The role of first year coordinators of mathematics programs

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In this talk we discuss our progress on the OLT funded project Building Leadership Capacity in University First Year Learning and Teaching in the Mathematical Sciences, which seeks to build a vibrant national network of scholars who provide leadership in first year learning and teaching in the mathematical sciences. In addition, it aims to examine and promote the unique leadership role of first year coordinators and educators.

We have now interviewed sixteen academics who have a significant role in first year mathematics teaching. We asked these academics what their responsibilities are in relation to curriculum design, administration, student support, student learning and transition activities.

In addition, for those with designated leadership roles, we asked how they and others viewed their role, why did they want to hold such a position, did they have a high level of job satisfaction, and did they see that there was a career pathway for them once they had left their position.

In our June workshop, around 40 academics gathered to discuss the main challenges of their roles as mathematics educators. Student preparedness, diversity of incoming students, student engagement and high academic workloads were common examples given. We give a brief report of these findings.