

ActivateUTS sport and social clubs: Empowering students to grow, contribute and make a difference

Prepared for ActivateUTS

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Executive Summary



Executive summary

ActivateUTS, a key strategic partner of the University of Technology Sydney, was established over 40 years ago to enrich student experience through the provision of extracurricular activities. In addition to enhancing student experience, the literature suggests that university-based extracurricular activities contribute to the development of graduate capabilities (Darcy, Foley, & McDonald, 2017). This report presents the findings of a study that investigated the relationship between student involvement in extracurricular activities facilitated by ActivateUTS and the development of graduate attributes.

Following consultation with ActivateUTS executive staff and board members, the following data collection techniques were adopted:

- Semi-structured interviews with student leaders of ActivateUTS social and sports clubs at the beginning and the end of their one-year terms;
- In-depth interviews with current and former student members of the ActivateUTS Board;
- Online questionnaire survey of all ActivateUTS club members with additional questions for student leaders (i.e. club executives, managers of University Games teams, Board members).

Analysis of the UTS graduate attribute framework and a literature review informed the design of the research instruments. 52 interviews were conducted. 844 usable responses were received from the online survey. Survey data was analysed using SPSS software. NVivo, comprehensive qualitative data analysis software, was used to organise, analyse and find connections across all the interview transcripts and extended response survey questions.

ActivateUTS membership and Graduate Attributes

The research findings indicate that UTS student involvement in activity facilitated by ActivateUTS is contributing significantly to graduate attribute development, both directly and indirectly. The findings cover student leaders and regular members of ActivateUTS sporting and social clubs.

Student leaders reported development in a range of graduate attributes in the online survey. The top 3 skills identified were **teamwork/collaboration skills**, **leadership/people management skills**, and **organising/coordinating skills**. These skills were developed by 99%, 98% and 97% of student leaders respectively.

This data was supported by detailed insights gathered through interviews. Indicative example, *“I actually went to a job interview earlier today and at the interview the employer asked me about my leadership skills and I was really pleased to be able to say that I had a leadership role in the Society and explain what that meant. I feel that it really provided me with an advantage for any potential employment”* (Student Leader, Social Club).

The majority of regular club members also reported skill development resulting from their engagement with ActivateUTS. Ninety-one per cent of sports club members and 84 per cent of social club members agreed that ActivateUTS membership had contributed to work ready skills. The top 3 skills developed by sports club members were **teamwork skills**, **interpersonal and communication skills**, and **time management**. The order changed slightly for social club members with **interpersonal and communication skills**, **teamwork skills**, and **creativity/ability to innovate** in the top 3 slots respectively.

Further outcomes

Students (at all levels of engagement with ActivateUTS) reported developing friendships through their involvement. They considered this to be the most significant personal benefit gained. Many students explained that they established “lifelong friendships” through their clubs and that these friendships improved their sense of well-being and university experience. *“I have made lasting friendships that I wouldn’t have made if not involved. I feel much more involved in the UTS community, and feel as if I make more of a difference now than I did before”.*

Students also reported increased levels of confidence, improved mental health, reduced stress and better physical health as a result of club membership.

Overall, membership contributed to a better student experience and the development of a sense of belonging to the UTS community. Research has shown that social engagement and a ‘sense of belonging’ has significant benefits for student retention and learning, and that social networks developed by students provides support to overcome stress and difficulties associated with their studies. These outcomes may be providing indirect contributions to graduate attributes by supporting students in UTS programs. *“As an international student, I have some problems with English language but being social and part of the team my communication skill has now improved”.*

Negative Impacts of holding an Executive Position

Student leaders reported increased stress as a result of the time commitment required for the executive role. Students explained that the support of other student leaders and ActivateUTS staff was essential in managing this stress and ensuring that all their commitments were met.

Suggestions from students for improvement

Student leaders would like recognition and formal acknowledgement of the skills developed and the time committed to leadership roles, including formal documentation that they could present to a potential employer.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that students are developing sets of skills through their engagement with ActivateUTS that correlate with UTS graduate attributes in each of the faculties, particularly with the more generic attributes such as leadership and teamwork, interpersonal skills, communication, critical and creative thinking, ethics and self-management skills.

Engagement with ActivateUTS was less likely to contribute to attributes associated with disciplinary knowledge, although our findings indicate that students sometimes have the opportunity to apply disciplinary knowledge, particularly those in leadership roles.

ActivateUTS is contributing to the UTS strategic goals by providing opportunities for practice-oriented learning and developing cross-cultural skills. ActivateUTS is supporting UTS students to develop stronger professional identities.

Leadership roles in ActivateUTS Sport and Social clubs and on the ActivateUTS Board provide students with a *work integrated learning* experience.

The key strategic partnership between ActivateUTS and UTS is contributing in multiple ways to the UTS mission and strategic plan. The recommendations that follow offer suggestions for ways in which the partnership might be leveraged further.

Next steps

This study has sampled the ActivateUTS student membership as a whole to determine the scope and extent to which graduate attributes are being developed for the ActivateUTS student body, and particularly for student leaders. Further research is required to evaluate the development of graduate attributes through university-based extracurricular activity at an individual student level. This might be achieved through evaluation of individual student portfolios and reflective work constructively aligned to develop and assess specific attributes.

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Report

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1. Introduction

ActivateUTS is a not-for-profit organisation and a key partner of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). It was established over 40 years ago to enrich the student experience through the provision of sport and social activities that complement the educational programs delivered by the University. The focus of this study is UTS students, however, it is noted that ActivateUTS extends its services to university staff, the ActivateUTS workforce (staff and volunteers), the precinct community and the broader public.

While the organisation is best known for facilitating sport and social activities ActivateUTS also invests in the personal and professional growth of its student members. This is done through formal training programs and the provision leadership opportunities including club executive roles and board membership. The ActivateUTS community has long held the view that these experiences provide significant value in terms of contributions to employability skills including graduate attributes that are the focus of programs and curriculum across the University.

Previous research supports this view. The primary application of a graduate attributes framework is in course curriculum design, however, learning can also occur outside the curriculum, in the context of students' experiences of belonging to a wider university community (S. C. Barrie, 2007). These extracurricular contexts have great educational potential, which can be harnessed by developing strategies that integrate the broader experience of university with curriculum learning. Studies have linked engagement in university-based extracurricular activity with increased capacity for: community engagement; informed inquiry; creativity and innovation; critical and independent thinking; judgment; cross cultural understanding; spoken and written communication; understanding of the contexts of professional work; and the ability to work with others (Clarke, Marsden, Whyatt, Thompson, & Walker, 2015; Clegg, Stevenson, & Willott, 2009; Cotter, Pretz, & Kaufman, 2016; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Griffiths, Bullough, Shibli, & Wilson, 2017; Muldoon, 2009; Peltier, Scovotti, & Pointer, 2008; Soria, Fink, Lepkowski, & Snyder, 2013; Thompson, 2013; Wresch & Pondell, 2015).

Extracurricular activities are defined as “activities and events that students engage in, which are not part of their formal degree classification such as hobbies, social groups, sporting, cultural or religious activities and voluntary or paid work” Thompson (2013, p. 135). The activities are usually structured, often campus based and of communal interest to those involved. Interacting and collaborating with other students who share a passion for varied pursuits results in strong bonds (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001), friendships and team spirit. Additionally working in teams in volunteering activities provides a context for peer modelling to occur (Tucker & McCarthy, 2001).

The UTS vision includes the following statement concerning students. “*We will develop generations of resilient and creative thinkers, equipped with boundary-crossing skills*”. The ActivateUTS Board and executive commissioned this study to understand ways in which ActivateUTS is contributing to this vision, and ways in which they could do more.

1.1 Purpose

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between student involvement in extracurricular activities provided by ActivateUTS and the development of graduate attributes. The aims of the study were to:

- identify the range of graduate attribute-related outcomes of student involvement with ActivateUTS;
- estimate the extent to which outcomes are achieved;
- understand the relationship between outcomes and type of engagement; and
- recommend strategies for integrating extra-curricular outcomes with curriculum learning.

1.2 UTS graduate attributes

The UTS Model of learning is a framework for practice-oriented learning and teaching at UTS. It links to the development of [graduate attributes](#) - essentially, UTS wants students to become graduates who will:

- be equipped for ongoing learning and inquiry in their personal development and professional practice;
- operate effectively with the body of knowledge that underpins professional practice and
- commit to the actions and responsibilities of a professional and global citizen.

Each faculty has adopted these broader attributes to create [faculty graduate attributes](#).

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has six graduate attributes that apply to all courses across the Faculty:

- professional readiness
- critical and creative inquiry
- international and intercultural engagement
- Indigenous competencies
- active citizenship
- effective communication

The UTS Business School has five graduate attributes that apply to all programs across the faculty:

- business knowledge and concepts
- critical thinking, creativity and analytical skills
- communication and interpersonal skills
- attitudes and values
- business practice-oriented skills

The Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building has five graduate attribute categories that apply across the faculty:

- Communication and Group work
- Attitudes and Values
- Practical and Professional
- Research and Critique
- Innovation and Creativity

The Faculty of Engineering and IT has six graduate attributes that apply across the faculty:

- needs, context and systems
- problem solving and design
- abstraction and modelling
- self-management
- communication and coordination
- professional practice within global context

In the Faculty of Health, program-specific graduate attributes have been developed. An example of a program-specific (Midwifery) graduate attributes are:

- women-centred care
- professional competence
- collaboration
- resilience
- diversity
- professional engagement

In the Faculty of Law, there are graduate attributes for Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses. The Undergraduate attributes are:

- legal knowledge
- ethics and professional responsibility
- critical analysis and evaluation
- research skills
- communication and collaboration
- self-management

The Faculty of Science six graduate attributes that apply across the faculty:

- Disciplinary Knowledge
- Research, inquiry and critical thinking
- Professional, ethical and social responsibility
- Reflection, Innovation, Creativity
- Communication
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges and Connection with Country

Indigenous graduate attributes for each faculty were developed (or are in the process of being developed) post the commencement of this project. Hence, they have not been included in this study. They may be the subject of future research.

Attributes in the area of *disciplinary knowledge* are not included in this study. Although many of the strongest ActivateUTS clubs are discipline-based, the majority are not. We therefore have not included disciplinary knowledge in this study.

All of the other graduate attributes listed by the faculties are transferable or “boundary-crossing” skills. That is, once the skills are attained they can be transferred from one context to another, across disciplines, professions and work places. For example, skills in collaboration and communication gained in one context can certainly be applied in new contexts.

The list of graduate attributes used for this project was designed to cover the transferable skills relevant to each of the faculties.

1.3 ActivateSocial and ActivateSport

ActivateUTS aims to create a “vibrant and exciting campus culture that is dedicated to enhancing the UTS experience” (ActivateUTS, 2018). It achieves this by providing a range of services and facilities and supporting over 130 student clubs and societies. As part of these services and clubs, they support the delivery of hundreds of events and activities each year, and provide spaces where students can engage and socialise with likeminded students and gain a sense of belonging to the University community. Clubs, events and programs fall under the banners of ActivateSocial and ActivateSport.

ActivateSocial supports over 100 clubs across different cultures, religions, the arts, the disciplines, and a range of other social activities. ActivateSocial’s vision is “to create the most inclusive, safe and engaging campus culture in the Australian higher education sector; one where students choose UTS because it is “the’ university community they aspire to belong to” (ActivateUTS, 2017, p.18).

To achieve this vision ActivateSocial supports its clubs to develop and deliver activities and events as well as having its own program of activities throughout the year. UTS students can nominate to become a club executive of a social club and are popularly elected by the club members. These leadership roles involve managing the club and facilitating activities, events and programs for club members and other students. They receive support from ActivateUTS staff and access to ActivateUTS facilities.

In 2017, ActivateSocial introduced the *Discover Sydney Program* to support students who feel “less engaged with the local cohort” (ActivateUTS, 2017, p.18). The program offers a wide range of activities and events including major sporting events, visits to local attractions, tours and extreme adventures such as skydiving. The majority of activities and events are hosted and organised by the clubs and societies. While the program was originally aimed at international students, it is also open to local students who wish to become involved.

ActivateUTS supports social sports clubs as well as UTS representative teams under the banner of ActivateSport. ActivateSport’s vision is to “be the leaders of University Sport in Australia; where sport includes elite, competitive, social, recreation and

health, and where sport seamlessly integrates with teaching, learning, research and external engagement” (ActivateUTS, 2017, p.14).

ActivateSport, comprising UTS Sport, Team UTS and the UTS Elite Athlete Program, provides a variety of initiatives, activities and events for students, staff and the general public, including social sporting opportunities, the UTS sports clubs network, and intervarsity sport. Recent achievements include winning the Australian University Games in 2017 and similar success at the University National Games in 2018.

1.4 About this report

In the interests of brevity, the introduction, methodology, findings and discussion, conclusion and recommendations comprise the main body of this report. Detailed results from the document analysis, questionnaire survey and interview analysis can be found in appendices 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

2. Methodology

The research design for collecting and analysing the data for this research included quantitative and qualitative methods. A mix method approach overcomes the weaknesses inherent in a single method design and included literature review, document analysis, in-depth interviews and an online quantitative and qualitative questionnaire. Multiple data sources allowed for cross validation of findings (Veal & Darcy, 2014).

The literature review and document analysis provided a starting point for the study. The purpose of this stage of the research was to determine the range of graduate attributes to be included in the study. The literature review began with an overview of previous research related to extracurricular activities and graduate attributes. The review of literature continued throughout the study as the findings emerged. The document analysis included UTS documents on graduate attributes developed by the various faculties as well as internal ActivateUTS documents including: ActivateUTS Alumni video; ActivateClubs handbook; ActivateUTS Annual Reports; ActivateUTS Code of Conduct; various checklists and training information. The contents of these resources were systematically synthesised into a matrix and then converted into appropriately worded attributes, skills and experiences for the purposes of analysis.

In addition to the literature review and document analysis, interviews with ActivateUTS executive staff and board members informed the design of the research instruments. Pilot interviews with students assisted in refining the survey instruments including adjustments to the language used. For example, we replaced the term “graduate attributes” with “employability skills”. Consultation with ActivateUTS executive staff and board members helped us to understand that the level of engagement of students might influence the type and degree of benefits gained from involvement with ActivateUTS clubs and societies. The following data collection techniques were adopted:

- Semi-structured Interviews with social and sports club executive members at the beginning and the end of their one-year terms;
- In-depth interviews with current and former student board members;
- Online questionnaire survey of all ActivateUTS club members with additional questions for students in leadership positions (i.e. club executives, managers of University Games teams, board members).

Initial contact was made with interview subjects by ActivateUTS staff to obtain agreement to participate prior to contact details being provided to the research team. The questionnaire survey was sent to all Club members directly by ActivateUTS.

2.1 Interviews

Interview guides were developed for each group of interview subjects. Fifty-two interviews were undertaken either in person or by telephone at the convenience of the subject. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. A total of 22 club leaders (11 social clubs and 11 sports clubs) were interviewed during the first round of interviews in the period 26 April to 2 May 2018. Club leaders were also invited to share their experiences at the end of their term and 11 club leaders (6 social and 5 sport club executives) agreed to a follow-up phone interview on their experiences between the 17 – 31 October 2018.

In addition, 5 student and 5 staff board members were interviewed in person on the UTS premises between 12 June and 17 July 2018. Finally, 9 student Board alumni interviews were conducted between 21 August and 19 November 2018.

2.2 Questionnaire survey

An online survey targeting ActivateUTS club members at all levels was developed in August 2018. The survey was sent to ActivateUTS staff for feedback and was piloted among student board members and general university students prior to finalisation. The questionnaire covered:

- involvement in ActivateUTS clubs, which included a measurement scale on respondents' level of engagement in the club they are most involved in. The measurement scale was adapted from Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006).
- benefits of club involvement, which included rating tasks for selected benefits identified through the interviews, and for specific employability skills developed from the UTS documents and informative interviews.
- sociodemographic and study background.

The survey ran from 12 September – 10 October 2018 with two reminders sent out by ActivateUTS during the period. Prizes were used as incentives to attract participation. The data collected online was checked for completion with all responses that answered at least the first questions on the level of involvement in ActivateUTS included for the relevant analyses (n=844).

2.3 Analysis

Survey data was analysed using SPSS software (Veal & Darcy, 2014). NVivo, comprehensive qualitative data analysis software, was used to organise, analyse and find connections across all the interview transcripts and extended response survey questions.

Coding themes (or nodes) were identified based upon theoretical background research to the project and the research design. Manual coding was undertaken, and then common themes identified across the data. Interview transcripts and extended response answers were initially coded using the **graduate attributes** identified in the research design. In the process of coding additional themes were developed based on subject responses. These additional themes included:

- **Personal motivation** – personal reasons for becoming involved in extracurricular activities through ActivateUTS and taking on an executive position for a Club or Society or expected personal benefits gained
- **Negative impacts** – perceived costs such as poor outcomes for studies or professional development as a result of time commitments associated with extracurricular activities
- **Factors influencing skill development** – factors that were considered to impact the students' ability to achieve benefits of involvement with extracurricular activities
- **Areas for improvement** – factors or support that could be provided by ActivateUTS or UTS to students to encourage greater benefits from their involvement

3. Findings

This section presents the analyses of both the questionnaire survey of the full student membership of ActivateUTS and the interview surveys of sport and social club leaders of ActivateUTS, student board members and board member alumni.

3.1 Questionnaire survey findings

Analysis of the survey responses provided several insights around level of engagement and the benefits of involvement with ActivateUTS.

Online survey respondent descriptives (n=844)

81% of respondents were domestic students.

89% of respondents were undergraduate students.

Respondents came primarily from Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (29%), UTS Business School (27%), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (20%) and Faculty of Science (17%).

Average age of respondents was 21 years and there was an even distribution between female and male students.

Almost one quarter of respondents held leadership positions in ActivateUTS clubs while the remainder were non-executive members of clubs.

Approximately 19 per cent of survey respondents were international (including exchange) students. International (including exchange) student respondents, originating from a diverse range of countries including India, Germany, China and Indonesia, were slightly under-represented in the survey. Student enrolments at UTS comprise approximately 33 per cent international (including exchange) students. In 2018 the split between domestic and international students in ActivateUTS clubs was approximately 75 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. International students that responded to the survey indicated a strong level of engagement with activities and many explained the personal value that their involvement had for their University experience.

I have made lasting friendships that I wouldn't have made if not involved. I feel much more involved in the UTS community, and feel as if I make more of a difference now than I did before, as I am an international student.
(International Student Club Member Survey Respondent)

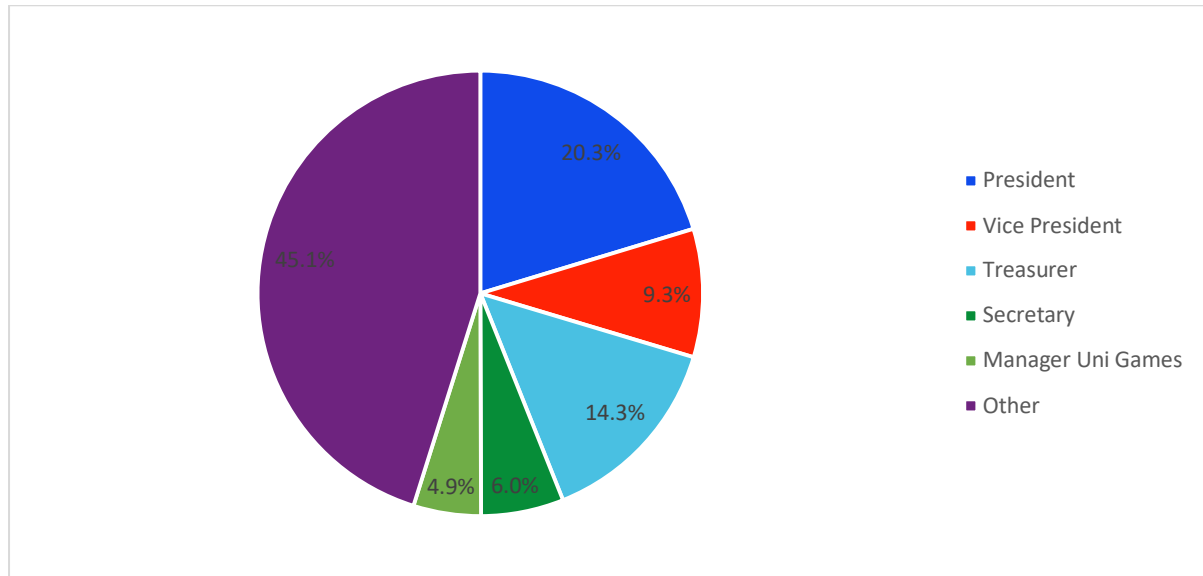
Eighty-nine per cent of the students who responded indicated that they are undergraduate students. Post-graduate students at UTS comprise approximately 28 per cent of the student body so undergraduate students are somewhat over-represented in this survey.

The average age of respondents was 21 years and the mix between male and female respondents was evenly distributed. There was also an even distribution between female and male respondents with leadership roles in the clubs and societies.

Club engagement

Over 80% of respondents who indicated that they held a leadership position were involved in only one club. This may be indicative of the time commitment that a leadership role requires but may also be reflective of individual preferences and passion for the clubs focus. While over half of those in leadership positions identified the traditional roles of president, manager, treasurer or secretary, 45 per cent of respondents indicated that their role in the club was more varied or included more specific roles such as event/social/engagement or marketing & communications (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Main leadership position identified



Thirty-nine per cent of respondents in leadership positions indicated that they were mentored before and during their leadership at their club, either by previous club executives, executives from other clubs or ActivateUTS staff. There was no significant difference apparent between the Sports and Social clubs or in the type of position held. Respondents indicated that being mentored made the transition into a leadership role easier and less stressful.

Over 80 per cent of survey respondents first joined an ActivateUTS club in their first year of studies, 9.3 per cent joined in their second year and the remainder later in their studies. This suggests that if students are not engaged in the first year of studies it may be harder to engage them.

There are over 130 social clubs currently supported by ActivateUTS and around 40 sports clubs. Two thirds of respondents indicated that they are most involved in a social club (as their primary club), while the remainder are involved in a sports club as their primary club. The length of involvement with clubs differs significantly. Students involved in sports clubs were more likely to have had a long-term commitment – some even being members since as early as 2012. By contrast, many students who are members of social clubs only joined in the previous semester. This may reflect the nature of the club and also link to previous experience for the individual students as many who commit to a specific sport have often played in that sport for a number of years prior to University and have a particular passion for the sport or activity.

Student engagement with individual clubs was determined in two ways. Initially students were asked to indicate the percentage of ‘events’ held by the club that they usually attended. For social clubs this would include club meetings as well as social events and for Sports clubs this could include regular training activities. Analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Social club and Sports club members attendance levels with sport club members, on average, attending more of the events than social club members ($\chi^2(4)=61.693$, $p<.001$, Cramer’s $V=.372$). This is not unexpected however as the nature of training and competition required for sporting activities is likely to necessitate regular attendance.

Benefits of club engagement

Respondents rated 11 benefits of ActivateUTS club involvement. Table 1 provides an overview of the benefit ratings by level of position. Overall, **personal enjoyment**, **friendships**, and **sense of belonging** topped the list. The mean rating for leadership students was generally higher than regular members suggesting that leaders agreed to a higher extent to receiving these benefits. The only exception is **stress reduction**, which those in leadership positions rated on average lower than members. This is not surprising given the amount of work linked to a leadership position. Examining the ranking of benefits also shows that perceive benefits such as **skills/experiences for work**, **community contribution/positive difference** and **CV enhancement** are rated more highly by those in leadership positions than regular members.

Table 1 shows that respondents’ level of club engagement is linked to the extent to which they perceive the selected benefits. All differences in the means were significant with the mean level of engagement increasing together with the extent to which a benefit is perceived to occur.

Table 1: Benefits of ActivateUTS involvement by level of position and level of engagement

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	Great Extent	Mean	Ranking
Personal enjoyment						
All	2.0%	3.4%	27.3%	67.2%	3.60	1
Members	2.7%	4.2%	29.2%	63.9%	3.54	1
Leadership	0.0%	1.0%	21.6%	77.3%	3.76	2
Mean Level of Engagement	13.4	23.9	31.5	40.1		
Friendships						
All	4.1%	8.5%	24.9%	62.6%	3.46	2
Members	5.2%	10.9%	28.1%	55.8%	3.34	2
Leadership	0.5%	1.0%	15.0%	83.4%	3.81	1
Mean Level of Engagement	19.3	28.1	33.9	40.0		

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	Great Extent	Mean	Ranking
Sense of belonging						
All	3.9%	7.6%	33.2%	55.3%	3.40	3
Members	5.2%	9.2%	37.1%	48.5%	3.29	3
Leadership	0.0%	2.6%	21.1%	76.3%	3.74	3
Mean Level of Engagement	17.8	27.2	33.9	40.9		
Improved self-esteem						
All	4.9%	12.3%	38.4%	44.4%	3.22	4
Member	6.1%	14.5%	40.3%	39.2%	3.13	5
Leadership	1.5%	5.7%	32.5%	60.3%	3.52	6
Mean Level of Engagement	20.7	29.9	35.6	41.2		
Network development						
All	5.4%	13.6%	36.8%	44.2%	3.20	5
Members	6.9%	15.1%	38.3%	39.7%	3.11	6
Leadership	1.0%	8.8%	32.0%	58.2%	3.47	7
Mean Level of Engagement	21.9	32.4	35.7	40.5		
Stress reduction						
All	5.3%	16.1%	35.8%	42.8%	3.16	6
Member	5.0%	14.8%	34.4%	45.8%	3.21	4
Leadership	6.2%	20.1%	40.2%	33.5%	3.01	11
Mean Level of Engagement	24.1	32.1	36.4	40.1		
Community contribution / positive difference						
All	6.6%	14.6%	36.7%	42.2%	3.14	7
Members	8.2%	17.4%	40.6%	33.7%	3.00	8
Leadership	1.5%	5.7%	24.7%	68.0%	3.59	4

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	Great Extent	Mean	Ranking
Mean Level of Engagement	24.1	32.3	35.8	40.8		
Study/Work-life balance						
All	5.4%	14.4%	43.9%	36.2%	3.11	8
Member	6.7%	14.9%	43.1%	35.2%	3.07	7
Leadership	1.5%	12.9%	46.4%	39.2%	3.23	10
Mean Level of Engagement	22.7	31.8	36.8	40.4		
Skills/experiences for work						
All	9.9%	16.8%	38.1%	35.2%	2.99	9
Member	13.1%	20.0%	40.3%	26.7%	2.81	9
Leadership	0.0%	7.2%	31.4%	61.3%	3.54	5
Mean Level of Engagement	26.8	33.5	36.7	40.9		
Skills/experiences for studies						
All	11.0%	20.5%	38.1%	30.4%	2.88	10
Members	14.3%	22.3%	38.6%	24.8%	2.74	10
Leadership	1.0%	14.9%	36.6%	47.4%	3.30	9
Mean Level of Engagement	27.4	34.9	36.9	40.8		
CV enhancement						
All	15.3%	25.6%	30.3%	28.9%	2.73	11
Member	19.3%	29.9%	30.5%	20.3%	2.52	11
Leadership	3.1%	12.4%	29.4%	55.2%	3.37	8
Mean Level of Engagement	30.1	35.0	37.3	40.8		

For member respondents, the ranking of benefits between sport club and social club members is not different. However, the means are on average higher for sports club members suggesting that they reported gaining these benefits to a higher degree.

Partially, this may be attributable to their higher level of involvement in the club (on average) as the mean level of engagement increases as the level of perceiving the selected benefits increases. But the type of club seems to play a role regardless of the level of club engagement as two of the benefits, namely **skills/experiences for work** and **skills/experiences for studies** do not show significant differences between the type of club members despite the relationship between the level of involvement and benefit gained noted.

ActivateUTS membership and Graduate Attributes (questionnaire survey)

The research findings indicate that UTS student involvement in activity facilitated by ActivateUTS is contributing to graduate attributes. The findings cover both leaders and regular members of ActivateUTS sporting and social clubs.

The majority of regular members reported skill development resulting from their engagement with ActivateUTS. Ninety-one per cent of sports club members and 84 per cent of social club members agreed that ActivateUTS membership had contributed to work ready skills. These respondents were directed to a further set of questions related to graduate attributes and the results are presented in table 2. The top 3 skills developed by sports club members were **teamwork skills, interpersonal and communication skills**, and **time management**. The order changed slightly for social club members with **interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork skills**, and **creativity/ability to innovate** in the top 3 slots respectively.

Table 2: Skill development of ActivateUTS members by type of club membership

	Not all	at Very Little	Somewhat	To a Great Extent	Mean	Ranking
Interpersonal and communication skills p<.001						
Social club members	3.4%	7.9%	50.7%	38.0%	3.23	1
Sport club members	0.5%	5.0%	40.4%	54.1%	3.48	2
Teamwork skills p<.001						
Social club members	4.8%	18.2%	44.2%	32.9%	3.05	2
Sport club members	0.5%	3.7%	27.5%	68.3%	3.64	1
Professional competence p=n.s.						
Social club members	7.9%	25.2%	44.1%	22.8%	2.81	4
Sport club members	5.5%	19.8%	42.9%	31.8%	3.01	6

Time management p<.001							
Social club members	8.9%	24.3%	47.9%	18.8%	2.76	5	
Sport club members	3.7%	9.2%	45.0%	42.2%	3.26	3	
Research skills p=n.s.							
Social club members	19.2%	34.6%	33.9%	12.3%	2.72	6	
Sport club members	26.1%	34.4%	26.6%	12.8%	3.11	4	
Leadership skills p<.001							
Social club members	12.7%	23.4%	43.0%	21.0%	2.72	6	
Sport club members	7.3%	12.8%	41.7%	38.1%	3.11	4	
Creativity / Ability to innovate p=n.s.							
Social club members	6.5%	18.8%	43.8%	30.8%	2.99	3	
Sport club members	11.5%	24.4%	40.1%	24.0%	2.76	7	

Club leaders reported development in a range of graduate attributes in the online survey (see Table 3). The top 3 skills identified were **teamwork/collaboration skills**, **leadership/people management skills**, and **organising/coordinating skills**.

Table 3: Graduate attribute development for ActivateUTS leaders

Graduate attribute	Not at all	Very little	Some what	To a great extent	Mean	Rank
Teamwork/collaboration skills	0.0%	1.1%	14.8%	84.1%	3.83	1
Leadership/people management skills	0.0%	1.6%	17.0%	81.3%	3.80	2
Organising/coordinating skills	0.5%	1.6%	24.7%	73.1%	3.70	3
Interpersonal skills	0.5%	1.6%	32.4%	65.4%	3.63	4
Verbal communication skills	0.0%	4.4%	30.8%	64.8%	3.60	5

Taking responsibility/acting ethically	2.2%	4.4%	24.9%	68.5%	3.60	5
Problem solving	0.5%	5.5%	30.2%	63.7%	3.57	7
Self-management/time management	1.1%	6.6%	32.6%	59.7%	3.51	8
Professional competence	3.9%	7.7%	26.0%	62.4%	3.47	9
Resilience	2.2%	9.4%	28.2%	60.2%	3.46	10
Cross-cultural skills	1.1%	12.1%	27.5%	59.3%	3.45	11
Agility	2.2%	8.8%	33.7%	55.2%	3.42	12
Creativity/ability to innovate	1.1%	7.7%	41.8%	49.5%	3.40	13
Mentoring skills	3.3%	8.8%	34.8%	53.0%	3.38	14
Administrative skills	2.2%	9.3%	37.9%	50.5%	3.37	15
Management/marketing skills	2.7%	10.4%	34.1%	52.7%	3.37	15
Critical/independent/analytical/reflective thinking	1.1%	8.2%	44.5%	46.2%	3.36	17
Written communication skills	3.8%	11.0%	35.2%	50.0%	3.31	18
Financial skills	9.9%	26.9%	35.2%	28.0%	2.81	19
Research skills	12.7%	26.5%	35.4%	25.4%	2.73	20
IT skills	14.9%	33.1%	30.4%	21.5%	2.59	21

3.2 Interviews

The questionnaire survey findings were supported by detailed insights gathered through analysis of the qualitative data. Club leaders and ActivateUTS board members and alumni provided a range of insights into their motivation for becoming involved with ActivateUTS. Motivations ranged from very personal reasons such as a desire to meet new people and establish friendships or a passion for the activities of the club to more career-oriented motivations such as the ability to add the experience to their professional resume. The second most common motivation was to be part of the UTS community, reflective of a desire to feel a sense of belonging at UTS and to enjoy their University experience beyond the classroom. The most common motivation for becoming involved with ActivateUTS for the leadership group was to improve employability.

ActivateUTS membership and Graduate Attributes (interviews)

Graduate attributes were discussed in the interviews. The thematic spread by source and frequencies provides an indication of the significance of each attribute for the students in leadership roles. The student and Board alumni comments provide context for the development of the various skills. Extended response comments from the

questionnaire survey have also been included in the data presented below and can be identified by a (q).

Leadership and people management was identified by interview subjects as the most significant attribute developed: *“number one would be my leadership skills”; “I felt that I grew as a person, I grew so much as a leader”*.

This attribute refers to the ability to inspire and motivate others to reach a common goal. Students made the point that the ActivateUTS leadership roles were providing opportunities that are often not available in classrooms: *“as a student you don’t always get the opportunity to manage a large group of people”*.

Students reflected on the skills they developed to manage and guide their teams in their roles as club executives: *“I really didn’t anticipate this but my authority or like my ability to take charge [has developed]”; “delegation is a huge thing I’ve developed and supervising as well, it’s basically an art finding the right balance between telling someone what to do and asking someone what to do”*.

They learned to work with a range of different personalities to achieve a common outcome: *“I think throughout this year I’ve become much better in taking on different opinions and dealing with different types of people and managing people, being a leader”*.

They also learned to adapt their leadership style: *“I have definitely learned how to manage people, and change my leadership style to fit the situation and person that I am dealing with as a senior executive”* (q).

Many of those interviewed noted that they had accumulated leadership skills from previous experience (either at school or in previous employment) but that their time in the executive of a club or on the ActivateUTS Board provided them with significant opportunities for further development: *“I previously considered that I was really a bit of a natural leader but I definitely found that I have improved significantly in my leadership skills. I was constantly surprised by how difficult it can be to lead people and get the best out of them”* (Student Executive Interview).

For a number of interview subjects this was their first experience in a leadership position: *“leadership skills, it’s actually the first time that I managed a whole team”. “I grew more than expected, managing people was harder and more rewarding than expected”*.

They viewed leadership and people management as valuable skills that can be transferred to other contexts; they anticipate this management skill will be invaluable in future employment: *“the leadership and authority skills that I have developed I will definitely take into my future employment – and I am already using that at work”*.

The students note that leadership skills are useful for gaining employment: *“I actually went to a job interview earlier today and at the interview the employer actually asked me about my leadership skills and I was really pleased to be able to say that I had a leadership role in the Society and explain what that meant. I feel that it really provided me with an advantage for any potential employment”* (Leader, Social Club); *“[employers] ask questions about project work or leadership, particularly in the public sector and in big corporates, so I always raise my board experience during those interviews”*.

They indicated that the training and support provided by other student executives as well as the staff of ActivateUTS was invaluable in their ability to lead their team effectively.

Time (self) management is regarded by students as an essential skill, and one of the biggest challenges for students transitioning from high school to university where *“it is totally on you to be organised”*.

Student leaders reported that they had developed time management skills in their roles and considered these to be crucial: *“In an executive capacity - I have had to reassess my time management skills”* (q); *“self-management is definitely improving, I am having to balance work, uni, the Club and whatever social life is available”*; *“[time management] skills have increased more than expected”*.

Many referred to the skill required to be able to prioritise tasks to meet deadlines and effectively balance competing responsibilities: *“I was already very good at time management and organisation, but I think that being involved has helped me develop those because it's about juggling priorities and juggling different commitments... kind of being able to prioritise my work versus this, versus that. That's really given me an opportunity to kind of cement my own time management skills”*; *“the added workload of being an executive has taught me the value of proper time management skills”* (q); *“by multi-tasking several aspects, within personal, professional and student life, managing and adapting to work under lesser stress”* (q).

All interviewees noted that effective time management was essential to success in their role and that while often they struggled with managing the conflicting demands of the executive or Board and their studies they found that through the course of their time they were able to develop effective skills in this area.

Communication – students discussed their improved ability to communicate with others and to influence others. They learned the importance of effective communication for meeting organisational goals: *“I communicated with the university, with sponsors, I had to find sponsors. I communicated with other clubs – we have several joint events with other universities and UTS clubs. So, I definitely improved my social and communication skills”*; *“leading small groups of people I was forced to develop my own communication skills”* (q).

Skills were gained in written communication, particularly email: *“when I was in club and society I had my emails being corrected for the first three months. I had to send it through a draft process and then they would get back to me, and then they finally trusted me”*; *“you [learn about] the formal email. Sincerely, kind regards, all that. So yeah, you do pick that up. It's not something that's kind of taught to you”*; *“writing emails to externals to invite them as panellists and judges. Sending out emails to attendees of events and writing event briefs/descriptions used for marketing”* (q); *“writing event proposals, nomination and end of event reports”* (q); *“wrote articles for our society's publication which has given me written communication practice”* (q).

Skills were also gained in oral communication: *“as a leader my ability to present to an audience or hold a speech in front of crowds of people has improved”* (q); *“continuous and adaptive public speaking in a plethora of modalities”* (q); *“I'm still not confident at formal speeches but I've greatly improved my general public speaking skills”* (q).

They learned to use persuasive communication: *“[I developed] great communication and effective communication. The ability to engender support and enthusiasm with multiple stakeholders, often conflicting stakeholders, towards a common goal”; “I also became more dynamic in my communication, especially when delegating tasks”.*

They learned the importance of consistent and clear messaging and to achieve club outcomes: *“going into the role I wasn’t sure how that would go - making sure that everyone was on the same page; I did find that communication was extremely important and making sure that the message was consistent”; “during mentoring descriptions of the activities and demonstrations must be effectively communicated” (q).*

They understood the importance of improved communication skills for presenting themselves in social and professional contexts: *“That’s probably the most valuable thing I have learnt, and communication with big companies. That’s actually a really big one. I’ve done a lot of communication with Microsoft”; “I know a lot of other people like it’s a great way to build their personal interpersonal communication. Being able to chat to people that they don’t know, introduce themselves to people they don’t know”; “I got a lot of opportunities to have meetings and talk in general to people in senior position and it was really good to have that experience and get a feel for what it is like to be talking to those sorts of people. I feel that is a very valuable skill going into the workforce”.*

Teamwork & Collaboration – students referred to their improved ability to work with others to achieve a common goal: *“for me it was the ability to work in a team, I think that is so crucial”; “having a long-term focus mindset, working with people for a collective goal, stretch goals”.*

Their engagement with ActivateUTS provided opportunities that are not always available in the classroom: *“it opened me up to just collaboration on scales that I don’t get out of my specific degree”; “the soft skills I learnt like teamwork, collaboration, delegation and leadership were developed during [leadership term]” (q).*

However, the skills they developed were transferable to the classroom: *“I personally found myself getting surprisingly good grades from group projects in class and I put this down to the skills I gained from being involved in the societies.”; “definitely benefits for my studies as well; in group projects in my classes I saw the team building skills that I have developed really shine through in group assignments. It really affected my approach to group work and how to work effectively in a team”.*

Networking skills were developed by many student leaders: *“I am now more inclined to speak to new people so there has been an improvement, I’m more proactive in developing networks” “developing networks, that’s really improved from average to beyond average. I met a lot of great people and met fantastic people, especially in these camps, meeting other executives”.*

Students developed professional and social networks. *“I think of the amount of people I have now in my network and what that would look like without both those experiences with ActivateUTS”; “so many of the law events are called networking nights, and also on board, we’ve just started the alumni network as well, so we are building out the board network as well”.*

They also understood networking as an opportunity to support others: *“I was able to share my 2nd/3rd year experiences with newer incoming first years”* (q); *“I am proud to say that as someone who had no clue what networking ... meant 9 months ago, I have come a long way. Students who meet me at events reach out to me on LinkedIn and ask for many tips in terms of networking and job applications”* (q).

Students cited benefits in developing network skills and a greater appreciation of the value of networks: *“thanks to the networking opportunities through BusinessOne I have landed 2 internships and a graduate program. It has also helped me understand more about how I would like my career to go by connecting me with industry professionals whom I can get insight from.”* (Student Executive Interview)

Professional competence skill development was valued by a diverse range of students: *“I never thought in a business sense before, especially coming from an engineering background”*; *“I personally feel that the experience has really helped me develop my professional skills. It has given me a balance between the theory that I learn in class and the ability to apply that to real world situations in a practical setting”*; *“the board has definitely increased my professionalism, I think. The way you communicate over email, the way you suggest ideas on actual board meetings, the fact that you can get to go to board meetings and I went through, I guess, the training that Activate offered me as well”*.

Students discussed their improved awareness of business processes and operations: *“there’s a lot of professional skills that you kind of pick up as you go along. One of the big ones was kind of like a business acumen that you would kind of gain having been on a board level with all these other professionals and people that have been through all kinds of experiences in the business world”*; *“just being involved in making important decisions of a large organisation – for me that was a life changing moment because I was able to understand how things worked in a company”*.

Students discussed the development of specific professional skills and the ability to reflect on these: *“everything from really basic things like how to chair a meeting, how to conduct a meeting and then also looking at budgets, finances. That was all new to me, so that was really good”*; *“Working on club productions like the artbook or playing cards allows me to practice my professional design skills, liaison with ActivateUTS & outside sponsors has helped me develop a professional tone in my writing and oral skills”* (q); *“running a formal society has definitely made me reflect on acting professionally to better represent the community that I have joined”* (q).

Many noted that their engagement with ActivateUTS means that they now feel more confident in professional settings due to an improved understanding of process: *“I am far more confident sending professional emails and communicating with professional in the field”* (q).

Financial management skills were acquired by some students, particularly those in positions such as club treasurer or Board member: *“because I’m on the finance committee I’ve learned to understand financial statements and read figures, which I wouldn’t have had exposure to in my degree”*.

Students referred to an improved ability to manage and plan budgets: *“I’d never looked at a budget in my life before. I mean, you do your little ones at home and you’re like, I’m only going to spend \$50 this week and try and stick to that but to actually see the*

different lines of the organisation and how they're categorised, how balance sheets work, I'd never had that exposure".

Students were also required to learn to manage financial responsibilities: *"my financial skills improved a lot, I needed to consider finances for gear maintenance – the club also has a van and a boat which need to be maintained".*

For some students it was a valuable opportunity to apply the disciplinary knowledge they had previously acquired: *"I mean, you learn these things on paper, but when it comes into a company by company situation, they're all different, and they're not going to be the textbook way of learning it"; "being the treasurer has helped me learn more about managing the financial aspect of a society which can help me in my business course" (q).*

Organisational skills – students discussed their improved ability to operate effectively and in an organised manner: *"it improved my skills of forward planning and organisation, making sure that everything was done and checking things off against our checklist of tasks".*

They learned to persevere: *"have you ever called City of Sydney to ask permission to film a 30 second promo video for your Uni ball. But you spend 30 days waiting for them to accept your application and another 30 days to ask you about EVERY aspect of it. And while you're organising the locations, you're managing your talent, your team and thanking them profusely for free labour. It's a lot of organising" (q); "the [leadership] experiences finetuned my project management skills and taught me patience and perseverance".*

They see organisational skills as transferable to the workplace: *"organising skills were improved a lot and helped in my career"; "I have been able to bring over my teamwork and organisational skills learnt during my time as an exec into my university work" (q).*

For some students it was a big learning curve: *"organisational skills: were not well developed before stepping into the role because I didn't need to develop them - but now I'm in a position that I need them"; "it helped me also to be more organized and diligent. It's really hard if you procrastinate and you have to backtrack the dates of events and receipts".*

For others, the role provided the opportunity to hone skills they already had: *"[the role] pushed me, I really like organising things and the club has allowed me to channel this".*

Problem solving – students discussed their improved ability to solve problems and find effective and appropriate solutions to issues: *"my critical thinking has definitely improved through this position. I am a student of design, so I didn't expect my skills to improve but finding creative and innovative ways to solve problems and get people involved, how people would want to get involved and finding creative ways to do that – I have had to do all of that and that came as a real surprise to me".*

For most, "problems" came with the responsibility of their positions: *"a lot of problem solving as well because things almost never go the way you planned – so that is definitely something that has developed over the year"; "so the issues that came up were able to be solved but they took a lot more time than I really expected. It put a lot*

more responsibility on me to make sure that the issues were rectified because ultimately they were my responsibility as the Manager”.

Students saw problem solving as a valuable workplace skill: *“I got very overwhelmed at times but in the end I managed to work things out so everything that I learned about being resilient, managing time and problem solving I think I will definitely take into my job and future employment”.*

Along with resilience, they learned that problem solving required flexibility: *“I think it’s made me much more flexible. I think before I was much more about getting my way and how things should be done. But in the real world nothing is perfect and it doesn’t work like that. I had to overcome a lot of difficult situations and keep on my toes”.*

They learned that problem solving also required self-management: *“We are constantly being exposed to difficult situations. It has taught me to remain calm at all times and think rationally” (q)*

Governance was the focus of many conversations with student Board members where high-level organisational structure and management was a priority. Student board members receive formal training in governance. This attribute was less significant for the student executive of individual clubs.

Students referred to understanding of procedures and strategic management of professional organisations: *“in terms of the actual organisational governance side of things I learnt so much about how a board is run”;* *“I also got a sense for the role of a director as being there for the organisation, not necessarily being a representative for any given group or any given person”;* *“I [learned about] the aspect of the strategic conversations and the strategic structures and how that all works. Understand how a board or a formal committee works”.*

Some students used this experience to contextualise disciplinary knowledge: *“running a business at that level you really do get another view, a whole bunch of experience at that, even if you aren’t making the decisions. Actually understanding cause and effect, if this than that, really did contextualise my theoretical learning”.*

Governance is an attribute that students understand may help with career progression: *“I guess the big one was how to operate on a board. This is self-evident but operating with big numbers, with people who are in relatively senior positions at university as an 18 year old was a steep learning curve like the meeting techniques, etc. I have definitely taken things like that with me and I think I definitely still use them in my law career now”.* *“Particularly nowadays when they are looking for people with broader experiences, in regards to the work that we’ve done in corporate governance and writing constitutions all the way down to things like achieving diversity. I can see it as being ever more handy”.*

Responsibility and ethics – students spoke about developing an understanding of social justice: *“it’s really developed in me a sense of social justice and a passion for seeing results. It’s kind of why I work in the field I do, working in campaigning”.*

Students had the opportunity to practise ethical and sustainable decision-making: *“acting ethically and CSR is also important to me – I see the Business Society as one of the more ‘visible’ societies at the University and they also collaborate with a lot of*

other organisations so I feel it is part of our responsibility to behave ethically and with consideration of others.”

They learned about being responsible to a range of stakeholders: *“I’m there to actually help make strategic decisions, to question why we’re making decisions or why this is the way that we do things and to say is this the best decision, not for me, not for our senior managers, but for the organisation as a whole”; “being an executive I have become hyper aware of my responsibilities”* (q).

They also gained an understanding of their legal responsibilities as club leaders and Board members: *“we are told, and it’s stressed, that we do have a legal responsibility to know what we’re kind of passing through”; “a lecturer can tell you in a lecture that you have legal responsibilities but you’re living those legal responsibilities, so it’s brought home to you”; “you do learn, for example, conflicts of interest, how those could arise and how those could present problems if they’re not declared and all these kind of different other situations”*.

Management & marketing – students referred to ability to develop management and marketing strategies and implement plans: *“my marketing skills have improved more than expected, like making Facebook posts”; “I got a better understanding of how to market / communicate / relate differently for different purposes to different target groups”*.

Some students used their roles as opportunities to put theory into practice: *“I had a lot of marketing experience and wanted to use it to brand the club etc, so it was a great experience to apply my existing marketing knowledge to a real world situation”; “as an aspiring marketer, my role as Marketing Director has given me experience that will benefit me in a work setting, managing the social media of the society, using Mailchimp to create EDM’s, and working with sponsors”* (q).

Others acquired skills that aren’t necessarily covered in their disciplinary area: *“[I learned] more of the business and management that I don’t get in my law degree. I know some people have a background in business, they had that before but for me it was all news and that was interesting”*.

These skills are transferable to work places: *“I need to market events and different things that come up for an executive definitely. That’s how it all started for me and I’ve taken that into my current work”*.

Resilience – students referred to the ability to cope with problems and issues that arise in a professional environment: *“you also learnt a lot of resilience - resilience for sure. Resilience is a good word”; “above all, [my leadership experience at ActivateUTS] taught me to be more resilient under stress and keep on trying when I fail”* (q).

They improved their capacity to recover from difficulties: *“I am not so good with stress, that’s why started taekwondo, but my [resilience] has improved from below average to average”; “[my leadership experience at ActivateUTS] has also taught me to persevere in times of difficulties, to work hard and try to the best of my abilities. All of which has made me become a better person, Uni student and potential employee”* (q).

They learned about their capacity to adapt to and embrace change: *“a lot of the times I’d plan an event and it wouldn’t turn out the way I wanted it, something would go*

wrong. And I just had to handle that”; “I have had some stressful times with BusinessOne in which my mental toughness was tested, however overcoming this has made me so much stronger” (q).

Interpersonal skills – students were confident about the development of interpersonal skills: “I have found that even this early in my term my interpersonal skills have improved significantly – I have had to communicate with people at all levels, from club members who are students and who I can communicate with at quite a casual level to sponsors who I have to deal with quite formally and professionally”; “interpersonal skills have improved generally and I expect that they will continue to grow”; “interpersonal skills have improved to above average since I started in the role”.

They spoke about their improved ability to build relationships with others: “I think throughout this year I’ve become much better in taking on different opinions and dealing with different types of people and managing people, being a leader but also being a colleague”; “I’ve been able to improve my interpersonal communication skills and I am also more confident when approaching people first” (q).

They learned to work with diverse teams: “I have had the opportunity to work with all different people and expand my people skills”; “I learnt more about different types of people, especially antisocial behavior, I learnt about identifying people with mental health issues, anxiety and depression, and learning how to approach those problems more personally”; “a specific area of improvement is the ability to empathise and have conversations with people from all walks of life, whether they be recruiters from a big 4 bank or just one of my team members who is going through a rough patch and needs to chat” (q).

Interpersonal skills have been transferred to the workplace: “I’m in change management right now so I work with people on a daily basis: different working styles, different personalities. I don’t think I’d be as comfortable or as suited to the current role without that exposure”.

Mentoring – students demonstrated a good understanding of the value of mentoring: “I think there’s so much value in [mentoring] because it plays into the succession planning. It plays into the cohesiveness. It plays into our communication skills and the more open our board is while still being objective and diplomatic, the wider our communication path the more opportunity there is for communication and for good ideas”.

Students developed skills in mentoring: “this year I had my own little team, and mentoring was something I had to learn. In particular, how to encourage and advise, rather than train” (q).

They spoke about providing guidance to incoming leaders: “I have spent a lot of time mentoring the new President and showing him how I did things – but of course he will make the position his own”; “I am happy to do a handover to the new president and be a mentor to the new team – so make sure that the executive know exactly what they need to do”.

Students learned the value of mentoring others and being mentored: “great business connections and community ethos that will stand me in good stead going forward. Plenty of chance to be mentored by great people” (q); “BusinessOne has also given

me a platform to give back, after achieving so much professionally, I am able to use my position as an Exec to mentor other students looking to get ahead in their career” (q).

Agility - students referred to improvements in adaptability; flexibility; the ability to adapt to new and changing situations: “agility is definitely improving as you have to think on your feet all the time”;

They gained an understanding of agility in the context of a workplace: “being able to adapt and push through adversities, both personal and external in order to achieve a goal” (q) “being able to work even when things don't go to plan” (q); “dealing with constantly changing circumstances” (q).

They learned the importance of being agile: “if you're not agile obviously you are going to crash and burn”; “dealing with unexpected situations/always have a backup plan”.

Critical; analytical; creative & strategic thinking - students referred to an improved capacity to think critically, strategically: “my critical thinking has definitely improved through this position. I am a student of design, so I didn't expect my skills to improve but finding creative and innovative ways to solve problems and get people involved, how people would want to get involved and finding creative ways to do that – I have had to do all of that and that came as a real surprise to me”.

The leadership responsibilities demanded critical thinking: “So critical, independent, analytical and reflective thinking, definitely, it just comes as you go, because you're told it is your responsibility so you're like, whoa, I have to work things out”; “I have to consider the club in micro and macro levels when planning events and club aims for the year” (q); “I have to think about the viability of event ideas and posts, which affect the club's image” (q); “event organising requires me to be creative and think outside of the box to find something everyone would be interested in” (q).

They explored opportunities for creativity: “thinking creatively to meet the needs of a large group” (q); “it is both a creative outlet and opportunity to experiment” (q).

Students applied critical and creative thinking for innovation: “I was able to execute experimental and innovative marketing strategies in real world situations”; “reflection on past events pros and cons, in order to improve our members' experience we have to be able to analyse our events from multiple perspectives” (q).

Cross cultural understanding - students referred to an improved ability to communicate, empathise and work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds: “being involved in ActivateUTS clubs has allowed me to expand my social network, create new opportunities and meet many different people with different backgrounds” (q); “it has opened my eyes to the variety of people out there...and how to work with them”; “[I] learnt to be empathetic to everyone, because of diverse background of everyone here that makes UTS unique” (q); “you have got a massive mix of people, and everyone comes with their own unique views and their own world views as well. So that really tested my leadership skills and my people management skills”.

Students learned to communicate with cultural sensitivity online: “I have to take into consideration of who views the messages displayed through media I produce, and let the messages be inclusive (cultural and disability backgrounds)” (q).

They developed their understanding of cultural groups across Australia as well as globally: *“our main trip travels to regional Australia. Working in these towns and speaking to the locals provided a great deal of insight compared to life in the major cities”* (q); *“TBL allows you to cross boundaries that aren't usually crossed and engage with the regional culture of Australia”* (q); *“we are a multicultural society. I was able to talk and listen to many people about their culture”* (q); *“we have many members for whom English is a second language, and training partners are often swapped”* (q).

Administration skills - students referred to the ability to operate effectively, efficiently and competently to achieve administrative outcomes. A small number of students commented on their improvements in this area: *“I wasn't very good at administration, and I still don't think that I am great, but I am getting much better just because I have to”*.

Students provided examples of the administrative tasks that they undertook in their leadership roles: *“back end admin for events and merchandise”* (q); *“minute taking and email”* (q); *“documentation of events and planning on our shared google drive”* (q); *“contacts and excel spreadsheet in regards to the faculty statistical performance and overseeing the stats on growth”* (q); *“liaising with Activate”*; *“managing official documents”* (q); *“organising the producer files and forms for each production”* (q).

IT skills - students discussed technical skills including expertise with software. The leadership experience provided an opportunity to practice skills in a variety of areas: *“extensive use of MS Office particularly Excel (which helps me prepare for the job market as well)”* (q); *“I have a proficiency in Google Drive and Google products thanks to BusinessOne”* (q); *“maintaining the website and uploading events to the website”* (q); *“working on website, coding on newsletter, dealing with access management, spam filtering, social media”* (q).

One interviewee spoke about IT in the context of a specific project: *“the mission of the club is to increase awareness of cyber security. I want to improve teaching in cyber security. There is currently a focus on tech but these are just the basics. I feel that it is really important to learn about technology even if you don't want to do it yourself”*.

Research skills – students discussed the application of research skills in terms of sourcing, evaluating, and synthesising relevant information.

Students were required to source information for a variety of reasons: *“research skills used mainly relate to information search to plan trips”* (q); *“fact-checking for stories”* (q); *“planning events, finding contact information for professionals”* (q); *“finding new venues and activities for events has been beneficial to online researching skill”* (q).

Evaluating and synthesising information ranged from: *“comparing options for event and project planning”* (q) and *“fact-checking for stories”* (q) to *“mastering complex documents on global issues, and coming with solutions to international crisis”*.

Students understood that research skills are transferable: *“opportunity to coordinate and present workshops regularly has allowed me to develop research skills ... highly applicable to the workforce”*.

Factors affecting skill development

A comparison of interview data was made based on the type of club student leaders were involved with. Sports club leaders were more likely to talk about skill development

in *responsibility and ethics, resilience, organisational skills* and *cross-cultural understanding* than social club leaders. Social club leaders were more likely to talk about skill development in *management and marketing* and *mentoring* than sports club leaders. While these differences may be of interest it is difficult to determine if they relate directly to the type of club or rather are related to the type of individual student that will become involved in the different clubs. An opportunity for further research may be available.

Interviews also highlighted a number of other factors that influenced the student's development of graduate attributes: the individual student's attitude to their role and its responsibilities; existing skills of the student and any previous experience they may have had in a similar role; the amount of time the student devotes to completing tasks and undertaking training; and the availability of mentoring the student receives when first starting in an executive role. Of these, the factor considered the most significant for influencing success in an executive role was the availability of someone to mentor the incoming student, particularly in the early stages of holding the position. Many interviewees commented that this personal support was invaluable and that without it they would have struggled with the requirements of their role. Others stated that this support was not available to them as they had little or no contact with the previous executive and did not have an effective handover into the position and that this lack of a mentor made the early stages of their role extremely difficult and stressful.

Negative Impacts of holding an Executive Position

Student leaders were asked about adverse impacts associated with their commitment to the position they held. All the students interviewed valued the benefits of involvement very highly, however, a few considered the cost unreasonable.

All student leaders reported increased stress as a result of the time commitment required and the need to balance conflicting demands of their studies and the executive role. While most explained that the workload was expected, many described the difficulties that this could cause. Students explained that the support of other executive students as well as ActivateUTS was essential to managing this stress and ensuring that all their commitments were met.

Several students also indicated that the time commitment required often meant that they missed lectures and tutorials due to conflicts and failed to maximise subject results.

Suggestions from students for improvement

Students would like recognition and formal acknowledgement of the skills developed and the time committed to leadership roles. These were seen to be significant areas requiring improvement, particularly by ActivateUTS Board members. Many noted that it would be useful to provide students in leadership positions with formal documentation that they could present to a potential employer to support their application. They also felt that more recognition and acknowledgement would ensure that the students felt appreciated and supported by both UTS and ActivateUTS.

3.3 Summary

This section has outlined key findings from the questionnaire survey distributed to the full student membership of ActivateUTS and the interviews with club leaders, ActivateUTS board members and alumni board members.

Both student leaders and regular members reported the value of developing friendships through their involvement in ActivateUTS. They considered this to be the most significant personal benefit gained. Many students explained that they established “lifelong friendships” through their clubs and that these friendships improved their sense of well-being and university experience.

Students also noted an increase in self-confidence as a benefit of club membership. The club leaders particularly valued the rise in confidence they experienced in “professional” environments and both groups reported improved confidence in social settings.

In addition, students reported improved mental health, reduced stress and better physical health as a result of club membership. They explained that club activities allowed them to focus on social and sporting activities outside their studies and provided a work/study/life balance.

Overall, membership contributed to a better student experience and the development of a sense of belonging to the UTS community. Research has shown that social engagement and ‘sense of belonging’ have significant benefits for student retention, and that social networks developed by students provides support to overcome stress and difficulties associated with their studies.

“I don’t think there has been a moment where I have regretted [joining ActivateUTS]. I think that every step of the way has been really rewarding. I feel like I have been part of something important.” (Student Executive, Social Club)

The findings of the online questionnaire survey indicate that regular club members are developing attributes in the areas of interpersonal, communication and teamwork skills.

Quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that ActivateUTS members in leadership positions are acquiring graduate attributes in all areas (aside from disciplinary knowledge and indigenous knowledge attributes). The findings indicate that students are acquiring understanding and knowledge of each attribute and demonstrating competence with application. The findings indicate that the strongest areas for skill development are:

- Teamwork/collaboration skills
- Leadership/people management skills
- Organising/coordinating skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Verbal communication skills
- Taking responsibility/acting ethically
- Problem solving
- Self-management/time management

Each of these attributes achieved mean ranks above 3.5/4 in the questionnaire survey.

Mid-range skill development occurs in:

- Professional competence
- Resilience

- Cross-cultural skills
- Agility
- Creativity/ability to innovate
- Mentoring skills
- Administrative skills
- Management/marketing skills
- Critical/independent/analytical/ reflective thinking
- Written communication skills

Each of these attributes achieved mean ranks between 3 and 3.5/4 in the questionnaire survey.

The least significant areas for skill development are:

- Financial skills
- Research skills
- IT skills

Each of these attributes achieved mean ranks above 2.5 and 3/4 in the questionnaire survey.

This study has sampled the ActivateUTS student membership as a whole. Further research is required to gain evidence of skill attribution at an individual student level.

The next section discusses findings in the context of relevant literature.

4. Discussion

4.1 Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are described as the qualities, skills and abilities that a university determines its students should develop during their time with the institution and which will ultimately shape the contribution their graduates are able to make in their profession and to society. “They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.” (Bowden *et al* cited in S Barrie, 2004 p.262). For UTS the development of these graduate attributes is linked to the UTS 2027 Strategy and the UTS Model where a framework of practice-oriented learning is linked to enabling our students to build strong professional identities and future-focussed graduate capabilities.

While the core method for developing these attributes has traditionally been in the classroom through the curriculum and formal learning practices it is now recognised that there are other aspects of engagement with university that are able to provide valuable employment skills and support the development of graduate attributes (S Barrie, 2004; S. C. Barrie, 2007). ActivateUTS, as a key strategic partner to the University not only provides social opportunities to students to enrich their University experience but also opportunities to support professional development. This is particularly apparent for those students with a high level of engagement with the clubs and those that take on an executive or Board role.

The extracurricular activities offered by ActivateUTS support student learning and provide balance in a demanding study environment. Benefits include skill development but also relate to friendship, belonging and confidence. Skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and teamwork are encouraged in the classroom but often fostered and expanded through involvement as an executive in a sport or social club.

“I got more from my time at University than an understanding of business. Being able to share and debate ideas with my executive team in the club and working with others for a common goal is a valuable skill UTS and Activate cunningly gave me without me even realising it for the most part”.
(Student President, Social Club)

A recent report by the Institute of Student Employers (Institute of Student Employers (ISE), 2018) notes the importance of graduate attributes but highlights a number of skills valued by employers that may not be developed in the classroom. “It is becoming more and more vital that Universities also prepare graduates for the world of work. This means the development of soft skills, like team playing and resilience, often becomes as important as the technical skills and knowledge acquired during a degree” (Quacquarelli cited in ISE, 2018, p.8). For example, the report explains that resilience is a key attribute that many employers look for in a potential graduate employee but it also highlights a significant shortfall in this area. Resilience, or the ability to adapt and deal with conflict or adverse circumstances in the workplace, is not directly related to technical content that may be taught through the curriculum but rather comes from experience and dealing with real world situations. Working as an executive in a club or society has been shown to provide students with this experience as they problem solve and deal with unexpected setbacks and issues throughout their term. While students often undervalue this skill, employers see it as key to success.

“I got very overwhelmed at times but in the end I managed to work things out so everything that I learned about being resilient, managing time and problem solving I think I will definitely take into my job and future employment.” (Student Executive, Sports Club)

The report identifies the top five skills looked for by employers globally as 1. problem solving; 2. teamwork; 3. communication; 4. adaptability and resilience; and 5. interpersonal skills. “The main challenge graduates face is accessing opportunities to develop key ‘soft skills’ such as leadership, confidence and resilience. There is often a lack of awareness about the need to develop these skills. This means students graduate without a level of employability and are thus underemployed or unable to secure role when they graduate” (Aspinall cited in ISE, 2018, p.14). With the increase in competition in the employment market and an increase in technology used in industry it becomes even more important that graduates have those ‘soft skills’ that cannot be replaced by technology. Experience in the clubs and societies of ActivateUTS, particularly at leadership levels, provides the opportunity to develop these skills through direct experience.

Key areas of skill development identified in this research are consistent with UTS graduate attributes as well as the key skills identified by employers. Students reported that their skills improved in almost all areas but particularly focussed on leadership and people management; time management; communication; teamwork and collaboration and problem solving. Students understood the value of their skills and the experiences that involvement university-based extracurricular activity provided. For many the experience gained had already provided opportunities for employment as they were able to use their experiences in interviews and on their curriculum vitae for applications.

“My initial motivations were career driven. I wanted to try new things at University, and I understood that this was a great opportunity to expand my skillset and improve my employability”. (Student Board Alumni)

In addition, students found that the experience they acquired in their roles gave them added confidence in their skills and for many this was a significant advantage when seeking employment. They understood what they were capable of once they had been in the position of having to coordinate a team, communicate with others, gain sponsorship or solve problems. Several authors make the point that the ability to operate effectively in a professional environment depends upon being able to reflect back on past experiences to deal with difficult or unpredictable situations rather than simply having technical skills (Simon Barrie, Hughes, Crisp, & Bennison, 2014; Cotter et al., 2016; Social Research Centre, 2018; Tchibozo & Pasteur, 2007). At ActivateUTS students gained both skills and the confidence through the challenges they navigated.

“I think I’ve very much transformed as a person in my confidence and my ability. As well, what I think I’m capable of doing has changed drastically and my ability to be in the real world.” (Student ActivateUTS Board Member)

“So in terms of my personal development I have found myself more confident and with a greater understanding of the different professional situations and environments that I might have to deal with – and that will have benefits beyond graduation as well.” (Student Executive, Social Club)

Many of the student leaders were encouraged to take on the position by previous executive or other students. For these students it meant that they had an existing well-developed relationship with the previous executive team and this had significant benefits for success. Where a successful handover was achieved and mentoring was provided by the previous team, students found that they had greater success, particularly early on in their role. Mentoring provides opportunities for personal development and a range of benefits for both the mentors and those who are mentored. It “improves planning, performance and productivity as the mentor is able to offer advice, support and guidance which will help improve problem solving skills and develop leadership skills for both the mentor and the mentee” (Soria et al., 2013, p.242).

“Happy to mentor the new executive and provide them with my insights from this year etc. I do know that having someone who has been in this position to talk to about what is required and ask question of is really helpful when you are first in the position”. (Student Executive, Social Club)

Many student leaders who did not received any mentoring or support from the previous team explained the added stress that they faced in their role. Where there was no guidance provided the students found it difficult to “get started” in their role. While it could be argued that this challenge may develop resilience (a key employability attribute), it often led to stress, frustration in some cases resulted in the student leaving the role early in their term.

“When I started out there was missed communication - and I wasn't quite sure what I was allowed to do and so it took a bit of time to understand what we could do.” (Student Executive, Social Club)

Similarly, poor communication and ineffective teamwork between the executive members of a club made the initial transition into the executive position more difficult. There may be an opportunity for ActivateUTS to provide training, insights and practical ideas for successful teamwork and communication.

The executive members of social clubs are popularly elected by the student members and so are not expected to necessarily have pre-existing skills. In contrast the sports club managers are chosen by ActivateUTS staff and are expected to have key skills: 1. Organised, 2. Responsible and 3. Good communication skills. Despite these differences the executive of all clubs tends to attract students to the role who are committed to community engagement and have a history of extracurricular activities that support their community. This means that while graduate attribute skills are significant for many they are not always skills that will be developed from scratch but rather skills that will be extended through the experience.

4.2 A Sense of Belonging

While the focus of this research was on the development of graduate attributes and employability skills in line with the UTS 2027 Strategy it is also important to recognise the other benefits that were gained by students involved in extracurricular activities through ActivateUTS. These include personal benefits such as confidence, friendship, personal enjoyment, community engagement and a ‘sense of belonging’ to the UTS community. These factors relate directly to the student participation and engagement in their learning at University. Willms (2003) explains they “are considered important, not only because of their relationship to student learning but also because they

represent a disposition towards education and life-long learning” (p. 2) which can in turn influence future career success.

Masika and Jones (2016) define ‘sense of belonging’ as “a student’s sense of being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by staff and peers and feeling they are an important part of the life and activity of the University” (p. 138). For students who are involved with clubs and societies ‘sense of belonging’ is a significant outcome of that involvement. This is true for both regular members and student leaders, but the leaders often feel a stronger sense of loyalty and ownership for the success of the club as a result of the commitment that they make.

‘Belonging is about increasing the experience of integration, involvement, engagement and connectedness with the University and reducing the experiences of fragmentation, estrangement and separation’ (Queensland University of Technology, 2016, p.1). Research also points to the relationship between a ‘sense of belonging’ to the University and its community and a continuation in higher education and general student well-being (Erb & Drysdale, 2017). Student retention is regarded as a priority for UTS and along with student satisfaction can benefit from involvement in extracurricular activities outside the classroom. Students who do ‘get involved’ develop stronger friendships and feel that they have a connection to the University that goes beyond technical learning. “Social support and social integration is essential for successful adjustment to University life” (Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005, p.709). Students engaged with ActivateUTS clubs report that their University experience is more balanced and enjoyable as a result and they describe the benefits of the support network they develop within the University.

“Some of the best university experiences I’ve had have been because of Clubs and Societies, or because of people I’ve met through them. It’s given me something to look forward to when heading in for classes and has equipped me with so many skills that have made me more of an asset in the workplace” (Club Member Survey Respondent)

Willms (2003) explains that students often describe their isolation and personal feelings about being accepted by their peers and whether or not they felt lonely, ‘like an outsider’ or ‘out of place’ when asked to describe their sense of belonging to a University. This is particularly relevant in universities like UTS with high ratios of international student enrolment. International students often describe isolation and loneliness in the first year and a sense that they don’t have a personal support network. That sense of isolation and not being part of the university community can lead to poor academic outcomes and withdrawal. This, in turn, can impact the university’s international reputation and success. Results of this study indicate that international students are less involved and engaged with ActivateUTS than domestic students and yet, as the following comments indicate, they would be likely to benefit significantly from involvement.

“I can get to know how to communicate others who I meet for the first time. I am more confident. In addition, I learn about other cultures through the activities, because I am from Japan, and this is my first time abroad”. (International Student Member)

“Society events are a great place to feel a sense of belonging especially if you’re an international student like me. My favorite part about UTS is all the

cultural societies. I am also a part of the Indian Society so lets me be close to my people, culture and festivals even in a foreign country". (International Student Member)

"Making new friends in Uni was hard but attending UKA [UTS Korean Association] events helped me to relieve stress and expand my social skills". (International Student Member)

Clubs and societies provide the opportunity to meet friends and establish relationships, build confidence in social situations and establish a personal support network within the University. "Leaving the University course often resulted from a failure in social integration, such as difficulty in making friends or homesickness. Students new social networks at University often provided support to overcome such difficulties" (Wilcox et al., 2005, p.709).

Masika and Jones (2016) explain that an increased and more diverse student body at the University should mean a focus on widening participation and developing approaches to student retention and success. Happier, more confident students are more likely to achieve academic success as well as have a positive experience while studying. Willms (2003) describes a direct relationship between student engagement and participation in extracurricular activities and how students value education as well as educational outcomes.

"Joining ActivateUTS clubs was one of the best decisions that I have ever made, besides choosing to study at UTS. It has enabled me to meet many new people, develop my interpersonal skills and become a more well-rounded person. I always look forward to coming to Uni and seeing my friends – it has even helped me in class – especially when doing group assignments." (Club Executive Survey Respondent)

"As a Muslim, it is very important for me to have a space where I can pray in peace. The UTS Muslim Society provides this fundamental need, and it gives me a sense of belonging to UTS for catering for this need." (Club Member Survey Respondent)

Wenger (2009) also argues that the *social theory of learning* applies to the extracurricular activities of students in a university environment. He argues that social participation, such as in the clubs of societies, is the "bedrock of learning" (p.216) and that learning should be placed in the context of lived experiences of participation in a social environment. Traditional learning at universities was largely based on the assumption that learning is an individual process, that it is best separated from the rest of our activities, and that it is only the result of teaching. Wenger (2009) argues that this has now changed as Universities and teaching institutions become aware that learning cannot and should not be separated from other activities. The more the student feels part of the community at the institution the more successful their learning is likely to be. The activities associated with clubs and societies provides students with the opportunities to develop this relationship with the community of their university; to feel that they are accepted and that they belong. As Masika and Jones (2016) explain "doing (engaging in activities, working together, talking and designing as a team) creates relationships and identification with the community" (p. 138). This then improves learning opportunities and the commitment of individual students to their own learning.

“The club has given me a great friendship group that works together for club activities but also at Uni in class. We all help each other to get through studying and balancing workloads. I don’t think I would be as committed to my Uni work without their support.” (Club Member Survey Respondent)

Increased confidence is also likely to improve student outcomes and engagement with learning as well as their ability to ‘sell themselves’ to a potential employer. Students expressed their growth in confidence and explained the social and professional benefits that this provided. For many, this new-found confidence had benefits for their overall University experience. Many first-year students struggle with the transition into University. The opportunity to develop new social skills and confidence in social situations has long-term benefits for their education and future professional life.

“Being involved in ActivateUTS clubs has really opened up employment opportunities for me; I am now able to confidently speak about my university life and the great experiences/friends I have made during my time of study.” (Club Executive Survey Respondent)

“Because it has made me feel so much more confident and comfortable with my future ahead, I know I’m not alone and have many shoulders to lean on. Joining the club has been one of the best things I’ve done.” (Club Member Survey Response)

In particular, international students benefit from Club involvement when first transitioning to the University environment. Research indicates that the transition of first year students is difficult as they move from a familiar school environment to tertiary education but that these difficulties are compounded for International students who find themselves dealing with the added stress of understanding a new culture, often using their second language and being without family and friends for support (Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015). Interview subjects and survey respondents all indicated that the friendships established through club involvement and the sense of being part of the UTS community provided great benefits, particularly during the early years. Long term benefits for University success are also apparent with students indicating that they not only enjoyed their experience at UTS, but that they felt safe, supported and were less likely to leave before completion of their studies.

“I met a lot of people who also joined that club at the events. The UTS club helped me to feel more connected to the daily Uni life. From the beginning, I was always looking forward to getting to Uni to participate in all the different events.” (Club Member Survey Respondent)

“I recommend all international students to join this club especially those who are weak in English and suffering from homesickness because we improve our communication skills here and make friends from different countries. Events are fun and offer free pizzas!! So, it’s not boring.” (Club Member Survey Respondent)

5. Conclusion

“I don’t think there has been a moment where I have regretted [joining ActivateUTS]. I think that every step of the way has been really rewarding. I feel like I have been part of something important.” (Student leader, Social Club)

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between student involvement in extracurricular activities provided by ActivateUTS and the development of graduate attributes. The findings of this study indicate that skills identified by students in this study as having been developed through their engagement with ActivateUTS correlate with UTS graduate attributes in each of the faculties, particularly with the more generic attributes such as leadership and teamwork, interpersonal skills, communication, critical and creative thinking, ethics and self-management skills.

Engagement with ActivateUTS was less likely to contribute to attributes associated with disciplinary knowledge, although our findings indicate that students sometimes have the opportunity to apply disciplinary knowledge, particularly those in executive roles.

ActivateUTS is also contributing to the UTS strategic goals. ActivateUTS provides opportunities for practice-oriented learning and develops cross-cultural skills. ActivateUTS is supporting UTS students to develop strong professional identities.

Leadership roles in ActivateUTS Sport and Social clubs and on the ActivateUTS Board provide students with a *work integrated learning* experience.

UTS aims to produce graduates who will:

- Be equipped for ongoing learning and inquiry in their personal development and professional practice;
- Operate effectively with the body of knowledge that underpins professional practice and
- Commit to the actions and responsibilities of a professional and global citizen.

The findings of this study indicate that ActivateUTS is making distinct contributions in all three areas.

The key strategic partnership between ActivateUTS and UTS is contributing in multiple ways to the UTS mission and strategic plan. The recommendations that follow offer suggestions for ways in which the partnership might be leveraged further.

Next steps

This study has sampled the ActivateUTS student membership as a whole to determine the scope and extent to which graduate attributes are being developed for the ActivateUTS student body, and particularly for student leaders. Further research is

required to evaluate the development of graduate attributes through university-based extracurricular activity at an individual student level. This might be achieved through evaluation of individual student portfolios and reflective work constructively aligned to develop and assess specific attributes.

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The methodology adopted and sources of information used by the authors are outlined in this report. While all care and diligence has been exercised in the preparation of this report, the authors assume no responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions. No indications were found during our investigations that information contained in this report as provided is false.

This summary report was prepared in May 2019 based on the conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. This report should be read in full. No responsibility is accepted for use of any part of this report in any other context or for any other purpose or by third parties.

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