



The University of Sydney

Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, 6 June 2007

3. **Matters arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**
 - 3.1 **Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Program**

Recommendation

That the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee note the report on the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Program proposal.



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Project Proposal

Project Name:	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
Funding Amount:	\$70,000
Funding Source:	Indigenous Support Allocation Funds

The Koori Centre is seeking financial support from The University of Sydney Indigenous Support Allocation Funds (Projects) to contribute towards the delivery of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) in 2007. These funds will provide a full-time position (HEO 6 Step 1) for a Facilitator as well as meeting a shortfall of \$15,000 for the delivery of workshops.

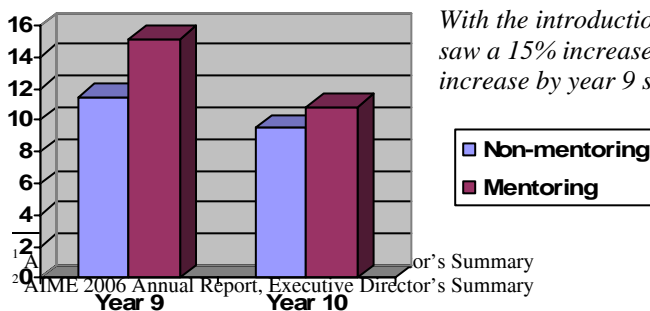
Background

This program is an innovation of Jack Manning-Bancroft and was launched in 2005. Its core objective is to “improve the lives of Indigenous people in Australia”¹ by “providing support to Indigenous high school students who live every day in Australia not being equal to every one else”²

AIME has provided The University of Sydney, the nation’s first university, with an exciting opportunity, in that this program is the first of its kind to be developed by university students in NSW. At the heart of its operations are the volunteers from within the student body of the University who have given their time freely to be mentors. This includes Jack Manning-Bancroft who embarked on this initiative while enrolled full-time in the Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) within the Faculty of Arts. Jack completed his studies in 2006, two years into the AIME program.

In its second year evaluations were conducted through mid-program mentor feedback sessions; student, mentor and teacher focus groups; attendance monitoring; school reports on behavioural patterns; academic outcomes; and student/mentor perceptions of partnership effectiveness. These clearly indicated that following the introduction of AIME there was a 40% increase in school attendance.

Fig 1. School attendance with and without mentoring



With the introduction of mentoring, Alexandria Park High School saw a 15% increase in attendance by year 10 students, and a 40% increase by year 9 students.

But AIME is about more than attendance at school. It is also about creating access to positive role models and engaging in strong relationships with different people. Since its inception the following results have been observed of the mentor:mentee relationship:

- Helps encourage students to remain at school beyond year 9.
- Provides the students with academic support, resulting in higher grades at school.
- Assists the students to develop social skills thus reducing behavioural problems.
- Creates incentives for students to attend school, hence reducing truancy
- Provides mentors with an opportunity to gain skills in motivation, support, leadership and a greater understanding of issues relating to young Indigenous Australians.

AIME is activity based, with community leaders running interactive workshops around mental health, self expression, educational and health, academic skills, creative writing and music workshops. These activities 'engage' students, enhance their educational skills and resilience, while allowing Indigenous and non-Indigenous university students the opportunity to contribute to the Indigenous community³.

The AIME experience is a four-year package: the first year commences with year 9 interactive workshops, education sessions, and character development; the year 10 program focuses on leadership with sessions conducted by esteemed Indigenous leaders and tied together by the mentee's commitment to completing a project; and in years 11 and 12 one-on-one tutoring is offered once a week spliced with information sessions about degrees, scholarships, universities, and jobs, all conducted by professionals in their respective areas.

It should be noted that in its current and future formats AIME meets Indigenous Higher Education Council (IHEAC) Priority 1 which states:

Encourage universities to work with schools and TAFE colleges and other registered training organisations to build pathways and raise levels of aspiration and confidence of Indigenous students.

It also meets AVCC Recommendation 1, points 2 and 4:

- Appropriate programs be developed to assist universities to work in cooperation with schools and vocational and technical education providers
- Programs be developed to provide advice to students, parents and teachers in secondary school to assist with appropriate subject choices that lead towards tertiary study.

AIME in 2007

AIME organisers have shown an impressive ability to run a highly successful low-cost program, which has expanded each year since the pilot program in 2005. Beginning with Year 9 students at one school - Alexandria Park School, in 2006 a Year 10 program for Alexandria Park and a Year 9 program for Leichhardt Secondary College were added.

In 2007 the number of schools participating in this program has grown to include: Tempe High School, Balmain Secondary College and St Scholastica's College. Mentor numbers have increased to 150 and

³ School to University Pathways Project application 2007

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mentees to 105 (extra mentors cover absences and assist with workshop delivery), which is a fantastic result given that AIME started with 28 mentors and 9 students.

Future Directions

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) has proven highly successful in working collaboratively within local high schools towards improved educational outcomes for secondary education. It has done this by involving community leaders in the facilitation of workshops. AIME has collectively brought university students, workshop facilitators and high schools together in working towards a common goal.

By 2008 AIME will have completed its first four-year pilot with Alexandria Park Community School and this will be the time to fully assess:

- Retention rates of mentees;
- Strength of links between Year 9 and 10 students and the university community
- Community capacity to foster links, incorporating older community members;
- Level of awareness of relevant Faculty programs in line with community roles.

While the program has already been expanded to include senior high school students, it is envisaged that further expansion will allow for the incorporation of first year university students through liaison with the Koori Centre. Together with Yooroang Garang AIME would like to develop ways of linking Camperdown campus-based students with Cumberland-based students. AIME is also working towards establishing pathways for mentees to progress into potential scholarships and educational places at The University of Sydney.

In terms of benefits to the University, AIME hopes to continue to:

- Expand and strengthen links with high schools;
- Increase high school mentoring initiatives and community involvement in schools to university initiatives;
- Build community capacity to strengthen school to university pathways;
- Create on-going and sustainable communication mechanisms with schools, colleges and community representatives in carrying out successful mentoring strategies.
- Increase Indigenous Australian student enrolment numbers to all Faculties and Departments of the University
- Faculties to be provided with feedback on high school student interests in fields of expertise.

Budget

Please note that \$20K funding has been received from the Faculty of Economics and Business (paid in two instalments) along with \$20K from the Aboriginal Education Council.

Administrative support and financial advice is provided by staff at the Koori Centre. The Centre also contributes a small amount towards general administrative consumable costs. An office space is provided by Tranby Aboriginal Cooperative College in Glebe, which offers access to a telephone and fax on a daily basis (Monday to Friday).

Below is a budget breakdown for project costs in 2007. It should be noted that as mentor and mentee numbers increase each year costs will rise slightly.

Project Costs	Expenditure	Income	+/-
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Contribution from AEC		20,000	20,000
Contribution from Faculty of E & B		20,000	40,000
Salaries (including salary increases)	57,258		-17,258
On costs	16,154		-33,412
Workshop coordinators & visiting artists/athletes	5,000		-38,412
Costs per capita for each Indigenous student to be supported	15,000		-53,412
Out of pocket expenses for student mentors (travel etc. (105 mentors @\$50 per annum)	5,250		-58,662
Program delivery (including bus and venue hire)	7,000		-65,662
Communication Costs (eg postage/internet/website development)	1,500		-67,162
Promotion and Marketing	2,000		-69,162
Travel (attendance at schools)	500		-70,112
Consumables (office materials)	500		-70,162
Total	110,162	40,000	-70,162

Facilitator Position

AIME requires the position of Facilitator to be funded. The program's expansion has resulted in a dramatic increase in administrative and organisational responsibilities. The University can no longer rely upon the current Facilitator to operate in this position voluntarily, especially since the Facilitator is contributing in excess of 35 hours per week to keep the program running.

By funding this position the University will be confirming its support for the work that AIME is doing and be doing that in best possible way, by guaranteeing its continued existence and its on-going expansion. The Koori Centre believes that AIME has found a niche within the Indigenous Australian community which is not being filled by any other means and full credit must go to Jack Manning Bancroft for his vision, dedication and tenacity.

It is our view that Jack be appointed in this role for the remainder of 2007 and all of 2008 (appointment on Nomination for Specific Project) to ensure the continuation of the work he started in 2005.

Following are some background details on Jack Manning Bancroft:

- Enrolling at The University of Sydney in 2004, Jack was the first recipient of the ANZ Indigenous Scholarship which was based on academic merit at secondary level.
- That same year Jack organised the National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games (NITESG) on behalf of the University of Sydney, which was hosting the games as joint winners of the Games in 2003 with the University of Technology, Sydney. The NITESG is an annual event that enables Indigenous students from across the nation to congregate and compete in a round robin competition
- Towards the end of 2004 Jack was the driving force behind the establishment of *Klub Koori*, which is a student-run association based at the Koori Centre. This club, which officially began in early 2005, encourages Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to come together in the spirit of Reconciliation.
- In 2004 and 2005 Jack was the student representative on the Board of Studies (Indigenous Studies).

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- In 2005, under the umbrella of *Klub Koori*, Jack organised the extremely successful *Inaugural Indigenous Carnivale* which was held on 26 May (Sorry Day) and drew over five hundred Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and visitors. In 2006 he again organised this event and drew a crowd of in excess of 1000 people. In 2007 he is again overseeing and organising this event which will be held on Saturday 26 May in the Manning Bar on campus.
- Also in 2005 Jack founded the *Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)*, which is currently in its third year of operation.
- Jack completed a Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) at the University of Sydney in 2006 and in this same year was awarded the University of Sydney Union *Foundation Leadership and Excellence Award*.
- It is important to also note that Jack is incredibly generous with any spare time he can squeeze out of each day and participates in University-wide events during SydneyUni Live, Reconciliation Week, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week. He has also assisted the Koori Centre with the *Indigenous HSC Enrichment Camp*, and he gives freely of his time for other activities such as his recent participation in the new Koori Centre promotional DVD and television advertisement.
- With his own positive experiences of living on campus Jack has tirelessly lobbied the Residential Colleges of the University to establish Indigenous Scholarships for part or full residential costs. In 2004, thanks to his efforts, three new scholarships were launched at the Women's College and two scholarships were created at Wesley College for implementation in 2005.

Jack has never diverted from his clear vision of collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people through recognising opportunities and developing strategies to enable the involvement of all people in active and supporting roles in Australian Aboriginal affairs.

In Conclusion

What AIME is trying to achieve is at the very core of the Reconciliation process in this country.

The University of Sydney Reconciliation Statement avows that “The University will actively promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians” through a number of strategies and activities. The first of which is “The Indigenous Education Strategy and the promotion of education for Indigenous Australian peoples at all levels in society”.

Supporting an Indigenous Australian student mentoring program, which is run by and through the University, is an excellent way to do this.

The majority of AIME's mentors are non-Indigenous Australians, many of whom have never been in contact with Indigenous Australians prior to signing up as mentors. Through the mentor training sessions and through interactions with mentees, mentors are learning, promoting and celebrating Indigenous Australian culture, protocols, history and heritage. Throughout this process they also become aware of other University strategies which support Reconciliation such as:

- Acknowledgement of traditional Indigenous custodianship of lands on which the campuses are located.
- The incorporation of relevant Indigenous perspectives into University materials and academic programs.
- Consultation and collaboration with Indigenous peoples to advance the goals of the University and Indigenous peoples.
- Research with Indigenous people to promote the welfare and health of Indigenous Australians and to support and promote an understanding of Indigenous Australians' culture within the Australian community.

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Without their mentoring experiences through AIME, many of these students would progress through their studies unaware of the fact that the University has a Reconciliation Statement and without gaining invaluable knowledge of Australia's first nation people.

The value of this program to The University of Sydney, its students and potential future students is clear. Here is the perfect opportunity for the University to reinforce its commitment to "the protection and support of Indigenous Australian cultural heritage, and to educating the University community about the continuing importance of this unique heritage in the lives of Australian Indigenous peoples today"⁴.

Recommendation

While this proposal is concerned with the current year, it is the view of the Koori Centre, that University internal funding arrangements should be set in place to support and foster this outstanding initiative for the next five years, in line with IHEAC Priority 1 and AVCC Recommendation 1.

In 2008 the first cohort of students to enter the mentoring program will be in their final year at high school and making career and further education choices. At the very least funds should be found from within the University to support AIME through to the end of that period. This will enable the Facilitator the space to assess the outcomes of the program for the mentees, but also to assess the benefits to the University in terms of recruitment from this cohort of students.

Janet Mooney
Director

⁴ The University of Sydney Reconciliation Statement