

DARLENE: Welcome, everyone. It's Darlene McLennan here. On behalf of ATEND and ADCET, I welcome you all to the webinar. Also I would like to take this opportunity to say a special welcome to our New Zealand colleagues who are joining us. It's great to have Friederike and Jemima from the Centre for Disability Studies presenting to us today on inclusive education at the University of Sydney and especially talking about tertiary education for people with intellectual disability.

Before we make a start, I want to give you a few housekeeping items before the presentation begins. This webinar is being live captioned by Bradley Reporting and will be recorded. This recording will be placed on ADCET after the recording has been captioned. Unfortunately, the GotoWebinar platform is not as accessible as we would desire for screen reader users.

If you are a user of screen readers and have any questions or would like to ‑‑ or have any comments -- if you could please email them to jane.hawkeswood@ utas.edu.au. All participants have been muted. This is to ensure as little background noise is received during the webinar.

The webinar will run for around 40 to 50 minutes and we will have an opportunity to ask questions at the end. Throughout the presentation feel free to enter your questions into the question pod and they will be answered at the end of the presentation. Alternatively, raise your hand and we will unmute you and you can ask your question. If you have any technical difficulties during the webinar, please email jane@utas.edu.au. Okay, it's over to you, Friederike and Jemima.

FRIEDERIKE: Thank you very much, Darlene. Welcome to this webinar, everyone. We will talk to you about inclusive education at the University of Sydney today and we will specifically talk about our experience here at Sydney University. My name is Friederike. I'm a research fellow at the Centre for Disability Studies and I'm here with my colleague Jemima MacDonald, a research and project officer here at the Centre for Disability Studies as well.

Just a brief background on our centre ‑‑ the Centre for Disability Studies is a non-profit organisation and is affiliated with the Sydney Medical School at the University of Sydney. We have been in operation since 1997 and our vision is building capacity for change.

And the work that we do is about creating and disseminating knowledge to improve the lives of people with disability and to achieve design, develop research and teaching and clinical research to inform clinical and policy practice. We would like to start the presentation by talking to you about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And specifically we would like to talk about article 24. Article 24 states or specifies that all persons with disabilities have the right to an inclusive education system at all levels. It reads: States parties recognise the rights of persons with disabilities to education with a view to realising the right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities the parties will ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. And lifelong learning. So as a signatory, Australia has an obligation to provide the same opportunities to people with disabilities, which includes people with intellectual disability, in the area of education, and that includes university education.

Now, despite the convention, inclusion of students with an intellectual disability into tertiary education remains limited. It is however appearing ‑‑ gaining interest worldwide.

Now, this slide shows a map of the world. We have marked some countries where work is being done in the area of inclusive tertiary education. And some of the countries of interest here include Canada. You can see a star which is placed on Alberta and British Columbia, where people with an intellectual disability have had opportunity to participate in university life for over 30 years now through the inclusive postsecondary education program in Alberta and through an organisation called Steps Forward in British Columbia. These initiatives in Canada utilise a fully inclusive model and that means that students with intellectual disabilities participate in all aspects of university or college life.

We have also placed some stars on the United States. There are over 200 colleges and universities that provide opportunities for people with an intellectual disability to participate at the tertiary level. However, most of these initiatives are programs where students participate in separate vocational or social skills programs. So they are located on the college or university campus. But it's not a fully inclusive initiative as such. And about 75 per cent of the programs are separate.

We have also placed a star on Ireland. Trinity College is a university in Dublin that seems to be leading practice in Europe. It utilises the so‑called hybrid model where students with an intellectual disability participate in a course called certificate in contemporary living, and as part of that they also participate in university lectures.

Now, lastly, we have placed two stars on Australia. And in Australia we have Flinders University, which operates the Uphill Project and have been doing that since 1999.

Lastly, we have placed a star on ourselves here at the Centre for Disability Studies where we have established the inclusive education program in 2012. As you can see, today universities are shifting the paradigms to open their doors to a broader cross‑section of the community, including people with intellectual disability. This challenges the traditional view that students with intellectual disability are not capable of completing a college or university course.

And they have been part of university life and taking classes with their peers and learning to navigate in a world of high expectations and this leads to the development of skills needed for a successful adult life, not necessarily the academic learning that takes place as well. This is a bit of background. And it will take us to the overview of what we want to talk to you about today.

We will talk to you about our journey towards inclusive education here at the University of Sydney. We will tell you a bit about how we established the program, how it all started and where we are all now, something that Jemima will tell you about in detail and we will then briefly look at our future direction.

So how did we start? When our director, Professor Patricia O'Brien, took up her position at the centre about five years ago she had a vision to include people with an intellectual disability here at the University of Sydney. Patricia had a background in this work through her previous work at Trinity College in Dublin, and that was one of the locations we marked on the world map. So this was a logical extension of the work she had been involved with. She had a vision to introduce a fully inclusive model based on the same values and principles of the Canadian model.

Patricia was then introduced to someone working here in state government. That's the Department of Family and Community Services in New South Wales. And this woman shared Patricia's vision. And through championing the vision she secured us an initial small amount of pilot funding for six months. The funding allowed us to set up the program structure, including setting up the steering committee, and that steering committee consisted of representatives from disability advocacy groups and also NGOs who shared that same vision of having a fully inclusive opportunity here at Sydney University. The steering committee nominated five students initially to participate in the program. The idea was those students would test what it would be like to come to Sydney Uni.

As part of the pilot funding we were able to appoint two part‑time program coordinators to facilitate the access to the university's academic and social life.

So on the slide we have two of the initial students in a tutorial session ‑‑ the photo here. As part of the pilot funding we were also able to conduct some research on the experiences of students who joined the program, peer mentors and lecturers. Jemima will talk in more detail about peer mentoring and how we engage people on campus.

Briefly I want to talk to you about the model that we utilise here. We use a so‑called auditing model. That means that our students audit units of study. That means that they participate in lectures and tutorials. Tutorials if they wish. They participate as non-credit students. Whilst they are students ‑‑ whilst they don't complete assignments or set exams they complete academic work to the level that suits their strengths, abilities and interests. It's a two‑year program in that context and students receive a certificate of completion, which is issued by the centre at the end of the program.

Going back to our pilot study, which looked at the first six months of the university experience for students with an intellectual disability, what did we find? We found it was a really positive experience for everyone. And the audited students reported feeling integrated, accepted and very happy to have the university, to come to university. Because it was a lifelong dream for all of them to attend university. They felt more confident about following their career pathways. And they felt that they had developed skills in the six months that were relevant for their future work. They also saw uni as a place to meet people and make friends.

When we spoke to lecturers; they told us that they found that welcoming students with an intellectual disability into their lectures wasn't just the right thing to do but it was fulfilling the students’ right for inclusion at university. They felt that it benefited themselves as lecturers and also the whole class. And lastly, they supported the idea that it was important to offer a supportive environment, that materials needed to be accessible and that it was important that students received individualised supports.

As part of the pilot study we also interviewed peer students who were active as mentors to our students within the program. And they said this was an opportunity for them to really reflect on and change their views about people with an intellectual disability. Many of the mentors had never met anybody before who had a disability. They had also come to believe that in fact every university should welcome students with intellectual disability because everyone would benefit. There are also human rights issues as well. I will hand over to Jemima now, who will tell you about our program as it is today and she will talk you through the different components that make it a success.

JEMIMA: Good afternoon. From 2013 to 2014 we were able to have an ongoing funding commitment through Ageing, Disability and Home Care. Therefore, the steering committee decided that we would now be in a position to offer a two‑year and to double our student intake. We went from five students to 10 students. Over this time, subject selection was very student driven. There seemed to be a particular preference for certain faculties such as education and social work, Sydney College of the Arts and the arts and social science faculties. But we supported our students to undertake any unit of study they were passionate about and interested in.

During the pilot and the research, one of the gaps that we identified was that students needed a little bit more individualised supports. Again, this is something that international practice supports. This is to enable them to access course content and modify some of the assessment tasks in a meaningful way. With the additional funding that we got in 2013 we were able to put in place one-on-one tutorials, and I will address that in a little bit.

So that brings us now to 2015. Through piloting and trialling this program we have come to realise there are seven key components that make this program the success it is. We have the program staff. That's myself and Friederike. And we are also supported by our director, Professor Patricia O'Brien. We also have one casual employed mentor, who started off in a volunteering role but now we have brought her in to assist us with some of the on-the-ground running of the program and provide the students and mentors with some additional support.

Friederike and I, we are mainly in the background and our job is to facilitate.

We facilitate the mentors, access to lectures and tutorials and facilitate other linkages on campus for our students. We have a small group of nine students and they are really motivated, driven and passionate. They have a very diverse range of interests. For example, not all nine students want to study in the same area. This extends inclusion throughout the university campus. The small cohort also enables planning that is individualised and person centred for each of our students. One of the ways that we do this is we use a person centred tool called a PATH, Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope. It's a goal setting tool. Once a year we sit down with the students and their supporters and we look at where they want to be at the end of the year. And that's not just to do with academically ‑‑ it's all aspects of their lives. That gives Friederike and I a real insight into what these students are passionate about and also what they don't like. And that helps us steer ‑‑ helps us support them in the way that is meaningful for them.

Then at the beginning of second semester we review the PATH and see if any changes need to be made. We're now looking at faculties. We have gradually expanded our presence with six faculties at the university. This is from arts to health, business, education and the conservatorium of music.

The aim here is for all of our IEP students to be fully participating in all aspects of university learning, including lectures and tutorials but again tutorials. That's up to our students. If they feel they are ready to enter into a tutorial setting we will make sure the supports are available to do that.

One of the biggest markers of success of our program is our mentors. Mentors are like any other university student. They meet up with our inclusion students, go to class, catch up for lunch, go over uni materials or just spend time together. We have two different types of mentors. We have academic. They are ones that will sit in the class. They might be enrolled in that subject. And they might sit next to our students. Or they might audit along with our students.

The other type of mentor is a social mentor. Like I said before, they might just meet up for lunch, they might hang around the uni, play sport, join a club or society and many of our mentors are known to have a really good connection with our students which then ventures off campus. Which is fantastic.

We have over 20 mentors each semester. And the numbers are increasing. Over the years we have refined the way we recruit our mentors. I think it's getting better each semester. We recruit through various avenues. The first is through faculties. Most faculties have their own form of mentoring program. We tap into these at the beginning of each semester.

The other way is through the individual units of study that our students are participating in for that semester. At the start of the semester, we send an email to our lecturers which they pass on to the students who are taking part in that subject. From there the students contact us if they are interested, fill out a mentor application form, and from there we do a little bit of match making. This is one of my main roles in the program. I meet with each of the potential mentors and match them with our students.

Then you can see that we have one tutor. As mentioned before, we have our own program tutor who is a university tutor and lecturer here at the University of Sydney in the history department. She meets with each of our students to make the course content more accessible, to set study goals and to work on a project which our students then present at what we call an end of semester presentation evening. At these evenings we invite students, mentors, lecturers, tutors, family members, supporters, course coordinators, and everybody comes together to watch our students present. And what we have seen is that it's always a really fantastic night. The next box says "university social life". A key component of the course is not just about studying, it's also about participating in all aspects of uni, including the social. Students are encouraged to join clubs and societies. And mentors are paired with our students to meet up and explore the campus.

Lastly, we have got families and supporters. The role of the supporters and families is really critical to the success of this. We work very closely with the families and supporters to make sure we have shared values so they can provide input and the right amount of support that the students need.

Now, we did have a bit of a video but we tested it before and the sound didn't work very well. So, I'm not going to play it all. I'm just going to play the start. And I will turn off the sound.

One of the examples of the supporter engagement is the semester event called the night of supporters. That's where ourselves, the students and their supporters, we come together to discuss the IEP, what is working, what is not working and what we need to change. I will show you a snippet from that. (Video shown)

It says night of supporters 2015. This is what is easy about university. Some of the students, all of the students helped with that. What is hard about university? What are you hoping to get out of the IEP? And everybody answered that one.

And now we're going to stop it there because the next part gets very difficult to hear.

During the semester, and at the end of each semester, we contact the lecturers, mentors and students to gain some feedback about how it's going for them. I just wanted to read out a few of the testimonies. These are testimonies from the lecturers. ‘They are awesome to have in the class. More engaged than the rest of the bunch.’ Then the next one, ‘loving having them in the lectures. So engaged and switched on. They are integrating wonderfully into the tutorials.’ And then the last from the lecturers, ‘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.’

Then we have some from the inclusive ed students themselves. The first one, ‘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.’

The next one, ‘I love uni because it feels like I belong.’ And the last, ‘Before I started the Sydney Uni IEP I was a young girl at a special school. I'm now an independent adult living in a much wider world.’

I think that really sums up what it means to the students. It's pretty nice to hear.

Now, again, we did have another video but the quality wasn't very good. And it just goes through some of the perspectives from the mentors' point of view. When you do get sent these slides you will have access to watch these. But I just wanted to skip through ... and I will read out two of the quotes that we have on here.

This is from one of our mentors who has been in the program now for quite a few semesters: ‘A caring community which shares love, equality and happiness through providing students with disability social and academic support so that the deserved rights of the students with disabilities are protected.’

And then the next one: ‘The IEP has shown me the importance of creating education systems that cater to students with disabilities rather than consistently expecting those students to adjust to mainstream teaching practices. I'm so grateful for the opportunities the IEP has offered me. Being involved with the program has been an enriching and informative experience.’ And that's also again from a mentor who has now been in our program for a year. That I think is what we see with a lot of the mentors when they come into the program. I would say, you know, why are you in this? They say, ‘We want to help a disadvantaged population.’ Then when I ask them again after a semester or a year I say, ‘What have you gained from this?’ They say that the students have taught them more than they ever thought they would teach the students. You can really see that growing in that knowledge and that awareness from the mentors.

I'm going to pass over again to Friederike to have a chat about the challenges and gains of the program.

FRIEDERIKE: Okay. Thanks, Jemima. Setting up this initiative, slide 18, by the way. Setting up this initiative in Sydney wasn't without challenges. From that perspective that is caused by the fact that traditionally higher education has always been perceived as an exclusive environment where students who only meet certain admission requirements are accepted. So the university has always been seen as an exclusive environment, by definition, you could say.

Our task here is to break down some of those historical barriers, and some of those barriers are rigid entry requirements, prejudice, expectations from peers and also social expectations from university staff.

Specifically in our context, the big challenges are around student status and the privileges that come with it. Earlier on in the presentation we talked about the auditing status of our students. So while it's about giving students full access to the participation side of things ... so being able to participate in all aspects of university life, it means they are at this point in time here in Sydney not fully enrolled students. Which in turn means they do not currently have access to all student privileges such as an official access to e‑learning, such as access to student services, including disability services. As well as gaining a qualification at the end ‑‑ it's currently not something our students have access to. So this continues to be a challenge for us, as you can imagine. And also how this affects the sense of belonging within the university community ‑‑ from the point of view of our students as they are aware that they are audit students and therefore have a separate status within the university compared to their peers that they make friends with and who they see themselves as a peer to.

And then lastly, the challenge of course as for many other not‑for‑profit initiatives ‑‑ is funding and the ongoing sustainability of our program. We will mention to you a little later on the work we are currently and have been doing for some time to address this issue.

Now I will speak to you about some of the gains we have achieved despite or maybe even because of the challenges we have been facing.

Since mid‑last year we have been able to get guest uni keys for our students. So whilst our students don't have a formal student status, they can now with a guest student key get to e‑learning with the permission of the lecturer and faculty. This is really a huge step forward. When we first started we relied on mentors who would print off slides for our students or would provide access to other materials.

Now at least our students can log in and access learning materials and that also becomes increasingly important with more and more content being online, recorded lectures being available and features such as online discussion forums, which otherwise our students wouldn't be able to participate in.

Another gain has been the growth of the mentor network. When we first started the pilot program, a lot of work went into finding suitable mentors for our students. Whilst we still spend lots of time and effort on finding the right mentors for our students, we now have the luxury of being able to choose the right match as opposed to trying to find somebody who is willing to participate. So at times we have more mentor applications than spots that we actually are looking for, which is great.

I might mention here as well that ‑‑ and it might be different from other universities. But Sydney University has a very strong focus on mentoring. Mentoring is not just something our students receive, it's something that most undergraduate students are offered to receive as a way of easing into university life. And as Jemima mentioned earlier, we have been able to tap into the various mentoring networks at the faculties that exist around the campus.

This is also allowing us to formalise our mentor training. As we move along we realise that our mentors need the right support to then support our students. We have continued to formalise and improve that mentor training. As Jemima mentioned earlier, facilitating mentors and facilitating access to lectures we have also developed a variety of events during the semester to support our students, to support families and also to support mentors and also to provide opportunities for networking, for debriefing, for spending time together.

One of those events for example is the night for supporters that Jemima mentioned. The presentation afternoon and various social events that we have put on during the semester. As well as an alumni event as well. We now have a group of alumni who continue to want to be connected with other fellow alumni and us.

We have also secured funding until the end of 2016. As Jemima mentioned, the funding currently is block funding from our New South Wales state government through Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care. For those of you who are in New South Wales and elsewhere, you might know that with the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme things are dramatically changing here in New South Wales, which will mean that after the end of next year we will most likely no longer be able to rely on block funding.

One of the strategies to address the challenge has been to enter an incubation program called the Crunch ‑‑ a program offered through an organisation called Social Traders. Social Traders is based in Melbourne. They are now extending their work to Sydney. We have had an opportunity to join an eight‑month program which is a program that teaches non-profit skills to turn their ventures into a social enterprise. We have been taken through a journey where we entered with a proposal and were accepted into the program funded by the Westpac Foundation. And finished the program with a business plan.

It's very exciting for us, but it's also really of assistance in delivering what is required in terms of embracing a business model. Other gains to date include the growing support within the university. So we started as, you could say, almost a grassroots movement here out of our centre, which is an affiliate of the university. The program never was a formal university program. We are now in a position where the university is acknowledging and supporting what this program does for the overall diversity within the university.

One way in which we have achieved that was through growing our steering committee membership strategically, you could say. So we have now members from different university student services. We have other academics who have joined the committee and that includes one committee member at the dean level who has been really important in creating linkages at a higher more strategic level for us.

The university is also increasingly taking ownership of what we do in our program as I guess it realises more and more how our work aligns with the objectives of the disability action plan. Therefore, we were featured in the action plan and we are also receiving increased publicity through the university, including internal publicity such as staff and student news, but also external publicity. And including writing media releases and that's been picked up recently so that's great for us.

Lastly, a great way for us to promote awareness about tertiary inclusive education was Disability Awareness Week at the university this year in September. Where one of our students whose name is Christopher Bunton showed a documentary that he was featured in. This documentary is entitled Keeping up with Chris. For those of you joining us from New Zealand, you may have seen it on TV in New Zealand. It was aired probably in August this year, I would think.

It's a documentary that is about Chris's busy life. Chris is a gymnast and special Olympian, he is part of a theatre group and is now a university student. It was great to show his documentary during the flagship event at Disability Awareness Week and it was great to get that exposure on the university campus. Okay.

Now another gain for us is how our student interest drives, as we call it, our expansion within the university. So, it's not us here at the centre who decide which faculties we link with. It's this is really driven by our students and their interests. And the units of study that they want to take.

During the planning session, the past planning that occurred, we learned about our students' interest and then support our students to find the unit of study that is right for them and then the next step is for us to go to the faculty, to the lecturer and negotiate access to the lectures. And on tutorials. So that's really been a great journey for us, because over time we have really strengthened our linkages with those faculties where students seem to return to for example ‑‑ ancient history, for example, seems very popular. So we have great relationships there. But it also means that we continue to build new relationships.

Okay. That's slide 21 now. One last thing in terms of gains that I would like to talk about is a collaboration project that we engaged in just last semester. So semester 2 in 2015. For the first time in our journey we partnered with the faculty of education and social work with a colleague called Dr. Michelle Bernati, who joined the university from the United States earlier this year. And together with Michelle we were successful in applying for an educational innovation grant through the university. So it's a small grant. The grant allowed us to create a project where pre‑service teachers ‑‑ these were bachelor of education students studying to become teachers -- were matched with our IEP students to collaborate. And these pre‑service teachers were studying a third‑year subject called cognitive approaches to special education.

Now, traditionally or usually these teachers are required or pre‑service teachers are required to do some volunteer work. What often happens is that they might volunteer for an organisation where they will provide a service for somebody with a disability and often that can rereinforce some stereotypes that the pre‑service teachers might already have in their mind about people with a disability.

The aim of the project is really to shift that traditional project from doing for to doing with as a project where our students and the education students truly collaborated on a project. And the way that it worked was that our students were matched with a group. As a group they decided on a project that related to the IEP student's area of study but also that met community need. So it was about putting academic learning into practice.

In one example a student was studying ancient Roman history. And with her group she created a resource for primary school kids to learn about ancient Rome. They went to a local primary school and did a reading to the class. So as a group they carried out the entirety of the project and documented the whole journey through a five-minute video. And then the process could be viewed by people who were interested in how the project worked. We were able to show this video at the end of the semester at the presentation afternoon. It was a great way to celebrate the collaboration. We just wanted to share this with you because it shows how we have slowly from a very small initiative been able to increase our linkages at the university through targeted collaboration. Okay. I have talked enough. I will hand over to Jemima to talk to you about the future and what it holds for us.

JEMIMA: We need to secure ongoing funding for a sustainable future. As Friederike said, our funding most likely will run out at the end of 2016. So we will also be looking at universities arising through the launch of the NDIS. Currently some of our students are on individual packages. And they use this as extra support for the program. For example, they might have a support worker who assists them with travel training and learning the routes to uni and back again. This is an area that we can't cover with our current funding. So we can start to have a look at more ways of possibly we can use the NDIS. As Friederike talked about, the social engagement, through the Social Crunch and Traders we came out with a model, a hybrid model, of philanthropy and social enterprise.

From the social enterprise section we are looking at scholarships that corporates kind of buy into so they can follow the journey of these young people through university. And other ‑‑ so what else we're looking forward to. We are looking at constantly refining the program based on the lessons we have learnt. We are constantly lobbying for increased access to university privileges. As we said, we have the uni there but how we can engage more with clubs and societies. And access to student services.

We are also currently developing opportunities for our students to engage in internships and employment opportunities. What we saw with our past cohort, we saw a gap. That gap was between our students finishing and the employment sector. If you look at most current students at university, they often during their time at university will partake in internship opportunities. And so we want to try and mimic and fully include our students into what that would look like. So we're looking at how in their last few semesters of the program they can go out and do a range of internships. And then that will hopefully bridge that gap into employment where they can have really meaningful employment opportunities.

So that is the end of our presentation. Our contact details are on the screen. If you want to, you can go to our website. On the left‑hand side there is a section under education and you can go into the inclusive education section. In there it tells a little bit more about the program and gives a lay summary of the pilot funding from the research in 2012.  And we're done.

DARLENE: Great. Thank you very much for that. That was absolutely brilliant. Awe inspiring. You have ignited a passion into me; I would be scared. If people want to ask a question they can either use the chat pod or raise their hand or email Jane Hawkeswood and I'm happy to ask those questions. While waiting to see if people do, I'm aware you had a forum last week, were there any outcomes from the session that you could report back to us?

SPKR: Yes, sure. I will give you a brief background on the forum and why we held it. Since the start of starting the program we have really been interested in having linkages around the country but also with our neighbours in New Zealand to bring about change in terms of access to tertiary education for people with an intellectual disability. The forum last week was really about bringing people together who were passionate about and interested in this area. So we had several talks about inclusion more generally. We looked at what is needed from our perspective but also from the perspective of others in terms of bringing about change in Australia. We looked at some of the international models that currently exist and how we might be able to apply them here.

We presented on the program in Sydney and also invited our colleague Lorraine Lindsay from Flinders University, who talked about their experience. I think one thing that came out of the forum is that there is also, despite the limited opportunities for people with intellectual disability in Australia, there is already between the two programs that exist a wealth of knowledge as to how it might work. We know that many other universities are at least thinking about it. So one thing that we really want to achieve through this forum is to mobilise a network of people around the country who are interested in serious I will doing something about this so we can also develop a framework and best practice guidelines to make sure the experience is a positive one for anybody with an intellectual disability who does enter the tertiary sector.

DARLENE: We had a couple of questions, one from Deb Duffy and how are students chosen for the program. Is there a selection criteria?

SPKR: Yes, there is. Initially students entered through word of mouth really, because we were such a small initiative. In 2015, semester 1, for the first time we had to make a selection, which was difficult. The way we went about it was we offered an open day to people who were interested last year in October. We advertised that widely and gave people an opportunity to come along and engage with us and we tried to design the day in a way so that people had an insight into what it might be like if you came to university.

So it was a day in the life of a university student, if you like. And then if people are still interested, they could put in an application. And we then selected students based on their motivation, based on their interests as well. We obviously wanted to select people with a diversity interests. As opposed to a number of people wanting to do the same thing. So flexibility. Also time commitment: There were a range of factors that influenced who we chose in the end. We did have quite a few applications from people who purely had mental health issues. And so that ‑‑ we had to say no to them, because they could go through the typical university path and access disability services. So

SPKR: Currently funded through ageing, disability and home care.

SPKR: In terms of proceeding, we really weren't looking at that. We know that we can support our students through mentors and through our one to one tutor. So we were more looking for students that were motivated and that wanted to learn.

SPKR: That's great. Just quickly as we're coming to the end of time ‑‑ one of the questions is just around is there any student fees or do students pay any fees or is there any cost to students?

SPKR: At this point in time, not at this point in time. Through the DOC funding we have we are able to offer this free of charge. It is likely this will have to change in the future when we no longer have block funding available. So we are looking at other models.

As Jemima said, that might include scholarships but it might also be necessary for students to make a contribution to the cost in the future.

DARLENE: Excellent. Thank you. Interestingly, I met with the National Disability Insurance Agency last week in Geelong at their national office. And I spoke to a staff person there, an alumni there of the University of Sydney. And she was very keen around looking at the issue of access for people with intellectual disability into university. I think that's something we could further discuss with the agency. That's quite exciting.

So thank you to both of you. It was an absolutely fantastic presentation. This is going to be our last webinar for the year. I just wish to thank everybody who has joined us for this one and ones previously. Thank you very much for your support. I know from the feedback we receive that they are very useful. And today's I think, yes, just goes to show there is lots of hopefully change within the sector around this issue and hopefully we will see more work. I would also like to thank Bradley Reporting for their great captioning this year and for today. And lastly, just a bit of a plug for ADCET ‑‑ we are doing an article which will be out in our next newsletter around the University of Sydney. And the great work they have done around the disability action plan. Just what you were saying Friederike and Jemima about the disability awareness day and the disability action plan at the university ‑‑ that the university has done, that was awe inspiring for me as well. So we have interviewed a couple of staff at the university and we will have that on our website and newsletter. So we might put a plug in for your program as well.

SPKR: Thank you.

SPKR: All right. We will finish there now. Any other last comments?

SPKR: Look, maybe just if people do have further questions after this settles in a bit, feel free to contact us. We are very happy to share and talk. And we are very keen for this to take off in other areas of Australia and in New Zealand. So please do contact us.

SPKR: I just had another one, Darlene.

SPKR: This is from Julie, thanking the presenters for the detail of how this excellent program works. I was particularly impressed by the depth of the inclusion. Often we see people attending a college or uni but on a separate course. And the question is: Is there any information on how much the course costs per student? I'm interested in promoting this approach and wonder if it could be sold as a business or income stream to the university. So you answered a little bit about the course cost per student earlier. What about the, I am interested in promoting this approach and wonder if it could be sold as business or income stream to the uni.

SPKR: I think it would definitely be something worth having further discussion about. I don't know if we can give a brief answer to this that would be under two minutes. So if you are happy to contact us directly, we are definitely happy to share more insight into some of the work we have done around this to get our head around what it does actually cost for example to provide the supports. Yes. That would be welcomed.

DARLENE: Okay. Excellent. Thank you for attending and thank you to our presenters and Bradley reporting. We will close off. Hopefully in the next week the recording will be available for you to view and share on ADCET. Thank you, everybody.