



Student Awards Ceremony

2024 Academic Year

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Order of Proceedings

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Acknowledgement of Country

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 (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

Message from the Executive Director, Advancement



At Western Sydney University, student success is at the heart of everything we do. The Student Awards Ceremony are a chance to celebrate the hard work, dedication, and achievements of our hardworking and ambitious students – recognising not just academic excellence, but also the passion and perseverance that will shape their and our collective futures.

These awards would not be possible without the generosity of our donors. By funding prizes and academic awards, donors play a vital role in encouraging students to aim high, supporting their aspirations, and giving them an edge as they step into the workforce. To our donors—thank you for believing in our students and helping them reach their full potential.

The Western Sydney region continues to grow and evolve, so do the opportunities for our students. The University is focused on preparing graduates who are adaptable, innovative, and ready to make an impact. These awards help ensure our students have the recognition, motivation, and confidence to take on the challenges ahead.

To our award recipients – congratulations! We are proud of all that you have achieved and can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Burden'.

Christian Burden
Executive Director, Advancement
Western Sydney University

Beth Southwell Memorial Prize



Donor	<p>Beth Southwell Memorial</p> <p>Associate Professor Beth Southwell was an inspiring educator, committed to opportunity and excellence. Beth grew up in the Tamworth area and studied at the University of New England where she was awarded for her outstanding academic achievements. Beth was the first Australian to achieve a doctorate in mathematics education, travelling to England to achieve her qualification. Her research also took her to Papua New Guinea. In Sydney Beth was one of few mathematics education researchers until the 1990s when the field began to develop, thanks, at least in part, to her commitment. While many of Beth's peers went on to hold senior positions in universities, Beth's passion for excellence in mathematics teaching kept her working in this field to the last.</p> <p>As a lecturer and tutor at Western Sydney University, Beth always presented her students with the most current approaches to mathematics education. For many years, she was influential in syllabus reviews and with the Mathematics Association of NSW, encouraging continuing professional development. Beth's sense of humour and enjoyment spread to her tutorial classes which were both active and theoretical. She stood firmly for high-quality mathematics teaching and high expectations, and against testing regimes She advocated constructivist learning, alternative authentic assessment, the beauty of mathematical patterns and relationships and the values of mathematics education. Beth cared for her students, giving them extra assistance out of class, and teaching in programs for mature age students to assist their entry to university. Beth worked for Western Sydney University's antecedent institutions from 1972 until her passing in 2007.</p>
Prize	Beth Southwell Memorial Prize
Criteria	Awarded to the student in their final year of the Masters of Teaching (Secondary) with the highest GPA in the unit Secondary Mathematics.
Recipient	Yingqi Chen

Betty and Neil Hunt Award for Excellence in Primary Teaching

Donor	<p>Betty and Neil Hunt</p> <p>Following eight years as a lecturer at Sydney Teachers College, Neil Hunt was appointed to the foundation staff at Westmead College in 1969. When Nepean College of Advanced Education was formed, Neil was a member of the first College Council and appointed as Head of the Visual and Performing Arts Department. Later, he was appointed Sub Dean of the School of Teacher Education. During this time, he was an active member and President for two years of Penrith branch of the Council for Educational Administration and later was made a Fellow of the NSW Council. He retired after 18 years in 1987. Throughout Mr Hunt's career, his wife, Betty Hunt was involved in many facets of Nepean life. Both were keen supporters of drama, music, sports and social activities, including running theatre parties associated with the College. In Easter of 2008, Mr Hunt regrettably passed away. The Betty and Neil Hunt Prize continues to be awarded in memory of Mr Hunt and in recognition of Mr and Mrs Hunt's commitment to students at the University.</p>
Prize	<p>Betty and Neil Hunt Award for Excellence in Primary Teaching</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the most outstanding graduating student in primary teaching.</p>
Recipient	<p>Yousra Mezher</p>

Dr Joyce Fyfe Wylie OBE Memorial Prize

Donor	<p>Estate of Dr Joyce Fyfe Wylie, OBE</p> <p>Dr Joyce Fyfe Wylie was an officer of the Order of the British Empire, a citation she attained in 1978 for services to Education. Joyce had her start as a teacher at Marrickville Boys High School where she was the only female teacher on the staff of twenty five. She later moved to Newcastle Girls High School where she was Deputy Head and in 1949 moved to become a residential member of staff at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. She later moved to work in Teachers' Colleges in Balmain and Sydney prior to taking up an appointment with the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney in 1956.</p> <p>Joyce was a most stimulating lecturer, one who could always link theory and practice, effectively directing discussion and encouraging thoughtful analysis. Appointments took her to far off places including Lagos, Nigeria and the Philippines. She toured the length and breadth of South America, Africa and the Polar Regions, north and south. Joyce had a pilot's license before she held a driver's license and flew with Dick Smith over the North Pole. After her retirement from Sydney University, Joyce gave her time and energy to other aspects of tertiary education, in particular to the development of the Milperra College of Advanced Education (MCAE) which later became part of Western Sydney University. The library at the University's Bankstown campus at Milperra is named for her.</p>
Prize	<p>Dr Joyce Fyfe Wylie OBE Memorial Prize</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an outstanding second year student in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education degree who demonstrates leadership and commitment to their studies and community.</p>
Recipient	<p>Georgia Grove</p>

Gloria Habib Memorial Prize



Donor	<p>Habib Family</p> <p>George and Gloria Habib migrated to Australia from Syria in 1973, Gloria beginning her life in Australia by working at a Sunbeam factory. Believing that strong community organisations underpin the health and cohesion of society Gloria joined the Australian Arabic Women’s Federation as a volunteer and the Arab Council Australia.</p> <p>In 1983, Gloria began work with the Department of Education and Training and became active in the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Associations. She was an invaluable source of advice and support to principals, teachers and students. She worked tirelessly for a unified, harmonious society that embraced cultural diversity, and was the driving force behind the Harmony Day School Spectacular. Australia is a tolerant, successful multicultural society which is due in no small part to what happens every day in schools, where students play and learn together. The Harmony Day School Spectacular showcases and celebrates this.</p> <p>A passionate advocate of cultural diversity, Gloria Habib was a remarkable woman who touched the lives of many and brought hope to people overcoming challenges. Gloria passed away in March 2007 after a battle with cancer and is survived by her husband, George and her children, James, Geraldine and Jocelyn. She received a posthumous award for Meritorious Service to Public Education and Training.</p>
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Prize	Gloria Habib Memorial Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Education - Primary
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding student in the National Exceptional Teaching for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) program for high achieving students in the Master of Teaching (Primary).
Recipient	Evan Thornton
Prize	Gloria Habib Memorial Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Education - Secondary
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding student in the National Exceptional Teaching for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) program for high achieving students in the Master of Teaching (Secondary).
Recipient	Fei Chen

KU Children’s Services Award for Excellence and Leadership in Early Childhood Education



Donor	<p>KU Children’s Services</p> <p>Established in 1895, KU Children's Services is Australia's most experienced provider of early childhood education and care. Through play-based programs, KU recognises each child as an individual and encourages their own interests and strengths as they discover and learn. Across its 140 centres, university-qualified early childhood teachers deliver these programs to more than 15,000 children and their families each year.</p> <p>Each KU centre is a welcoming and inclusive early education environment and workplace, reflecting the unique aspects of the communities within which it operates.</p> <p>KU Centres are currently leading the sector in our National Quality Standard Assessment and Ratings with 98% of our services rated as Meeting/Exceeding or Excellent. In 2016, KU was recognised as an Employer of Choice at the Australian Business Awards.</p> <p>ku.com.au</p>
Prize	<p>KU Children's Services Award for Excellence and Leadership in Early Childhood Education</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an outstanding student who demonstrates leadership and commitment to the field of early childhood education.</p>
Recipient	<p>Sera Okan</p>

Mildred and Albert Porter Memorial Prizes for Teaching

Donor	<p>Philip Porter and Dawn Bruce</p> <p>The Mildred and Albert Porter Memorial Prizes have been established by their children, Philip Porter and Dawn Bruce, as a fitting and heartfelt memoriam. Having had to start life again in a new country and with very little in the way of material wealth, Mildred, a Greek refugee from Smyrna, Turkey and Albert, an émigré from South Africa, were committed to the value of education as a fundamental human need and right as well as the vehicle to financial security. Parramatta locals, they raised their family about a kilometre from where Western Sydney University's Parramatta South Campus is located today. Both Mildred and Albert supported Parramatta Primary School's P&C by facilitating the purchase of books and artwork for the school. Even in the 1950's, they knew the need for excellent early childhood education as a foundation for later learning.</p>
Prize	<p>Mildred and Albert Porter Memorial Prize for Teaching 3-5 Creative Teaching & Learning</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the most outstanding student demonstrating outstanding creativity and leadership, in programming and planning in early childhood settings, as part of the Professional Experience 3-5 unit.</p>
Recipient	<p>Jean Martelino</p>
Prize	<p>Mildred and Albert Porter Memorial Prize for Teaching Birth-2 Diverse Literacy</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the most outstanding student demonstrating excellence in building relationships with children, staff and families and using this information to inform teaching and learning in the area of literacy, as part of the Professional Experience Birth-2</p>
Recipient	<p>Yiren Zhou</p>
Prize	<p>Mildred and Albert Porter Memorial Prize for Teaching K-6 Early Maths and Numeracy</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the most outstanding student demonstrating excellence in planning and implementing an innovative and inclusive curriculum with a focus on early maths and numeracy, as part of the Professional Experience K-6 unit.</p>
Recipient	<p>Syahla Margo</p>

Presentation Sisters, Wagga Wagga Award



Donor	<p>Presentation Sisters, Wagga Wagga</p> <p>In the early 1870s, Father McAlroy was commissioned by Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn to recruit teaching nuns from Ireland for the schools in the Diocese of Goulburn, which then included Wagga Wagga. Five sisters were chosen to bring Christian education to the children of the early settlers of Wagga Wagga. Mt Erin was opened in 1874. The work of the Presentation Sisters was largely in school education. Since the 1980s, the areas of ministry have changed and the sisters are now involved in rural ministry outreach services, ecology and working for the environment, Aboriginal reconciliation, family support and youth camps as well as a no interest loan scheme in Western Sydney, and providing support and care to the ageing members of the congregation. All of these works are carried out within a commitment to justice for the Earth and those made poor.</p> <p>presentationsociety.org.au</p>
Prize	<p>Presentation Sisters, Wagga Wagga Award</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an Indigenous student with the highest GPA at the end of first year, enrolled in Education.</p>
Recipient	<p>Jessica Farries</p>

School of Education

Dean’s Award for

Best PhD Thesis



Donor	<p>School of Education</p> <p>The School of Education prepares teachers and educators for the challenges and triumphs of working in schools, pre-schools and adult learning environments. We believe that the future of education is based on effectively engaging students and teachers in challenging and relevant learning through invigorating and networked communities of learners. Through our research and the Education Knowledge Network, we promote and support professional development and effective engagement in learning between teachers and students.</p> <p>westernsydney.edu.au/schools/soed</p>
Prize	<p>School of Education Dean's Award for Best PhD Thesis</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the student with the most outstanding doctoral thesis.</p>
Recipient	<p>Nikolai Lysewycz</p>

Sydney Lyceum Club Prize in Teaching



Donor	<p>Sydney Lyceum Club Inc.</p> <p>The Sydney Lyceum Club aims to provide a non-political and non-sectarian environment for women with complementary interests to meet, converse, discuss and participate in special interest groups, and to enjoy a monthly lunch or dinner, a social gathering with a guest speaker.</p> <p>The Sydney Lyceum Club is proud to provide this prize to support and encourage excellence in our future teachers.</p> <p>sydneylyceum.com.au</p>
Prize	<p>Sydney Lyceum Club Prize in Teaching</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the student with the highest mark in the unit Aboriginal Education: Past, Present and Future (TEAC7156); for demonstrating outstanding commitment and high academic achievement in all aspects of community engagement.</p>
Recipient	<p>Charlotte Dawson</p>



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The gift of knowledge empowers our students to embrace opportunity, growth and change. Your support of Western Sydney University students through awards, scholarships and research encourages them to strive for excellence and reach their potential.

For information on how you can support Western Sydney University and our students, please contact the Office of Advancement.

02 9685 9511
giving@westernsydney.edu.au
westernsydney.edu.au/giving



Western Sydney University
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia

westernsydney.edu.au