

# Friends across Swanston Street: building cross-unit connectedness through mentoring partnerships

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# Our discussion today

- Introduction
- Why we developed the mentoring program
- How we set up the program
- The mentoring literature
- Key points for an effective mentoring program
- How the program went
- What we learnt
- How the program measured up against the literature
- Where to next





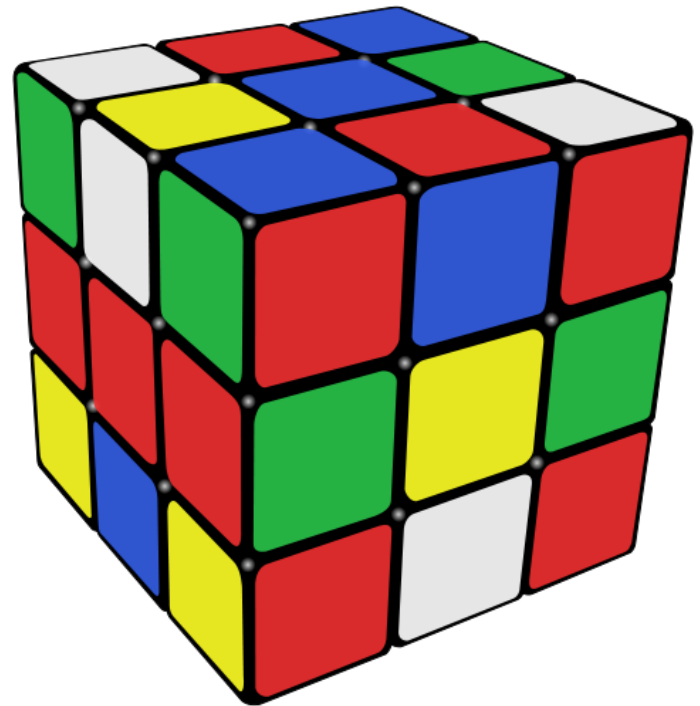


## Why we developed the mentoring program

- Staff survey identified 'cross-unit communication' as a gap.
- ARG staff conference identified a need to improve career support.
- ARG has a strong commitment to professional development.

# The mentoring program aimed to

- Build mentoring skills in staff.
- Enable staff to be mentored by staff outside of their own work area.
- Improve cross-unit understanding.
- Foster career reflection/building.



How we set up  
the program

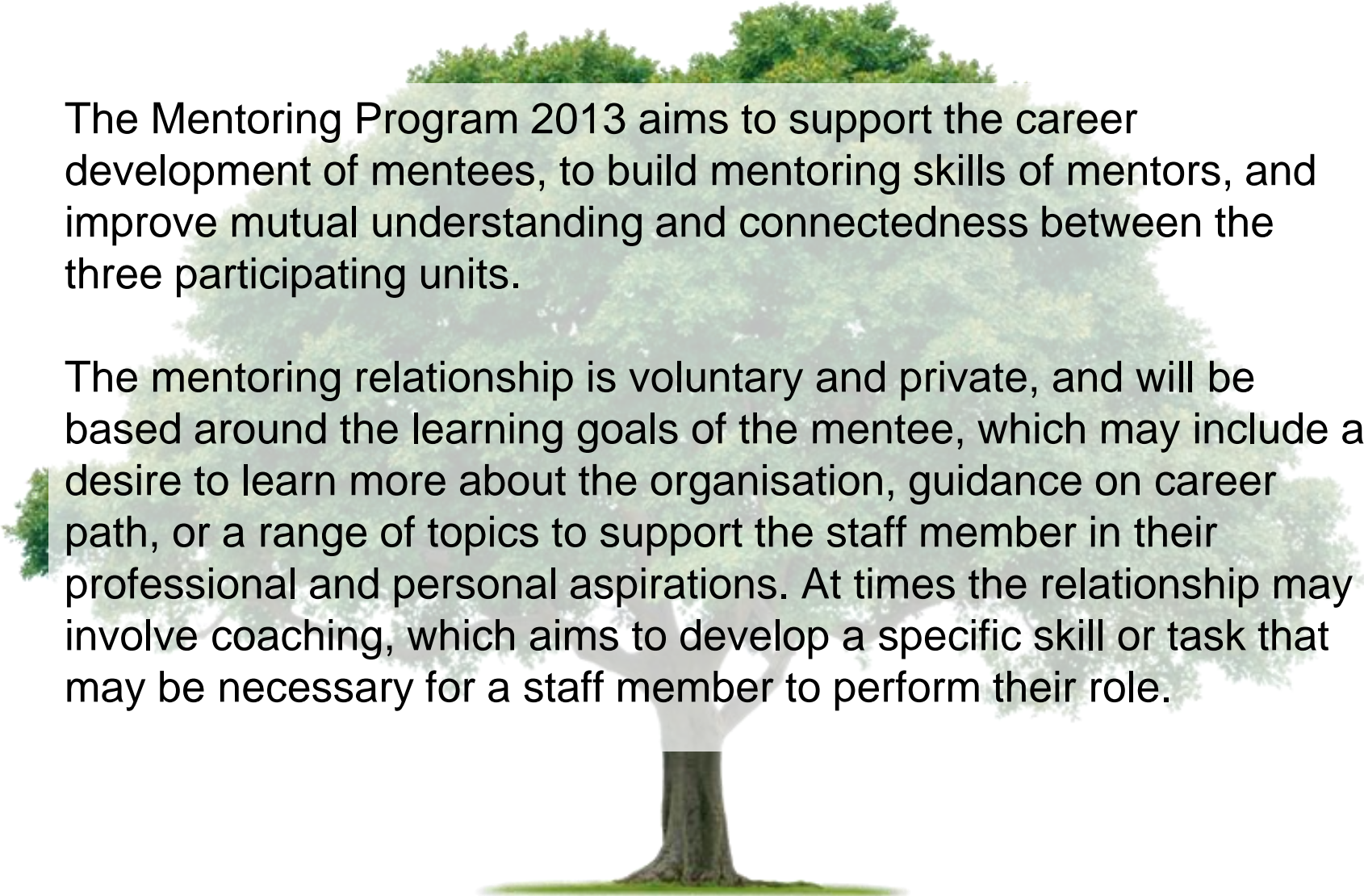


# How we set up the program



- Established what mentoring meant for the program






The Mentoring Program 2013 aims to support the career development of mentees, to build mentoring skills of mentors, and improve mutual understanding and connectedness between the three participating units.

The mentoring relationship is voluntary and private, and will be based around the learning goals of the mentee, which may include a desire to learn more about the organisation, guidance on career path, or a range of topics to support the staff member in their professional and personal aspirations. At times the relationship may involve coaching, which aims to develop a specific skill or task that may be necessary for a staff member to perform their role.

# How we set up the program



- Set the program parameters
  - Communicated with staff
    - Matched partners
    - Delivered training
- Administered evaluation surveys

A black and white photograph of Albert Einstein. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark jacket. He has his characteristic wild, wavy hair and a mustache. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. His right arm is raised, and he appears to be writing on a chalkboard. The chalkboard is dark, and the text 'What I Learned From...' is written in white chalk. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

What I  
Learned  
From...

The mentoring literature

# Key points for an effective mentoring program

1. Establish a mentoring culture in the organisation
2. Be aware of the mentoring literature
3. Articulate the goals/purposes of the program
4. Resource the program adequately
5. Ensure senior officers support the program
6. Establish a program timeline
7. Appoint a program coordinator
8. Communicate and promote the program



# Key points for an effective mentoring program

9. Enable voluntary involvement in the program as mentors or mentees
10. Have a no-fault exit clause
11. Set out roles, expectations and responsibilities clearly
12. Select mentors with good skills
13. Train mentors and mentees
14. Match mentors and mentees well
15. Provide support for mentors and mentees
16. Monitor and evaluate the program to support ongoing improvement, and to measure whether the program meets its objectives



# How it went



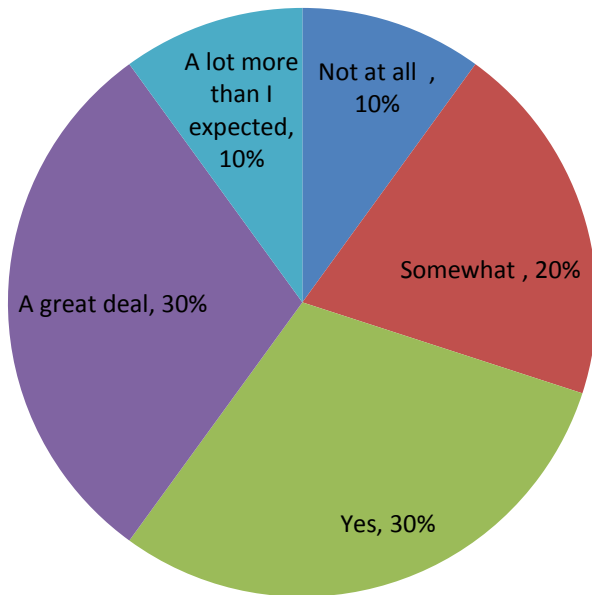
- 23 partnerships were established
- Three mentors were paired with two mentees each
- Seven applicants not accepted into the program

## How it went

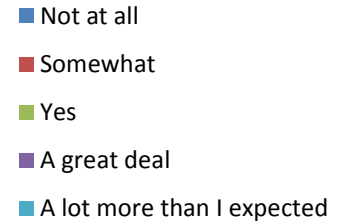
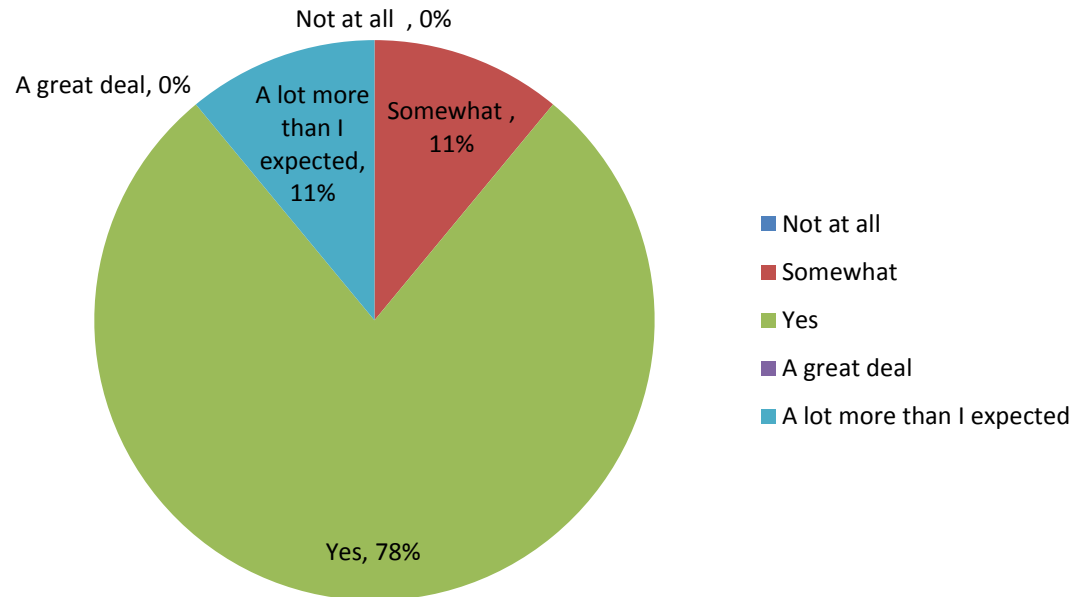
- The program ran for six months; partners typically met once a month, for one hour.
- Some partners met at varying intervals due to workload constraints.
- All mentees reported that their managers supported their participation in the program.
- Most respondents answered yes when asked if they would recommend participating in the mentoring program to others.

# Career goals

## Mentee Response



## Mentor Response

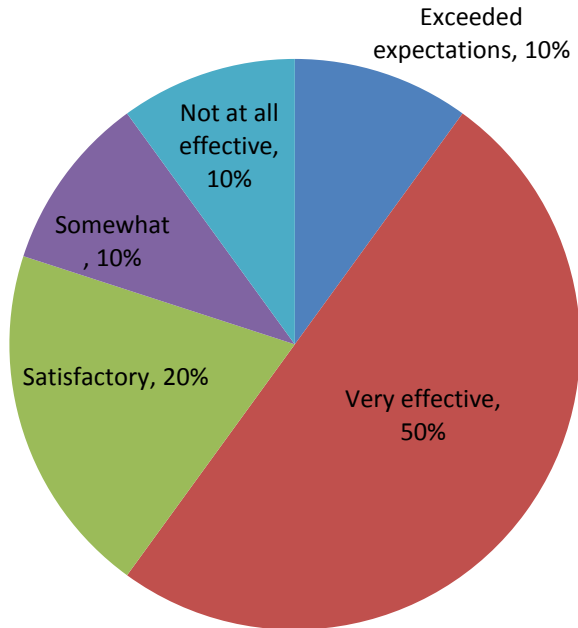


- Mentees – has the program contributed to your preparedness to reach your career goals?
- Mentors – has your support and guidance as mentor contributed to the mentee/s preparedness to reach their career goals?

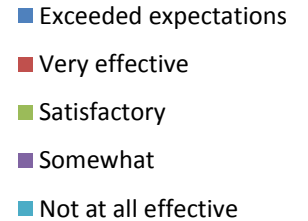
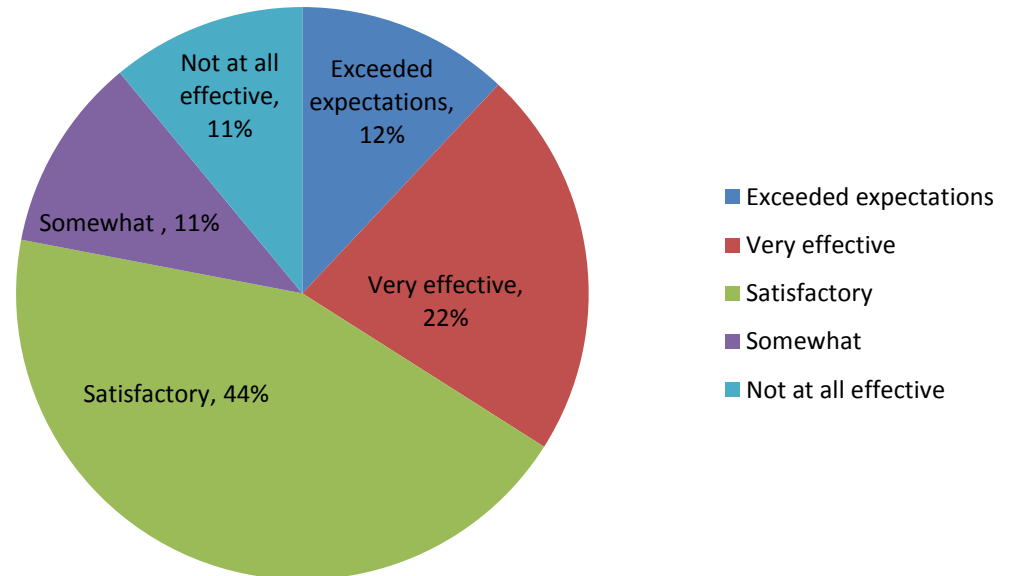


# SMART objectives

## Mentee



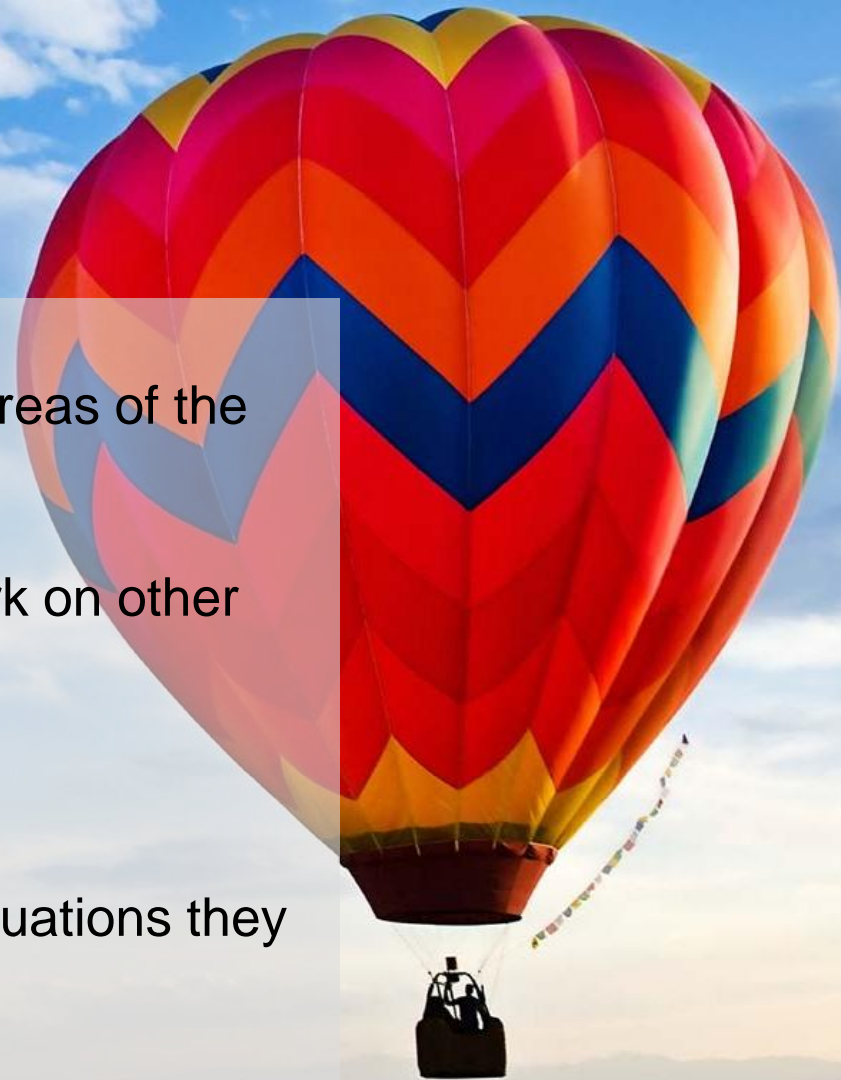
## Mentor




- How effective were the meetings in addressing the mentee's SMART objectives?

# Participants reported the following benefits

- Increased knowledge of how other areas of the university work
- Awareness of the impact of their work on other areas
- Strengthened communication
- Gained strategies for dealing with situations they found challenging
- Were able to view things from an alternative perspective



A surreal landscape with a glowing lightbulb in the sky and a person carrying boxes. The scene is set against a backdrop of a sunset or sunrise, with a warm orange and yellow glow. A large, glowing lightbulb is positioned in the upper center, appearing to be part of the sky. Below it, a person in a dark suit is walking away from the viewer, carrying several large, stacked cardboard boxes on their back. The ground is a mix of orange and brown tones, suggesting a desert or a dry, open field. The overall atmosphere is one of contemplation and discovery.

*‘This has been a beneficial process for both myself and my mentee – time spent with someone from another part of the organisation helps broaden the overall understanding of how this place works!’*

*‘The program has given me a new perspective and insight into myself and my work that I wasn’t expecting.’*

*'My mentor provided me with a template for planning a current project. I will be able to complete this related to my project; this will help me manage my time and potential resources that may be available.'*



*'It has been an enriching experience, and has helped me to reflect on my own career and what I've learnt from it. Sharing my experience has helped me to value it. I've learnt a good deal from my mentees.'*

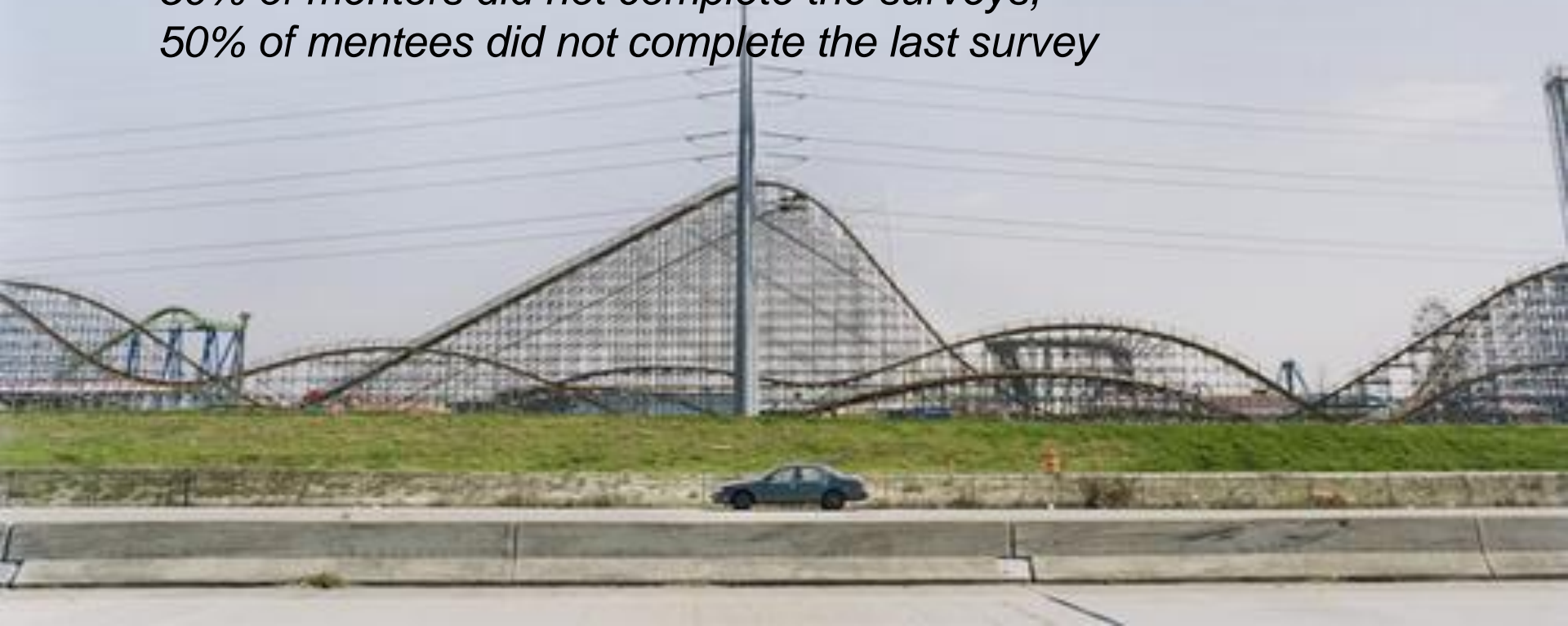
# Our experiences of the program



*'I wouldn't recommend participating. I didn't have the right fit with my mentor unfortunately and found I have mentors in a more informal environment.'*

*'The SMART goals seemed too rigid and structured.'*

*50% of mentors did not complete the surveys;  
50% of mentees did not complete the last survey*

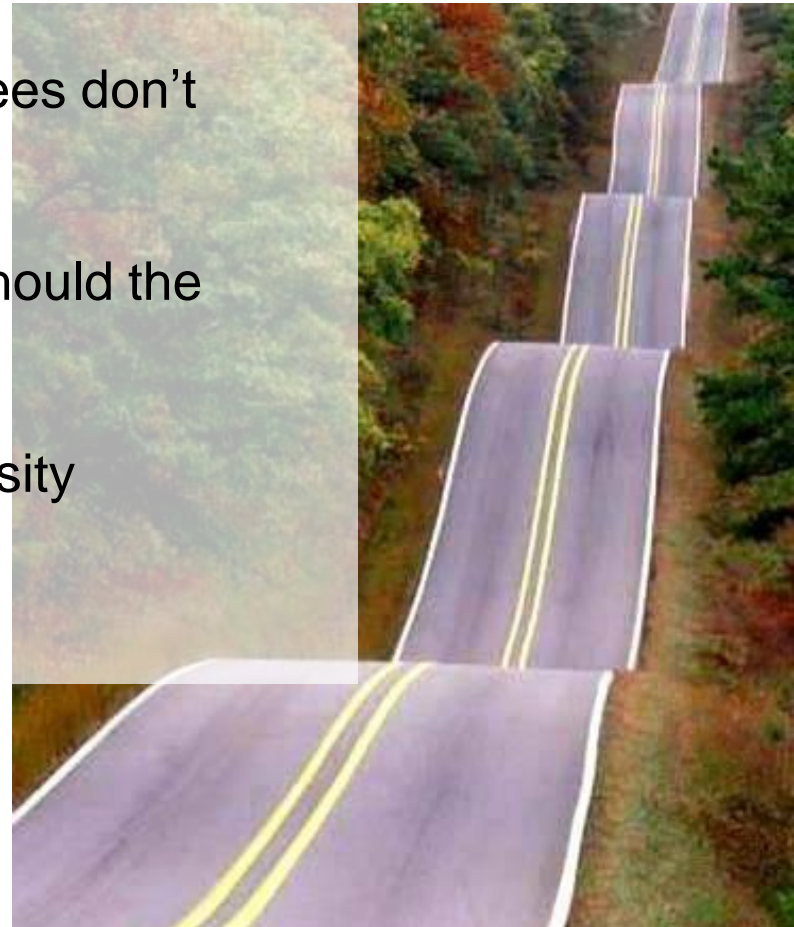




What we learnt

# Participants' suggested improvements

- Greater assistance to start the relationship
- Advice on what mentors can do if mentees don't engage
- A process to offer alternative pairings should the relationship fail
- Expand the program to the wider university
- Less emphasis on SMART goals





# How the program measured up against the mentoring literature

Fulfilled many key requirements:

- clear objectives, time-limited
- participants were matched fairly well
- defined roles/responsibilities
- provided a little training/support
- evaluated thoroughly

Some weaknesses though:

- did not establish priority for staff time
- did not ensure mentors had good mentoring skills
- only minimally supported mentors to improve mentoring skills

# Where to next?

- University-wide program?
- Mentoring toolkit
- Group mentoring

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