RESEARCH MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS IMPACT CASE STUDIES

ARMS Strategic Plan 'Towards 2025' has as one of its priorities the promotion of the profession of research management (Strategic Priority 2). One way ARMS plans to achieve this in the timeframe 2019-2021 is to develop case studies that demonstrate the value and contribution of research management professionals (Implementation Priority 2.2).

A template has been developed to help describe your research management impact. ARMS hopes to use many of the impact case studies to demonstrate to our stakeholders the value of our profession to the research enterprise. The impact could be felt by researchers, funders, institutions, collaborators, students, the community, governments or industry.

A Research Management Impact Case study should be a narrative (maximum 1,000 words) around the following questions:

https://www.researchmanagement.org.au/call-submission-impact-case-studies

1. **Please tell us about the research enterprise, and your role in it. What was the situation/project; what were the challenges that were faced; what was your role it; and why did you do what you did?**

Established in 2013, the Global Challenges Program (GCP) is a strategic whole of institution research initiative, designed to drive social, economic and cultural change in our region, with the potential to be translatable across the globe. Now in it's seventh year, the GCP is unique nationally and internationally, and is innovative in both the program design and implementation.

As the GCP Program Director, I have worked to improve gender equity and develop the next generation of research leaders through support and engagement of Early Career Researchers (ECRs).
It is widely accepted that men are more likely to move up the academic ladder toward fixed positions, while women are less likely to receive promotions (Dannell & Hjerm, 2013). At a professorial level, 85% are men, with women heavily concentrated at the bottom ranks of the profession (Allen & Savigny, 2016). Women lack mentorship and experience discrimination, and of course child-rearing experiences of young mothers remain a key source of gender inequity within academia.

GCP has removed barriers to female and ECRs participation and leadership of research teams. This has been achieved by the implementation of values around equity, diversity and inclusion, identifying researchers, funding teams and providing not only financial, but an array of non-financial support including mentorship and training. This approach has resulted in significant success in supporting gender equality, ECRs and community, industry and Government partnerships. GCP has not only increased the number of researchers engaged in interdisciplinary, challenge-led research at UOW, but significantly increased the proportion of women and ECRs in leadership positions on research teams. 50% of researchers in 2020 are women and 53% of projects have women as lead investigators. 41% of projects have ECRs as chief investigators, ensuring we are investing in and supporting the next generation of research leaders.

2. **How did you add value, improve outcomes and/or otherwise positively impact the research enterprise? How was this impact measured?**

I come from a background as a medical researcher and have over 20 years of experience in the Higher Education Sector. I am passionate about the value of research and the positive impacts it makes on the world, I add value by bringing diverse groups of people (from university, community, government and industry) together to facilitate transformative and impactful projects. With lived experience as a female ECR, I worked with the GCP team to develop an culture which challenges the status quo.

The UOW GCP was designed to facilitate inclusiveness, collegiality and equity in research; empowering researchers and setting them up to succeed. GCP explicitly encourages ECR participation in our funding guidelines and researchers are mentored and supported to develop diverse

teams. The GCP model provides non-financial as well as financial support, including media and marketing, support for award nominations, grant applications, mentoring, relationship building, research development and advice. Support is provided by the leadership team at every step, from idea inception to the implementation of the project. We do not fund and forget and this level of support is something that is uniquely associated with GCP, and not offered by other funding organisations.

The GCP also continues to [work toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), an initiative the program has been tracking and measuring since 2018 to ensure its teams are making real-world, measurable impact on a global scale.

The impact of the program has been captured shared through the production of [whitepapers and publications](#). The Program also contributes strong research outcome measures, from publications and funding, impact, engagement and rankings (see [2019 Annual Report](#), p5-6).

3. **Who were the key stakeholders in the research enterprise and how did you work with them to achieve a common goal? Please include any testimonials you have from those key stakeholders.**

The Research and Innovation Division developed the framework, scope and goals of the program through a working group and university-wide consultation. GCP Challenges were selected by UOW Researchers who identified them as having significantly local and global benefit. The GCP is a niche team that sits outside of all UOW faculty structures and has no line-management of any researchers. To deliver the program so we work closely with the Research Services team, Innovation & Commercial Research unit, Library, Finance, Legal and Marketing. One third of our projects also have a named investigator from outside UOW with many more working with external partners, so managing internal and external stakeholder relationships is a key strength of the Program.

"The Program offers its project teams support well beyond the financial, through building connections across the university, with industry and community, and in advancing women researchers and Early Career Researchers. The team fosters a research culture representative of the change we aim for in the wider University and community. Their research management and leadership throughout 2020 shows their commitment to working toward the bigger picture, through their unwavering values of adventure, collegiality, inclusivity and support." (Prof Jennifer L Martin AC, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, R&I)

"It is a good program for people like myself, who can work part time, have academic input and get on a few extra publications, which is really important, as an early career researcher." (ECR, Female)

"I now have close collaborations with people I wouldn't have met otherwise and its precipitated other research or teaching collaborations within that team. So, it's one of the things I love about Global Challenges." (Mid-career researcher, Female)

"You don't necessarily have to have that track record to be successful in getting funding. But for me, it's also been a great learning experience in terms of trying to lead a project for the first time, working with other people." (ECR)

"As an early career researcher, I think it's fantastic because it gave me the opportunity to get runs on the board. Starting off with seed and then I've progressed onto a project grant. That really provided me with an opportunity to explore an idea and then build on that idea… so I can be competitive for applying for those bigger grants… I thought it was really well targeted for early career researchers." (ECR)

4. **What lessons did you learn that you would like to share with your fellow research managers? e.g. better communication protocols; tips for negotiating successful industry partnerships; more transparent reporting of research expenditure**

Develop your team values and live by them. Make sure you communicate and enact your values in all that you do. If you identify good researchers, good teams and provide them the support and environment to thrive and fail safely, you will achieve amazing outcomes.