



15 December, 2014

To whom it may concern

The Academic Leadership Development Programme (ALDP) at the University of Otago has been running for 5 years. The focus is on professional development, induction and support for Heads of Department, Directors of Centre, Associate Deans and, where relevant to distributed leadership, their nominees. There are 84 departments at the University, within 4 Academic Divisions (Sciences, Humanities, Health Sciences and Business) across 3 campuses.

During the past 5 years, Process Communication Model (PCM™) courses have been offered through the ALDP. During this period there have been 11 courses with 142 participants from across the University, predominantly in academic leadership roles such as Dean, Head of Department, Associate Dean, Director of Centre.

In an organisation which is committed to excellence in research and teaching, there is the expectation that all academic leaders continue to be active researchers and teachers whilst undertaking administrative work. Academic clinicians, such as doctors and dentists, have significant additional clinical responsibilities. Therefore, time away from teaching, research and clinical is very precious. It is therefore striking that the PCM course always has a wait-list with more applicants than places available. The uptake of PCM as accredited Continuing Medical Education (CME) by some of the professional Australasian Colleges (e.g. Surgeons and Anaesthetists) has contributed to the demand for this material. Little course advertising is required, rather it is word of mouth recommendations that lead people to register for the course.

What changes does PCM create? Spontaneous comments from participants and comments from their managers indicate that after the course people have:

- a tool which enables them to understand how their communication preferences differ from other people
- a framework to reduce interpersonal conflict or miscommunication by adapting their communication approach to different people.

Most importantly the information about psychological needs enables people to recognise and meet their own needs thus avoiding predictable distress sequences. This in turn means that they keep a sense of perspective and retain the ability to make sound decisions whilst in their leadership roles. After completing the course, the Director of Human Resources and several Deans in Health Sciences have allocated Divisional/School funds to offer 4 PCM™ courses for their Executive Management groups (n=33 comprising HR Managers, Research Managers, Business Manager, Associate Deans, Heads of Department). This has built capability in some work areas where all the staff are “onboard” with using the PCM™ approach and language.

During 2014 the University Quality Advancement Unit established a panel to review the ALDP. During the review process numerous comments were made by programme participants about the effect of PCM™ on their own wellbeing.

- *“It changed the way I looked at the world”*
- *“I understood what got me down and how I could look after myself”*
- *“I have used it to interact with different people in different ways”*
- *“I use it so much”*
- *“The 3 day PCM sessional also needs to be offered no matter what the cost”.*

As part of the review, Professor Jones, previously Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) undertook independent data collection about the ALDP by meeting with focus groups comprising 38 Heads of Department and Directors. His conclusion regarding PCM was *“Everyone who had participated in this workshop was exceedingly positive, even to the point of saying that it had changed their whole way of functioning in a leadership role.*

PCM continues to be one of the flagship courses in the ALDP and a priority to allocate resources to run this with the outstanding professional facilitation which Werner Naef provides.



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