

# NO PAYNE no gain



Corey Payne in discussion with students from the faculty's Master of Management program

COREY HAS LONG been driven by a mission to improve participation rates in tertiary education among young people from Sydney's south-west. So, he developed a project called the Future Direction Network (FDN) which provides financial support (via scholarships), mentoring and career pathway planning and execution (cadetships/internships) for students from South West Sydney. This is in line with the University's activities to support social inclusion.

Corey is an active member of the Faculty of Economics and Business alumni community, as well as being

a current Master of Commerce student, and so he immediately also saw this project as a way he could give something back to the University by involving students enrolled in the faculty's Master of Management program.

It is a fact that less than 20 per 1000 students who attend school in South Western Sydney go on to university, compared with the national average of almost 50 per 1000\*.

FDN is made up of a group of young professionals who grew up in the Western Suburbs of Sydney, attended university and have gone

on to develop successful careers. All of them are dedicated to providing greater opportunities to the next generation of young people from the region they grew up in.

Payne contacted the then Director of the Master of Management program, Associate Professor Nick Wailes, to enlist the help of the current cohort of eager of students.

"There are numerous barriers that have the potential to prevent young people from South West Sydney attending University," said Payne. "Being financially disadvantaged,

Corey Payne, who completed a Bachelor of Commerce in the Faculty of Economics and Business in 2007 is passionate about playing rugby league for the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. However, for the last 12 months while a serious shoulder injury had him sidelined from the game, he threw himself whole heartedly into a cause he's equally passionate about



Payne playing for the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs in the NSW Cup Week 1 finals match against the Cronulla Sharks - September 2010.  
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or the fact that no other family member has attained a formal education alongside the belief that University is quite simply beyond their reach can be some of the hurdles that students from the region face."

"I wanted to do something a bit more proactive, and conceived the idea of setting up a program that would help to not only see more kids enrol at University but also challenge attitudes.

"Financial assistance is a critical component in helping kids from South

West Sydney to attend University, however, the provision of support networks is essential to seeing them graduate. So, it is imperative that we [FDN] provide a strong mentoring program to help support students through their studies.

"When Nick informed me that he was interested in having the Master of Management students engage the idea as part of their studies, I was very excited. Who better to work on my project than the best and brightest students at the University".

Nick Wailes said: "When Corey came to me with this opportunity I jumped at it. One of the key aims of the Master of Management is to equip students with the ability to develop solutions to real world problems.

"This project provides students with a fantastic opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to a concrete set of challenges. It requires them to understand the target market, look for potential sources of funding and identify sustainable governance and organisational arrangements. The skills that students acquire working on this project will be directly applicable in their professional careers.

"Just as importantly, this project and others that our students have worked on are one of the ways that the University can make a positive contribution to the Australian community."

Jessie Kelly, a current Master of Management student, who has previously been involved in a mentoring program for Indigenous

students, thoroughly enjoyed working on this project.

"I was really excited to be able to work on such a worthwhile initiative as part of my studies," said Jessie.

"My experience is that the people in this course work really hard to produce quality work and I know that as a group we will apply these principles to this project. The most exciting thing for me about this opportunity is that our work will have a real impact on the future direction of this program and I'd also like to think that I am making a real contribution to changing the face of this university."

The entire FDN board were extremely pleased with the professionalism, thought leadership and passion that was shown by the Master of Management students whilst working on the project and have utilised a great deal of the recommendations made by the students when finalising the schools program. Pilot programs will be run by FDN beginning in 2011 in two South West Sydney Schools – Fairfield High School and Westfields Sports High School.

\* Figures obtained from the SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Ltd (Aug 2008)

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Future Direction Network -  
[www.fdn.net.au](http://www.fdn.net.au)  
*(site going live in early November)*

Master of Management -  
[sydney.edu.au/business/mmg](http://sydney.edu.au/business/mmg)