



UniSA

**The start of something great:  
Designing peer mentoring programs to build a sense  
of connection between students**

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# Outline of Presentation

1. Business Mates peer mentoring program
2. Results – looking at the first year students and student mentors' sense of community
3. Strategies for how this was achieved
4. Questions and discussion

## **University of South Australia**

- Over 30,000 students

## **Divisional Context**

- Division of Business - 28% international students

## **Purposes**

- Transition to the university
- Facilitate social interaction between students

## **Overview**

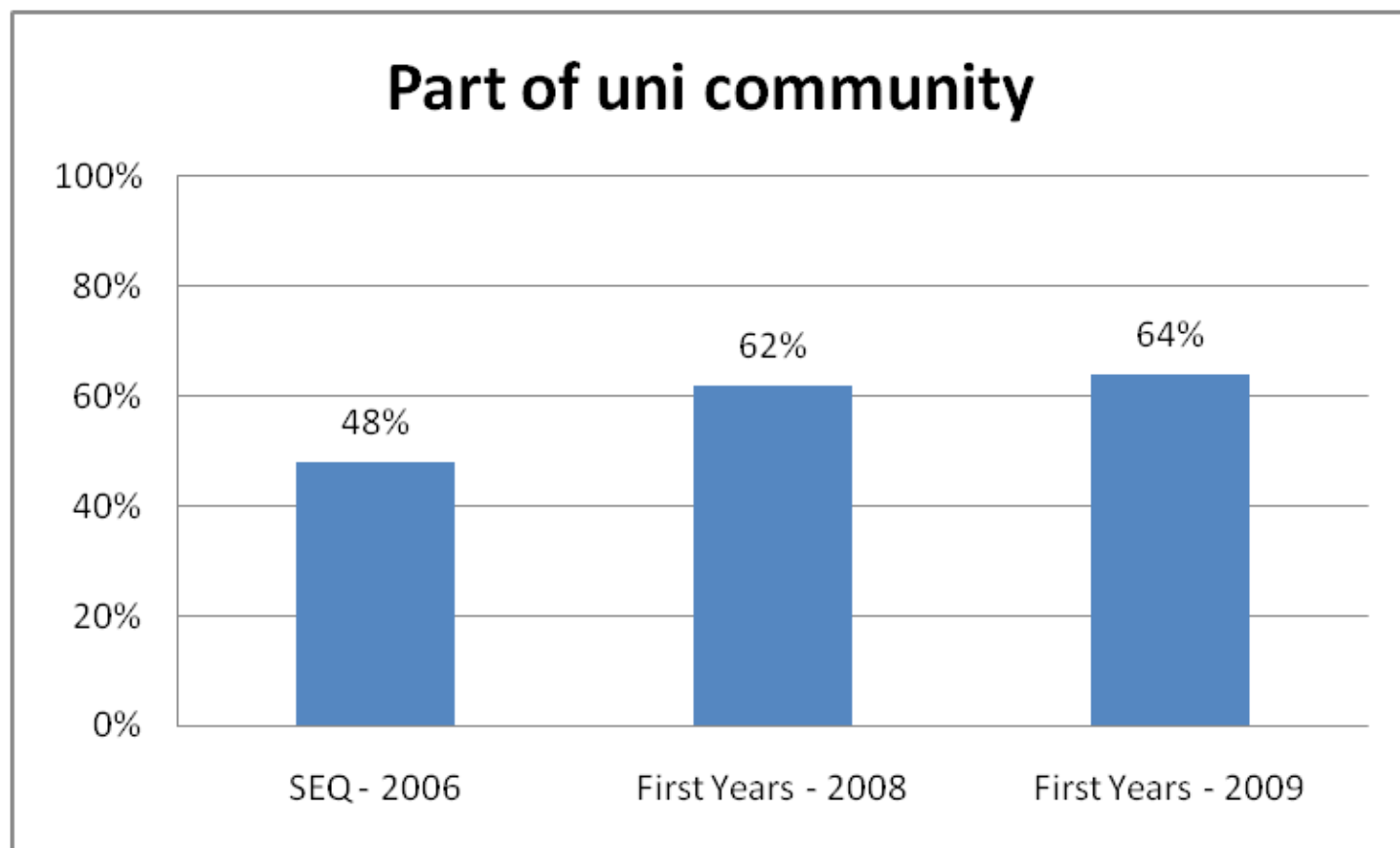
- Senior level students - Business Mates
- Volunteer basis
- 1200 new undergraduate students - automatically allocated Business Mates (66), ratio 2:35
- Business Mates work in a pair, international/domestic

## The program components:

- Orientation - campus tours and small group activities
- Social events - on-campus: weekly lunches (weeks 1 – 6)  
- off-campus: such as a pub-crawl (going to various bars)
- Emails/Facebook discussion and social event reminders
- Orientation/Business Mates filmed footage

## Part of university community

The following results are for first year students.

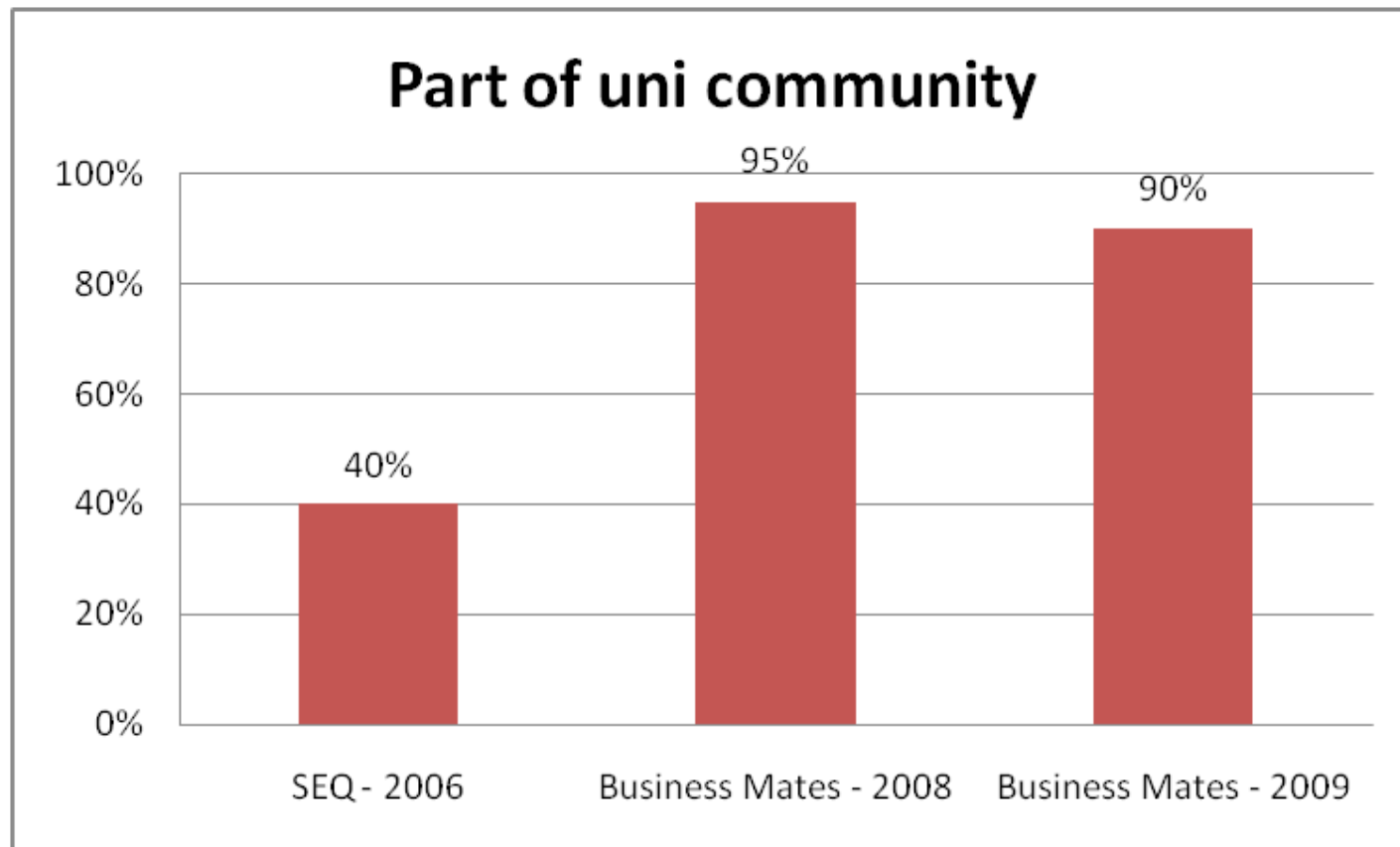


## Quotes from first year students

- *Their help, experience and advice made you feel like you weren't alone and it was comforting knowing you could go to them for help. It is also a good way to socialize and meet different people.*
- *Pizza Thursday. For us struggling first years with no income it was a free lunch.*
- *The best part is there was no pressure for participating but at the same time the support was still there. The occasional emails were enough and not too much.*

# Part of university community

The following results are for student mentors.







# How were these results achieved?

- Sense of ownership of program
- Multiple strategies utilised
- The importance of having student mentors who feel valued with their role and part of a community

- Who here has been involved in peer mentoring programs?
- What are some strategies to ensure an effective peer mentoring program?
- What are some specific activities universities have used to facilitate interaction between students?