

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting 12 October 2005

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT Recent developments

ACHIEVEMENTS

Student selected for high profile conference

As reported at the last meeting, UWS's Cooperative Programs worked with Bayer Australia to select four university or TAFE students to represent Australia at a high profile international "Eco-Minds youth forum" to be held in Manila in October. The forum was organised by Bayer in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, and students from the Philippines, New Zealand, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, China, Korea and Australia will participate. 165 applications were received from across Australia, with most being of a high standard. Fifteen applicants were shortlisted, including three from UWS – a very good result. Alison Hamilton, a second year UWS student of Applied Science in Environmental Management, was selected as one of the four Australian delegates. Alison has undertaken voluntary work in South and Central America and hopes by her participation in the forum to increase awareness of the effects of consumerism upon society and the environment, and how popular culture can be used to promote environmental programs.

Film-maker's work selected for US festival

UWS PhD candidate and artist Mireille Astor's short film "Not From Here" has been selected for the fifth CinemaEast Film Festival, held in New York from 4-10 November. It is one of just 15 films to be shown during the week-long festival. "Not From Here" has also been shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Mona Hatoum Forum, the Art Gallery of NSW's Poetics of Australian Space conference, Toronto Arab Film Festival and the fifth Lebanese Film Festival in Beirut.

UWS graduate sought by US university

Bachelor of Space Sciences student Scott McLeod attended Montana State University in the United States under the UWS international exchange scheme in 2003. Whilst there he designed the magnetorquing coils for their satellite "Maia" as an undergraduate research project. The staff were so impressed with Scott's work that he was offered two years full tuition fees waiver and a teaching assistantship to help him study for his PhD at the University. Scott was interviewed on ABC radio on 2 September. The Vice-Chancellor sent him a note of congratulations, and in his reply he wrote "Going to university as a mature age student has been the best decision I even made, and changed my life in ways I would never had imagined".

Landcom to sponsor sculpture competition

Landcom has agreed to sponsor the 2006 UWS Sculpture Award and Exhibition at the Campbelltown campus with a \$20,000 prize. Landcom will acquire the winning entry for permanent installation at the site of one of its building projects. The Landcom prize will complement the UWS prize, which will be for the same amount, with UWS acquiring the winning entry. The inaugural Sculpture Award and Exhibition in 2004 was a very successful event, with the sculptures much admired. Many of them were created specifically for the lakeside setting at Campbelltown. Building on this success, and with two prizes available to

sculptors, we expect that the 2006 event will attract an even greater range of entries and public interest.

UWS part of successful basketball team

A UWS podiatry student, Belinda Battistel, and recent graduate Ali Hudson (occupational therapy) were part of the Australian women's basketball team which won an historic bronze medal at the World University Summer Games in Turkey. They were the only students from a NSW university to represent their country at the Games. It was the first time Australia had sent a women's basketball team to the Games for nearly 20 years, and the first-ever medal success for an Australian basketball team in the Games' 46 year history. Ali had been named UWS Sports Person of the Year in 2004.

Engineering students in Awards Final

Two UWS students performed well at the Engineers Australia Public Speaking Final and Awards of Excellence in early September. Naomi Herben (Civil Engineering) was a finalist in public speaking and Cheryl Holden (Environmental Engineering) won the Industrial Training Report Excellence Award.

Fine Arts student wins grant

Fine Arts student Paul Greedy was awarded \$1,000 under the William Fletcher Trust. These awards are given on the basis of both talent and need, and entries are usually of a high standard. Paul was one of only eight students to receive a grant in 2005.

Law students win moot competition

UWS's law students James Willis, Michael Sanig and Faraz Maghami recently won the Lexis Nexis Constitutional Law Mooting Competition. The final of the competition was held in the High Court in Canberra in front of Justice Michael Kirby. UWS has made the final several times in the past few years, but this is the first time our team has won. The competition trophy will be displayed in the Law School at either Campbelltown or Parramatta.

Student has article published in overseas aid magazine

Belinda Williams, an Honours student of the innovative Bachelor of Community Welfare (International Social Development) course coordinated by Belinda Mericourt of the School of Applied Social and Human Sciences, had an article published in *Focus*, the magazine of Australia's overseas aid program. The article "Death of a Nobody" dealt with the death of a young woman from AIDS in Papua New Guinea. The student is an Australian Youth Ambassador, a program sponsored by AusAID. Many of the students in this course are chosen as Australian Youth Ambassadors, which helps them to undertake the placements in developing countries which are a component of the course. The course has proved a platform for students who wish to take up careers in international aid.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Grants, Scholarships, and Research Funding

- Professor Peter Cornish from the School of Environment and Agriculture has gained funding of \$860,000 over four years from the Commonwealth Government's Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) for a large scale project to be undertaken in India. The project, "Water harvesting and better cropping systems for the benefit of small farmers in watersheds of the East India plateau", aims to develop,

Item 3.1 Information paper

validate, and promote water harvesting principles. Initially this will be through an assessment of the applicability and sustainability of water harvesting across the East India Plateau, by means of hydrologic and geo-hydrologic studies. It is anticipated that the project will develop cropping system options and improved agronomy to effectively use harvested water to enhance the capacity of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to undertake watershed development work.

- Dr Paul Smith of the School of Science, Food and Horticulture is leading a collaborative project to research inland aquaculture in Papua New Guinea over the next five years to boost the productivity and profitability of smallholder fish farmers, and improve the diet of the population. The project has been granted funding of \$773,797 from ACIAR.

Recent Developments

- MARCS Auditory Laboratories is heading a project to develop a new electronic musical instrument called the Thummer™. Dr Garth Paine from the School of Contemporary Arts is also involved in this project. During a musical performance humans identify at least six so-called psychoacoustic variables, including pitch, loudness and timbre, in qualitative terms, such as roughness, richness, density, intensity, loudness and spatial position. The Thummer™ is considerably more expressive than existing instruments, presenting many more variables. This could lead to a new approach for the design of musical instruments. The next step is to test the new variables to determine if they are recognisably “musical” to listeners.
- Dr Gavin Ramsay, School of Environment and Agriculture, will be further investigating the socio-economic impact of animal trypanosomiasis (Surra) in the Philippines. Surra is a tropical disease similar to sleeping sickness that affects livestock. It is caused by a single-celled organism and transmitted by biting flies. Endemic throughout South East Asia, the disease affects the productivity of small family farms. The research is important because it could be used to develop rational control programs to reduce the disease. The collection of socio-economic data will determine the costs of cattle mortality, loss of income, treatment and surveillance costs of an outbreak of Surra.

Research Centres

- Dr John Howard will commence in October as the Director, Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies (AEGIS). Dr Howard has a distinguished background in commissioned and consultancy research and is well placed to facilitate commissioned research in the innovation field at AEGIS. Dr Howard is known to AEGIS staff and will be able to work with staff to build up the Centre’s research funding and project base.

PLANNING AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENTS

- Professor Stuart Campbell has been appointed as Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality, to assist Professor Geoff Scott with the leadership and coordination of a range of quality improvement initiatives, including provision of academic course advice to students, course approvals, assessment processes, and other projects related to improving the student experience.
- An important improvement initiative currently being undertaken is the Review of University Engagement. The review has several components including a self-assessment exercise carried out by Schools/Units and Colleges/Divisions in July and August. Other information feeding into the review includes analyses of UWS subject units with an engagement focus and of University surveys of employers and prospective students. The review panel led by Dr Barbara Holland, conducted

Item 3.1 Information paper

interviews with selected staff to validate the findings contained in the self assessment. The review report is currently being prepared and the findings of the review will inform future directions in the area of regional and community engagement, and also the development of our Performance Portfolio as part of the Australian Universities Quality Agency's audit of UWS in late 2006.

- Professor Geoff Scott, PVC Quality, has been leading a national research project involving 14 universities. The project focuses on the evaluation of qualitative student comments on the Course Experience Questionnaire concerning the best aspects of their experience at university and what needs improvement. He recently conducted a series of national workshops with senior academic leaders on the findings of the study, with the aim of developing strategies to improve learning and teaching based on these findings from analysis of student feedback.

OTHER RECENT EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

International conference on community engagement

Professor Reid was one of two Australian Vice-Chancellors invited to participate in an international conference of university leaders on "civic engagement" held in France in September. Attendance at the conference was fully funded by the organisers, Rutgers University and donor organisations such as the Ford Foundation. The Vice-Chancellor's report on the conference is attached.

Meeting with Minister

The Vice-Chancellor met with the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, on 24 August to discuss a range of matters. These included, as well as the DEST Teaching and Learning Fund and Voluntary Student Unionism, the University's request that the three tranches of federal funding for UWS infrastructure projects be more closely aligned with project completion timelines. The projects include the Medical School facility at Campbelltown, the new teaching building at Parramatta, the confocal microscope and associated renovations at Hawkesbury and enhancement of the Penrith campus library. The Minister has recently written to the Vice-Chancellor to advise that this request has been granted, which will mean significant savings in interest that would otherwise have had to be paid prior to "reimbursement" by the Government. The changes need to be confirmed by the Senate (expected October), but will result in UWS receiving \$11M (2006), \$10M (2007) and \$4M (2008), rather than \$8M (2006), \$8M (2007) and \$9M (2008).

Graduations

Almost 2,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students graduated in nine ceremonies held at the Hills Centre, Castle Hill from 27-29 September. Some of the distinguished speakers included Councillor Jim Aitken (Managing Director, Jim Aitken and Partners), Professor John Niland (former Vice-Chancellor of the University of NSW), Mr Mark Goodsell (Director NSW, Australian Industry Group), Mr John Allsop (Consultant, TAFE Global), Mr Michael Gill (Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, Fairfax Business Media), Mr Ian Stone (Managing Director, Advance Metal Products and member of the UWS Regional Council), Mr Peter Kell (Executive Director, Anglicare) and Mr Glen Sanford (Partner, Assurance and Advisory, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and Chair of the UWS Audit and Risk Management Committee).

Hawkesbury Community Expo

The Hawkesbury Community Expo was held on 16-17 September. This was a very successful event which was planned together with Hawkesbury EarthCare Centre and

Item 3.1 Information paper

Hawkesbury Harvest. It showcased UWS research and course activities. The first day was exclusively for high school students from Western Sydney and had a strong education focus with seminars, workshops and course information available. Around 300 year 10, year 11 and year 12 students attended. September 17th had a community fair with an educational theme and celebrated community links with a farmers' market, community produce stalls and the annual EarthCare Sustainability Fair. The program included a self-guided heritage tour of the campus. An enthusiastic crowd estimated at over 5,000 people attended.

Academic interviewed about Hurricane Katrina

Professor Beverley Raphael from the UWS Medical School was extensively interviewed by the media following Hurricane Katrina. Professor Raphael, who commenced with UWS in August, is an internationally-recognised disaster and mental health expert. She is the head of the University's new specialist research unit set up in partnership with NSW Health to tackle the mental health issues associated with disasters, terrorism and other large-scale adverse events, including both preparedness and response.

Professor Raphael was interviewed on ABC television news nationwide, ABC 702 Sydney breakfast program, 6PR radio breakfast program in Perth, ABC radio breakfast program in Brisbane, SBS radio news, ABC radio Orange morning program and Australian Associated Press (AAP), the national wire service.

“What Matters” competition

The winners of the second “What Matters” writing competition for NSW and ACT year 5-12 school students, organised by the Whitlam Institute and sponsored by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Sun-Herald*, were announced at a ceremony on 31 August. The Hon. E.G. Whitlam AC, QC and well-known social researcher Dr Hugh Mackay presented the prizes, and Dr Mackay delivered the inaugural “What Matters” lecture. The competition requires students to write a 400-600 feature or opinion piece on what matters to them and why, and has been very successful in both years. The many thoughtful essays submitted showed the issues of importance to our school children included among others the environment, human rights – particularly of refugees, education and social justice. The joint overall winners had their pieces published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and one was interviewed on radio *Triple J*. (The winning entries can be viewed on the Whitlam Institute website at http://www.whitlam.org/its_time/25/wmcomp.html.) Dr Mackay also gave a lecture at the Female Orphan School on 1 September on values and ethics at home and work.

National Strategy Meeting for Leaders of University Engagement

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed guests to the National Strategy Meeting for Leaders of University Engagement on 2 September, which was facilitated by international expert on engagement Dr Barbara Holland. While in Australia Dr Holland, who is a long-time friend of UWS and Adjunct Professor, chaired our Review of University Engagement (see Planning and Quality Developments above).

Donors' lunch

A lunch was held at the Parramatta campus on 22 September to thank donors supporting UWS's Complementary Medicine research programs (five donors providing \$87,000 in total). The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development and International), and the Head of the Centre for Complementary Medicine all attended, with the Vice-Chancellor delivering a short speech to thank them for their generosity.

Art exhibition opening

“From The Liberties to Parramatta: contemporary prints from Ireland” is an exhibition of artworks from the collection of the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in Dublin which was shown first at the Female Orphan School, and is now at the AD Gallery Space. The Liberties is one of the oldest parts of Dublin, and Parramatta is one of the oldest parts of Sydney. The concept for the exhibition was developed by the Head of Fine Print at NCAD, Mr Mike Birtchnell, who until 2000 was head of the printmaking program at UWS, and the UWS art curator Ms Monica McMahon. The Irish Consul-General, Ms Anne Webster, opened the exhibition on 23 September, with about 50 people attending.

10 years of Cooperative Programs

UWS’s flagship Regional and Community Engagement Cooperative Programs scheme celebrated its tenth anniversary on 10 August with a ceremony at the Parramatta campus. A thousand students have now completed projects under Cooperative Programs, which places students in local workplaces to assist with specific organisational projects. The Programs provide valuable practical professional experience for students and assist organisations by giving them a low cost option for specific work and testing students’ suitability as future employees. Many students have gone on to gain permanent employment with their Cooperative Programs organisation.

Senior Management Conference

The annual Senior Management Conference was held at Parramatta on 8-9 September. The conference focused on quality, with reference to the Australian Universities Quality Agency’s audit of UWS scheduled for next year. For the first time, Heads of Program were invited to attend on the first day, and this proved a popular and useful innovation, with Heads of Program expressing their appreciation of being able to participate, and contributing significantly to the day’s discussions. The keynote address on the first day was given by the CEO of Woolworths, Mr Roger Corbett, who impressed participants with the relevance and insightfulness of his comments.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- A postgraduate information evening will be held at Rosehill Gardens on 12 October. UWS offers over 150 career-oriented and research postgraduate courses which are well-respected in industry, with many of them professionally accredited.
- The Vice-Chancellor will address staff about the University’s directions and recent key developments at a special forum at the Penrith campus on 7 October. The forum will be videoconferenced to audiences at the other campuses and tapes subsequently made available at the request of several UWS senior managers.
- The Whitlam Institute will host a Health Inequalities Forum at the Parramatta campus on 11 October. The forum “Coordinating government services for better health: *like herding cats?*” will take as its starting point the UK Blair Government’s approach to coordinating public health action, and will examine the efforts in NSW to align human services for greater impact, and the forces which shape these endeavours. Keynote speakers will be Professor Don Nutbeam, Pro Vice-Chancellor, and Head of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney, and Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood, Director-General of the NSW Department of Education and Training, and Managing Director of TAFE NSW. Respondents will be Professor Diana Horvath, CEO of the Sydney South West Area Health Service, and Professor Beverley Raphael, Professor of Mental Health at the UWS Medical School.

Item 3.1
Information paper

- On 11 November the Whitlam Institute will mark the 30th anniversary of the dismissal of the Whitlam Government with a Hypothetical to be moderated by the Hon. Bob Carr, former Premier of NSW. The Hypothetical is expected to provide an entertaining and thought-provoking vehicle for remembering and reflecting upon the Whitlam Government's agenda and achievements. The panel members are currently being finalised.

**REPORT OF TALLOIRES CONFERENCE 2005
THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Professor Janice Reid
26 September 2005**

The Talloires conference was a meeting of university Vice-Chancellors/Presidents with representatives of key agencies, sponsors and senior leaders in the field of civic engagement, organised by Rutgers University at its European Centre. Over the past 20 years there have been three Declarations arising from gatherings at Talloires, such as that relating to campus sustainability which now has over 300 signatory universities around the world. Conference attendance was by invitation and involved approximately 30 Presidents of institutions from all continents, universities at all stages of development, with greatly varying socio-economic, cultural and political contexts, but all with a known commitment to engagement and partnerships with their communities. Other participants included representatives of Campus Compact, the Ford Foundation, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Australia was represented by the University of Ballarat and the University of Western Sydney. The conference was funded by Rutgers University and a group of foundations and organisations with charters which include civic participation in its various forms.

Prior to the conference each participating institution had provided information on its programs, related issues, funding etc. A summary of the information provided by participants was circulated prior to the gathering. Professor Robert Hollister, Dean University College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University summarised the emerging themes thus:

- *Civic engagement means educating citizens and creating social capital* such as alleviating poverty, building the capacity of poorly educated people, improving public health and promoting democracy. The values of social responsibility, democracy, social justice and equity of access emerged in many reports.
- *The organisational structures for promoting community engagement are quite young.*
- *Institutions are motivated by the needs of society* in their outreach activities
- *The scale and impact of these initiatives are far greater than is commonly assumed*, and in fact are relatively invisible to external observers.
- *The barriers are lack of money, government policy and staff perspectives and motivations.* The absence of supportive government policies, despite a few enabling initiatives, is a commonality, as is the lack of incentives for staff to undertake such work.
- *Institutional plans for the future are ambitious* and are optimistic about strengthening this work.
- *The power of collaboration with other institutions and partners* are key to the way forward.

In short university engagement is a movement which is accelerating globally and already of a scale that is widely underestimated, with a high level of common purpose and vision despite diverse contexts and institutional strategies.

Several factors together make this a fruitful time to move this agenda forward:

- *The societal needs* that Universities can address are immense.
- The ‘movement’ is no longer isolated and idiosyncratic; it is *developing a critical mass*.
- There is growing evidence that the programs are effective and have *demonstrable impacts*.

Points made in discussion:

- Universities are major institutions in society (like churches, government etc) and are therefore inevitably in leadership and formative roles.
- Universities have a role in promoting civil, political, social and economic rights by virtue of their roles in teaching and enquiry. These are underpinned by values such as the dignity of each person, freedom, equity, the common good, acceptance of diversity, a sustainable living environment and so on. Putting these values into action in teaching and research is an important facet of engagement as an indivisible part of a university’s work and role (“values in action”). As institutions we can measure ourselves against the extent to which our values are evidenced in our work and in our relationships with other agencies in society which have related goals. Universities can amplify their effectiveness in partnerships with other social institutions.
- Interdisciplinary approaches to student teamwork within the context of their studies can address social, economic and other local needs in a particularly effective way, by bringing diverse skills and perspectives to local problems; these in turn may provide insights and feedback that modify the curriculum and enhance its relevance.
- Organising the community for social engagement is just as important as organising the university, as are local knowledge and traditions.
- It is not enough to have an embedded or “hidden” presence for civic engagement; we need policies to frame the university’s commitment. This may help shape the areas of study that an institution chooses or develops. For instance, one former eastern bloc university has introduced peace and gender studies as a response to social imperatives, working with local NGOs in a post-communist environment. In another, the students are required to spend 20% of their time working with poor communities and designing effective interventions which include making community members aware, empowered, united around key aims and self-governing in their achievement. It is important to avoid the danger of the “one-handed clap,” in which the community is a passive recipient.
- This agenda is driven partly by the impacts of rapid social change, environmental degradation, the spectre of education being treated as merchandise and not a right, population growth, health issues (eg HIV-AIDS) and global conflicts.

- In the land grant universities in the US there has been a change in the terminology for teaching, research and service to describe these as “learning”, “discovery” and “engagement”, in order to broaden the discussion.

Professor Judith Torney-Purta, Professor of Human Development, University of Maryland presented a proposal for a survey of university students’ civic engagement. Universities, present and absent, were invited to express interest in participating in a university-level survey(s) on student attitudes to service and engagement. Judith is interested to hear from institutions which may like to join such an initiative.

A major focus of the Conference was the development of a Declaration that will constitute an enduring point of reference for institutions and government in promoting civic engagement. Associated with this was a series of smaller workshops on:

- research and scholarship and the relationship with civic engagement,
- organising the university for civic engagement, and
- creating a government policy climate and identifying resources to support civic engagement activities.

A number of follow-up actions were discussed by the gathering but with the expressed expectation that other national and international organisations would independently adopt the agenda or use it to inform existing programs and policies relating to university outreach. To support further initiatives, to attract further signatories and to interest or involve other organisations a small steering group formed under the umbrella of the organising institution Rutgers University. The University of Western Sydney is represented on this group. The attendees also discussed developing a key program which can be taken up by all members; this is still in play.