

NZSA Mentoring AGM Report Nov 24

Lisa Thomasen

The third cohort of the NZSA mentoring program has recently concluded. Both mentors and mentees have highlighted the value they have gained from being involved. In the three years that the program has been offered, we have had 64 individuals involved as mentors and/or mentees. Many of these individuals have been involved across multiple years of the program:

- 6 individuals have been involved in all 3 cohorts
- 17 individuals have been involved in 2 cohorts
- 5 individuals have been involved as both a mentor and a mentee.

The high return rate suggests that many individuals have identified the value in being involved across multiple years. It is also exciting to see individuals who started out as mentees gaining the confidence to become mentors themselves. Three individuals have made this transition so far, with multiple mentees from Cohort 3 expressing interest in becoming mentors in Cohort 4 or beyond.

I have received enquiries about Cohort 4 already and have multiple individuals from Cohort 3 who have expressed an interest in being involved again. It is exciting to see continued enthusiasm for the program and to hear testimonials from past participants. I am looking forward to offering the program again in 2025. I expect to launch Cohort 4 in February with the program running from April to September. Program details and the opportunity to sign up will be promoted via the NZSA mailing list and S&ECS Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

Cohort 3

Cohort 3 ran from April to September 2024. This year's program involved:

- 30 participants, including 16 mentors & 17 mentees
- 15 mentoring pairs & 1 mentoring group
- 3 people involved as *both* mentors and mentees.

Pairings were communicated throughout the month of March, with the program kick off and meet & greet sessions for mentors and mentees being held in April. These sessions were attended by 8 mentees and 10 mentors and were a great opportunity for meeting others in the program and discussing tips for getting started.

Mid-point check ins were held for both mentors and mentees in June. The program formally concluded in September, followed by close out sessions in October and a close out survey. I am currently in the process of reviewing feedback from the close out survey and will write up a detailed summary of Cohort 3, including feedback and learnings, which will be shared with the NZSA Exec prior to the launch of Cohort 4. A condensed version of this report will be made available to all members via the [Mentoring page](#) on the NZSA website.

Lunch 'n' Learn Sessions

A selection of lunch 'n' learn sessions have been offered to give NZSA members an opportunity to network and discuss relevant topics. The first lunch 'n' learn session was held in February and focused on *Professional Development*. Discussion focused on the balance of technical vs soft skills and how to prioritise development with a busy workload.

The second lunch 'n' learn session was held in March on the topic of *Giving & Receiving Feedback*. This session was attended by 18 NZSA members and included lots of thought-provoking discussion including the impact of cultural differences on feedback. The third session, *Work-Life-Mum Balance*, was held in May, targeted at NZSA members who are Mums.

Elena Moltchanova's lunch 'n' learn session on *Finding Confidence as a Statistician* was held in August. Members of various career stages had the opportunity to share aspects of their roles where they had lacked confidence. This was followed by an interactive discussion on ways to mitigate these challenges. There was knowing laughter when we discussed the challenge of interacting with stakeholders who use journal articles with suboptimal statistics as evidence to support their suggested approach. It seems most statisticians can share a story where the stakeholder has pushed for numerous t-tests instead of an ANOVA!

Lean in Circle

Lean In Circles are small groups which connect regularly for peer-to-peer mentoring, networking and support. This year a Lean In Circle aimed at women in the NZSA was set up with the purpose of expanding networks, building connections and creating future opportunities for self-selection of mentoring groups where an initial connection has already been established. We currently have 10 women involved in this year's circle. Seven of these women have been previously involved in the mentoring program, with 3 becoming involved with the program for the first time via the circle.

After an introduction session in February, we have been connecting virtually for an hour per month. Topics covered in these sessions have included: *Anxiety in the Workplace*, *Comfort Zones*, *Work Life Balance*, *Advocacy vs Enquiry*, *Languages of Appreciation*, *Leading with Vulnerability*, *Mindset* and *Apologising*.

This circle has been a great opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and learnings with others in a supportive environment. The discussions have prompted self-reflection and we've all learnt things about ourselves and each other throughout these sessions.

After the final Lean In catch up for this year I will gather feedback from this year's participants. I am keen to offer Lean In Circles again next year and there may be an opportunity for multiple circles, depending on interest. Please get in touch if you're interested in being involved or would like to know more. I will also be promoting these when Cohort 4 launches.

External Collaboration

I have been in regular contact with Lizzie Korevaar and the other members of the SSA mentoring team. We have shared successes and learnings with each other and I have found this collaboration very valuable.

International Day of Women in Statistics & Data Science (IDWSDS) Panel Session

In October, I led a panel discussion on the NZSA Mentoring Program as part of the IDWSDS virtual conference. The session was entitled *The Significance of Mentoring for NZ Women* and included Claire Cameron, Rina Hannaford, Alice Kim and Olivia Angelin-Bonnet as panellists. All four of these women have been involved in the program for 2 or 3 years. Each panellist shared their experiences of the program and their advice for prospective mentors and mentees.

Get Involved!

There are multiple ways to be involved in the NZSA Mentoring Program:

- Become a mentor or mentee
- Join a Lean In Circle
- Attend a lunch 'n' learn session
- Offer to facilitate a discussion topic for a lunch 'n' learn *or*
- Help out with the organisation of the program

If you're keen to get involved, or have some good ideas, please email me: mentoring@stats.org.nz