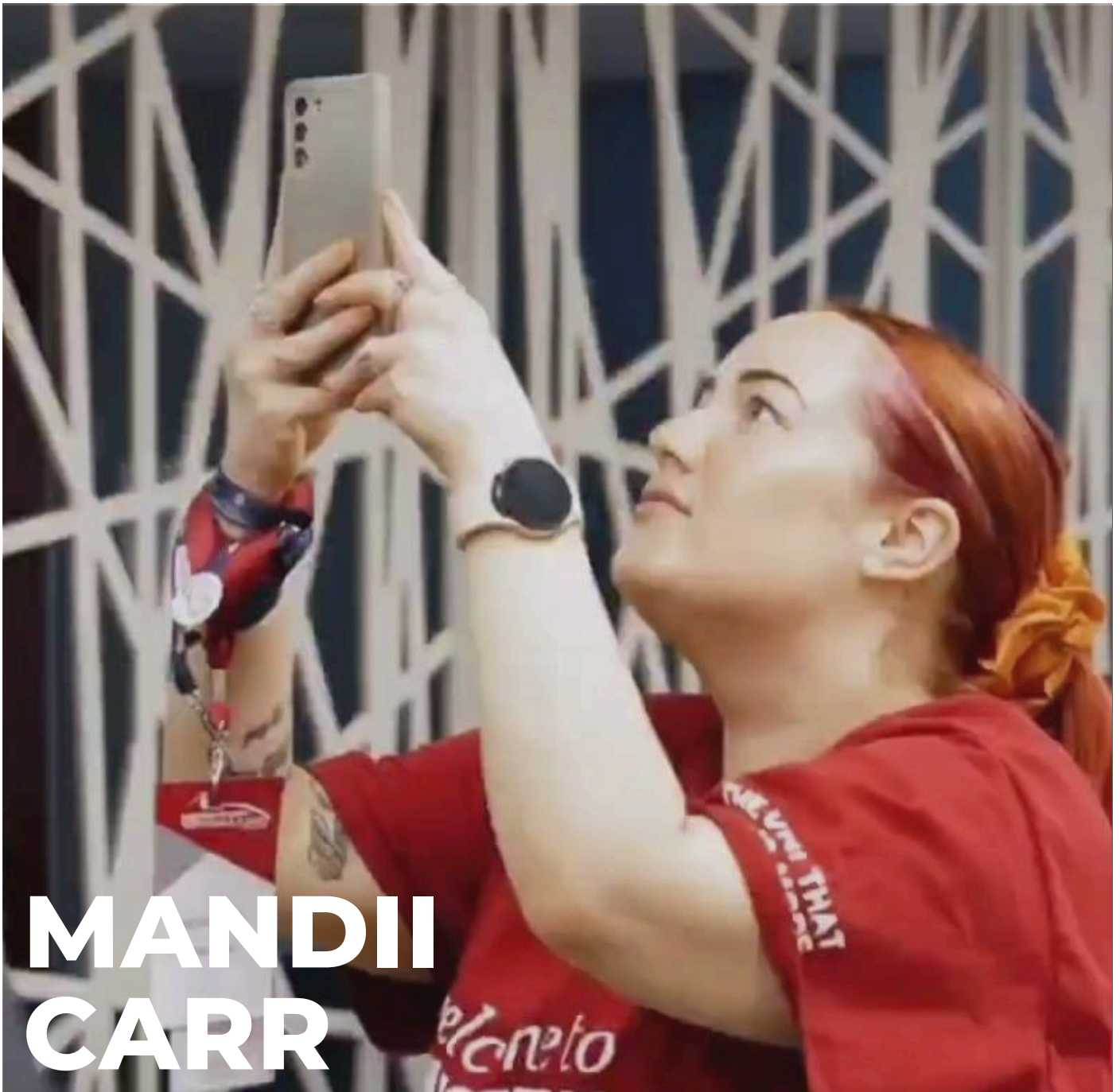


TOP PROFESSIONAL VOICES IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



MANDII CARR

**Program Officer, The Academy
Western Sydney University**

Mandii has been chasing good vibes and great student experiences ever since their days as a student rep. What started as “just helping out with campus events” quickly turned into a full-blown career passion. Mandii brings a little extra sparkle to life on campus.



www.linkedin.com/in/mandii-c-8b178798/

“EACH STEP OF MY JOURNEY HAS REFLECTED THE SAME THEME: HELPING STUDENTS CONNECT, BELONG, AND SUCCEED.”

How did your personal and professional journey lead you to your current role in student engagement?

My journey into student engagement began almost by accident. While studying in a pathway program to secondary education, I became heavily involved as a student representative, focusing on creating event-based experiences across the multiple campuses of Western Sydney University. I was determined to make students feel included by hosting an event on every major campus, and through those experiences I realised my true passion lay not in the classroom, but in student life.

During my Master of Education, I had a lightbulb moment: the energy I felt from student events far outweighed the path I was on. I pivoted, trading my Master's for another undergraduate degree in communications, and leaned fully into student engagement. Since then, I've worked across the university in roles spanning marketing, college events, and careers.

Today, I'm on secondment with The Academy, supporting high-performing students to thrive. The Academy community is dedicated to maximising the university experience while making a positive social impact. It helps students develop broader leadership skills, future-proof their careers, and enhance their employability through scaffolded learning, transferable skill-building, and leadership development.

Looking back, each step of my journey has reflected the same theme: helping students connect, belong, and succeed.



Mandii's 2025 Open Day Nails to show Western Sydney University Spirit!



The SRC reps who supported 2019's Winter Wonderland at Hawkesbury Campus. (Mandii, Kiara, Allan and Matthew).



Mandii & Mary-Pearl Chung at the VC Awards.

What motivates you to continue working in student engagement?

An important driving factor in this work is the power of genuine connection. I love learning students' names, degrees, and aspirations so I can share opportunities that align with their goals. For me, it's about creating moments where students feel seen, valued, and supported — because having someone on campus who remembers you and believes in your potential can truly transform the student experience.

I've seen how belonging boosts confidence and wellbeing. When students know there's someone who genuinely cares, it not only improves their engagement with university life but also their ability to persist through challenges. Every conversation, event, or even social media post is a chance to strengthen that bond and remind students they are part of a community. That's what drives me forward every day.

“HAVING SOMEONE ON CAMPUS WHO REMEMBERS YOU AND BELIEVES IN YOUR POTENTIAL CAN TRULY TRANSFORM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.”

Can you share some examples of how your work has positively influenced the lives of university students and enhanced their overall experience?

Some of my favourite initiatives have been leading large campus events like Winter Wonderland, inspired by the Winter Magic Festival. The event featured live music, free food, community vendors, a petting zoo, and even a “blind date with a book” activity. By year two, students from other campuses were already asking for their turn.

In response, we introduced Spring Fling at Parramatta South, where more than 200 students and staff enjoyed gelato and fresh flowers. These touches of joy created lasting memories and gave students experiences they might not otherwise have had.

What excites me about these events isn't just the numbers — it's the ripple effect. Moments like these build connection and enrich campus life in ways that last well beyond the day itself, and it always brings me unbridled joy when someone mentions how much they loved an event without knowing I was behind it.



A Note from the Founder

The last two posts on Mandii's LinkedIn were both about promoting a blood drive — and that sums up who I know Mandii to be: all about leadership, all about service, and all about building the future we want to live in. If you're looking for someone who leads with a full heart, look no further than Mandii.



Bowen Fucile, Mandii and Sandy Lindsay at the Zest Awards.



Mandii & Careers Colleague Adam Clayton.

What achievement in your role related to student engagement and retention are you most proud of, and why does it stand out to you?

There are so many to choose from. The WiSE Employer Visits have helped students step into internships and jobs, while the WiSE welcome events and dinners have created real community and friendship.

One achievement I'm especially proud of is the campus vs campus Lifeblood Challenge, which has **saved over 2,500 lives through blood donations**. I first started this initiative as a student and, together with my colleague Grant Murray, have nurtured it for years. It has since grown into a meaningful campus tradition and in 2023 was recognised with a Highly Commended award in the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards — a humbling reminder of its impact.

Another highlight was when the Careers Team partnered with Dress for Success, Deloitte, and Walker to deliver a careers event for low-SES, female-identifying students. **50 students participated in the exclusive leadership panel and 150 overall at the clothing event where 500 clothing items were distributed**. Beyond the statistics, the feedback showed how transformative it was for students to walk away with professional attire, new role models, and the confidence to step into their careers.

For me, both initiatives reflect what I value most: practical, high-impact support that changes lives.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ACADEMY AT WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY [HERE](#)