Computer literacy just media hype

by Alison Grahame

A survey carried out by the Library to see how undergraduates cope with using libraries and computers, has produced some startling results.

Carried out amongst first year history and nursing students just to give a snapshot of their skills and attitudes, the survey revealed that the majority were unprepared for an electronic information environment.

The survey was a component of the Library's Information Literacy Project supported from Quality Incentive Funding, and according to the Information Services Librarian, Jim Cleary, it was the first survey of its kind to be carried out by the Library.

"For many years we have run an instructional program for undergraduates but we've had very little data to go on about just what exposure to libraries our new students have had. Now we know something of their skills and attitudes it's clear that we need to take action to help them develop greater confidence in using the library and its computers."

It was obvious from the survey's results, Mr Cleary said, that a lot of the messages we get about the computer literacy of teenagers is just media hype and that in reality their levels of skill are much lower than we've been led to believe.

"In fact, 62% did not use a computer at home and only 44% used a computer in any location once a week or more. For those who did use computers the vast majority used them only for word processing or games."

Only 10% of respondents saw computerised databases as a primary means of finding published information and only 6% had used the World Wide Web to any significant extent. Some 31% agreed with the statement that "I avoid using computers as much as possible because I am not confident". Similarly, 24% were "intimidated when I have to use a computer to find information" with a higher proportion of nursing than history students in this category. Some 13% categorised themselves as non-users of computers and a further 39% as beginners. The prospect of employment in a job requiring computing experience engendered anxiety in 46% of respondents.

A closer look at student experience engendered anxiety in 46% of respondents.

The idea of a republic

"British leaders were in a terrible state of anxiety at the prospect of a French-style revolution catching on with their citizens; the Americans were republicanism and in the British colony of New South Wales, the people imbued great draughts of the republican spirit."

But being aware of what was taking place on the other side of the world was one thing. Joining in and spreading the word was clearly another.

"Poor old Joe Smallslas. Transported from England to the colony of New South Wales, he was accused on his arrival in 1806 of 'inflammatory and seditious practices'. In fact, he was a republican, and for his pains he was clapped in irons and transported again - this time to Newcastle! He had been a follower of Thomas Paine whose name was written on a placard and hung around the convict's neck for all to see."

Respected author and professor of Politics at the University of Newcastle, Graham Maddox was setting the scene in his keynote address, "Australian National Identity and the Idea of a Republic," for the recent forum on social change and cultural diversity entitled Inter-Cultural Studies 96.

"From the beginning, there were clearly conflicting opinions about the issue. There was the view of the convict population, the view of the establishment and over time there were added the views of the Catholic Irish, the Dissenters, the Chartists and the Chinese," Professor Maddox said.

Upon Federation, however, the arguments in favour of a republic were mostly directed towards gaining independence from Britain. But when formal political independence came, it did so without any dramatic break or revolutionary struggle.
Most discussion of universities in Australia is dominated by the prospect of large scale cuts at the present time. We will not have much information prior to the budget and so much is speculation. The universities rightly point out that the Federal Government ran on the basis of election promises which asserted that recurrent funding for universities would be maintained at present levels.

The universities are entitled to demand that these promises be kept. If major cuts do occur the University will proceed by examining the central areas first - such as looking at all subsidies and peripheral operations, questions of out-sourcing and contract work, and other such matters. Then, after having established a figure, the University would proceed to look at the Faculties to determine whether whole sections should be shut down, and following that what general diminution of resources should be handed out across the board.

This would provide an exercise in two steps, and should lead to a definition of a target percentage to be spent on central administration and what is to be spent on the Faculties.

This last is a necessary exercise at this point, but in the course we hope that it will not be carried out under the duress presently predicted.

Raul Morley
Vice-Chancellor

Computer literacy just media hype

From Page 1

ience of libraries shows that while more than 90% had used libraries to find information, only 53% had used libraries one or more times per week during their final year of previous study. The main approaches used for finding information in a library were the catalogue (88%); reading lists (73%); browsing the shelves (53%); reference books (37%) and article references (33%).

"Few had much exposure to databases in their previous library or educational experiences. With 60% lacking confidence in the use of CD-ROM databases compared with 24% for the computerized catalogue," Mr Cleary said.

"Only 55% had received any library instruction prior to enrolment in 1996; 77% of this group had catalogue instruction but only 23% CD-ROM databases and 2% the World Wide Web.

"On the positive side, however, nearly two-thirds felt comfortable asking a librarian for assistance although 36% felt they could be more helpful. Two-thirds felt self-reliant with little referral to teachers or librarians."

Mr Cleary said that the survey has confirmed the need for a collaborative approach to student networked learning support that tackles the IT infrastructure requirements, the attitudinal and skill issues related to the use of computers and the information skills required in an electronic information environment.

"Faculty will need staff development opportunities to help them incorporate computing and information skills into the curriculum," he argued.

"Students will have to be aware that having acquired these skills, they will then have to be updated regularly as part of lifelong learning."

Mr Cleary said that Library staff and faculty from Nursing and the Department of History have already demonstrated the benefits through the integrated "Enquiry and Learning" course for nurses engaged in continuing education and the production of a computer based learning module on "How to Write an Essay" for History 101 students.

"The task for the remainder of the year will be to further develop the incorporation of generic skills into the first year curriculum in selected subjects and to develop computer based learning modules to underpin this process."

"The Coalition's proposed budget savings, especially in the area of labour market programs, threaten the recent trend improvements in economic growth and job creation in Australia," said Dr Green. 

Dr Green is a member of the ACOSS Commission for the Future of Work chaired by Professor John Nevile, was speaking at the recent ACOSS Brotherhood of St Laurence Making It Work conference at the Wesley Centre in Sydney.

"We calculate that, taking into account labour force growth and productivity, economic growth of at least 3.5% is needed to make further substantial inroads into unemployment," Dr Green said.

"However, budget cuts of the magnitude suggested by the Coalition would not only remove jobs in the public sector, but would also affect private sector employment through the impact on domestic demand."

"The cuts will be particularly damaging to companies that benefit from the export assistance programs targeted for abolition. This will reduce our ability to tackle Australia's current economic problems."

"They will also be damaging in a more personal sense to the long term unemployed and disadvantaged groups in the labour market whose re-entry to the workforce depends on effective labour market programs," Dr Green said.

The Co-op Bookshop's Sally Pontefex and the sign which has now been taken down.

Cuts threaten growth

"The Coalition's proposed budget savings, especially in the area of labour market programs, threaten the recent trend improvements in economic growth and job creation in Australia," said Dr Roy Green, Director of the University's Employment Services Centre.

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Hugh Lindsay, lecturer in the Department of Classics, with one of the Suetonius/Tiberius recent finds housed in the Treasurehouse by Professor Brian English. Two other books - Effective Teaching Strategies - Lessons from Research and Practice by Dr Roy Kitton, and Biometrics and Data Analysis by Professors Dr Ken Mitchell, Dr Ian Kerridge and Professor Terry Lovat - were also launched as part of the In Print series run periodically by this University and the Co-op Bookshop.
Honeysuckle - a culture of exclusion

by Kim Britton

The Honeysuckle Development Project should not be a "colonizing in exercise" in regaining land use allocation. Dr Deborah Stevenson of the University of Technology, Sydney, said at the recent Imaging Newcastle Symposium.

"Using this approach, both the process and the shape of the future development, is intrinsic to the community and, if credible, will have considerable impact on local cultural activity, resources, quality of life and amenity," Dr Stevenson said.

Released in 1991, the proposal by the New South Wales Government to redevelop the inner city area of its social fabric of the city and one which has always been parochial and defensive," Dr Winchester said.

But a study carried out in Carrington by the Department of Geography shows some unexpected changes in that traditional community and offers hope for the future, Dr Winchester explained.

Using oral histories conducted with long established residents of the harbourside suburb, Dr Winchester said, "I am very encouraged that there is that both more diverse than expected and more accepting of diversity. The people interviewed commented that "everyone knew everybody" and "you never used to lock your door or if you did, everyone knew where you kept the key."

"We have a description of a close knit community, a traditional urban village which we read about in the socio-geographic literature," Dr Winchester said. "What surprised me was the difference within that community and the fact that such difference was not accepted."

Residents spoke with tolerance about the influence of recent immigrants coming ashore in the pre-war period ("they headed straight for the booze"); the issues of income and employment ("it didn't take any difference to them"); and the influence of the Church ("the Catholics didn't talk to the Protestants... it was just a fact of life").

"It is one of the things that makes Newcastle, not just Carrington, a good place to live."

"I have a deep affection for Carrington, a good place to live. One of the Carrington residents commented that we need to "live here until I die". This positive community spirit is an important asset for the city's future." Dr Winchester said that those interviewed also showed widespread acceptance of contemporary changes as well.

"Because of its cheap rents, Carrington had become the sort of area where hostels for AIDS sufferers or battered women were inundated with without much objection or ex- but that have been a significant factor in council residents and local artists viewing Honeysuckle with hope and trepidation.

"It has been 18 months since the first stage of the cultural review was completed and Honeysuckle has been under way for five years. Building Better Cities was financially depleted and the cultural review process has received further support from Council. We now have a new city council and both the state and federal governments have changed. The city continues to spread westward. The Hunter Street mall is once again on the agenda, homelessness continues to loom as does vandalism. Many of Australia's most talented artists, writers and performers for whom Newcastle is home lack the appropriate venues in which to perform and Newcastles residents still prefer to live and shop in the suburbs," Dr Winchester said.

"Newcastle is seen as a community with all together in the Newcastle boat. It's under siege, discriminated against, the politicians out there aren't helping. It's a very positive aspect of community and one which is not always associated with traditional defensive or parochial images," she said.

"This very positive image of community is something which builds on the community strengths of the past and is a positive asset for the future. It is one of the things that makes Newcastle, not just Carrington, a good place to live."

"I reckon it was a good idea... we had too many pubs on Carrington Street," another said "it was just a fact of life".

"It's a very positive place to live with their little group. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I felt that I was a fragile human being."

"Newmyths of Newcastle

When Dr Hilary Winches-
Economics and terrorism are not two subjects one up against the other but for Professor Todd Sandler, they are subjects that form a part of his research output and which have earned him worldwide recognition.

Based in the Department of Economics and Political Science at Iowa State University where he has the title of Distinguished Professor, he researches, writes and lectures about the economics of terrorism and other topics. He is currently writing his research findings on the impact of terrorism on foreign investment in Spain and Greece.

"Since the 1970s not one terrorist in Greece has ever been captured. It obviously hasn’t been a priority for the Greek police. But if you look at the economic effect that terrorism has on that country’s economy, it should be a priority. The revenue loss for a country with an ever present threat of terrorism can be significant.

Terrorists, Professor Sandler’s research has had some unexpected outcomes. For instance until he decided to do it, nobody had truly quantified the effects of installing metal detectors in airports throughout the world. In it, the probability of another Cherobyni (extremely likely), we can work out the cost of health care for the victims and a whole range of other costs which might help governments see the value in taking action now.”

“Buildings were no longer attacked. What happened, however, was that embassy staff became targets for kidnaping.”

The economics of terrorism

by Alison Graeme

A round 1973 when metal detectors were introduced, the incidence of skyjackings plummeted as you might expect. Everyone was delighted because until then terrorists had been using aeroplanes regularly. But what nobody had researched was that this dramatic drop in one form of terrorism had produced a correspondingly dramatic rise in another form of terrorism – the taking of hostages.

The American State Department has recently expressed an interest in his research findings about embassy security measures.

“The government had installed metal detectors and other devices to defend its properties in countries where there was a risk, and it was successful. Buildings were no longer attacked. What happened, however, was that embassy staff became targets for kidnaping. I was able to demonstrate that the policy of protecting property had placed foreign embassies at greater risk, so the government's ideas about security had to be revised.”

Professor Sandler is currently on campus as part of the Vice-Chancellor’s Research Best Practice Scheme. He is here until the end of June, carrying out research with Koo Doodeman from the Faculty of Economics and Commerce, delivering seminars and working on his latest book, Global Challenge.

In it, he examines the economic benefits of taking appropriate action to solve the big issues such as global warming and nuclear waste storage.

“Governments don’t look very far ahead and are pretty reluctant to spend vast sums of money on projects where there is no obvious return. What I’m doing is looking at the cost, the economic cost, to future generations if governments fail to take action on these kinds of issues. For example we can estimate the probability of another Cherobyni (extremely likely), we can work out the cost of health care for the victims and a whole range of other costs which might help governments see the value in taking action now.”

The business of research

If you invented a better mousetrap or perhaps a car tyre that couldn’t wear out, what would your first step be?

If you made your discovery as part of your work would you ask the University for help with patenting it? Or if you had worked on your invention on the weekend or your own time, would you be more inclined to go it alone?

If you’d be tempted to take the latter approach, you could be disappointed. When it comes to patents and universities if you are a member of the academic or professional staff, there is no such thing as working in your own time, according to TUNRA CEO, Dr SoozY Smith.

"If you are an academic or professional staff member and you invent something, then following careful review of the potential to commercialise your invention, TUNRA as the commercial arm of the University, may protect your intellectual property by funding the necessary patents. The property is then owned by the University with any profits from commercialisation being split between the University and TUNRA. Of course obtaining a patent can be an expensive and time consuming business, so most people are only too happy to let TUNRA administer the process. Established in 1969, TUNRA’s role has diversified substantially since its early days. Originally we were set up as a company limited by guarantee to provide a gateway to the University’s expertise. Of course we still perform that role but we are also involved with project design, project management, commercialisation of intellectual property, conference organisation and we are the Secretariat for the Hunter Valley Branch of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants,” Dr Smith explained.

TUNRA is now made up of eight specialist divisions:

- TUNRA Fine Particle Services Division (est1983)
- A research organisation specialising in dust suppression and flotation applied to mineral ores, water treatment and soil remediation.
- TUNRA Industrial Electronics Division (est1986)
- Development, design, build, test, install and commission in the areas of satellite tracking and control and control engineering.
- NEWSTAT Statistical and Quality Consultants (est1988)
- Specialist in statistical consulting and data analysis, quality improvement, statistical process control, health planning, medical research and training courses.
- Hunter Occupational Health (est1989)
- Provides a high quality, independent, consultative service concerned with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace.
- Employment Study Centre (est1990)
- The Centre plays a significant role both in the analysis of employment issues and in the practical implementation of reform in the Australian labour market and workplace, incorporating members from the departments of Economics, Management, Law, Sociology, History, Geography and Psycho-Social Health Studies.
- EAM Consultants (est1991)
- Environmental Assessment and Management (EAM) provides a professional consulting service in the areas of air and water quality assessment, environmental management plans, environmental audits, flora and fauna surveys, water resources management, ecological studies and educational kits on specific topics. Workplace Culture Change and Training Research Unit (est1996)
- This unit examines a broad range of workplace related issues, focusing on skill formation, organisational change and training within a collaborative approach to industry and business needs. The Unit adopts a "pluralistic workplace culture" approach. This underpins both its strategic approach to action research and the implementation of research-based initiatives at an enterprise and industry level. TUNRA receives no grants or assistance from either the government or the University but is self-supporting. It makes regular donations to the University in the form of scholarships both postgraduate and post doctoral. TUNRA’s divisions also support numerous scholarships and research programs within the University. They used to be found in the Aviation building but the TUNRA people have now moved to the Industry Development Centre.

"The move means that we’ll have a more visible and accessible focus for both the University and our clients in commerce and industry," Dr Smith said.

TUNRA’s new phone number is 21 8777, fax 21 8778.
What quake Database maintained by the Hunter Region Information Centre and the Newcastle City home pages

An Environmental Management Act Select under the heading such information as a Guide to Businesses on the World Wide Web, a Hunter material suitable for research, particularly

There are now Hunter Community Network (Information E-mail: FREENet HTTPlwww.newcastle.edu.au Information) for a copy of information flyer

For further information call the Help which is chaired by Lynne Benton, Manager, Central Coast Campus Information Resources Centre.

How do I get it?
You will need a computer with a World Wide Web browser such as Netscape and

Access points have been provided at local libraries, CCRIS is a federally funded initiative of the Central Coast Office of Labour Market Adjustment (CULMA) Committee

The initiative sub-committee is chaired by Lynne Benton, Manager, Central Coast Campus Information Resources Centre.

How do I get it?
You will need a computer with a World Wide Web browser such as Netscape and access to the Internet. This can be available from office or home, P2P2 and from public facilities in many campus computer laboratories and in the libraries.

Dates for these services are as follows:

Deadline
Deadline for the next issue of the Ear and the Inner Ear is Thursday 18 June at 10am.

Other services for the community are:

- customised business information
- Internet access with local dial numbers
- World Wide Web page writing services

For information call the Help Desk of the Information Technology Division, or Chris Lindsey at the Central Coast on #214.

Australian Federation University Women Dinner 26 June at Alcron Restaurant 116 Church St Newcastle 6.30pm for 7pm Speaker will be Myra Chapman, "Travels to Russia". Please telephone 66 1760 by 23 June. All welcome.

Symposium Global Warming Friday 14 June The Department of Economics welcomes visitors, staff and students to participate in a one day interdisciplinary symposium on the subject of global warming.

10am-11am: Global warming and climate in Australia changes for the future Professor Howard Brigman, Department of Geography Discussion

11am-12pm: Internationally tradeable carbon dioxide permits and Australian's export market on global warming Ko Doekeman, Department of Economics Discussion

12pm-1.30pm Lunch in Student House/ Student Union

1.30pm-2.30pm Global house - strategic behaviour of nation states in a shared and shrinking world Distinguished Professor Todd Sandler, Department of Economics, Iowa State University Discussion

2.30pm-3.30pm Global warming - the ethics of energy policy Glenn ALbrecht, Department of Geography Discussion

3.30pm Social function - refreshments provided Venue: 502 (Social Sciences Building)

This week's Ear is dedicated to the subject of global warming.

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Hunter Regional Fellowship of Australian Writers

Trans-Actions in The Old Bank Building Seminar Series on Contemporary Theatre Theory and Practice

The series for 1996 will run fortnightly (beginning week 6) on Thursdays at 7pm in the Seminar Room - Drama Building
In order to continue to promote the highest international standards in the research carried out within the University, the Vice-Chancellor’s Research Best Practice Scheme will be introduced in 1997, to bring scholars to the University of Newcastle for the purpose of research improvement. The scheme is also intended to cover those disciplines in which performance plays a significant part, leading to arts-in-residence appointments.

The scheme is designed to bring outstanding scholars from major centres to Newcastle for a short period. During this period, they should be asked to lead research seminars, interest themselves in the research projects of the members of staff in the faculty to which they have come, and to carry out a quality assessment of the work being undertaken. The visiting scholar will be asked to provide written assessments and advice on development and improvement, and will be expected to bring to bear the latest and best standards of research in the given field. A conference could be organised around the presentation of the results of that individual, who would be expected to contribute. In the performance disciplines, a similar role would be played.

This is part of an attempt to continue to develop links with the major international centres of learning and to ensure that our staff are exposed to the highest level of international practice in the research in their fields. It is part of the strategy to maintain international best practice as the standard at the University of Newcastle. It adds to the Study Leave process of going to a centre of excellence, the process of bringing a part of the centre of excellence to Newcastle. It is important to maintain a high climate of expectations in our own institution.

Ten such fellowships are available in 1997. Groups wishing to benefit from such a scheme should make contact with the Vice-Chancellor, indicating the possible research benefits, listing the process under which the scheme will be best balanced from such interaction, and providing the name and a brief CV of the scholar involved, together with a list of duties of attendance.

The scheme is intended to bring scholars of major significance to the University of Newcastle, and is not intended for scholars in mid-career or at some developing stage. The candidates should be, by common scholarly consent, aspirants of international best practice in their own fields.

An honourarium of $10,000 will be provided, plus return air fare for a minimum of two months’ residence at the University. Visiting scholars have the option of Business Class air travel, at a per diem allowance of $70 per day of residence at the University, plus $100 allowance per day of residence. It will be expected that the Dean’s office will assist with practical arrangements such as accommodation. Some advice can be provided by the Vice-Chancellor’s office.

Variations on these conditions can be negotiated with the Vice-Chancellor. This project is funded by monies available from the quality inspection process.

The Vice-Chancellor will seek the assistance of the Research Committee in allocating the available funds.

Applications should be sent to the Vice-Chancellor’s office, addressed to the Executive Officer, Applications for Fellowships for 1997 should reach the Executive Officer not later than 30 September, 1996.

Corporate wardrobe

Delivery of the staff wardrobe has been delayed by three weeks due to set up problems with embroidery on all garments.

If you are aware it is now a taxation requirement to have all items embroidered, creating a need to develop our new colour combinations to satisfy the guidelines. This has now been finalised and production is underway.

It will however bring delivery date up to the week commencing Monday 24 June 1997 (previously anticipated delivery was last week May / first week June).

We apologise for the delays but, particularly with tailored garments that have a life expectancy of up to five years, we do not wish to rush into an embroidery design that will not complement the garments or have sufficient contrast to satisfy tax requirements.

Your patience is very much appreciated.

Kevin Croffey
For Jean Bax Pty Ltd

The university corporate wardrobe committee also wishes to convey apologies for the delay in delivery and thank staff for their continuing patience.

External Review of the Faculty of Law

The external review of the Faculty of Law will commence on Monday 1 July. Submissions addressing the terms of reference (which can be found on the CWIS) are invited and encouraged from staff and students by Friday 28 June and should be directed to:

Paul Drinkwater
Strategic Review Management Officer
Strategic Review Management Unit
The Chancellery

If members of staff wish to meet with the Review Panel to speak to their submissions they should contact Paul Drinkwater on 7455 or email pdr@ncl.newcastle.edu.au to make an appointment.

Invoices will be included in the three days July 1 to 3 July

Telstra Phonebook Muncher

Telephone book recycling from Friday 14 June

Carpark in Front of Engineering A/E/1 Buildings

The following information is available on the CWIS:

- University Legislation
- Stores Bulletin
- Terms of Reference for External Reviews
- Music Appreciation Group Program
- Eudora Course Dates

If you aren't familiar with the procedure this is what you do. Open the computer program youpage and you should automatically find yourself on the University's home page (URL: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/cwis/pr/year). You then click on University of Newcastle local information then click again on University of Newcastle local information then click again on campus news and services. Now you're on your way.
Autonomy for the Central Coast Campus?

by Charles Graham

What is the future of the Central Coast Campus? Should it be an autonomous campus with Ourimbah as a central campus with outposted campuses in Wyong and Gosford or should it remain part of the University? These were some of the questions posed by Sir Davis Hughes, the Occasional Speaker at the recent Central Coast Campus graduation ceremony.

Leaving his audience in no doubt as to how he felt the questions should be answered, Sir Davis said that with a population of more than 250,000 he believed the Central Coast could support an autonomous university.

Sir Davis said that the Coalition, prior to the election, had pledged to set up a working party to examine fully the question of autonomy and that now it was up to the Federal Government to decide the matter.

He praised the new campus buildings designed by Phillip Cox and predicted that future graduation ceremonies would be held at Ourimbah in a building designed for the purpose by Cox and provided by the people of the Central Coast, possibly by the year 2000.

"The Central Coast Campus has an ideal situation with its lovely buildings. It has a unique state, a very young and devoted university, all with one aim - to achieve the maximum value for your degree - and you have the inspired leadership of your Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eastea. You should be so lucky!" Sir Davis said.

Now a resident of the Central Coast, Sir Davis was awarded an honorary doctorate of Education from the University of New England in May from the chairman of the Council of Public Works in the Askin government for the seat of Armidale and a member of the Council of the University of New England during the 60s, and Minister for Public Works in the Askin government in the 60s with responsibility for overseeing the completion of the Sydney Opera House.

One of his guests was his brother, Professor Phillip Hughes of Melbourne who received an honorary doctorate in May from the University of Canberra.

The degrees were conferred by Dr Peter Hendry, the Deputy Chancellor who stood in for the Chancellor Mr Ric Charlton who is recovering from injuries recently sustained in a cycling accident.

Dirt car parks, chips and gravy

Witty Bachelor of Business graduate Michael Liubinskas, 21, of Wyoming, had his fellow graduates laughing when he replied on their behalf at the graduation ceremony held at the Central Coast Leagues Club.

"Mum and Dad, I've decided to go to university. At Ourimbah. "Outimbah, where's Ourimbah?"

"Ourimbah would come to mean cow pasture, a couple of buildings, dirt car parks, chips and gravy and a close group of friends. Some things have changed over the years of my degree. There is now a bar, named after a cow, we have moved into a new couple of buildings, and the car parks are so big and far away they have a different postcode. But the foundation on which the campus was founded has remained - there's still chips and gravy!"

Michael majored in Marketing and has already landed the kind of job he wanted, as a data specialist in IBM's new Marketing Unit. He's the second in his family to take a Bachelor of Business at the Central Coast Campus.

His older brother Wayne graduated in 1992 with a major in human resources and now works with management consultants Arthur Andersen in Sydney.

Michael Liubinskas completed all his education on the Central Coast, from Valley View Primary to Lisarow High to the Central Coast Campus. At Lisarow he was sports house captain, a debater, and captain of the basketball team. His father, of Lithuanian background, is a basketball enthusiast and was President of the local Basketball Association.

Michael, not as tall as he'd like himself to be, has been a sportsman all his life and has a strong belief in some things.

"What we take with us is the ability to persist in something we believe in. We started something worthwhile, never gave up, and made it here today."
SPECIAL FEATURE

by Alison Grabanne

Students with a disability are now making an impact on between 3%-6% of the student body on Australian university campuses. The numbers have grown markedly in the past few years as services for people with a disability have improved, prejudices have begun to disappear, and as definitions of what disability actually means have begun to change. Students with a disability are also beginning to realise that they have economic muscle - with universities fighting each other for every student, inadequate services are no longer acceptable.

So how do students with a disability manage at their University? Is providing services for them a high priority?

Val Sherels, the Disability Liaison Officer says there is a myth in the community that people with a disability don't perform well at university and that they take a very long time and a vast amount of resources before they are able to graduate.

"We know it's not true and gradually the message will get home. The fact is that students with a disability are performing just like everyone else. We have students doing PhD's, Masters, and honours degrees across the whole range of faculties. What we provide is access to particular resources which they then make use of as they need to. We don't make it a policy to hand hold, although we are always available to talk to students if they come across a problem."

Confirming that the numbers of students with a disability are continuing to increase, Val says that this is not surprising when you consider how the range of conditions is extending.

"Most of the disabilities we dealt with originally were those relating to mobility," she explained. "Now we have a large number of students with back injuries, and a big increase in students with learning disabilities. Some people find the idea of a university admitting someone with a learning disability a nonsense but it has nothing to do with intelligence or capacity to learn. What it might mean is that they have difficulty writing down what they have heard in a lecture despite having understood it perfectly, or they may have no trouble taking notes but have almost no capacity to articulate what they've written. Such learning disabilities (like dyslexia with which most of us are familiar) are the result of a brain dysfunction and can be easily overcome by the student being allowed to sit for oral exams rather than written exams; having someone take lecture notes for them; using a voice activated computer or a dictaphone or other forms of help."

Numbers are also increasing, Val explained, because students with a disability are getting help in primary and high school and being encouraged to go on.

"Getting students straight from high school is relatively new and it's because they have seen others do it and they know they can do it too."

According to Val, Physical Planning and Estates is very focused on the issue of disability access to the campus.

"Their long term aim is to make it fully accessible. I am always involved in discussions when new buildings like the sports centre are on the drawing board. The staff realise that it's much cheaper to design proper wheelchair access at the beginning than to try and modify a building after it has been built."

One of the most successful initiatives undertaken by the University has been the creation of a student and faculty service (library and computer lab) advisors.

"These are staff members who have volunteered to act as liaison people with our Unit and who work with students to resolve problems at that end. I can't speak highly enough of either the system or the volunteers. They do a great job and it means that for students in the first instance don't have to deal with what they may perceive as the big bureaucracy. They can talk to someone they see all the time and that has to be a good thing."

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We're streets ahead

You may not know her by sight but unless you're pretty new to the campus, you'll know about Ruth Miller.

It was while she was a student here that Ruth took out the injunction against the State Rail Authority when it allowed the Warrabrook University railway station to go to tender without any mention of disabled access. With the help of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission the matter was resolved in a couple of months without going to court.

"Not that the walkway they eventually built is ideal for anyone in a wheelchair but it is possible to use and it has meant the station can be used by people with strollers, the elderly and those with sight impairment and that wouldn't have been possible had we not taken the action we did," Ruth said.

Having graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in biology and psychology, Ruth has just recently been employed by the University as the Disability Manager for the Central Coast Campus. It is a part-time (two days a week) job. The other three days she is employed as the Coordinator for the Central Coast Volunteer Service.

"Actually when I add it up I'm working more than full time - at least 55 hours a week. I don't seem to get any time off at all!"

So how does the Central Coast Campus measure up with disabled access?

"All the new buildings were pretty good for wheelchair access. The Disability Access Committee of Wyong Council has a group of people with varying degrees of disability who have advised in the past for approval of plans," she said.

Originally a student at the University of Southern Queensland, Ruth transferred to the University of Newcastle because the course here was just what she was looking for. The added bonus was that as a student with a disability she had much better support.

"Newcastle was streets ahead in terms of addressing the issues of access and equity," Ruth said. "In Queensland there were no support mechanisms in place at all."

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Nothing is too much trouble

"The support I've received, both physical and moral, has been excellent," Dianne Taylor told the Ear.

Recently appointed to the job of Marketing Assistant in the University's Public Affairs Unit, Dianne has nothing but praise for the help she has had both as a student (she graduated last month with a BA in Communications) and as a member of the staff.

"As a student there was always someone you could phone if you had a problem and nothing has ever been too much trouble - people would do whatever they could to help. When I had a problem with parking the staff in PPE had it fixed in a couple of days. The same with timetabling. I always looked months ahead with timetabling and if there was a problem with building access, then staff had time to work out a solution."

"When it comes to employment Dianne admits that the first hurdle is always the building in which she'll work.

"My first question is 'how will I get in the door?' and after that I have to work out what other problems there might be. Fortunately I now work in the Chancellery and it is pretty well suited to wheelchair access."

As to successfully applying for a job, Dianne is quite pragmatic.

"You don't place yourself in a position where you're going to fail. That doesn't mean you don't go for a challenge but it does mean being realistic."

Despite her praise for the University and its policies for the disabled, Dianne feels that it could do a little more to let the public know just what great services it provides.

"I think we could do more to encourage those disabled students still in high school who might be intimidated by the place. I know our services are mentioned in the UAC Guide but I think we could mention them more frequently in our general Guide."

As it happened, the first job Dianne had to tackle on taking up her new appointment, was an article for the University Review for a special feature it was running on universities and disabled students.

"It couldn't have suited me better," she said.
A constitutional monarch on a
particular monarchy itself,' Professor Maddox argued.

"With the present wave of republi
can sentiment we seem to have
taken it for granted that re
moval of the Queen from our
constitutional system will result
in a republican form without
anything further being done.
Paul Keating’s ‘minimalist’ repub
lican proposal simply required
the replacement of the Queen with an Australian citi
zen as President.’

This approach, Professor Maddox said, was simplistic and
had too deadly flaws.

"First, the formation of the constitution was still monarchic, and
in would date be impos
sible to impose the restrictions of a
constitutional monarch on a
President; secondly, it was clear
that, if there was to be a Presi
dent, the people wished to elect
that person directly to office.
Keating resisted this idea be
cause he knew that a popularly
elected President would set up
in competition for power with the
Prime Minister, and this would fundamentally alter the
political system."

Professor Maddox said that Australians had to be careful not
to slide into republicanism with their eyes shut.

"Republics have their tradi
tions, some of which are quite alien to Australian sentiment.
American republicanism, for
example, is strongly individualis
t, and is directed against the
possibility of any real social change through collective ac
tion. To adopt a republican constitution would very possibly result
in our lopping off much of value from our political sys
tem;” he argued.

"On the other hand, much ben
efit has accrued from the
constitutional monarchy, par
ticularly the growth of party
government in a parliamentary system. Monarchies have a tra
dition favourable to the growth
of the welfare state. Moreover, the symbolised concentra
tion of power on the Crown, which is
available for competition by the
people’s representatives, allows for the possibility of strong po
litical action not otherwise available in republican systems
characterised by separation of powers and checks and bal
ances."

Professor Maddox told his
audience that he thought it un
likely that the monarchy would last in Australia beyond the reign
of the present Queen.

"Government without the monarchy would indeed be repu
blican. Yet we should retain
all the best aspects of our par
liamentary system, as indeed
Keating had wanted to. Better
than automatic subscription to an alien political form, we
should retain an affection for the
time-honoured title of Australia
- the Commonwealth.

"In doing so we would be true
to our own diversity of political
tradition, both individualist and collec
tivist.”

The opportunity is there for this
campus to excel with its native
bushland character - but it needs
to be driven. It is clearly one of
the most marketable physical
attractions in Australia, and
a perfect tool for developing
sustainability as a core compo
nent in the academic course
structure. We sell the beauty of
the campus and the surrounds of
the playing fields. The greening
of carparks, as well as revitali
sation of the entire Hunter
precinct are mooted.

Peter has never been one to
bog the limelight. He works
quietly and effectively and is
very supportive of the Physical
Planning & Estates team about
whom he has very strong feel
ings.

"The University could lead the country in the whole
study of environmental sustainability"

"Philip Pollard (Senior Archi
tect/Planner), Mim Woodland
(Landscape & Ovals Manager)
and many others have worked
very hard to get the campus to
the point where it is nationally
recognised. From what could
best be described as a position
of cynicism, bodies such as lo
cal councils and the Department
of Public Works have now
come around to admitting that
we are onto something - they
now pay us visits to find out
how we do things. What we have
done is regarded as a success.

"What we need to do now is
consolidate that success - fill the
gaps, refine the edges - in order
to secure a culture of care for
the environment. When you
have a picture of where you are
headed it’s very easy to pursue.
But if things are done on an ad
hoc basis, then what do you end
up with?"

Being a down to earth sort of
guy, Peter doesn’t go much for
the word ‘vision’ But it is his
picture that quite clearly has
inspired staff. They know, he
says, what the campus can be.
It is up to the University to ensure
that it becomes a reality. The
same goes for the idea of
encompassing “sustainability”
within many study areas. All it
needs is the goodwill and clear
support of both the academic
department and senior management.

“We’ve explored change and
we’ve given people visible ei
vidence of what’s possible with
fixed resources. We have refined
a philosophy, we know what has
to be done. Now we have to
get on with it.”
By Helene O'Neill

And the winner is... When the name of the University of Newcastle Sportsperson of 1993 was announced it came as no surprise that Elizabeth (Liz) Heslop (tumbling) had received the judges' nod. Elizabeth was selected from an all-female field of 7 outstanding athletes. But the most excited amongst the finalists was swimmer Alicia Jenkins. These years since their big night both Elizabeth and Alicia have continued their contribution to sport and university life albeit in different roles.

Motivated by the courage of athletes at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics, Alicia attended university on a part time basis during 1993-5 but decided to put her studies on hold till 1997 allowing her to concentrate on swimming. Her dream was re-awakened on May 9 when the Australian team for the Atlanta Paralympic Games was announced. She will represent her country in the 50m butterfly, 200m individual medley and the 100m breast stroke. Alicia's selection is a reward for her determination to succeed.

The 8x2 hour weekly swimming sessions under the guidance of coaches Gwen Geoffrey and Brad Patterson has prompted Alicia to set her goals on making the finals in all 3 events in Atlanta. Medals will be a bonus. What does Alicia remember most about the 1993 University Sportsperson of the Year award?

From BMX to mountain bikes

Making the progression from BMX to mountain bikes was an easy step for Bachelor of Science student Iain Jones. Iain started competing at 13. Three years later at the age of 16 before transferring to road racing and mountain bike racing when he turned 13. Although you may think that a bike is a bike, the skills required for Iain's speciality which is cross country riding, are vastly different from road riding. He has to contend with the rugged terrain of Barrington Tops and the Watagans while practice takes in Glenrock State Forest or bushland around Newcastle.

One of the added attractions of mountain bike riding is the scenic spots chosen by officials for state and national titles - the venue for the 1996 Australian titles was Thredbo in the Snowy Mountains. Following a fine performance in the state titles where Iain finished 2nd, he was keen to make an impression at the top level. Some 80 riders lined up for the cross country event and Iain finished a creditable 6th.

Although mountain bike riding has been declared a medal sport following a fine performance in the state titles where Iain finished 2nd, and the winner is...

What does Alicia remember most about the 1993 University Sportsperson of the Year award?