

The Way to Go! – University of Wollongong Library Professional Cadets

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Attracting professional librarians with the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to advance the University of Wollongong Library's (UWL's) goals as well as sustaining its reputation for service excellence has become increasingly challenging. Succession management and leadership development have long been the subject of strategic planning at UWL and a range of initiatives have been implemented with varying levels of success.

The most successful initiative has been the introduction of a Library Professional Cadet (LPC) program designed to assist in addressing significant issues in succession planning and to identify and develop potential leaders. Key elements of the three year program include a six month rotation through all areas of the Library concluding with a six month placement in a team of their choice. In all teams relevant goals and potential benefits are identified for the cadet during their placement and these are documented in a monthly review with each team leader.

A further opportunity for reflection and more general organisational advice is provided in a regular review meeting with the LPC coordinator, whose substantive role in the Library encompasses financial, facilities and human resource management. This role also functions as an advocate for the cadets with team leaders to ensure that assignments with each team are developmentally oriented and not treated as an extra resource to alleviate workloads.

With two cadets having completed their program and successfully applied for permanent positions with UWL it is timely to reflect on the program, discuss possible changes and promote the program which has the potential for wider application in the profession. The presentation will provide a brief overview of planning for the program, its operation in practice, experiences of the cadets and the benefits of the program from the cadets' perspective as well as that of the team leader and the Library's strategic planning group.