportunities and does not ever embrace the view that their structures and techniques cannot be altered or improved. A commitment to infinite learning translates to a program's infinite potential and ability to adapt, grow, respond and change (Brown, 2008).

Is there meaningful doing and purposeful being?

People find stability and security in purpose, not plans. The idea of being purposeful and deliberate in change initiatives speaks to learning, to reflecting, to being in a relationship and for our need to take a step back and evaluate the bigger picture (Brown, 2008). Leaders need a clear understanding of how change will influence meaning and purpose for all members of the program. This is guided by the notion that people in organisations need "a collective sense of identity and fundamental purpose" (Brown, 2008).

Is there periodic evaluation?

To remain adaptable to the needs of the university and students, it is important that periodic reviews are conducted of the program's relationships and functions so it remains contemporary and in touch with its role as a facilitator of student engagement and volunteering (Brown, 2008). Organisations are often reluctant to criticise the effectiveness of volunteer efforts, thinking it will affect retention, future recruitment, and public relations with the community; nevertheless, evaluation is a necessary component of any volunteer program (Gummere 2003). Evaluation indicates to volunteers that their work is meaningful and deserves the attention and review of their supervisors (Brudney, 1990; Clifton & Dahms, 1993). For students who are looking to develop their skills, evaluation is essential for their learning and professional growth. The primary objective of evaluation is to provide and solicit feedback from volunteers for the purpose of improving performance by both the volunteer and the organisation (Clifton and Dahms, 1993; Pynes, 1997).

Is the program sustainable?

It is important that changes are sustainable in the short and long-term, and therefore these programs must necessarily use innovation, responsiveness and active learning as key tools in this area (Brown, 2008). Active learning refers to the conscious and deliberate effort to review and effectively inquire into the actions of individuals, teams or organisations and thereby maximise outcomes (Brown, 2008). Active learning fosters new interactions, new ways of thinking and is a catalyst for creative organisational ideas. Lastly, it is important that the changes become embedded and ingrained into the program's structure, systems and culture (Brown, 2008).

Other suggestions to sustain change include deliberately showing members and program partners how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes have improved its performance. Student and university leaders, moreover, must support and facilitate these changes and new approaches of the program (Brown, 2008). However, it is ultimately the people that are involved and not the program per se which contributes to positive and long-lasting change. Therefore, it is the collaborative and working relationships between the university, the program and members that make the program effective (Brown, 2008).

Literature Review *student motivations to volunteer*

The act of volunteering, in a broad sense, can be defined as participation in any activity whereby unpaid time, service, or skills are given freely to the benefit of another individual, group, or organisation and that is conducted willingly and without coercion (Wilson, 2000; Oppenheimer, 2008). Bussell and Forbes (2002) elaborate on this definition by asserting that volunteers must, in essence, be centrally motivated by altruism whereby the volunteer's motive is indeed a selfless one. In recent years however, a developing emphasis on governmental encouragement of community engagement amongst young people, particularly within Western contexts, has perpetuated the occurrence of student volunteering both within and external to the university environment (Smith, Holmes, Haski-Leventhal, Cnaan, Handy, & Brudney 2010). Hustinx, Vanhove, Declercq, Hermans, and Lammertyn (2005) have comprehensively defined student volunteering as participation in activities that are non-compulsory and extracurricular, not limited in time and/or type, unpaid and externally oriented, and are not necessarily conducted within an organisational framework. However, Smith et al. (2010) and Francis (2011) claim that the university student demographic are an under-utilised and under-researched element of young adult volunteers and that due to lack of research available on this demographic, a gap in the volunteering literature remains evident. Smith et al. (2010) assert that given the absence of data dedicated to student volunteering, studies of volunteer participation on a more general scale must thus be examined. Where there is a shortage of literature dedicated to student volunteering, there exists an abundance of literature associated with the phenomenon of 'service learning'.

What is 'service learning'?

Defined by Milne, Gabb, and Leihy (2008) as learning within a community context via the provision of service which is a requirement of a student's course of study, service learning offers students a form of experiential learning, in addition to attending to the needs of local communities. Nevertheless, despite the wealth of information pertaining to the efficacy of such service learning programs (Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001; Caruso, R., Bowen, G., Adams-Dunford, J, 2006; Swan, B.G., 2006; Prentice, M, 2011; Astin, A.W., & Sax, L.J., 1998), the quintessential nature of what Bussell and Forbes (2002) define as 'true' volunteerism has not been fulfilled, as the motives of individuals within these service learning programs are not strictly altruistic. Furthermore, Sobus (1995) goes so far as to state that although there is a strong focus on community within service learning programs, it can also be suggested that the value of community service is in fact undermined, with students realising that they are not volunteering as such, but instead being 'compelled' to perform this service. Mohan (1994) supports this view, citing the progressive institutionalisation of course-based, credit bearing community service as leading some students to consider this form of experiential learning a mere platform to acquire the skills and credentials necessary for entering the postgraduate workforce, thus devaluing the core nature of altruistic, community-based student volunteering.



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Conversely, Holdsworth (2010) argues that whilst gaining an advantage in the workplace is undoubtedly a priority for some students and that the association between volunteering and employability is acknowledged, for others this is simply an unintended consequence, whereby altruistic motives remain at the forefront. Furthermore, Holdsworth (2010) suggests that the benefits students obtain from community-based student volunteering (service learning) do not necessarily have a direct correlation to enhancement of future workplace opportunities, but rather to the benefits pertaining to a young person's negotiation of the transition to adulthood and learning to contend with novel situations. However, Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, and Hustinx (2009) state that students will be more willing to engage in volunteering when they recognise that it may be an opportunity to examine future career possibilities, whilst gaining experience and accessibility to organisations external to the university context, but that such service learning courses must be optional rather than compulsory in order to sustain a better long-term impact. Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) support Haski-Leventhal et al. (2009), asserting that when mandatory service is embedded within the university context, the stronger the perceptions of external control, the less likely it will be that a positive relationship between prior volunteer experience and future intentions to volunteer will occur. From a social-psychological perspective, Bem's (1972) Self-Perception Theory may be applied to the information presented by Stukas et al. (1999) and Haski-Leventhal et al. (2009), dictating that the constraints of an activity may play a critical role in determining how one subsequently feels about that activity and that people come to understand their own attitudes by looking at the constraints (or lack thereof) of a situation and how they behaved in that situation. For example, if an activity is undertaken in order to receive reward i.e. institutional service learning, external constraints exist that will be viewed as the cause of the behaviour and thus the act loses its virtuous attribution.

With this information in place, the present review will next explore the literature aligned with Bussell and Forbes's (2002) definition of altruistic-motivated volunteering, with a direct focus on students in the higher education context. Cross-national university student volunteering demographics and motivations to volunteer (MTV) will be examined, in addition to investigating why, if at all, this particular demographic represents a vast gap within the existing volunteering literature (Francis, 2011).

Student volunteering in a global context

Perhaps one of the most notable and comprehensive studies on cross-national student volunteering comes from Handy et al. (2010), in which data was gathered from a total of 9,482 university students residing in 12 different countries, by way of survey distribution. Countries included in the study were Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Finland, the Netherlands, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, and the United States. It was the intention of the study to investigate differences in undergraduate university student MTV within a cross-cultural context, with a key focus on altruistic, utilitarian, and social motivators. In contrast with the views expressed by Sobus (1995) and Mohan (1994), results demonstrated that overall, resume enhancement as MTV was not a positive predictor of student volunteer participation and that resume enhancement in fact demonstrated a statistically significant negative impact on MTV. Moreover, altruistic MTV, broadly defined by Mesch, Tschirhart, Perry, and Lee (1998) as a desire to serve the community and help others at the expense of one's own personal benefit, was found to have a positive effect on the probability of student volunteer participation. This altruistic MTV was found to predominate amongst all countries surveyed, with resume enhancement and social MTV being ranked below the altruistic MTV. Results of this study also demonstrate that participation in volunteer activities is likely to increase when students come from a higher-income familial background, in addition to having prior exposure to some form of service requirement. Furthermore, students' personal value systems were cited to have an impact on their willingness to volunteer, with those students demonstrating a stronger support for non-materialistic values being more likely to engage in volunteering. Results from a similar cross-cultural study investigating student volunteerism conducted by Gronlund et al. (2011) lend support to the above mentioned results, stating that students from higher income familial backgrounds with low-level materialistic values, in addition to having prior exposure to service requirements at school or university demonstrate a higher level of volunteer participation overall.

In a separate study, Hustinx, Handy, and Cnaan (2012) sought to investigate the impact of cultural differences on student volunteering within China and Canada, with a particular focus on attaining a greater understanding of volunteering in non-Western countries. The study utilised data from 1,892 survey questionnaires that were distributed to students attending three top-ranked universities in both Beijing and Toronto. For the purposes of the study, Hustinx et al. (2012) have defined volunteering as behaviour that occurs within formal organisations that involves no remuneration or coercion, a definition in line with that defined by Bussell and Forbes (2002). The researchers acknowledge however, that a fundamental difference between Western conceptions of volunteering as encompassing free and equal citizens within a liberal democracy and China's conception of state-sanctioned, government controlled volunteering initiatives remains evident. Thus, altruistic MTV when comparing the two countries remains questionable. Further investigation of these cultural and political differences demonstrated expected variations in rates and frequency, perceived benefits, and the determinants of participation in volunteering amongst students in both China and Canada. Although both countries were found to have comparatively high levels of student volunteer participation, Chinese students were found to have a slightly higher participation rate of 84.5% when compared to Canadian students, with a volunteer participation rate of 79.7%. However, it must be noted that the Chinese student volunteers within this study demonstrated significantly less volunteer participation on an ongoing basis, as opposed to their Canadian counterparts.

Socio-political and socio-cultural implications

In order to explore if and how societal characteristics influence and shape MTV amongst university students, Hustinx, Cnaan, Brudney, Pessi, and Yamauchi (2010) conducted a study on a sample of 5,794 university students from six countries, including Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Japan, and the United States. These countries were selected on the basis that they represent distinct institutional and socio-political contexts, allowing researchers to accurately determine the nature of how societal characteristics may influence student MTV. Results support the premise of the study, illustrating that MTV amongst student volunteers vary according to the differences in socio-political regimes within their respective countries, and that the greater the governmental involvement in social service delivery, the less likely MTV will be altruistic in nature. Belgium, China, and Japan were among the countries that fell into this low-altruistic MTV category given their corporatist, statist, and statist/liberal regimes, respectively. These results may be applied to the study conducted by Hustinx et al. (2012), whereby although Chinese university students reported a higher overall rate of volunteering than their Canadian counterparts, the MTV may not be entirely altruistic due to the heavy governmental and state-run influence. Conversely, in the present study, Hustinx et al. (2010) hypothesised that altruistic MTV would garner strongest support from the liberal regime of the United States, moderate support from the liberal/corporatist regime of Canada, and weak support in the social-democratic regime of Finland. Interestingly however, results determined that Finnish students were in fact most likely to report greater altruistic MTV, followed by students from the United States and Canada who rated altruistic MTV as equally important. Hustinx et al. (2010) suggest that the Finnish results may be due, in part, to students possessing the need to view their volunteer contributions as more altruistic, so as to maintain the socialist nature of society in response to the economic depression of the 1990's.

Smith et al. (2010) conducted a similar study by comparing data collected from over 4,000 university students, residing in five Western countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In contrast to the study conducted by Hustinx et al. (2012), researchers of the present study sought to investigate the extent to which university students within Western contexts and countries that share certain commonalities including political, social, and cultural histories, participated in volunteering and the perceived motivations and benefits associated with this volunteer participation. Results demonstrated a rather large proportion of overall student volunteer participation, with approximately 70% of students surveyed reporting to be volunteers. Canada, the United States, and New Zealand were found to have the highest rates of student volunteering (79.6%, 78.8%, and 74%, respectively), with the United Kingdom and Australia displaying the lowest student volunteering rates (63.3% and 58.7%, respectively). In line with the results obtained by Handy et al. (2010), altruistic MTV was found to predominate amongst participants but was significantly more important for those students who volunteered on a regular basis, as opposed to occasional and non-volunteers.

It must also be noted that both regular and occasional student volunteers did profess similar levels of agreement with regard to resume enhancement (57.7% and 56.5%, respectively) as MTV, however these statistics remained lower than for non-volunteer participants who rated resume enhancement MTV at 62%.

Student volunteering in a local context

Although a selection of the literature presented above contained data representing Australian university students and their MTV, in accordance with Francis (2011) and McCabe, White and Obst (2007) relatively few studies have sought to explore this Australian demographic independently. In a study conducted by McCabe et al. (2007), the psychological functions that volunteering serves amongst young tertiary students and the perception of the functions served by volunteering by non-volunteers were investigated. Participants included a total of 121 undergraduate psychology students that were enrolled at a major Australian university, with data gathered by way of questionnaire completion. Encouragingly, results demonstrated that 43% of participants were current or recent volunteers and that both volunteers and non-volunteers rated the values and understanding functions of the questionnaire significantly more important than any other function measured. Furthermore, non-volunteers rated the career enhancement function as more important than the current volunteers. For current and recent volunteers, results demonstrated that, after values and understanding, career enhancement functions were rated as next important. Not only do these results lend support to the literature revealed by Handy et al. (2010) and Smith et al. (2010) with regard to the predominance of altruism as MTV for university students, but may also align with Holdsworth's (2010) view that career enhancement and resume building are not the primary objectives of university student volunteers. McCabe et al. (2007) suggest that in order to encourage student volunteer initiation and volunteer maintenance, motivations related to values and understanding must be emphasised given their primary importance to young university students and that by engaging younger people at this point may also encourage ongoing volunteerism post-graduation.

The literature put forth for tertiary service learning programs and what constitutes true altruistic MTV amongst university students provide valid arguments both for and against each discipline. However, although the student volunteering literature abounds in an international context, the lack of Australian research must be further explored. In addition to the recommendations made by McCabe et al. (2007) on how to best encourage and maintain university student volunteering, Smith et al. (2010) emphasise that the legacy of university involvement including the transition of student volunteers into post-graduate volunteering warrants further investigation.

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