

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting 16 February 2005

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT **Recent developments**

ACHIEVEMENTS

Student wins design competition

UWS industrial design student Bobby Lowe won the 2004 Commercial Radio Australia competition to encourage innovation in the design of digital radio receivers. The digital radio receiver designed by Bobby, the "Personal Digital Sound Communicator", was considered to be desirably simple and providing "a complete solution for consumers in terms of portability and accessibility", according to the CEO of Commercial Radio Australia.

Journalism students win Asia-Pacific Awards

UWS journalism students won four awards at the Asia-Pacific Ossia Awards for Journalism announced in Fiji in December. Michelle Larin won both Best Radio Current Affairs by an Undergraduate (won last year by UWS's Jamie Zamudio) and the Response Ability Prize for Mental Health Reporting (won last year by UWS's Lisa Helleur). Michelle also won the major prize, Best Student Journalist (Any Medium). Adam Cubito was highly commended in the Best Regular Student Publication category.

This was the most awards ever won by UWS students in the competition, and brought to six the number of national awards won by UWS journalism students. Three of the four finalists in the 2004 FECCA Student Journalism Awards for Multiculturalism (to be announced in March 2005) are also UWS students.

Increase in research citations

An analysis of academic citations (where an author's work is referred to in a publication by another author) by ISI Essential Science Indicators showed that UWS recorded the highest percentage increase in social science citations of any academic institution in the world for the two months ending June 2004. UWS researchers recorded a total of 842 mentions during this period, based on 216 papers. Professor Herbert Marsh, Director of the Self-Concept Enhancement and Learning Facilitation (SELF) Research Centre, had 16 of his papers cited, while Adjunct Professor Trevor Cairney's research into literacy issues and the family's role in education, educational psychologists Professor Dennis McInerney and Dr Andrew Martin, humanities Associate Professor Scott Poynting and education researcher Dr Katina Zammit also received multiple citations.

Student Exit Survey

The findings of the UWS Student Exit Survey, which explored the reasons for students' dropping out of university in their first year of study, provided valuable data to assist in the improvement of the University's services to students and Student Retention Program. The survey is one of the first in Australia to look at first year "dropouts" and the results will also be useful to other universities. The survey found that both personal factors and University-related issues influenced the students' decisions. University-related issues included more than 35 per cent of students saying the course was not what they expected; 24 per cent

stating they had conflicting employment commitments; and 20 per cent citing difficulties with enrolments, paying fees and student admissions. These factors will be addressed in the Retention Program. The survey was favourably reported in the media and the relevant articles have been provided to Board members. (See item 6.3.1.)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor appointed to TAFE Board

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Services), Professor Rob Coombes, recently accepted an invitation to serve as a full member of the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Board as the representative of the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

New scholarships offered

UWS has introduced "SmartStart" scholarships. The scholarships, worth \$2,000 each, aim to help students meet costs of the multitude of small "extras" associated with beginning university study. Up to 120 scholarships will be offered in 2005 across 39 courses at all six campuses. To qualify, potential recipients will need to have listed the eligible UWS courses as their first or second preference with the Universities Admissions Centre. Applicants for other UWS scholarships will not be eligible. A simple application process has been devised using SMS, email or telephone. Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of UAI score and/or interview/portfolio ranking, and successful enrolment in an applicable UWS course.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Grants and Research Funding

- In collaboration with Dairy Australia and Food Science Australia, Associate Professor Jim Hourigan and colleagues from the UWS Food Research Program have received major funding to undertake further research on their ground-breaking work on lactose particle technology. Funded to a total of \$780,000 over three years by Dairy Australia, the project will focus on understanding methods for the control of crystallisation of lactose in pure solution and in complex mixtures to achieve faster, more reliable and higher-yielding processes. This builds on the development and patenting of a number of alternative technologies for the purification of lactose extracted from cheese whey pioneered by UWS researchers, particularly UWS Postdoctoral Fellow and research graduate, Dr Rosalie Durham. The research results are fundamental to the Australian dairy industry's need to improve its technology for crystallisation of lactose, in order to maintain its competitive position in the export market.
- UWS was granted almost \$300,000 to fund two projects through the Australian Government's Higher Education Innovation Program (HEIP). The first grant is to formalise and disseminate the work of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA). UWS contributed seed funding to establish AUCEA and initiated and hosted the first two National Community Engagement Forums in 2002 and 2003. The HEIP funding will help to build the capacity, expertise, quality partnerships and a shared vision between universities and their communities with respect to engagement. The second grant is to fund development of a course experience questionnaire to improve the quality of learning programs in Australian universities. Entitled "Accessing the student voice: using comments on the course experience questionnaire to improve the quality of learning programs in Australian universities", the project will be led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Quality, Professor Geoff Scott.

- The Australian Government and the European Union have committed \$500,000 each towards an innovative three-year project led the UWS's tourism group as part of a consortium of four Australian and four European institutions. "Sharing Our Heritages: Master Classes in Cultural and Natural Heritage Management" is the third in a series of pilot projects with the European Union aimed at encouraging cooperation between Australian and European universities. It will enable postgraduate students from Australia and the European Union to live and study in educational institutions in the northern and southern hemispheres.

Research Management

A revised UWS policy framework to support good practice in the conduct of research is now in place. The main element of this framework is the Research Code of Practice encompassing Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee/National Health and Medical Research Council principles and guidelines covering matters such as the management and storage of research data, publication and authorship, research supervision and disclosure of conflict of interest. The UWS Research Code of Practice defines research misconduct and identifies procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct on the part of staff and research students. Associated elements include a new policy for the investigation of research misconduct on the part of research students and revised degree rules incorporating research misconduct provisions.

RECENT EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Morning tea for potential scholarship recipients

A morning tea was held for high-achieving local students (with UAI's of 90 or more) on 4 January, as part of an ongoing campaign to attract such students to study at UWS. These students would be eligible for Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Scholarships or Academic Excellence Scholarships. The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rob Coombes, hosted the morning tea, which gave potential scholarship recipients the opportunity to meet senior UWS staff and find out about the University. Deans and Associate Deans (or their representatives) from all Colleges attended, and many Marketing and Communication staff. Some current scholarship holders also attended. There were over 70 people altogether, including 15 potential scholarship recipients and their families. Examination of preferences after the event revealed that 13 of the 15 had made UWS their first preference with the remaining two being interested in either podiatry or osteopathy which are not on offer in 2005. Subsequently 14 of the 15 have received an offer to UWS.

Course decision day

UWS held a course decision day on 4 January at the Parramatta campus, timed to precede the Universities Admissions Centre change of preference deadline of 6 January. The event, which ran from 4-8 pm, gave visitors the opportunity to obtain course advice and career information, including the chance to talk with academic staff and to learn more about the University itself. The event was attended by around 5000 people. An innovation for 2005 was the introduction of seminars on UniTrack which ran continuously throughout the event and reduced the time visitors spent waiting in queues. Many UWS staff took time out of their holidays to participate and make the event a success.

Appointment of new Director, International Office

Ms Diane Dwyer, formerly Executive Officer of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics at the University of New South Wales, has accepted appointment as the Director of the UWS

International Office, following the recent retirement of Associate Professor Joe Relich. Ms Dwyer will commence duties in the second half of February.

Meeting with University of Glamorgan representative

On 22 December the Vice-Chancellor met with Professor Michael Stuckey, Head of the School of Law at the University of Glamorgan, Wales, and an Australian. Professor Stuckey was representing the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan, Professor Les Hobson, who has visited UWS previously to further links between the two institutions.

Launch of Human Communication Science Network

The Human Communication Science Network (HCSNet), which last year won an Australian Research Council network grant of \$2 million over five years, was officially launched at UWS on 27 January. The network will promote interdisciplinary research collaborations between scientific, engineering and information technology experts and psychologists, creative artists, musicians and linguists, for a fresh approach to existing and future communication challenges. The network is led by UWS and Macquarie University and includes academics from 17 Australian universities, private and government-run research facilities, and major universities and research institutes in Japan, the UK, the US, Canada, Asia and Europe.

Science schools

Two summer science schools were held at UWS for high school students. The Siemens Science Experience is a Rotary-sponsored program which UWS has participated in for some years, and it always receives good feedback from participants. The program aims to foster an early interest in science as a career, and in 2004 around 90 year nine students attended the Campbelltown campus on 7-9 December to learn about exciting developments in science, technology and engineering through lectures, field trips and practical workshops.

The Honeywell Engineering Summer School is supported by Rotary and coordinated by the Institution of Engineers, Australia. It is a six-day program for students who have just finished year 11, and offers insights into a range of engineering disciplines to them a better understanding of the field. Around 80 students from around NSW visited UWS on December 9 as part of the program.

Meeting with the Hon. Jackie Kelly

The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Coombes, met with the Hon. Jackie Kelly MP on 18 January to discuss the bid Ms Kelly is facilitating for the siting of an Australian Technical College in the Penrith area. Australian Technical Colleges are an Australian Government initiative for year 11 and 12 students interested in a trade career. There will be 26 colleges providing vocational and academic education, with the first of them to open in 2006. They will be located in areas suffering skills shortages and high rates of unemployment, but with significant industry bases.

Ms Lyn Bain, Senior Lecturer in the UWS School of Management, has assisted with the Penrith bid, which draws on her research report "Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit Project". The bid will be put forward by a consortium of local business, training institutions (including TAFE) and schools. The Acting Vice-Chancellor has provided a letter in support of the bid.

International enrolments

The International Office has been tracking commencing onshore international enrolments through data on acceptances and from the "i-Paid" system on a daily basis since December

2004. Since January 2005, weekly comparisons of international enrolments by course have also been undertaken. According to the data, commencing enrolments for 2005 are almost the same as for 2004.

UWS's reliance on commencing onshore international postgraduate students is still very strong. The fear that changes in visa regulations might significantly impact on enrolment in courses such as the Master of Professional Accounting does not seem to have been realised.

There are encouraging increases in enrolments in Interpretation and Translation, Professional Communication, Youth Work and Nursing programs, but the numbers are still relatively small compared to enrolments in College of Law and Business programs.

TVS

Plans are advancing well on a number of fronts for the launch of the new community television station TVS. These include building refurbishment, equipment selection, business plan revision, set-up loan arrangements and development of service agreements. Application has been made to the ABA to vary the TVS licence to allow for a higher-powered transmitter to adequately service the Sydney viewing area. An engineering study is underway in relation to this. Meanwhile, TVS management is assisting UWS with the development of promotional programs to showcase the University, design of two fee-paying Masters courses to commence in 2006 and development of curriculum initiatives in television studies.

It is probable that the launch of TVS will need to be delayed and the ABA has been advised of this. The ABA has indicated it would be willing to consider an extension subject to advice on the reasons for the delay. If the higher-powered transmitter is to be acquired the launch would need to be delayed until mid-year. The delay has some positive aspects. The extended viewing area provided by such a transmitter would have the potential to generate larger amounts of sponsorship revenue. A mid-year launch would dovetail with the College of Arts, Education and Social Science's introduction of new courses and there would be more time to develop the programming schedule and the "look" of the new station.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- On 15 February UWS will host a delegation from the Canadian Quality Network for Universities. The delegation includes senior staff from 13 Canadian universities, mostly at the Vice-President level. The Quality Network began in 1993 as a platform for university leaders grappling with new strategic challenges and eager to learn from emerging research, experience and best practice, from across sectors. The delegation's visit to Australia is being hosted by UTS with the assistance of UWS, and participants will visit three or four other universities in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the Australian Technology Park during their stay.
- On 18 February the Vice-Chancellor will host a lunch for the winners of UWS Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Scholarships and Academic Excellence Scholarships. Also invited will be the relevant school principals and careers advisors. Last year following this event many schools placed photographs in their school publications and newsletters with positive comments about the University.
- Eminent academic and international expert in university and community engagement Professor Michael Gibbons will be visiting UWS from 28 February to 2 March. Professor Gibbons was most recently Secretary-General of the Association of

Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and was a key speaker at the first meeting of New Generation Universities initiated by UWS and sponsored by ACU in 2002. On 28 February he will have a roundtable discussion with the UWS Executive and senior staff, followed by dinner, and on 1 March he will present on “Research at the heart of the engaged university” at a community forum at the Parramatta campus. Professor Gibbons’ visit to Australia, which will also involve facilitation of a high-level workshop on engagement at Griffith University, was arranged through AUCEA, which group is currently funded by UWS.

- At the UWS International Women’s Day event on 8 March, an autobiography by Nancy De Vries will be launched. Nancy is a member of the “stolen generation” who has achieved much in her life, including graduating from UWS with a nursing degree and being chosen as the person to whom the State Government apologised for past wrongs to Indigenous people. The winner of the inaugural “Women of the West” Award will also be announced at the International Women’s Day event. The award aims to provide recognition of the contribution women have made to the Greater Western Sydney region.
- A special symposium jointly sponsored by the UWS School of Law and regional law firms “Detention Without Trial – what are the limits” will be held on 15 March. Justice Michael Kirby, AC, will be the guest speaker.
- On 16 March “The History of Nepean Campus”, edited by former Nepean College of Advanced Education Principal Dr Ellice Swinbourne, will be launched prior to the UWS Foundation meeting at the Female Orphan School. The publication follows the history of the College from inception until its incorporation into the newly established University of Western Sydney in 1989.
- The new community station TV Sydney, established by a consortium including UWS will launch a 24 hour, seven-days-a-week service from March 2005.