Position Description – LEAP Volunteer Mentor

About the program

LEAP Macquarie Mentoring program runs the following two streams:

- Refugee Mentoring
- Pacific Islander Mentoring

Both programs aim to promote purposeful relationships in which mentors work with high school students from refugee and Pacific Islander backgrounds, to assist them to develop a positive sense of self and knowledge of educational pathways available post high school.

Each program runs over 10 weeks and comprises:

- **In-School Mentoring Sessions**
  Mentors will be allocated between 1-3 mentees to work with simultaneously for an hour each week at an allocated school. Session times will be at a fixed time each week and allocation will be based on mentor availability.

  Please note – mentors must allocate 4 hours per week for in school mentoring sessions which includes pre/ post debrief and travel time.

- **University Experience Day**
  This one day event will take place on a Friday in week 9 of the program. It brings high school students, their parents, teachers and principals from 9 partner schools on campus for a fun and engaging day of activities. For many mentees in the program, this day is a transformative experience complementing the in-school mentoring sessions.

  During this day mentors will be actively involved in running campus tours for mentees.

Who are the mentees?

Mentees from our partner high schools are from refugee and Pacific Islander backgrounds. They are given the choice to self-nominate or are recommended by their teachers. The following mentee demographics are based on participation in the Refugee Mentoring program in 2016.
Rationale for the LEAP mentoring program

Students from refugee or Pacific Islander backgrounds can face considerable challenges in education and training. Many have little access to and knowledge of the range of higher education options available, and possess limited networks, knowledge and confidence to navigate the maze of vocational and educational pathways in Australia.

The Program seeks to empower and equip these students with the capabilities and information required to access the best outcomes. The program works with high school students from refugee or Pacific Islander backgrounds and aims to raise their aspirations towards further study. This is achieved through mentoring. Mentors help and inspire the high school students to engage in their school life, progress in their studies and plan their transition from high school to further education. They are role models and caring adults, who support the students to unlock their potential.

Program requirements of Mentors

- Complete compulsory online (3-4 hours) and face-to-face training (1 day)
- Be available for 3-4 hours per week for 10 weeks in Semester 1
- Able to participate in the University Experience Day
- Available to attend focus groups and feedback sessions
- Undertake a satisfactory ‘working with children’ check prior to commencement of program

What we are looking for – desirable skills, qualities and attributes

Diversity – mentors from refugee backgrounds or previous experience working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse and willing to learn about the refugee experience.

Communication Skills – mentors are friendly, engaging and able to communicate in a non-judgmental way. They are able to develop active listening and questioning skills.

Commitment – mentors are reliable and dedicated to the program.

Self-Awareness – mentors have awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and are able to ask for help and support.

Outlook – positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn from their mentees. Mentors do not try to ‘save’ or ‘fix’ young people.

Professional – ability to maintain boundaries, respect confidentiality and act within the program’s policies and procedures.

Work Independently – mentors are able to use initiative, take direction and work with limited supervision.

Experience - previous mentoring experience is helpful but not necessary.
Mentor Role

To develop and maintain a mentoring relationship with 1-3 high school students with the support of LEAP program staff.

This is not a tutoring program – your role is to work with high school students in their decision-making process, regarding further education based on their skills and interests. This is achieved through activities that include, but are not limited to:

- Goal setting
- Time Management
- Study skills
- Research skills

Mentor Responsibilities

- Commit to the whole length of the program
- Attend and participate in weekly mentoring and debrief sessions
- Engage with their mentees through the pursuit of common interests.
- Provide non-judgemental, unconditional and open-minded support and friendship to the mentees
- Act as a positive role model and encourage new experiences and opportunities
- Encourage the mentee to reach their potential and help them identify and achieve their goals
- Focus on building and encouraging self esteem
- Demonstrate initiative and plan for each mentoring session by using the resources provided by the program and your own resources and insights.
- Use your personal interests and life experiences as a valuable resource to support the mentoring session
- Maintain confidentiality and set clear boundaries in line with the LEAP Mentoring Program Policies and Mentor Code of Conduct
- Seek guidance from program staff when needed
- Maintain regular contact with program staff and the mentor liaison and provide information about the progress of the mentoring relationship.

Reporting relationship and support

You will be supported in your role by the LEAP Mentoring Team comprising of Project Coordinator and Project Officer. Each school will be allocated a Mentor Liaison who is usually a volunteer mentor who has participated in the program at least once before. The Mentor Liaison has the role of providing guidance and support to the other mentors.

A school coordinating teacher will be present at school during each of the sessions and can be an additional source of support for mentors.

Throughout the program you will have access to the online training portal and other resources disseminated by the program staff.

Additional information

For more information please contact the LEAP Office:
leap@mq.edu.au or
02 9850 7394