Welcome, we have now released all Intake Dates for 2010. The first Intake of the year has already commenced in February and the April Intake is now full but there are still remaining places in July, September and November Intakes.

The PSMP fee will increase in November so take advantage now by booking onto 2010 Intakes where you will pay the current $8000 fee. (see back page for full Intake dates).

Curriculum Refresh

The refreshed curriculum has been now been introduced to the PSM Program.
All new participants will use the refreshed curriculum materials and assignments.
The February 2010 Cohort have already gone through Unit 1 workshop with the new curriculum and materials are now being issued on USBs.

PSM Program National Website Refresh

The PSM Program National Website is currently being refreshed and will be released very shortly.
You can still keep up to date with the Program by visiting Victoria University’s PSM Program pages.
www.businessandlaw.vu.edu.au/psmu

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Make sure you never miss PSM Program updates. Join our mailing list. Email: lesley.gordon@vu.edu.au

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Information Session February 2010

The PSM Program Information session took place on Friday 19th February 2010 at Victoria University City Campus.

Dr Pat Brewer, PSM Program Manager started proceedings by inviting John Cross, Principal Adviser, Workforce Planning & Development, SSA to speak on the behalf of the Victorian Local Leadership Group. The PSMP Marketing Officer then presented the PSM Program in its uniqueness and delivery in Victoria.

Graduates of the PSM Program Graeme Collins, Superintendent, Victoria Police and Karen De-Leon, Human Resources, Australian Building & Construction Commission were then invited to the podium to discuss their PSMP journey and the worth of the program to them and their Agency.

The session was a success to those who attended and there was opportunity for questions after each presenter and again an opportunity for informal one to one discussions with the PSM Program office staff and presenters along with refreshments.

A Graduate’s PSM Program Journey

Graeme Collins a Superintendent with Victoria Police and PSM Program Graduate presented at our Information Session on 19 February 2010 detailing his journey through the PSMP. Here is what he had to say:-

I graduated from the PSM Program in 2008 after an interesting journey. I started the program a few years ago and completed the bulk of the subjects, but had to defer due to a heavy work load, a change of work location and some serious health issues with my wife. After these issues settled down, my life started to get back to normal when I was offered the opportunity to do a Masters in Public Administration through ANZOG. This was a fantastic opportunity but it did cause me to put the PSM program on hold again. I was fortunate that I was encouraged back to complete the program by Dr Pat Brewer, the PSM Program Manager. I completed my work based project in 2008, whilst still completing my masters and graduated in the Program in 2009. This was one of my proudest achievements and I am grateful to Pat for her support.

The PSM Program impacted on me personally and professionally and I feel I am now able to accurately reflect on the influence this program had on my academic learning. I am happy to briefly explain how it helped me grow and support me in my current role. The Managing Up unit topics have a strong linkage to governance and accountabilities in the public sector. The Program changed my understanding of where Victoria Police sits within the government framework and gave me a broader knowledge of Australian Federation and the place government now has in the Public Sector. Managing Out helped me to understand the importance of delivering public value by the Victoria Police and how a networked governance approach to management is an essential part of the Victoria Police function. The importance of ethics, integrity and accountability in Victoria Police goes without saying and Managing In provided an opportunity for me to self analyse my attitudes and my approach to policing. Managing Down provided me with the chance to really test my learning and put my skills into practice. I took on an important project in my police division that has since had a lasting impact on my work in a political context and in delivering the public value the community expect. I am certain that I would not have been able to achieve this without the learning from the PSM Program.

In a professional sense, the program gave me the confidence to take on other study and higher learning. I could not have taken on my Masters Degree without having been exposed to the subject matter and the learning experiences from the PSM Program.
A Graduates PSM Program Journey continued

In addition, the contacts I made and experiences of the other participants on the program provided me with a diverse range of views and management experiences. The program has given me a deeper understanding of Government and an understanding that Victoria Police has the same management challenges as other agencies. The program has also had a very positive impact on my career — it assisted me in obtaining promotion through the learning achieved and gave me a strong understanding of governance issues, strategy, contemporary management theory and an insight into the workings of other government agencies.

On a personal note the program impacted on my life in many ways. Higher education and part time study is a challenge, no matter what job you do. It challenges you to be disciplined, committed to achieving goals, to prioritize your time and make sacrifices. These are all inherent traits of being a good public sector manager! There is a need to balance your working time and study/research time — but it was achievable without being all consuming. The support from the PSM Program Manager was outstanding; this provided me with the strong support and the motivation to take on additional work at a critical time in my life to finish the course. An understanding of my strengths and weaknesses was very important to me to ensure I understood what I had to do to succeed. Using my network of peers from the program and other program graduates was also vital, especially as they were going through or had been through, the same experiences as me and this assisted me greatly. Having support from family and friends is essential, but it is important that you try and balance your study time with their needs as well. This makes for a more harmonious home and work life.

Finally, my journey through the PSM program was perhaps not as smooth as I would have liked. This wasn’t the fault of the PSM program, but a combination of many factors we often have no control over. For me the PSM Program was a great reintroduction into academic learning. It is relevant to all public sector management roles and provided me with a highly accepted Post Graduate qualification.

I would thoroughly recommend the course to anyone thinking about Post Graduate Public Sector Management study.

Would you benefit from a Graduate’s assistance?

The PSM Program team are currently building a “bank” of PSMP Alumni who are willing to provide informal assistance and support to current PSMP participants. Their role will provide you with a contact in sharing their PSMP experience.

If you would be interested in accessing this assistance please contact Dr Pat Brewer, Program Manager.

Articulation Routes at Victoria University

New pathway routes for Graduates of the PSM Program Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.

Graduates of the PSM Program can now articulate into Victoria University’s Master of Business (Industrial Relations/ Human Resource Management) and Master of Business (Management) and receive a credit of four units. For further information visit www.vu.edu.au or contact Dr Pat Brewer.

The PSM Program can also articulate into many Masters and PHDs at various other universities.
2009 Graduation

The PSMP Graduation took place on Wednesday 25th November 2009 at Victoria University with 35 eligible graduands and 26 PSM Program participants graduating on the day. There was a total of 122 guests in attendance these being graduates family, friends, sponsors, work colleagues and line managers as well as some Agency Human Resources and Learning & Development Managers and some Heads of Agency.

The Graduation ceremony formally recognises the academic achievements of PSMP participants. It is the opportunity to celebrate the participants commitment to completing the program. This was the first year the PSM Program offered gowns to all.

On the day the graduates were welcomed by Prof. Pauline Stanton, Victoria University and congratulations delivered by Cris Lumley, Chair, Victorian Local Leadership Group.

Cris Lumley said:-

Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of the Australian Public Service Commission and the Local Leadership Group. The Australian Public Service Commission is about supporting, and building the capability of, the Australian Public Service. A key area of focus for us is on middle manager development. And this fits well with the PSMP. Some of the challenges we as public sector managers currently face include:

- The framework in which we manage, the dynamics, the complexity, the potential for change.
- The changing face, interactions and expectations of the community.
- The different way in which a public service operates when compared to private sector—our ethics and accountability.
- Being able to frame all of this in a realistic and practical model for the teams that we manage.

This is Managing up, out, in and down. Terms very familiar to our graduands today.

What is facing the public sector today is an even more ambitious public sector reform agenda, and programs such as the PSMP offer an extremely important part of the toolkit we as managers need in this environment. Not the least of which is the benefit of cross-jurisdictional networks, contacts, interactions. As participants in this program you have needed to be persistent, resilient, committed and motivated to complete your study. In addition to this, you have had to make sacrifices. Your families have also had to make sacrifices to support you through your studies. This is the opportunity to recognise your commitment, your motivation, your resilience, and those sacrifices and most importantly to celebrate the achievement. Congratulations to all graduands!

The Guest speaker was Robyn Clark, Executive Director, Department of Transport who discussed the preparedness of the participants professional and personal development and their journey of learning. The graduates were invited up to receive their testamur’s to rapturous applause for each.

The audience was then treated to a rousing talk from Geoffrey Leveritt (pictured above), Australian Securities and Investments Commission, as the response on behalf of the Graduates.

All graduates were then given the opportunity for photographs and to celebrate their achievements with their fellow graduates, sponsors and managers, friends and family who were all invited by the PSM Program to relax over refreshments.

A Graduation Booklet was published commemorating the 2009 ceremony detailing all the graduates and their work based projects.

A great day was had by all!
Karen De-Leon, ABCC detailed her reasons below for applying to the PSM Program and it’s worth.

I applied to do the PSM program as I wanted to get a better understanding of the broader public service issues and how things work as I often thought why do have to do things a certain way? I was also curious to find out about other participants experiences working in the state and federal public service.

Overall I thought the PSM program was great and met my expectations. I found the content interesting and challenging. With a young family it was a bit tricky fitting in time to finish assignments and study but Pat and my Manager were fantastic in providing support.

When I did the program I wasn’t in a management role and I found I still got a lot out of it because it gave me a good foundation of management skills that I am now using when I manage HR projects.

I also enjoyed completing the work based project because it allowed the HR team to seek feedback from staff on the effectiveness of four HR services delivered at the ABCC. I was then able to make recommendations to improve services and provide feedback to the HR team on the things we are doing well.

It’s been a few months now since I completed the program and I find as I’m working on projects I remember points that were covered in the program and have been able to use my knowledge and learning to improve the work I do. I’m happy I completed the program because of what I got out of it and also an extra qualification.

The graduation ceremony gave a natural conclusion to my completion of the PSM Program and an opportunity to celebrate my achievement with my colleagues.
Building Effective Working Relationships

Public sector managers engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Learning to build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and sectors of society with a variety of concerns and views is both a responsibility and a key to achieving good outcomes.

While the nature of your work and your level of responsibility affect which stakeholders you engage with directly, most managers belong to a team of colleagues or manage a team of direct reports. It is within this ‘home’ team of stakeholders that you have the most frequent opportunities to use and develop your relationship skills.

Of course when individuals join a work team early in their career they bring with them well-established patterns of relating – some effective and others not. The extent to which they maximize their strengths, drop ineffective approaches and develop a wider repertoire of relationship skills are affected by the norms of interaction established within the work group into which they arrive. So the patterns of interaction within work teams matter quite a lot. Work teams can offer a significant learning ground for more effective interpersonal functioning. It makes sense that public sector manager’s focus wholeheartedly within their team arena to make the most of this opportunity for developing people and building a healthy workplace culture.

An important area for attention is how your team/colleagues deal with differences of opinion. While the need for sensitivity across differences in gender and cultural background is widely acknowledged, the need to respect differences in points of view may get less attention than it deserves. Differences of opinion can involve strong feelings, deeply held values or threaten our own self esteem and identity (as competent, committed or caring etc.).

Work overload, time constraints, a narrow task orientation and poor facilitation of discussions can exacerbate this problem. When team discussions are frequently oppositional or combative, insufficient common ground and mutuality in working relationships is developed. When debate prevails over dialogue a lot of effort goes into defending positions and winning arguments rather than building greater mutual understanding. In contrast when dialogue is valued, team members learn from their differences by sharing different points of view and exploring new possibilities. Using this approach in problem solving, for example, to explore assumptions about what the problem is and how it might be solved, is shown to generate more effective, sustainable solutions.

Making the shift from verbal combat to learning conversations involves suspending judgment and listening with an open mind. Colleagues share the relevant objective facts and personal experiences from which they form their point of view – making these open to scrutiny. This non-defensive approach to conversations develops greater interpersonal connection. The outcome is that team members feel heard and in turn can hear their colleagues. They pay attention to their own assumptions and reactions and those of others with a relaxed, non-judgmental curiosity. Dialogue becomes a journey of discovery – a way to see things as freshly and clearly as possible.

Learning to deal effectively with differences of opinion can lay the groundwork for dealing with more difficult conflicts between work colleagues. These conflicts require more than cursory attention to address how each party views what has happened, the feelings involved and the impact on each person’s identity.
Building Effective Working Relationships cont

In difficult conversations predictably human errors can distort our thoughts and feelings and get us into trouble. Typically, instead of exploring what information the other person has, we may assume we know all we need to understand and explain things. Instead of working to manage our feelings constructively, we either hide them or let loose in ways we later regret. Instead of exploring the identity issues that may be deeply at stake for us we start a conversation as if it says nothing about us (or the other party) as a person – and never come to grips with what is at stake for our self-image, self-esteem or well being.

Successful approaches to difficult conversations integrate a broad range of competencies such as the ability to:

- Differentiate between our intentions and our impacts;
- Explore the impacts each of us is having on the other;
- Recognise that we have all probably contributed to the situation;
- Recognise the feelings of both parties without judgments or attributions;
- Acknowledge feelings before making a start on problem solving;
- Recognize the identity issues on the line for us and the other person involved;
- Develop a more balanced self-image.

Like dialogue skills, the abilities used in conducting difficult conversations can be learned. When you recognise that building effective working relationships is central to your work as a manager you have plenty to gain by building your repertoire in these areas. Your home team of colleagues or direct reports also stands to benefit as you model these abilities and they get built into your group’s everyday ways of working together.

References

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen (1999) *Difficult Conversations – How to Discuss What Matters Most*

Patricia J. Fritts (1998) *The New Managerial Mentor- Becoming a Learning Leader to Build Communities of Purpose*

David Bohm (1996) *On Dialogue*


Taylor Cox (1993) *Cultural Diversity in Organisations- Theory, Research and Practice*

Jenny Hutt, Learning and Organisational Development Consultant, PSM Program Facilitator
Want to find out more about the PSMP

The PSM Program team can come to your agency and present the PSM Program to you and your staff and demonstrate the benefits gained by studying the PSM Program for the participant and your agency at a time that suits you.

To arrange a visit drop me an email: lesley.gordon@vu.edu.au or phone 03 9919 1492

PSM Program Intake Dates 2010

To Apply visit http://www.psmprogram.gov.au/cgi-bin/eam/login.pl

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