

Inclusive Education at the University of Sydney

The Sydney Experience

Friederike Gadow & Jemima MacDonald, Centre for Disability Studies



UN CRPD

CONVENTION on the RIGHTS of
PERSONS with DISABILITIES

Article 24 Education: States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning.

Inclusive Tertiary Education



A Journey to Inclusive Education

How it all started
Where we are now
Where to next?



How it all started



Inclusive Education Pilot 2012



Auditing model

IEP students **audit** Units of Study and therefore

- ▶ participate in lectures and tutorials
- ▶ participate as non-credit students,
- ▶ complete academic work to the level that suits their strengths, abilities and interests
- ▶ receive a Certificate of Completion issued by CDS at the end of the 2-year program



Pilot study – what did we find?

Audit students

- ▶ Reported feeling integrated, accepted and very satisfied to have the opportunity to attend university
- ▶ More confident about following their career pathways, having developed job related skills
- ▶ Saw university as a place to meet people and make friends.



Pilot study – what did we find?

Lecturers

- ▶ Perceived that having students with ID in their lectures fulfills the student's educational right for inclusion
- ▶ Expressed that having IEP students within their classes was a positive experience for them as lecturers and for the class
- ▶ Supported the notion of offering a supportive environment, creation of accessible materials and providing individualised support.



Pilot study – what did we find?

Peer students

- ▶ Reported a positive change in their views about people with intellectual disability
- ▶ They had come to believe that every university should welcome students with intellectual disability for everyone's benefit



Where we are now

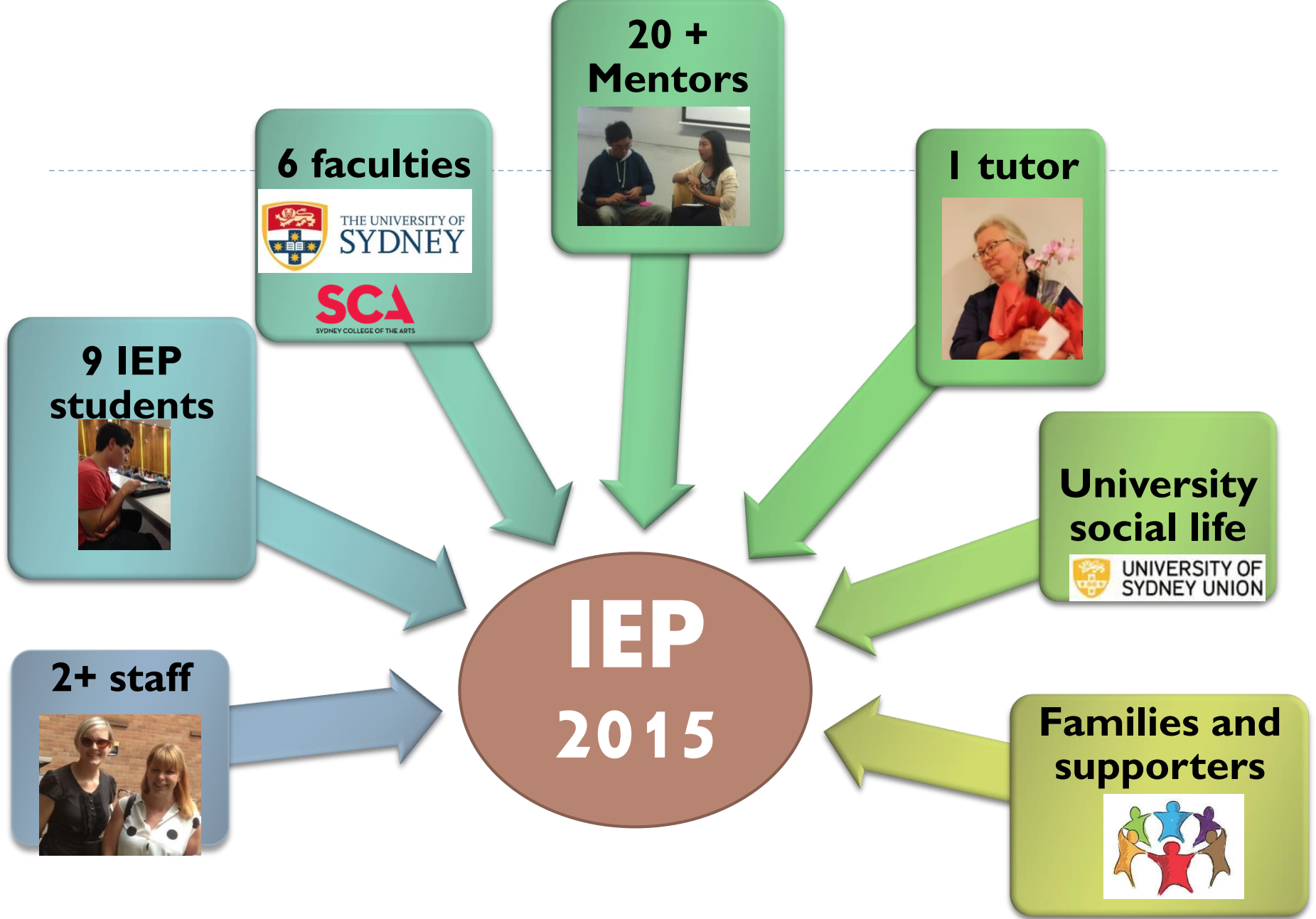


2013-2014

- ▶ Students took part in a 2 year auditing experience
- ▶ Doubled student numbers to 10 students
- ▶ Auditing occurred across 5 different faculties
- ▶ Individual tutoring for each students bi-weekly
- ▶ Mentor network began to expand



Awards ceremony
2014



Night for Supporters



Testimonies: Lecturers

- ▶ *“They are awesome to have in the class. More engaged than the rest of the bunch!” – Lecturer*
- ▶ *“Loving having them in the lectures, so engaged and switched on! They're integrating wonderfully into the tutorials.” – Lecturer*
- ▶ *“Matthew comes to see me most classes, either in the middle or (more commonly) at the end... He is always in good spirits, and is mostly in attendance.” – Lecturer*



Testimonies: IEP Students

- ▶ *“Sometimes we dream of the impossible and when that impossible becomes a reality, it seems like a miracle - that is how I feel with the opportunity of being able to attend the University of Sydney through the Inclusive Education Program”.*
- ▶ *“I love Uni because it feels like I belong!”*
- ▶ *“Before I started the Sydney Uni IEP I was a young girl at special school, I am now an independent adult living in a much wider world.”*



Mentor Perspective

CDS

Centre for

Disability



Challenges

- ▶ Higher education: “a proudly exclusive environment in which only students who meet certain admission requirements are accepted and educated” (Hart, Grigal, & Weir, 2010, pp. 2-3)
- ▶ Breaking down historical barriers to tertiary education due to rigid entry requirements, prejudice, social expectations from peers and university staff
 - ▶ Student status and student privileges
 - ▶ Sense of belonging as an audit student
- ▶ Funding/sustainability



Gains to date

- ▶ Each student has a unikey
- ▶ Large increase of mentor network
- ▶ Continuing to formalise mentor training
- ▶ Variety of events during semester for students, families and mentors
- ▶ Secured funding until end of 2016
- ▶ Successfully completed incubation program through Social Traders



Gains to date

- ▶ Growing support within the University
 - ▶ Reflected in steering committee membership
 - ▶ University increasingly taking ownership – featured in DAP and publicity
 - ▶ Disability Awareness Week
- ▶ Student interests drive our expansion within the university and the support that we gain from that



Student collaboration and increased linkages

- ▶ Received educational innovation grant through USyd in collaboration with Faculty of Education and Social Work
- ▶ Pre-service teachers (students studying to become teachers) studying 'positive approaches to special education' were matched with IEP students
- ▶ Groups collaborated on a project that
 - ▶ Related to IEP students UoS
 - ▶ Met a community need
 - ▶ Was documented through a 5 min video



Where to next?



Where to next?

- ▶ Secure on-going funding for a sustainable future
 - ▶ Opportunities arising through the launch of NDIS
 - ▶ Corporate engagement utilising a hybrid model of philanthropy and social enterprise
- ▶ Further refining of program strategies based on lessons learnt
 - ▶ Lobbying for increased access to University privileges
 - ▶ Currently developing opportunities for IEP students to engage in internship and employment opportunities



For more information contact

Friederike Gadow

Program Coordinator

T 02 9036 3611

E friederike.gadow@sydney.edu.au



Jemima MacDonald

Program Officer

T 02 9036 3609

E jemima.macdonald@sgydney.edu.au



▶ A lay summary of the pilot findings can be accessed on
www.cds.org.au/education-a-training/inclusive-education



Questions or comments?

