DEBBIE: I’m really, really happy to welcome Edward Osano from GradWISE and Rebecca Riley from Swinburne University to start our breakout sessions today and providing an insight into an exploration of success. Edward and Rebecca have worked collaboratively to implement GradWISE to Swinburne. Are you okay, Susan, can you hear us?

SUSAN: The link to the other interpreters, is there somebody there who can do that just quickly?

DEBBIE: Are we able to do that, Mel?

MEL: I can sort that out.

DEBBIE: Thanks for letting us know, Susan, I appreciate it. Edward and Rebecca we’ve had a nice little informal chat with them before we started today which was great, thank you. They’ve been working collaboratively this year, and I’m pretty sure it started way before this year, to implement GradWISE to Swinburne students and this is looking at assisting graduates into meaningful employment and they have been very successful so congratulations to you both. I’m really excited now to hand over to you so we can all learn a little bit more.

EDWARD OSANO: Thank you, Debbie. We’re excited by this opportunity and we look forward to sharing some insights with you. I’ll just try and share my screen. Just bear with me for one second, excellent. Before I start properly, I would like to acknowledge country, acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation who are the traditional owners of the land we live and work on. We pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging as well others from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who are present here today. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which we all live today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this meeting. My name is Edward Osano, and as Debbie mentioned, head of the GradWISE program. I have been involved with the program since its inception and I truly believe that we are all powered differently. Today is two years since my last presentation and I can say that I look forward to sharing with you the GradWISE story, learning’s along the way, some insights and some successes that we’ve had along the way as well. So, in 2017 I think is when we started thinking of the GradWISE program and the challenge we were faced with was how can we increase the graduate outcome rates for students who are leaving and managing a disability. The genesis of GradWISE is a collaboration between WISE Employment and Swinburne University, a vision between our CEO, Madeline Bell(?), the Swinburne Vice Chancellor at the time Professor Linda Kristjanson and the then Swinburne Manager, Accessibility Services who is now the current manager of Equity and Diversity at Latrobe University and the President of ATEND Anthony Gartner. The goal, as I mentioned, is to increase the graduate outcome rates for students living with a disability by ensuring that they’re competitive for the graduate entry level positions. We are not trying to circumvent the application process because we believe that would be setting more expectations for our students. We try to achieve these goals with coaching, advocacy and high performance by building on students’ self-leadership, innovation capacity, learning capacity and resilience. The challenge that we face at GradWISE, and I’m sure other practitioners working in this space, is buy-in from the students and this is completely understandable due to the negative experiences they would have faced whilst competing for employment opportunities. Over the last two and a half years it became clear that in order for the students to buy-in and high performance with the GradWISE program or the world of work the student had to go through three phases and the phases are connect, transform and act. Before I delve into these three phases I want to welcome Rebecca Riley, AccessAbility Career Hub Coordinator from Swinburne University who’s going to share with us some results we’ve achieved to date.

REBECCA RILEY: Thanks, Ed. My name is Rebecca. I’m the AccessAbility Careers Hub Coordinator with Swinburne University. I’ve been in the role since May of this year. It’s been I was just saying to Debbie before a really interesting experience on boarding and starting a new job through lockdown and especially being in Melbourne. My role sits within the career development team in the university but actually I guess our program and where GradWISE has been really involved is in setting it up so that we specifically provide career development support for students who have got a disability and I’ve just got that extra bit of capacity to provide individualised support, speak to students maybe more regularly so have more frequent touch points. At times it’s nearly a bit more like a case management role than maybe just a one-off career development practitioner consultation. I guess there has been in the relatively short time I’ve been in the role as well a couple of examples where we’ve been able to collaborate really well with Ed and the whole GradWISE team and how I’ve been able to then get the feedback from students on the collaboration. This year in particular obviously with everything being online we held an event a few months ago, an online careers event for students with disability in a similar way that we’re meeting today, lots of Zoom events with employers talking about opportunities, disability confident recruiters, and I had members of the GradWISE team come in to talk to our students about what they do, their offerings which we’ll hear more about today and from students attending that we had people who were obviously very keen to engage. There have been a couple of instances where I’ve worked with the students maybe around what their actual goals are when it comes to what they look like in the world of work and in the practicalities of seeking a position or a particular placement I’ve been able to refer them to GradWISE where they can also get that case management regular check-ins and utilise all of the industry contacts that GradWISE has for the benefit of moving the students into a placement or into a graduate opportunity. It’s really pertinent that it’s come up this week as well in that I had a few weeks ago, I think it was actually back in October, Ed and I facilitated a lunch time just drop-in session where Ed talked a bit about GradWISE, what they do, from the student’s perspective and of I think the students who turned up all bar one were either already engaged with GradWISE or chose to engage afterwards. One of them was a young male student. I had a bit of a chat to him afterwards. He got referred to GradWISE and through that was able to actually participate in a day of shadowing someone in the industry that he was really interested in. He’d been studying. He’s nearly finished his studies. I hadn’t heard anything back for a month or so. He’s come back and he’s been offered through that one day of shadowing - someone has really seen that potential and the student has come back and said, “If you want to do a placement I will take personal responsibility for being your supervisor.” We want people like you on board. That’s come up through the opportunity of this student being referred to GradWISE, taking up that opportunity and he’s now actually engaged with our placements team at Swinburne to make sure that this opportunity that’s just come through from him coming to the session, engaging with us, engaging with GradWISE and just being himself, having an employer see that opportunity and really take hold of that. It’s been wonderful and obviously the whole GradWISE team has been completely supportive and really helpful for all of our students.

REBECCA RILEY: I’ll hand back to you, Ed.

EDWARD OSANO: Thank you for the kind words, Rebecca, the cheque is in the mail. The slide that I have up there pretty much this is where I think according to the graduate outcome rate for 2018 and the graduates with reported disability had a fulltime employment schedule 62.8% which is I think 11 percentage points lower than the 73% who have reported no disability. Currently at Swinburne we are tracking at 72% of graduates into employment. We’re just 1% shy of achieving parity. Another university that we’re also working with is Monash University and there they’re tracking at 70%. I must admit it’s not all GradWISE work. This is a collaboration between university practitioners like Rebecca. It’s also collaboration with the accessibility teams who ensure that the students have all their tools and reasonable adjustments that are required for them to complete their degree. It’s also collaboration between us and all the industry partners that we work with who are disability confident employers so it takes a team for us to be able to achieve the results that we’re achieving to date. Now, as mentioned, the three phases we think the student has to go through are connect, transform and act. With regards to connect, in order to feel connected we need to find commonalities. This begins with understanding self, who are we, what is our world view and how do we see ourself fitting into it. We believe that a healthy mood state or a positive mindset is a springboard for optimal goal directives. For us the questions are how can we increase the belief of our students and graduates, how can we improve on their motivation and how can we build on their confidence because we know that belief, motivation and confidence is up one spiral along which goal directedness is optimal. Having a sense of belonging in life in the personal life this refers to belonging to the group, the family or friend or culture. If we look at work life having a sense of belonging there refers to the team, the department or vision of the organisation and most importantly the individual feeling represented. The question that we work through with our students in this space is how can they ensure that they’re making meaningful contribution to the organisation, how can they establish commonalities when they go within these things and how can they communicate the commonalities that everyone shares. The constructs of social safety obviously enable us and our students to combat those negative recurring thoughts by replacing them with positive ones. We’ve seen the students who are able to achieve this have the ability to achieve difficult and challenging tasks. Over the next couple of slides I’m going to share with you a couple of the tools to establish the insurance that we use to help our cohort manage and to improve on their social safety. The first slide is going to be around the first six months how that looks for the student whether they enjoy GradWISE and the second tool that I’m going to share with you is going to be a neurozone tool. This is about optimising the brain system and this tool means we are coaching them from a neuroscience point of view. This is how the first six months of the student’s journey looks like. In the first instance there’s an initial appointment. This is where the student meets their career coach and this is where the career mapping starts. Part of that career marking is looking into an employability audit. We work out an employability audit. We try to identify the industry or organisation of choice for the student and then we actually drill down to the exact role the student has a desire to work in. Once we have this Intel we reverse engineer and look at where the gaps may be for the student and then along the journey with our student graduates we try to ensure that they’re progressing those gaps or those skill shortages. We address those through inviting the students into something we call the graduates’ master class. This is where we invite industry to come and share with the students about their culture, about the application process, about the supports that are going to be also available once they commence employment. This gives the students a lot of confidence to know that industries are out there willing to work with them and it’s not a talking gesture for the student. It’s based on their merit. We also have a GradWISE life. We have created a safe space or a community to build on social safety that we mentioned. This is where the students share their collective experiences and feel supported. We also have a peer support group that we developed because we’ve been doing this for I think two and a half years now. We have a lot of graduates who have worked between six to 12 months so we match the students who are going through the current coaching with those graduates as peer support. I’m going to delve a little bit more into this in the next slide but this is about optimising brain and body system. We definitely work on mentorships and internships. Like everybody here as well we work closely with ND. We also work with all industry partners to ensure opportunities are available for our students. Job shadow days are very important. We recently had one with the Department of Justice and Community Safety. We had 18 of our students go through that and, as Rebecca mentioned earlier on, the gentleman who went through that and absolutely loved it. He has seen the Department of Justice from a different light and is absolutely convinced that that’s the organisation that he’ll work with. What this has done as well it’s created an opportunity for the students and the people from the department to create some sort of network and from that an employment opportunity has come. Graduate applications are very, very important for us. We work with the students around that and we work with them pretty much from the inception. Through the GradWISE master classes we have worked through topics such as resumes, cover letters, interview techniques. We also invite industry to run through commentary testing, simulations, because we believe practice makes permanent. We hope that most but not all our students will gain employment and once they gain employment we support them for another year, 52 weeks. We call this ongoing support phase. During this phase the conversations that happen between a GradWISE coach, the student and the hiring manager from a particular organisation and this is around ensuring that once a student walks in the right support structure is in place. We will help the student disclose whatever disability they may be managing and we try to give the student comfort that this disclosure is all about ensuring that should there be any flare-ups, the hiring manager or the diversity inclusion manager knows how to support the student through that phase. With regard to neurozone, in order to locate performance we believe that graduates are self-sufficient. Learning capacity, innovation capacity, resilience have to be at a very high level. As we move into a new organisation or industry the ability to absorb and apply the new learning’s or new information is really important. We’ve had a lot of disruptions recently, the disruption of COVID and an ability to pinpoint and frame an innovative solution is key to the student’s success. The transition to the world of work may have its challenges or setbacks but how we bounce back or forward from these challenges will be the determining factor on the student’s success. I’ve mentioned neurozone is a tool that enables us to build our self-leadership, learning capacity, innovation capacity and the resilience is about working through these 10 drivers on your screen now. These 10 drivers are divided into three groups. The green is your foundational driver so we work with the students around exercise if we can. We’ll work with them around nutrition and sleep/week cycle so it’s in the mind. More often than not the results of this sleep/week cycle are very low and we try to educate the students on the importance of having the right amount of sleep. It’s not just about the (inaudible) but this is where the majority of memory is made and this is also where decision making takes place. When we look at the second grouping of drivers in blue those are your social drivers. Now social safety is important, goal directedness and collective creativity. What we are seeing unfortunately in our cohort is a lot of negative thought patterns. There’s a lack of state of belonging as well so how can we coach them and we coach them to try and ensure that we’re reducing those negative thought patterns. For example, if you walk into a new work environment and you may be suffering from anxiety the perception of threat could be a bit daunting but how do they manager this, how can they ensure that this doesn’t impact or impede their ability to thrive. Collective creativity, as I mentioned, how can we ensure that we have a sense of belonging. One of the most interesting things that we have seen and industry shared with us that every time that a student who has a disability joins a team the managers of those organisations have seen increased performance. I’m not saying that their performance (inaudible) but they’ve seen increased performance. This is because immediately someone from a cohort joins that team there’s a sense of empathy that comes along with that and once there’s a sense of empathy there’s a sense of belonging in that team and that obviously leads to higher performance because they have shared the same vision. The third grouping of drivers, the learning capacity, abstraction around usually processes and also executive function. This could entail things such as brain games just to ensure that they are staying focused. Because of time I can only present a summary of neurozone but more than willing if anybody wants to talk about it more to, I guess, connect and discuss. The second phase that I’ve mentioned is the transformation phase and for us transformation means a fluid state, it’s fluid. The one thing that we also realise it’s not clear. It requires attention and care without change. As we grow we become stronger and with transformation we become (inaudible). If you look at the early identification this is where as I mentioned earlier on it is exposing them to (inaudible), exposing them to (inaudible), we’re exposing them to (inaudible). If we look at the confidence part of the transformation it’s giving this confidence by attending all these master classes that I mentioned before, learning from other students or industry partners as well. Experience comes along through all the advocates that I mentioned by name, engaging with employers and the opportunities that we create for them. We’ve mentioned it is very important, in fact today we had a function for the International Day of People Living with a Disability and the topic that was being covered was reflection and reframing. One of the students shared the most powerful stories I’ve heard in a long time. Unfortunately for him he lost his brother who got lost and was found after he had passed away after a few days and for him upon reflection and reframing he saw, I guess, a silver lining in this whole situation and the silver lining was the support that he received from the community, the support he received from SES, the support that he received from, you know, the people who used to work with his brother. That for me was a very, very powerful moment. I could not imagine what this family went through but for him to be able to reflect and find the silver lining was extremely powerful. In terms of learning for us it’s about ensuring that they’re looking at any setbacks from a different lens and seeing where they can create resiliency, if they get rejected what learning can they get from that. Trusting connections is really important. We try to ensure that our students take the advice or the guidance that’s being offered be it from GradWISE, be it from the university sector as well and, you know, trusting the process that it’s been tried and it’s true and it does work. Celebrating success, we do this a lot and we do this by inviting – there are different ways but one of the ways we do this is by inviting them back to GradWISE night and the success is not just about employment, it’s success about somebody (inaudible) for this last time. We just had one, she’s a mature lady, mature student in her fifties, has never ever been to a face to face interview and that was the story that she shared and that was really powerful and everybody, the coaches, the students celebrated with her. I think that really cements the transformation phase.

DEBBIE: Edward, thank you for that. We could hear you talk for ever about student stories. They’re so powerful and they really resonate with all of us when we’re working in a tertiary sector. I’m not quite sure whether some questions have come through but are yourself and Rebecca happy to hang around to answer any of the questions that you do come up in the chat box?

EDWARD OSANO: 100% yes, definitely. We’re just one slide away from finishing and then we’ll take the questions.

DEBBIE: We just need to move on with time, that was all.

EDWARD OSANO: Oh, okay.

DEBBIE: It goes so fast Edward I know. I’m not quite sure whether we’re keeping all of the presentations but we might put your contact details in the chat box as well, Edward, or if you’re able to do that that would be fantastic.

EDWARD OSANO: Okay.

DEBBIE: I’m pretty sure there’s a fair few people who would really like to engage and connect because what you have created is really a comprehensive model and I can see why 11 universities have jumped on board because the success and the outcomes that you’re getting are just phenomenal, so well done but if we could get Edward’s contact details in the chat box that would be brilliant.

EDWARD OSANO: Okay, great, I’ll put them in.

DEBBIE: Thank you Edward and thank you Rebecca for your time. I really appreciate it.