Mentoring literature often cites a tension between local initiatives that target the needs of specific groups and more efficient centralised programs addressing common concerns across a larger population. For several years, the University of Sydney has had a Mentoring Network consisting of the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Science, Sydney Law School and the Business School as a way of connecting, supporting and, perhaps most importantly, debriefing. These faculties have worked together to develop a community of best practice for mentoring programs. Over the last five years this informal network has been meeting before mentor training and after the launch of the faculty programs to discuss what went well, to share information and ideas, and to assess what could be improved.

This connection across some of the University resulted in the presentation of a paper: *Same-same but different: integrating central university support and faculty-specific knowledge for mentor training* at the International First Year Experience conference in Darwin this year. It compared the programs of the group members, and looked at how sharing experiences had resulted in the development of a common training module for the mentors.

Discussion at the conference led to a number of innovative ideas, including the proposal to look at developing some common online modules for mentors to complete so that students who were participating in more than one program would complete the related sessions only once. This would mean that more time could be allocated for the faculty-specific training that occurs face-to-face.

One of the most important things to come out of the conference was the realisation that, while the network has a diverse group of coordinators with a lot of ideas and willingness to support each other, there are so many more groups and coordinators in the University of Sydney community who could be supported and could contribute to this informal network.

**If you are interested in connecting to the group please contact:**
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You can also request to join the LinkedIn group.