Postgraduate Information Evenings 2020 - *Social Science Transcript*

Brian Stout: Good evening and welcome to the School of Social Sciences Postgraduate Information Session for November 2020. I'd like to start by acknowledging traditional owners of the land. With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands in Greater Western Sydney and beyond. I'd also like to give a particular welcome Danny Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and prospective students who are with us this evening.

My name is Professor Brian Stout I am the Dean of the School of Social Sciences here at Western Sydney University, and I'll be speaking to you for the first few minutes of this evening. I'm also the Provost of the Liverpool campus. And I'm also delighted, Natasha Zographakis, is with us today. Natasha from our Contact Service Centre and she'll be giving you some of the details later on.

So this is a very general introduction session when I'm not particularly going to be taking questions. If there is anything you wanted asked me, you can give it a go in Chat. The Breakout sessions that are on later are a real forum for questions and discussions and we are recording both the Zoom meeting and the Breakout sessions. We record them for publishing on the website. As attendee’s transmission of the video and audio during the Zoom meeting is completely optional. If you do participate your video and audio transmission will be automatically captured by the recording, in addition to being accessible to other participants of the Zoom meeting and Breakout sessions. If you chat, question and answer, post sections as in meetings – that’s also completely optional, but if you use it, you consent to it being shared and collected for the University for learning purposes and to build a catalogue of frequently asked questions for the benefit of other prospective students. If we collect personal information during the meeting and sessions will, of course, manage that, in accordance with Privacy Policy, Privacy Management Plan, and all that is available online. And there's an email address for Events, if you have any questions at all about how we use that material.

So, what we're going to do is talk in this session little bit about Postgraduate study, the University, the School, Higher Degree Research, the application process, a bit about the fees, some questions and answers, and then we’ll go into the Breakout sessions to talk about particular programs.

This next section is going to be about the School of Social Sciences. This our first year in existence as a School. We had previously been a part of the School of Social Sciences and Psychology. This is our mission as School “The School of Social Sciences aims to provide students with the skills to consciously and ethically pursue social justice and social change within chosen fields in Western Sydney, the wider community and globally. Students are offered frameworks to think critically, innovate and independently evaluate the shifting social worlds around them.” So, as you'll see, I’ll talk a little bit about our particular programs, but the thread that runs through everything we do within discussion at the School of Social Sciences is that we pursue social justice and social change and we're connected Western Sydney and locally and globally. And as you'll see below, we're also very proud of our research performance that in the US rankings were one of the top 200 in Geography in the entire world and the top 100 in Sociology in the entire world. Some of the people who you are meeting tonight are certainly the people who you will be part of your course, are world leading researchers in the field in which you're studying.

The School is really all about teaching and research. We provide innovative and relevant undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and higher degrees and Master's and Doctoral levels. We have research led programs with a strong focus on diversity in human rights and our core disciplines and we'll talk about these a bit more in a second: Anthropology Criminology, Cyber Security, Development Studies, Geography, Sociology, Social Work, Therapy Studies and Counselling.

This is a bit more of a summary of our research and you can see there's a lot written on this slide, but it will give some highlights of what we do, from a research and theme perspective. This is particularly relevant, because our key researchers are also teaching in our Masters programs, and our Masters and Postgraduate provision is based around what we consider to be our research strengths. The Diversity and Human Rights Research Centre (DHRRC) is the organising group for research across the whole School. A lot of what's written below that is connected to diversity and human rights. It's also a way in which we draw links with the rest of the University, but particularly the cluster that we're in. Our Diversity and Human Rights Research Centre is linked to The Institute for Cultural Studies, to the School of Law, to Humanities and Communication Arts and other people across the University. Our aim is to contribute to public discourse, to be involved in interdisciplinary research, to promote equality, and to impact the lives of people in Western Sydney nationally and internationally.

We have Urban and Regional research which is incredibly important and the studies of housing liveability, economies and regional infrastructure, have been important for many years in Western Sydney - particularly important at the moment as we think about the ways in which we live, the ways in which we work in the changing environment within Western Sydney.

We have a number of religion scholars within the School who are interested in religion, spirituality and multicultural/multi-phase societies, looking again internationally, but with a particular focus on Western Sydney about the cultures and communities around the Western Sydney region. We have a strong group of Gender and Sexuality researchers as well, working with diverse, marginalized individuals and communities and looking at the intersections between race, gender, sexual and cultural diversity and discrimination. So, you'll see that all these research themes that we're talking about on this slide aren't seeing aren’t just things that a researcher looked at on their own; they intersect with each other and they linked to each other. And similarly with Challenging Racism, we're supporting a generation of anti-racism researchers and practitioners and partnering with government and non-government agencies to look at research into how to challenge racism, how to understand racism within Australian society and to work with government policy makers in making changes there. And then finally, very importantly Humanitarian and Development Research initiative (HADRI)is an initiative that has been very, very active this year in looking at the spread of COVID-19 responses across the world. They pursue research that highlights the complexity of international responses to conflict and disaster, intersection of multi-dimensional health and socio economic competitive aspects of emergencies. It is research that has a major impact in Western Sydney, but also has a global link as well.

So, we're very proud! We're going to talk about teaching programs in the next few slides, but we are very proud to be a research active School, a School whose research informs its teaching, and its teaching programs lead into research excellence.

Our researchers are assessed, as all universities are. The list on the left-hand side are the main groups that have just talked about. Our aim is researcher which has an impact; its world-class, engaged, research which has an impact on disciplines, professions and society. The Era codes and on the right-hand side; essentially the way that you understand those is this: If you get a three then you're at work; you're carrying out world-class research and if you're at a four, it's above world-class research. At the moment, we are at three or four in pretty much all our areas with aspiration that within the next year, we will be a three or four across everything that we do. So, our researchers are already excellent. And we have strong ambitions in that area as well.

Some of the examples I think of are the Era codes, but they are probably more interesting to University scholars and other universities than generally, but this is how our research has an impact on the world. The Urban heat research and Western Sydney, Dr Sebastian Pfautsch - his work is getting a lot of attention at the moment, particularly looking at schools and how schools need to be cooled down and how that the design environment within Western Sydney can be improved to make it more liveable in the very hot summers that we experience.

Nicky Morrison and Ryan Van Den Nouwelant will be looking at pacemaker opportunities in delivering health and wellbeing outcomes. Kevin Dunn, who is our former Dean, is looking at Challenging Racism and building societies that are fair for all. Karen Soldatic is a disability researcher and her work has had a big impact in Western Sydney, but also in state and national policy and as it is impacting the people that are making those decisions.

Rae Dufty-Jones - as you can see on the right-hand corner there - the Social Policy ‘NSW Public Policy Institute’ has partners from a number of NSW universities, including NSW government and Ray is our School and University representative on that. And again, Nicole Georgeou - her work is connected to multicultural services in Western Sydney, a better eldercare looking at culturally and linguistically appropriate service provision for older migrants. It’s a lot of impact and you'll see that impact is described there although it's called global impact is also very relevant to the Western Sydney region.

We are, as well as being very strongly and locally linked, globally linked. As you will understand our international engagement in 2020 wasn’t the same as it’s been in previous years and it's a little bit unclear about what it's going to be like in 2021, but we are still really keen to have these international links and a lot of our Masters students are connected through those links. Some of our most important partnerships are listed on the left. We have partnerships with Chinese universities and Jiangsu and Taiwanese universities as well, and as a university in India that has agreed to take our students on placement and that unfortunately wasn't able to happen in 2020. However, a university in Nepal was able to take our students on placements.

And then USP University South Pacific was also able to take our students as well. And we've research partnerships there too. So, we have lots of opportunities for students and for research partnerships across the world. Kathmandu University has been our most prominent partner and with the most student placements based in Kathmandu. The New Colombo Plan, which allows some funding for International Partnerships – we have had some success across the last few years getting scholarships and joining PhDs. We have a lot of PhD students internationally, including large numbers from Indonesia, as well as partnerships that are described there and in Australia, Croatia, Cyprus and Italy. So, our international partnerships and links are growing really quickly. Now again, data slowed down in 2020 and is something we do want to pick up. We’re able to do so, but we do have a global link that we absolutely value - the importance of international experiences as part of the education experiences of our students is vital.

Okay, so the next few slides I know most of you have come here and you've registered for a particular program - the program that you're most interested in. Breakout rooms are going to talk about those in some detail, but just in the next few slides, I'm just going to give you a one or two slide snapshot of all the programs that we're offering. You will have the opportunity, if you have a bit of time, to join a Breakout room to hear a little bit more about a course you are interested in.

The Master of Humanitarian and Development Studies (M.HADS) responds to the need for qualified workers and disaster relief and development, in government and non-government agencies involved in humanitarian operations and development practice; addressing challenges and opportunities, associated with various forms of national and international migration; public health programming, preparedness and response; and building the resilience of vulnerable populations.

The purpose of the program is practical application of specialised theoretical knowledge in humanitarian and development contexts. This is complemented by pathways to advanced research, and by career development support through extensive networks, including with international non-government organisations. So, if you do the M.HADS, you will have the opportunity to be taught by world's leading researchers and teachers in humanitarian development. It is a program that is highly engaged and has significant partnerships through the research partnerships, but also through our teaching and placement partnerships, so you will get opportunities. We know that there are phenomenal opportunities for careers and for work in the development area and you will meet people from the agencies that are seeking to employ our graduates and you will have the opportunity for overseas placements in Nepal and elsewhere. And as I said, you’ll be equipped with the knowledge derived from substantial research in the coursework, and a placement experience with an industry partner. The structure of M.HADS is linked to the specific industry requirements of humanitarian development and practitioners and it is a full masters, but it also has entry and exit points for perhaps people who may already be in employment or who aren't, for whatever reason, ready to take on a full masters. It gives you the option to do a Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate which would be units that are short of a full masters in there and with exit points for flexibility.

The M. Urban Management and Planning - you can see that photo taken from our campus and you’ll see immediately how relevant Urban Management and Planning is to Western Sydney. On a normal day you’d be able to look out the window and see that, but that's the best we can do to replicate the experience. The Western Sydney University courses Urban Management and Planning aim to provide you with the scholarship, skills and knowledge to successfully manage the planet’s increasingly complex urban world.

You may be an existing urban professional seeking to build or seeking to begin a career in this area. The flexibility of the course will especially appear to planners and urban professionals, in government and the private sector looking for postgraduate qualifications with a focus on management. So again, this is an accredited program, it has placement opportunities, significant partners and is taught by industry leaders and subject experts.

Master of Social Work (Qualifying): Social Work is one of the biggest programs within the School, with a large undergraduate program. The Master of Social Work (Qualifying) is aimed at graduates of and Social Sciences and other Human Services program who wish to achieve a professional qualification in social work. It combines the academic rigour, is accredited by the AASW, and includes research training required for a Masters level, as well as a practical education. So, within the Master of Social Work (Qualifying) you do two placements: you do the 1,000 hours of placements that is required and by the AASW as well as covering all the requirements that are needed for an accredited program. The AASW has an accredited program that actually will only, within the last few months, enable you to work as a social worker as soon as you qualify. If you are interested in Master of Social Work (Qualifying) program and you don't have an undergraduate degree in Social Sciences or Human Services Program, then we have the bridging program which is an opportunity to study for another six months prior to the Master of Social Work program and to do some Social Sciences and get the entry qualifications that way. It’s one of the largest masters programs in NSW and an incredibly successful program. Again, we have links with state providers, large NGOs, smaller organisations to enable our students to get placed.

Master of Art Therapy is the only course of its kind in NSW and one of only three such courses in Australia. So, if you're interested in Art Therapy in NSW, we are the place to study! It shows you how to use visual art media within a therapeutic relationship to help people in distress. You will emerge with the theoretical knowledge and practical experience required to work as an art therapist in a wide variety of contexts. Sheridan’s here and with us tonight to talk about the Art Therapy program, the particular entry requirements in terms of the experience of art, as well as having the personal skills and abilities and the academic expertise. It’s incredibly highly regarded program, it's a world leader in what it does and the facilities that we have in Parramatta sites are amazing. It was the first program to return to campus after lockdown and it is an outstanding in class experience. And again, the placement experiences are there for people to be working as well as studying.

The Master of Psychotherapy and Counselling cross-disciplinary pathway into a career in helping people in distress. In counselling psychotherapy, clients gain self-understanding, expand interpersonal capacities and become more able to change through a dedicated helping relationship. This course focuses on the process of creating a therapeutic environment for clients and on cultivating the high levels of skill, sensitivity, self-knowledge and ethical conduct required of the counselling and psychotherapy professional. So, again, it is a very hands-on, very practical program. There are placement experiences, including through our growing clinic experiences, where we're working in partnership with some of the large NGOs in NSW, including St Vincent de Paul and Uniting Others provide counselling as part of their services, allowing you to be supervised and trained by experienced counsellors. Again, it's an accredited program, allowing you to work as soon as you're qualified and again, it's got a Graduate Diploma in Graduate Certificate as well. So, if you're not ready to take on the full Masters, there are other opportunities as well.

And I think there's a final one - the Master of International Criminology. We have large undergraduate numbers in Criminology and in Policing. In a globalised world, crime and criminalisation have assumed new and transnational forms, with mixed effects on human wellbeing social justice. The aims and objective of this course are to draw out the significance and range of these issues and in international criminology, and to examine the viability of different preventative and criminal justice responses in relation to these. Early exit points of graduate certificate and Graduate Diploma are embedded within the Master's program. So, we have a large number of very experienced and expert criminologists within the School and they will be teaching you on this program, bringing their expertise and putting the criminology teaching again within a global context.

I think that is my last slide. And I'm handing to Natasha.

Natasha Zographakis: Correct, yes. Thank you so much, Brian. Thank you for your presentation. So regarding Western Sydney University and the current COVID-19 situation, we are continuing to review all University operations acting on the latest Australian government health authority and regulatory advice. That means all classes have currently been moved online as well as the majority of student services. Students Central and wellbeing services have all moved online to live chat, email and phone call communications. And the University will endeavour to deliver classes, both online and on campus. But this is dependent on requirements for each unit. All on campus classes will be delivered in restrictive numbers to allow for social distancing

Western Sydney University is committed to supporting our students to ensure they can continue learning during the current pandemic and there are academic support services available to students to assist them, and that includes the Coronavirus Support Line and this is the central contact point for students and staff. They are responsible for managing and directing inquiries to the correct departments. The team has provided a trusted platform for students seeking the best possible advice.

We’re also offering the Student Hardship Fund and this assists students through the provision of grocery vouchers, loan laptops and financial support. The centralised application process has allowed for an efficient maximum five-day turnaround time to assist students experiencing hardship.

And now our Postgraduate research degrees. They are handled by the Graduate Research School. WSU offers the following Higher Degrees by Research:

The Masters of Research: is a two-year research training degree that acts as a pathway to PhD study and a future research career. The first year is coursework and the second is a supervised research project.

PhD and Master of Philosophy: to be eligible for a PhD you need to have completed an honours, Master of Philosophy or Master of Research degree. Western Sydney University is committed to high impact research that makes a tangible and ongoing difference in the world and is responsive to contemporary challenges. You can discover more at western sydney.edu.au/future-makers

If you should have any questions about the application process either domestic or international our admission staff will be available via the web chat function during tonight's event to assist.

For domestic students, and that includes Australian and New Zealand Citizens, Permanent Residents of Australia and Permanent, and Humanitarian Visa Card Holders, you can apply one of two ways: directly to Western; applying is free or through the University Admission Centre; there is an application fee for this one. I think it's currently $200.

And for our international students, you can apply one of two ways: online using the study link portal or through an agent representative. You may visit the website at: westernsydney.edu.au/international

And you can visit the ‘how to apply’ tab on the event website to speak with our admissions team through web chat. That will be throughout tonight's session.

As for application closing dates, please refer to the WSU website for specific closing dates as some course application dates do vary and applications are currently open. So, this is the part where you can check for closing dates for each of the courses.

Key terms to consider for understanding fees:

Commonwealth supportive place, otherwise known as CSP. This means these fees are subsidised by the government and the remaining tuition fee can be deferred by eligible domestic students on to a HECS HELP loan.

FEE-HELP loan for eligible domestic students wishing to defer tuition fees from a non CSP course.

The majority of Postgraduate courses at Western are domestic full fee paying places.

Australian citizens may be able to defer tuition fees from full fee paying courses onto a FEE-HELP loan

All Postgraduate education courses and most Postgraduate nursing courses at Western are commonwealth supported place courses and follow the undergraduate fee structure.

For more information on international fees please visit our website.

All international students will be advised of exact fees on their official offer letter, and that includes tuition fees and compulsory overseas Student Health cover. For further information you can visit westernsydney.edu.au/fees

And for additional costs that includes student service and amenity fees. This is a small fee each student pays per semester that funds the student services on campus, such as study hall and child care services. Other costs may include textbooks costs, class equipment and applicable living expenses.

Links to Breakout sessions will be posted in the Zoom chat section. Please click on the Zoom link and you will be moved to that Breakout session. You may jump in and out of each session by clicking on the Zoom links for each of the courses. Again, you can visit the ‘how to apply’ tab on the event website to speak with our admissions team through web chat.

And I think that concludes our presentation for tonight.