Focus on your career

CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Program calendar
To browse through the full suite of career development programs available to all ANU staff, visit the 2012 Program Calendar at: hr.anu.edu.au/career/calendar

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Next issue:
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Mandatory online learning modules
All staff on probation are required to complete a set of four online training modules through the University’s online learning program, Pulse.

The four modules to be completed are:

- Harassment, Discrimination & Bullying
- Indigenous Cultural Awareness
- Code of Conduct
- Comcare Work Health & Safety

To access these and other modules in Pulse, register or login at: http://anu.interactiontraining.net/register.aspx
Help for the Early Career Academic Warrior

Being an early career academic is a tough gig. Each day we struggle with an ever-changing mix of research, teaching, career development, young families, elderly parents, conferences, publications, mortgages and various other important priorities. And all of this is taking place in an uncertain job environment where often, next year’s pay is dependent on this year’s grant application. Let’s face it, we could really use some help.

Enter NECTAR. NECTAR was conceived by four ANU early career academics (pictured). It is an independent space created by and for ANU early career academics (ECAs) with support from the ANU Executive, connecting ECAs directly with the Executive. It is a place for us to develop ideas, build our confidence and networks, and acquire some of the skills and knowledge required to lead ourselves and our university to a successful future.

So how does NECTAR work? There are four elements: the NECTAR team, NECTAR working groups, NECTAR members, and NECTAR’s open line of communication with the ANU Executive.

The team supports the working groups in developing proposals addressing issues raised by members. These proposals are then discussed with the ANU Executive for implementation.

NECTAR started in March 2011 with the four custodians of the NECTAR space and their new relationship with the ANU Executive. Since then, NECTAR has blossomed into a group of over 220 involved members making headway on important early academic career issues.

So what has NECTAR been up to so far? Well, not surprisingly, members’ most prevalent concern is job insecurity, and in 2011 two working groups, championed by NECTAR members, formed to propose new mechanisms supporting ECAs in our efforts to improve job security.

Firstly, the Bridging Funding Working Group proposed that ECAs who have successfully led a grant-funded research project be provided with bridging funding in the event their next grant application fails, to enable them to continue their employment at ANU and rework their application for resubmission. Secondly, the Grant Application Success Working Group proposed a range of measures to augment current ANU processes to help ECAs prepare the most compelling and competitive grant applications possible.

The results of NECTAR’s efforts so far are promising.

The Executive has invited the Bridging Funding Working Group to raise its proposal for further consideration in the next budget. As NECTAR members will know, Pro Vice Chancellor Mandy Thomas offered to review any ECA grant application and provide suggestions for competitive improvements; several members have taken advantage of this opportunity. Additionally, a competitive grant writing workshop for ECAs is being developed in conjunction with the Research Office.

Currently, NECTAR members are engaging with the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) to raise our voice and concerns with the Australian Government through ACOLA’s Government funded research on ECA careers. Members are participating in this research through online surveys, focus groups and a NECTAR submission. The ACOLA focus groups will be taking place on 22 March, and ANU ECAs are welcome to contact us to participate.

Our first annual retreat will be held this year at Mt Stromlo on Wednesday and Thursday, 6 – 7 June. In the same inspiring space where the first issues to ECAs were raised in the April 2011 NECTAR workshop, we will be reviewing progress to date, setting priorities for the coming year, conversing with members of the ANU Executive and other high profile guests, and forging new alliances with each other.

As early career academics we may be ambitious, harbouring secret dreams to one day be senior academics with a coterie of research assistants industriously furthering the research for which we ourselves have developed an international reputation. Or we may simply want to make a contribution to the collective wisdom of our times. Whatever our ambitions and concerns, NECTAR is here to provide the space to address them, to the benefit of ourselves, our ECA colleagues, and ANU.

To get involved, join in on our website http://nectar.anu.edu.au or contact Sabrina Caldwell on x59220.
Centre for Career Development represented at Symposium

Carole Brown, Manager of the Centre for Career Development and National President of the Career Development Association of Australia, was one of 5 members of the Australian Country team to attend the 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, held in Budapest in early December 2011.

The objectives of this and previous symposia have been to build closer international linkages between career development policy makers in the fields of education, employment, economic development and social inclusion and, with professional leaders and researchers.

A particular focus of the Budapest symposium was on:

- improving and strengthening career practitioner capability in all sectors
- developing a stronger research agenda
- working towards national co-ordination of fragmented services
- building stronger partnerships between government, industry and professionals; and
- creating a stronger evidence base to support both policy and practice.

The Australian team was pleased to learn that advances made in our country, particularly in relation to professional standards and other quality mechanisms, were acknowledged as world leading.

More information about the symposium can be gained by contacting the Centre at: careerdev@anu.edu.au

National Careers Conference comes to Canberra

Canberra will play host to the 21st annual conference of the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA) to be held from 28 – 30 March.

The conference will bring together career practitioners, education and training providers, leaders of industry, policy makers, HR professionals and researchers to explore the links between career and workforce development and the value career development brings to building sustainable workforces and quality work and education outcomes for all Australians.

The conference program considers four key themes:

- Social inclusion: ensuring that all Australians realise their full potential
- Career transitions: supporting transitions from school to retirement
- The nexus between workforce and career development: impacting workforces to recruit and retain skilled workers
- Business skills and innovative practices for career practitioners

Time for a chat?

Holding career conversations with a mentor, supervisor, colleague or career coach are a vital part of actively managing your career.

Preparing for a career conversation can help you to get more out of these discussions. Once you have reflected on your current situation, let your supervisor know that you would like to talk with them.

If you are a supervisor, you have a key role to play in providing opportunities for career conversations for your staff, and actively supporting their career development.

In order to assist supervisors and staff have a productive career conversation, here are some suggested questions to get started. If you are preparing for a conversation with your supervisor, it may be helpful to review these questions and consider how you would respond or raise some of these points.

> What do you enjoy most about your current role?
> Talk about your achievements that mean the most to you.
> What is the next major challenge you would like to take on?
> How do you promote your need for resources? What ways do you build working relationships to share knowledge, solve problems and support others?

> What ways do you build working relationships to share knowledge, solve problems and support others?
> Have you had feedback from others on the things you do well or could do better?
> Which areas would you like to develop in and why?
> What are your goals for your future?
> What are you doing now or need to do in order to achieve these goals.

Visit our Program Calendar for more information about the Career & Performance Conversations (for supervisors) program at:
hr.anu.edu.au/career-development/calendar/career-and-skills-development

“\nThe people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them. ”

– George Bernard Shaw

Explore. Dream. Discover

Being proactive in your own development and broadening your experience allows you to develop in your job, prepare for new roles, improve productivity and build your networks.

Although formal education and training are important, keep in mind that some of the best and most immediate opportunities for development often exist in your current role. These include:

> Mentoring
> Job shadowing
> Job rotation
> Coaching
> Online learning
> Temporary assignments
> Seminar and lectures
> Being part of committees and working groups and forums

To continue growing in your career, also think about what work interests and motivates you.

Some common interest categories are: creative/innovative; practical/mechanical; helping/advising/leading; analytic/scientific; persuading/service; organising/administrative

When you next have your career conversations, consider these development opportunities along with other formal training. Be open to new and different possibilities and be guided by what interests you now.

Extract from Focus on Your Career: Career Management

For learning and development opportunities visit the Career Development portal at:
hr.anu.edu.au/career