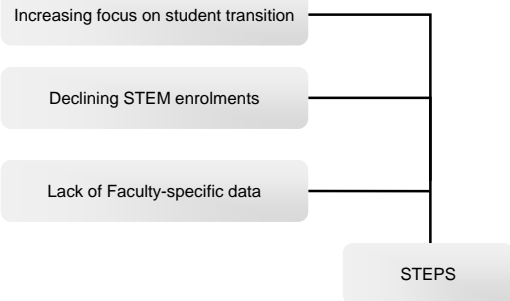


'STEPS'

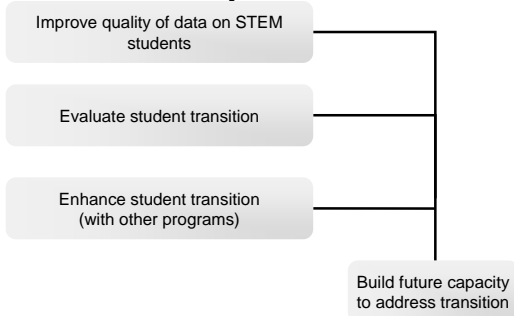
Student Transition Evaluation Program for the Sciences

Dr. Dominic Keuskamp
Student Learning Centre
Flinders University

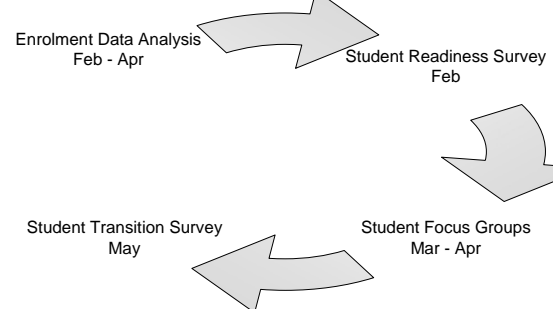
Rationale



Objectives



Program Outline



Enrolment Data Analysis

- **Database of ~800 students enrolled in STEM subjects**
- **Academic and demographic info provided at enrolment**
- **Profiling of student cohorts**
 - Those initially enrolled, persisting and leaving

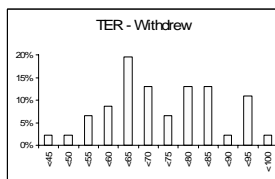
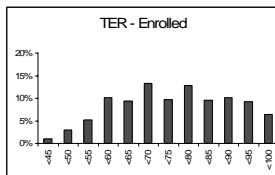
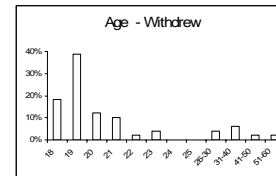
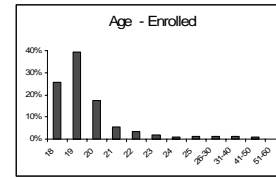
Enrolled in February*

- **51% female**
- **98% domestic**
- **93% Australian citizen**
- **Only 6% self-identified NESB**
- **87% full time**
- **76% gained entry via TER**

*it should be noted that these are early enrolments, and do not represent the full diversity of the final enrolled cohort

Withdrawn by April

- **66% female**
- **No other group disproportionately represented**
- **Trends in age and TER...**



Program Outline

Enrolment Data Analysis

Student Readiness Survey

Student Transition Survey

Student Focus Groups

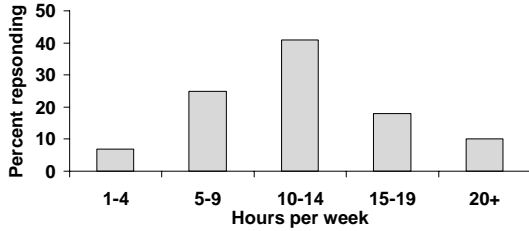
Student Readiness Survey

- **Web-based survey sent via email to initial enrolments:**
 - break btw study
 - steps for prioritising study
 - perceptions of current, and expected skills
 - awareness of support services
 - additional demographics etc.
- **275 respondents (34% STEM subjects, 44% STEM courses)**

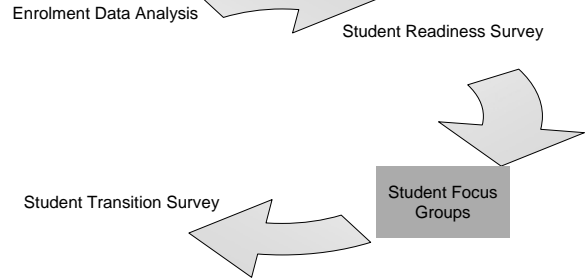
Student Readiness Survey

- **60% students no break in study**
- **Only 50% rated internet and email skills advanced**
- **Only 60% had prioritised university study**
 - Usu. reducing paid work commitments
- **70% expected to require support in writing skills (more than maths or science skills - 40%, computing skills - 20%)**
- **60% live with parents, 40% changing address to study**
- **Otherwise prepared, aware of support etc.**

Intended working hours



Program Outline



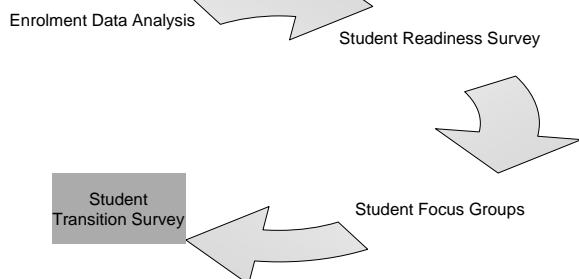
Student Focus Groups

- ~ 200 students in SRS agreed to be contacted or did not respond
- Invited by phone to attend catered lunchtime FGs in successive weeks of semester
- Topics :
 - personal and social experiences of transition
 - how experiences matched expectations
 - interactions with university environment, teaching and administrative staff
 - Interactions with other students

Student Focus Groups

- 13 students attended, from diversity of backgrounds & courses
- Themes that emerged:
 - challenges in managing workload
 - level of content higher than they had expected
 - expectations of computing skills more advanced than expected
 - Interactions with university and staff mostly positive
 - perceived lack of social engagement among fellow students
 - usefulness of online delivery of teaching

Program Outline



Transition Survey

- Hard copy survey, handed to students pre- or post-lecture
- Mix of scaled and open-ended responses to questions about their transition
- ~200 responses:
 - Managing time and studyload, and maintaining *motivation* were most challenging
 - Level of new/assumed science knowledge greater than expected
 - Usefulness of online delivery
 - Other students as most useful resource

Conclusions

- Overall, student satisfaction with their transition high
- STEM students esp. time poor
- Limits students' ability to engage with each other and their transition (likewise for Faculty)
- Greater social engagement should
 - enhance learning
 - increase student motivation

Next STEPS?

- Increase capacity for social engagement
 - In teaching – rituals of the science tribe?
 - Through online social networking
 - Beware the digital divide?
- Enhance ability to manage time
 - Promotion pre-semester
 - Online scheduling through LMS
- Refine understanding of reasons for students' withdrawal, esp. for specific groups