Uninews

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I am writing this column during the 'Graduation ceremonies' season this semester, which celebrated the successful completion of studies for 3642 graduates and the awarding of a number of honorary doctorates and an exceptional service medal.

The profile of our graduates this year is noteworthy, with 80 percent receiving degrees following undergraduate study; 18 percent receiving a postgraduate coursework degree; and two percent qualifying for a research Master's or PhD degree.

Our graduates ranged in age from 20 to 71 years; 58 percent were women; 63 percent live in the Hunter or Central Coast regions; and four percent have returned to their home country overseas.

Three quarters of our graduates who were looking for full time employment have now been successful in finding a job, and have an average salary of $35,000 per annum. The undergraduates have inherited an average HECS debt of around $20,000, and collectively owe the Federal Government over $50 million.

In addition, 923 students have successfully completed the requirements for several enabling programs, including International Foundation, Newstep, Yapug and Open Foundation, and have been provided with new and exciting opportunities for further tertiary study.

Three distinguished Australians graduated from the University with honorary degrees, including the following:

Dr Helen Garner who is the author of three novels, two short story collections, three non-fiction books and two screen plays, and has been awarded a Walkley Award for feature journalism in 1993. We are fortunate indeed to have Dr Garner appointed to the University as a Creative Writing Fellow;

Dr William Bowmore, a highly distinguished musician of 93 years, who served as the unofficial patron of the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music during its formative years, and has greatly assisted the 'Con' in so many different ways, including funding of scholarships, as patron of the Friends of the Conservatorium, and active involvement in fund raising; and

Professor Ralph Slatyer, the first Chief Scientist, who joined former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, as the inspiration and architect of the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program, which has contributed so much to Australian science and to the successful exploitation of innovation and research development in this country.

Mr Ian Shepherd received an Exceptional Service Medal in recognition of his twelve years of outstanding honorary service as a member of the Human Research Ethics Committee, which ensures that University of Newcastle research involving human subjects is conducted in an ethical manner.

In addition to the nine graduation ceremonies held in the Great Hall on the Callaghan Campus, the University held a successful ceremony at the Ourimbah Campus, in partnership with NSW TAFE Hunter Institute and the Central Coast Community College. This is a distinctive and special ceremony, which places the University at the forefront of universities in relation to collaboration and cooperation with other tertiary sectors in NSW.

As you aware, we are awaiting the outcome of the Crossroads Review undertaken last year by the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson. While it is premature to speculate about the detail of the Government’s plans for its contributions to funding and any new policies for the higher education sector for the next three to five years and beyond, I remain quietly confident that the sector will be enhanced as a result of this review. In particular, I look forward to welcoming new policies and increased support for our major roles in education and research, regional engagement and Indigenous higher education and research.

Irrespective of the outcome following the May Federal budget, I remain confident for the sector and for our university in planning for further growth and development.

Last month, I attended on your behalf a number of functions for Professor Dennis Gibson, who retired after 21 years as Director (of Queensland Institute of Technology) and Foundation Vice-Chancellor (of Queensland University of Technology). The events recognised his contribution to Australian and international higher education and included a walk across the Goodwill Bridge connecting QUT with Southbank by more than 300 staff, students, State politicians including the Premier and the Minister for Education, QUT Council members and supporters, as well as Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors from other Australian universities. This was followed by a graduation ceremony at which Professor Gibson received an Honorary Degree from QUT Chancellor, Dr Cherrell Hirst, and a celebratory dinner.

I hope that your year is going well and offer best wishes for a successful 2003.

Roger S Holmes
Vice-Chancellor and President
Minister launches University Department of Rural Health

Senator Kay Patterson, Minister for Health and Ageing, officially launched the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) in northern New South Wales last month.

Pro Vice-Chancellor of Health, Professor John Marley, hosted the event at the Tamworth Base Hospital on April 16.

The aim of the UDRH is to increase educational opportunities for students and improve the health and well being of regional, rural and Indigenous communities within the New England, north-west slopes and plains areas of the Hunter Valley, and Manning Rivers regions.

Professor Marley said the UDRH allows the University's students to undertake education, training and research projects in northern NSW that focus on rural and remote health care issues.

"The UDRH will build relationships within the northern NSW region, giving health students from rural areas the opportunity to study closer to home and students coming to the region the opportunity to experience rural practice first hand," he said. "In the long-term, this experience will encourage more health professionals to practice in rural areas."

The UDRH – northern NSW – covers approximately 20 percent of the land area of the State and includes Tamworth, Armidale, Taree and the surrounding communities in a corridor of land that stretches north to the town of Tenterfield on the Queensland border.

City welcomes commencing students

The University's commencing students were welcomed to Newcastle with a Civic Reception held at City Hall last month.

Lord Mayor of Newcastle John Tate and Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes jointly hosted the reception. Professor Holmes said the University's students are very much a part of the broader community during their time in Newcastle. He welcomed the Lord Mayor's gesture in hosting the Civic Reception.

"University is not just a place for study, but for experiencing a different lifestyle," he said. "In these difficult times for the world community, we hope that the time spent at the University of Newcastle is seen as an opportunity for forging bonds between city, country and the wider international community. Sharing common experiences through studying and living together can lead to greater understanding."

Guest speakers included Mr Herbert Gatamah, President of the International Students Forum and Ms Rachel Scott, Vice President of NUSA. Guests included Mr Wilton Ainsworth, Chairman Newcastle Port Corporation, Dr Alan Pattison, Chairman Hunter Economic Development Corporation and Ms Claire Williams, Dean of Students, Hunter Institute of Technology. The formal proceedings were followed by entertainment from Indonesian dancers and tours of Newcastle's cultural precinct.
People & Places

Faculty optimism infectious

Director of Faculty Services for Education and Arts Kim Foster was pleased with the success of the Faculty's 'Working Together' workshop for general staff, held in the Ray Watt Oval Pavilion at the beginning of April.

"The team building days were really great," she said. "The experience was very positive and everyone who attended came away feeling part of the Faculty."

Kim, along with Patrick Murphy, Di Pascoe and Emma Thriffo from Human Resource Services, began talking to staff in the Faculty's schools in the second half of last year about the possibility of a team building exercise. There are eight schools within the Faculty and more than 100 members of general staff.

"I realised early in my discussions with staff, that because the Faculty was so large, teams didn't necessarily have to work together," she said, "but I also got a sense that some staff were still thinking in terms of the old structure. It was very productive to bring staff together so they could meet others from the Faculty, find out what they do and look for ways to cooperate."

The workshop theme was 'sport' and people were encouraged to wear their favourite sporting gear. While no sporting activities were scheduled as part of the workshop, the sunny weather on the first day saw spontaneous games of cricket and soccer start on the oval during the breaks.

"The workshop gave us an opportunity to review our progress in implementing the new organisational structure of the Faculty, to talk about and celebrate our achievements and to look at where we would like to go in the future," Kim said. "I expected some angst but everyone was very positive and optimistic. In one exercise, staff were asked to draw a picture symbolising how they saw the Faculty's future. The pictures drawn were in the main very positive — with many depicting rainbows, sunshine, smiling faces and moving forward."

Kim came to the University from Canberra at the beginning of last year to take up the position of Faculty Services Director. She left her role as Executive Officer of the National Graduate School of Management at the Australian National University. Prior to that, she had been Executive Officer for the Asia Pacific School of Economics and Management in the Institute of Advanced Studies, also at the ANU.

"I'd been in Canberra for 20 years and it was time to move on," Kim said. "The position here appealed to me because it was similar to my previous roles, only on a larger scale. It looked like it would be a challenge."

While she says her first year involved a 'huge learning curve', Kim said that the restructure meant that a lot of people at the University were in the same boat. She saw her first priority as trying to help the general staff in the Faculty settle into their new roles.

"People found themselves in new schools, where departments and departmental secretaries' roles no longer existed. Former departmental secretaries were being brought together into school offices. There was a little bit of resistance from some, who did not like the idea of change and working in a larger group environment, but after some discussion the advantages of co-location soon became apparent."

Kim was originally from the Hunter, but grew up in Camden, southwest of Sydney. She was offered early entrance to ANU, where she began a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in psychology. Two years into her degree, she transferred to the University of Western Australia to finish her psychology studies. She returned to Canberra after graduating, where she spent 11 years working in the public service.

Initially, Kim worked for the Department of Housing and Construction, where she was responsible for marketing and promoting the first iteration of the First Home Owners' Scheme in the early 1980s. She was then seconded to Parliament House, where she worked as Committee Secretary to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, working on such diverse projects as the Kent Street Telephone Exchange in Sydney and a Submarine Escape Training facility in Perth.

Kim returned to the Department of Housing and Construction, (now Department of Administrative Services), first to work as Senior Consultant, Marketing, and then Executive Officer for the Project Services Division, which was responsible for major Commonwealth public works, such as the National Maritime Museum.

"Twelve months after my daughter was born, I decided to leave the public service, and started work at the ANU in 1992 in the Faculty of Science."

Kim then became Faculty Secretary for the Faculty of Asian Studies, the smallest of ANU's faculties, but the one that offered the most degree programs. She has enjoyed the move to Newcastle and has found her role as a member of the Faculty of Education and Arts executive an easy transition.

"I've been in executive roles for the past eight years, so I'm used to it," she said. "The Faculty executive works well and the heads of schools have been great — very supportive."

First UNISS graduates

Electrical engineer Grant Bailey and mechanical engineer David Williams became the first University of Newcastle Industry Scholarship Scheme (UNISS) recipients to graduate when they collected their testamurs at Callaghan last month.

UNISS has been a runaway success for the University since its inception in the former Faculty of Engineering in late 1998. It has spread to other University faculties with 79 students benefiting from UNISS and 40 sponsors.
Chinese Consul General donates valuable books

The Chinese Consul General, His Excellency Liao Zhihong, donated a valuable collection of 250 books to the University in April.

Vice-Chancellor Roger Holmes welcomed the Consul General prior to the book presentation in a ceremony in the Treehouse Room of the Shortland Union Building.

"I am pleased to have had the opportunity of welcoming teachers and students from your country to the University and happy that we have an academic program, staff and students that have been able to support the teaching and learning of Chinese language over many years," he said. "I am very pleased to receive this wonderful collection of books, which will be added to our library and will be very useful to our students - not only those studying Chinese, but to others who may have an interest in using them."

Head of the School of Language and Media, A/Professor Hugh Craig, said the donation was extremely generous and allows the University to update its Chinese collection with modern editions.

"Of especial interest are dictionaries, encyclopedias and demonstration videos on the teaching of Chinese language, and a treasure house of Chinese literary achievements since 1949," he said. "Included in the donation are books of Chinese classical literature such as poetry from the Sung dynasty and Tang dynasty, historical works, and books analysing erotic masterpieces such as 'The Golden Lotus'.'

The literary donation will be utilised primarily by undergraduate and research postgraduate students in Chinese, and will also be of great value to the local Chinese-speaking community.

Consul General Liao Zhihong said the donation, on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the National Office of Teaching Chinese, was one of many made to schools and universities in Australia over the years. He commended the University for establishing an exchange program with Harbin University in China, which he said provided a good opportunity for students to learn about China and experience its culture.

"Australia and China have economic, trade, education and cultural exchanges and cooperation," he said. "I hope that Chinese teaching and study programs flourish for the benefit of our two countries. I'm happy to give any assistance that I can to the University."

Convenor of the Chinese discipline in the School of Language and Media Dr Li Xia said the book donation was another major sign of support from the Consul General, who had donated a terracotta warrior statue to the University in April.

"As a teacher and promoter of Chinese language and literature at this University, I'm touched by this gift," she said. "We, as teachers and students of Chinese, have a vested interest in doing all we can to foster connections with universities in China."

involved. The scheme places scholarship winners with sponsors for a total of 84 weeks over a five-year period, including 12-week placements each year and one 12-month placement in year four.

David Williams was accepted into UNISS at the end of his first year of university study in 1998. The former Merewether High School student, who topped the State in Engineering Science in his HSC, pursued his lifelong interest in how things worked by choosing to study mechanical engineering. His sponsor, Transform Composites, began David's work placement with a stint on the factory floor.

Engineering Manager for Transform Composites and former electrical engineering lecturer at the University Dr Ian Webster, said that the company was a foundation sponsor of UNISS, sponsoring four engineering scholars.

"The company recognises that good people lend significant quality to a business and that good people can be found at university," Dr Webster said.

Grant Bailey was fortunate to win a UNISS scholarship offered by Energy Australia just as he was made redundant from BHP Steelworks in 2000.

"I was working in BHP's design office when I was offered redundancy and at the same time, one of the UNISS scholars dropped out of the program and I applied for the vacant position," Grant said.

After completing his studies at the end of last year, Grant was hired as an engineer by Energy Australia and is currently working in the field service section, coordinating the work of electricians in the field. He says that opportunities to gain industry experience while studying at university seem to be declining and praised the benefits of the UNISS scheme.

"These days a lot more students do uni full-time and finish without much field experience," he said. "The degree is necessary because it teaches you the skills of learning and researching, which are with you for life. I think my experiences are a good illustration of the fact that places like BHP are no longer offering cadetships, which is why programs like UNISS are so valuable."
University honours outstanding Australians

The University awarded three honorary degrees and an exceptional service medal at last month's graduation ceremonies. Following are excerpts from the citations read at the ceremonies.

William Bowmore

Doctor of Music honoris causa

William Bowmore was born in 1909 at Dalby in Queensland. As a child he showed great talent as a pianist and after winning an all-Queensland Eisteddfod at the age of 14, he pursued studies in piano and cello, eventually entering the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney.

In 1935 William settled in Newcastle where he commenced his lifelong involvement in the hotel business. During World War II, he served in the RAAF, teaching cypher. He was stationed in New Guinea and Morotai. After the war, he went into business in property development in Newcastle.

In the 1950s William started teaching cello and became strongly attached to the Newcastle Conservatorium. For many years he has been the unofficial patron of the Conservatorium and has helped it through the funding of scholarships (particularly for cello), through the donation of money, as patron of the Friends of the Conservatorium and through his active involvement in many fundraising ventures.

William developed a serious interest in building a major collection of world art. He opened his home in Newcastle as a part time gallery and in the 1990s bought an art gallery on his property at Somersby near Gosford. In 1996 he moved his collection to Sydney. He donated significant pieces to the Newcastle Region Art Gallery, including two Rodin sculptures, a Brett Whiteley landscape and paintings by William Dobell, Sidney Nolan and Conrad Maroons. To galleries in Maitland, Bathurst and Stanthorpe he gave each at least fifty works of Australian and Aboriginal paintings.

He was a strong donor to the Art Gallery of South Australia. Works now held there include twenty one Rodin sculptures and major paintings; he gave 200 pieces of African art to the Australian Museum in Sydney and two Old Masters went to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. His latest gift is a painting of Dame Joan Sutherland to the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.

In acknowledgement of his philanthropy as well as his service to the community, he was awarded an OBE in 1978 and in 2002 an Order of Australia 'for service to the arts as a collector, donor, benefactor and patron of galleries in Australia, and to young musicians as a teacher and sponsor of concerts and scholarships.' He recently received the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, an Italian award dating back to the sixteenth century.

Ian Shepherd

Exceptional Service Medal

Ian Shepherd served on the Human Research Ethics Committee from 1990 until 2002, when he resigned due to work commitments. Ian is a certified teacher and a registered psychologist. He currently holds a position as Coordinator of Student Counselling and Welfare in the NSW Department of Education and Training. He is responsible for the supervision and management of the school counselling service in the school districts in the north-eastern sector of the state, from the Central Coast to Tweed Heads.

Membership of the Human Research Ethics Committee is an arduous task. The Committee meets 11 times a year and the meetings typically last four or five hours. This requires a significant period of preparation prior to each meeting. Ian's employer, the NSW Department of Education and Training, very generously allowed him to attend meetings of the Committee during business hours.

Notwithstanding, there is no doubt that Mr Shepherd gave much of his own time to assist the Committee and, ultimately the University, to meet its obligations for the ethical conduct of human research.

The community members of the Human Research Ethics Committee are integral to the Committee acknowledging and responding to community attitudes to research. Mr Shepherd was a very active member of the Committee, always good humoured and excellent company and never expected or received remuneration for his involvement in the Committee.

That Ian kept up the gruelling schedule of a Human Research Ethics Committee member for 12 years is noteworthy.
Helen Garner  

Doctor of Letters honoris causa

As the author of three novels, two short story collections, three non-fiction books and two screenplays, Helen Garner is established as a major Australian writer. She is controversial, unconventional and never boring. Born in Geelong and educated at Melbourne University, Helen graduated with an Honours degree in Arts in 1965 and then taught in Victorian high schools for several years. In 1972 she started working as a freelance journalist, where she has made a living, between writing books, ever since.

Her first novel Monkey Grip, published in 1977, was an instant success, winning a National Book Council award and a film based on it was released in 1983. Her short novel, The Children’s Bach is considered one of the greatest short novels ever written in Australia and is widely assigned to lists for Australian literature courses around the country. Her novel Cosmo Cosmolino which was nominated for a Miles Franklin Award was her first work of fiction that moved outside realism.

In 1993 Helen won a Walkley Award for feature journalism for her story in Time magazine about the Daniel Valerio child battery case. Her non-fiction book, The First Stone, concerned allegations of sexual assault brought by two young women against the principal of a Melbourne University residential college and caused a huge uproar when it was published in 1995. It became an important focus for debate on sex and power in contemporary Australian society. Since The First Stone she has published two further collections of essays and journalism: True Stories and The Feel of Steel.

In 2002 Helen accepted a position as Creative Writing Fellow in the University’s Faculty of Education and Arts. During her stay, she had a major impact on raising the profile of the Creative Writing program through media interviews and interactions with community groups. She provided invaluable links with the wider Australian literary and publishing scene. Helen has been working for four years on a new non-fiction book, a story with a Newcastle connection, which she hopes will be published later this year.

Ralph Slatyer  

Doctor of Science honoris causa

Ralph Slatyer was educated at Wesley College in Perth and the University of Western Australia. He joined the CSIRO as a research scientist in 1951 and established an international reputation for his research on the effects of environmental factors on plants. He was appointed Chief Research Scientist and Associate Chief of the Division of Land Research in 1966.

In 1967, he was appointed Professor of Biology and Head of Department of Environmental Biology at the Australian National University, a position he held until 1992. He was Chair and a member of the Australian National Commission for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation from 1970 and served as ambassador to UNESCO from 1978-1981. He was Chair of the Australian Science and Technology Council from 1982, during the time when the Government acted on a Council recommendation to introduce the 150 percent tax deduction for industrial research and development, and for the establishment of the Australian Research Council.

In 1989, Professor Slatyer was appointed Australia’s first Chief Scientist and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Science and Technology. He oversaw the establishment of the Prime Minister’s Science Council and of the Coordination Committee on Science and Technology and was the architect of the Cooperative Research Centres program. On stepping down from the post of Chief Scientist in 1992, he served as Chair of the Australian Foundation for Science until 1994.

Ralph Slatyer has been active in national and international environmental activities. Internationally, he was involved in establishing the UNESCO program ‘Man and the Biosphere’ as well as being involved with the International Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment. He was Chair of the World Heritage Committee from 1981-1983.
First Aboriginal PhD focuses on literacy

Ten years ago when Wendy Hanlen hurt her arm and couldn’t knit any more, she decided to learn French through the Central Coast Community College – a decision that led to her being conferred with her PhD at the Ourimbah Campus last month.

Wendy is the first Aboriginal person to be conferred with a PhD at the Ourimbah Campus. Her thesis attempts to fill the void currently being experienced in literacy outcomes in Indigenous populations.

Wendy’s initial foray into learning was so successful, she went on to gain an arts degree from the University of New England. She was recommended to Associate Professor Laurie Makin from the University’s School of Humanities, as a possible candidate for a Master’s or PhD degree. He was conducting research on Aboriginal Literacy in Early Childhood Education and was excited about having an Indigenous scholar conduct further research in the area.

Wendy won a University research scholarship and began her PhD, which was later supervised by Professor Lyndall Ryan.

The research is timely as NSW has the highest Indigenous population, the poorest Aboriginal literacy outcomes and the least amount of research into the area. Wendy believes that the current basic literacy skills test sets Aboriginal children up to fail.

“Aboriginal people have very different belief systems and values that impact on how they view the world,” she said. "If literacy skills were integrated with their social practices and delivered from an Indigenous perspective, then they would be more empowered.”

Her thesis drew on the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, sociolinguistics and education.

“My dream is to have the type of literacy programs in place for Aboriginal children that empower them to participate equitably and successfully in mainstream society,” she says.

Michelle’s charges excel

Dr Michelle Adams, from the School of Applied Science in the Faculty of Science and IT, celebrated the achievements of three scholars whose research she supervised, when they graduated last month at Ourimbah.

Dr Yang Huang, has been searching for five years to find a way to put probiotic microorganisms containing vitamin B12 into food. Vitamin B12 is essential for the growth and health of human beings and low levels of B12 are reported as risk factors for heart disease, multiple sclerosis, stroke, breast cancer, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

Yang, who is from China, said the capacity for research in food technology at the Ourimbah Campus is outstanding. She began her PhD research under the co-supervision of Dr Bob Hosken, Ross Gordon and Dr Michelle Adams, with Michelle taking over when Bob retired.

Her research concentrated on the development of vitamin B12 producing probiotic microorganisms to enhance the delivery of vitamin B12 to people, especially vegetarians. Yang is a microbiologist with Food Science Australia. Her research led to her file a patent on a novel bacterial strain.

Lidija Kotula, whose honours thesis was supervised by Michelle, spoke no English when she arrived in Australia five years ago as a Bosnian refugee. She enrolled in the University’s Newstart program, learning English at the same time as preparing for University entry.

Her Honours research has centred on a study of how a novel probiotic can survive and exert a positive health benefit in an animal model. She has been awarded a PhD scholarship from the University and will continue her research on probiotics by performing human clinical trials and developing novel probiotic food products. A winner in previous years of the Dean’s Award for Academic Merit and winner of a scholarship offered by Sanitarium Australia, Lidija was named the top graduating Honours student. She is currently employed by Steggles as a food technologist.

The third of Michelle’s research stars is Melanie Lean, who graduated with First Class Honours in Applied Biology. Her research concentrated on the search to locate a vaccine for tuberculosis, which she says threatens about one third of the world’s population. As an infectious single agent, tuberculosis is a bigger killer than AIDS and malaria. Melanie’s preliminary trials have shown that her work has resulted in inducing an immune response in an animal model.

Employed by Roche Pharmaceuticals as a nutrition health consultant, Melanie hopes to pursue her research further as the subject of PhD studies, again under the academic supervision of Michelle.

“I feel that I was on the right track with my research and have differentiated which direction to go in the future,” she said. “I was very pleased with the results. They were quite surprising.”
Thai visitor ‘shadows’ DVC

A top university administrator from Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok, Thailand, who shadowed Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Ron MacDonald during a visit to the University last month, hopes to initiate a formal agreement between the two universities.

Professor Piniti Ratananukul spent nearly a week at the University as part of the 2003 Thai University Administrators Shadowing (TUAS) project, which aims to upgrade the skills of senior Thai university administrators through placements at Australian universities. The administrators shadow an Australian administrator of equivalent rank to try and gain a better understanding of autonomous university systems and increase their awareness of Australian higher education administration best practice.

Professor Piniti said his University was about to change from being a public university to an autonomous one.

“We are currently administered under the civil service system,” he said. “The change to being autonomous will give us more flexibility in the management of our budget.”

Srinakharinwirot University has some similarities to Newcastle in that it offers a comprehensive range of programs and has two main campuses. It has around 16,000 students. Professor Piniti is Vice-President for Finance and Personnel at the University and while he spent time in both these areas during his visit to Newcastle, he also learned about the structure and administration of the University.

“I'm interested in establishing a formal link between the University of Newcastle and my University,” he said. “We still have very young staff working in new faculties, who need to have their qualifications upgraded.”

Professor Piniti has invited Professor MacDonald and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roger Holmes to visit Bangkok to complete the agreement.

He also visited Victoria University as part of the TUAS visit.

The TUAS project is a component of the institutional development activities agreed between Thailand and Australia under the Memorandum of Understanding on Educational and Research Cooperation between the Thai Ministry of University Affairs and the Department of Education, Science and Training. It has been held annually since 1995.

Professor MacDonald said the University was pleased to be involved in the TUAS project and to have hosted Professor Piniti.

“I'm very supportive of the program, which has helped to strengthen the links between Thai and Australian universities,” he said. “We look forward to expanding our association with Srinakharinwirot University in the future.”

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A University project is underway that uses the Callaghan and Ourimbah campuses as living classrooms to pilot an interdisciplinary approach to the delivery of educational programs in the area of sustainability.

The ‘Integrated Learning Opportunity for Sustainability’ project, funded by a University Teaching Development Grant, aims to establish a formal framework for sustainability education within the University and to provide students with a unique learning experience.

Project Director, Professor Geoffrey Evans from the School of Engineering, says sustainability and protecting the environment are increasingly important areas of study in a range of disciplines.

“The University has acknowledged its commitment to ‘environmentally sustainable practices’ in its Institutional Strategic Plan,” he said, “and there have already been a number of successful projects implemented through Facilities Management, to the point where the Callaghan campus is seen by many as a showcase for sustainable development.”

The University offers a number of courses across almost all disciplines dealing with the environment and/or sustainability, with a search of its curriculum database identifying around 60 courses that mention both environment and sustainability. It offers degree programs in environmental engineering and environmental science, and a sustainable resource management program at Ourimbah. Up to now, however, there has been no real integration across disciplines to provide a university-wide course in either sustainability or the environment, which leaves the University lagging behind many of its competitors.

“The University is widely recognised for its initiatives in the environmental management of its campuses,” Geoff said. “Our best opportunity to make the University a leader in education into sustainability is to take advantage of the many significant ‘environmental’ assets that the campuses have to offer and implement them into a unique learning experience for our students.”

Geoff and other individual academics have been using various aspects of the Callaghan campus as case studies to highlight sustainability issues. He teaches chemical engineering students about sustainable building design and environmentally sensitive water management with the award-winning Richardson Wing building and the University’s Callaghan campus as his case studies.

“What I like about this project is that it not only pulls together all of the faculties and disciplines with an interest in sustainability, but it also incorporates the Facilities Management section of the University Services division,” he said. “By trying to coordinate efforts and build a database of course resources and research in the area of sustainability, we not only ensure that knowledge and experience is shared, but also get to showcase what has been achieved in the design of our buildings and grounds.”

The project is ongoing and aims to coordinate the use of campus-based case studies and is working towards:

- Establishing a formal framework within the University structure to allow initiatives in sustainable practice, both across the campus and local community, to be directly integrated into educational programs across all disciplines.
- Providing an open forum, where all students can openly communicate, extract information, present results, and view the inputs from their colleagues, on real-life sustainability projects being undertaken on campus.
- Giving students a unique learning experience, involving a broad range of social and technical issues that heightens their awareness of sustainability.
Currently, two case studies have been developed based on existing activities undertaken by Facilities Management. Philip Pollard, with support from Mim Woodlands and Latha Lewis, has liaised with academics to provide the necessary background material and data so that teaching modules could be developed. The case studies are in the areas of waste management and ecologically sustainable building design.

Philip said Facilities Management is part of a collaborative initiative that works towards a sustainable future. In partnership with organisations and groups from the University, the regional community, and national and international bodies, Facilities Management has implemented a range of measures to enhance the University's environmental sustainability including a successful recycling program for paper, and on-site worm farms at Callaghan and Ourimbah.

"It includes initiatives to make energy savings, reduce carbon dioxide emission, reduce the waste stream to landfill and storm water, use of recycled materials, and enhanced bio-diversity through innovative 'landsoft' landscaping techniques," Philip said. "As well, a series of ecologically sustainable buildings - both new and refurbished - have been delivered as part of campus facilities."

Virtually all scraps generated by the University's food outlets and college dining halls, and around 80-90 percent of all organic waste, are utilised in the worm farm. Energy savings in buildings of 50-70 percent have been achieved and water consumption has remained constant over the past decade, despite a 50 percent increase in student numbers, Philip said.

"The University has formed a variety of partnerships in the region with community groups such as Landcare, Bushcare and disabled groups, who undertake voluntary work on the natural campus environment to bring the sustainable principles into reality," Philip said. "Knowledge generated through the various initiatives is transferred through demonstration to other regional organisations such as local councils, Hunter Water Corporation, as well as local property developers and students from the region's high schools and TAFE institutes."

There are many people around the University involved in educational activities related to sustainability and the environment, and through the 'Integrated Learning Opportunity for Sustainability' project, the University hopes to enhance its already strong reputation in this area. To ensure its success, the project is coordinated at an institutional level by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English.
Healthy ecosystem conference draws stars

Internationally recognised peace activist Dr Helen Caldicott was one of a number of high-profile environmental experts who spoke at the ‘Air, Waters, Places Conference on Ecosystem Health in Australia’ held at the University last month. Dr Caldicott has devoted the last 30 years to an international campaign to educate the public about the medical hazards of the nuclear age. She founded the Physicians for Social Responsibility in the United States and similar groups in other countries and has authored five books.

Dr Caldicott delivered an address on the war in Iraq, highlighting the devastating effects it would have on human and environmental health.

Conference convenor Dr Glenn Albrecht from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and IT, said the presentation was one of many at the conference that examined the relationship between the health of ecosystems and the health of people.

“The conference encouraged participants to explore, using transdisciplinary approaches, the relationships between the ecological and physical foundations of life and the health and status of citizens and their communities in Australia,” he said. “The University was an ideal place to hold it because the Hunter region is a showcase of issues, problems and solutions for the whole paradigm of ecosystem health.”

Another keynote speaker at the conference was Professor David Rapport, from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Professor Rapport is founding President of the International Society for Ecosystem Health and has been honoured by his peers for his achievements in environmental health with a Tri-National Invited Researcher Chair in Ecosystem Health and a Twentieth Century Distinguished Service Award. He has been elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London. His address stressed the need to include human factors in assessing ecosystem health, including socio-economic, cultural and human health dimensions as both affected by and affecting biophysical conditions.

Dr Mary White, author of a series of books that espouse Australia’s current land and water use as unsustainable, delivered an address that examined the continent’s geological history. Dr White talked about the importance of invisible, microscopic life to the complete webs-of-life that make the biosphere function and ensure human survival on the Earth.

Professor Tony McMichael from the Australian National University spoke on climate change and its impacts on ecosystems and human health. A/Professor Pierre Horwitz from Edith Cowan University delivered an address on ‘Endemic Sense of Place as a Key Theme in Ecosystem Health’; and Eric Hatfield (Healthy Rivers Commission), Dr Andrew Brooks (Griffith University) and Dr Andrew Boulton (University of New England) spoke about the importance of healthy rivers and water systems.

The conference, sponsored by the International Society for Ecosystem Health, the Clean Air Society (NSW) and the Asia-Pacific Institute for the Environment, included a field trip to the Hunter Valley vineyards.

Australia’s first micro power station

Australia’s first grid-connected micro power station was officially launched at the University in March.

The 30-kilowatt natural gas-powered micro turbine is the first commercial application of its kind in Australia and will provide electricity and heat energy for the University’s Medical Sciences building.

Micro turbine technology utilises a tiny jet engine that spins at 98,000 rpm. With only one moving part, it provides extremely high levels of reliability.

Director of Facilities Planning Philip Pollard said the University is constantly seeking ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.

“In addition to protecting the environment, we need to protect the decades of research work that we have stored in minus 80-degree freezers, and these will now be further protected by the micro turbine power supply,” Philip said.

The University and Newcastle City Council approached the NSW Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) last year seeking their involvement in the development of a micro turbine project. SEDA subsequently provided a $70,000 grant to assist in the development, with a view to demonstrating the low greenhouse gas emissions of micro turbine technology.

By generating electricity on site, waste heat from the micro turbine can be captured and used to support air conditioning and hot water, which achieves overall energy utilisation of up to 80 percent.

“We also see this project as a unique learning opportunity to provide our students with a hands-on demonstration of leading edge technology, whilst continuing our role as an innovative university,” Philip said.

The project is a joint initiative involving the University, SEDA and Newcastle City Council. Council’s Energy and Resource Manager Peter Dormand says the project demonstrates the opportunities for the Hunter Region to push the boundaries of energy generation.
Canberra fellowships a capital opportunity

A delegation promoting educational tours to Canberra visited the University last month to offer fellowships to secondary history education students.

About 40 students at Callaghan and 20 at the Ourimbah campus met the visitors, who represented the Australian War Memorial, the National Museum of Australia and the National Capital Educational Tourism Project, to learn about the 12 Teaching History Fellowships being offered.

Garry Watson from the National Capital Educational Tourism Project said the students who are awarded fellowships will experience and contribute to the teaching of history at educational and tourism institutions in Canberra.

"Last year 128,000 students visited the national capital on educational tours but most of those were primary school students," he said. "We think there is the potential to attract half a million students from around Australia to Canberra each year on excursions. This project allows us to tap into the students while they are in their final year at University and open their eyes to the national cultural resources that are available to them as history teachers in high schools."

The fellowship winners will investigate the education programs, websites and curriculum materials offered by the Australian War Memorial and the National Museum, as well as meeting and working with curators, historians, museum educators and guides. They will also visit other institutions with historical focuses including National Archives of Australia, National Capital Exhibition, Old Parliament House and ScreenSound Australia.

At the end of their week-long visit, they will complete a written project on their experience, with the possibility of publication in history teachers' journals to assist other teachers. They will also receive a certificate.

Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Education and Arts, Dr Ruth Reynolds, said secondary education students from Newcastle had been visiting Canberra annually for a number of years as a learning experience.

"The opportunity for our students to apply for these fellowships came about in part as a result of the close links our students have had with Canberra over the years," she said. "The resources available through these federally-funded cultural institutions support the inquiry and discovery based approach to teaching history that we provide at the University."

The fellowships provide travel and accommodation expenses, as well as valuable work experience and networking opportunities for students, who are selected for their academic results as well as their interest in history and teaching.

Students seek sustainable world at summit

Postgraduate student in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment Ben Maddox represented the University at the 2002 World Students' Summit in Japan last October.

More than 300 students from 82 universities in 45 countries and regions around the world attended the summit, which was held at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University overlooking Beppu City. The students formed committees, which were given the task of creating a draft statement on behalf of all summit participants about their findings on 'the role of students and youth: how can we establish human security and sustainable development on the earth'.

Ben volunteered to be part of a sub-committee charged with producing a statement on the Transfer of Technology - one of 10 groups that discussed different aspects of the overall theme.

"I felt my educational experiences in environmental science and engineering, along with my work experience in the areas of life cycle analysis and sustainable technology, provided me with a strong background relevant to technology transfer," Ben wrote in a report of the summit.

After a sleepless night hand drafting a statement for his sub-committee and a rushed typing job, Ben succeeded in having a revised statement accepted by his colleagues and submitted to the organising committee of the summit.

His statement concludes: "As students we can raise awareness of technological solutions and devise strategies that make appropriate transfer possible. We can be generous with spreading our knowledge and research findings. We can also conduct forums for citizens of developing nations to voice their needs. Finally, we can live our lives in a socially and ecologically sensitive way, using the most sustainable technologies available to us when meeting our daily needs."

Ben said his educational experiences at the University of Newcastle have provided him with the tools necessary to be a valuable participant in the summit. He thanked Professor Peter Scaife and the Centre for Sustainable Technology, as well as the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, for funding his travel to Japan, and Professor Brian English for nominating him.

"It allowed me to have an enriching experience of interacting with people who have a wide array of educational backgrounds and many differing opinions," Ben said. "The experience has strengthened my belief in my own abilities and given me valuable tools to draw upon in the future."
Revised grievance procedures implemented

The University this year introduced revised policies for grievance resolution that are not only more user-friendly but also aim to address grievances at the lowest appropriate management level to prevent them from escalating.

Former University Grievance Officer (UGO) David Powis initiated a review of the grievance procedures at the beginning of last year:

"During my two year appointment as UGO, I became aware of inadequacies in the existing procedures for handling grievances, which were rather cumbersome," he said. "There was limited flexibility and the Grievance Officer didn't have an adequate range of options open to them. I suggested a thorough revision of the procedures to make them more user-friendly and to reflect current legislation and best practice."

Two broadly-representative working parties were formed to carry out the review – one for staff and one for students. They sought input from relevant unions and University staff members, as well as outside opinions from the Anti-Discrimination Board and other authorities to ensure all the issues and legislation were adequately reflected in the new procedures.

"The process now starts at the lowest possible level and there is greater emphasis on solving the problem," David said. "We are hoping that a lot more disputes will be solved at the informal level rather than escalating to a formal complaint."

Working Party member Bev Richards from Human Resource Services division said the University was committed to the revised procedures and had devoted considerable resources and effort to implementing them. The number of grievance advisers and mediators has been significantly increased, with around 70 people undergoing training in the past couple of months. The trainees either self-nominated or were nominated by PVCs and division heads. They represent a balanced coverage of the campus in terms of gender and discipline area.

"More than 50 people, nominated by heads of schools and pro vice-chancellors, have taken part in a half day intensive training session to become grievance advisers, and there are more than 20 mediators, who attend two one-and-a-half day courses run by the Anti-Discrimination Board," David said. "The adviser's role is to be the first link in the chain. If someone has a complaint and they're not sure what to do about it, the grievance adviser will give them advice about their options, without trying to solve the problem."

An important aspect of the new procedures is to ensure that they are accessible to all staff and students by raising awareness about them. The University has run a poster campaign and has established websites for staff (www.newcastle.edu.au/services/hrm/grievance) and students (www.newcastle.edu.au/ study/grievance).

While David's appointment as UGO was extended for a year so that he could oversee the introduction of the new policy, he has now handed on the job to Ellak von Nagy-Felsobuki from the Faculty of Science and IT.

"David has done a marvellous job in the past three years and has really put the grievance procedures on the University map," Ellak said. "I see my task as UGO is to help to create an environment at the University where people can grow and achieve their potential. When a person feels aggrieved and someone else is implicated, it is my task to manage the process in an orderly and hopefully effective manner to ensure that there is an outcome."

Ellak hopes that by acting quickly and in a non-judgemental manner, disputes can be resolved with minimum stress and damage.

"Invoking the revised procedures will lead to natural justice," he said. "I'm interested in helping to make the University a more pleasurable place to work and study."

Researchers in top scientist ranking

The University has three of the world's top scientists as ranked by ISI, the Institute for Scientific Information. The ISI 'highly cited' ranking system identifies the top international researchers in nine disciplines over the last 20 years.

Professor Iain Raeburn from the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences was 'highly cited' for his work in the field of pure mathematics.

Professor Robert Antonia, ARC Senior Research Fellow in the School of Engineering, was 'highly cited' for his work in the field of mechanical engineering.

Professor Graham Goodwin, Fellow of the Royal Society, London and ARC Federation Fellow from the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science was 'highly cited' for his work in the field of electrical engineering.

The 'highly cited' ranking recognises scientists who essentially form the core of the international scientific community.
Disabilities no barrier for Mark

A brief encounter at the Green Hills Fitness Centre in October last year began a chain of events that led to psychology lecturer Dr Mark Charlton winning three gold medals for swimming in the Trans-Tasman Master's Games in Newcastle in March.

Mark, who is Disability Adviser for the Faculty of Science and IT, was swimming with his wife and daughter at the centre when he met Ellena Morris, Regional Director for Disabled Swimming. She invited him to try competitive swimming, starting with the Trans-Tasman event.

After training for one day a week to build up his stamina, Mark won the 25-metre freestyle and backstroke, and the 50-metre backstroke events for his age and disability classification.

Mark, whose arms are deformed due to thalidomide, learned to swim as a child and took it up regularly a couple of years ago as therapeutic treatment for chronic back pain. He has scoliosis and has had two spinal fusion operations and a metal pin inserted in his back.

"Swimming is great therapy because it's not weight-bearing and it exercises every part of your body," he said. "I took on swimming competitively because I am interested in increasing my involvement with people who are disabled, which is why I took on the Faculty adviser’s job - I want to give something back. Swimming in this sort of event helps to increase my knowledge and awareness about issues affecting disabled people."

Mark has never let his disabilities hold him back but they have affected his career path. He began his working life as a trainee metallurgist for BHP, moving to Newcastle from his family’s property near Walgett in western NSW in 1981. But physical difficulties made the work hard for him and after completing his metallurgy certificate, he came to the University in 1984 and began a Bachelor of Arts with the idea that he might teach. After studying psychology in first year, he was hooked and completed an Honours degree and a PhD to become a registered psychologist.

Between 1993 and 1995, Mark worked as a psychologist at the Kanangra Centre, a residential institution for developmentally disabled people at Morisset. He was forced to leave when his back pain became chronic. He returned to a position as a professional officer at the University in 1996, where he completed his PhD and taught part-time until he was offered a full-time lecturer’s position in 2002. He now teaches health psychology to allied health professionals, as well as supervising postgraduate students.

Mark is working with the University’s Clinical and Health Psychology research group, researching a topic in which he has a personal interest – chronic pain. He plans to continue swimming competitively with his next event scheduled to take place at Homebush in June.

Music prize to ABC composer

Australian composer and ABC presenter Andrew Ford has won the 2002 Jean Bogan Memorial Prize for piano composition.

Dean of the Conservatorium, Professor Robert Constable, said the judging panel was unanimous in its selection of Andrew Ford’s work, ‘The Waltz Book’, which he described as ‘a very worthy addition to the Australian piano repertoire’.

Andrew Ford is well known in Australia, both as a composer and as a journalist on radio and in the print media.

"In the past winning compositions have been single works," said Professor Constable, "but on this occasion, the panel decided to award the Jean Bogan Prize for a collection of short pieces. In fact there are 60 short waltzes that make up 'The Waltz Book' collection."

The adjudicators who select the winner of the Jean Bogan Memorial Prize each year have a hard task as the contest attracts many high calibre entries from around Australia. The prize for piano composition was initiated in 1989 by Mr Laurie Bogan in memory of his late wife Jean. Mr Bogan, who died recently, made provision in his will for the competition to continue.

Andrew Ford is a composer, writer and broadcaster. Born and educated in England, he came to Australia in 1983. For the next 12 years, he was on the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong, and since 1995 he has presented the Music Show each Saturday morning on ABC Radio National.

As a composer, Ford has written for the concert hall, the theatre and radio. He was Composer in Residence with the Australian Chamber Orchestra from 1992-94, and was the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Fellow in Composition, 1998-2000. His music has been performed throughout Australia, in North and South America, in southeast Asia and in most countries of Europe. More than 30 of his pieces are now commercially recorded.

Beyond composing, Andrew Ford is well known as a commentator on a wide range of music. In 1998, he was awarded the prestigious Geraldine Pascall prize for critical writing. The premiere of ‘The Waltz Book’ took place in Hobart in March.
Engineering in the blood

Geoffrey Long received a surprise bonus when he graduated last month at Callaghan with a combined Bachelor of Surveying/Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) degree with first class honours. He was presented with his great grandfather's Whitworth Scholarship Medal, dated exactly 100 years before Geoffrey's graduation, and a wooden box containing his engineering drawing instruments.

Geoffrey's great grandfather Robert Barr was awarded the medal when he graduated from a civil engineering degree at Glasgow University in 1903. The Whitworth Scholarship was presented for mathematics.

Speaking at the presentation, Geoffrey's mother Julie said he was following a family tradition by choosing a career in engineering. His paternal great grandfather Alf Middleton was a surveyor and his grandfather and two uncle's were engineers.

"Geoff and Robert had quite a few things in common," she said. "They both studied civil engineering, were both very capable students and exactly 100 years ago, Robert was awarded the Whitworth Memorial Medal. He was 23 years old. In 2003, Geoff is also 23 years old."

Continuing in the family tradition, Geoff is a member of the Institution of Engineers. Julie discovered in researching the life of Robert Barr that he was a foundation member of the Institution in 1919. Geoff's paternal grandfather Bob Long was Assistant Secretary of the Institution and his other grandfather and uncles have all been members.

"Now Geoff works with Geoff Gleeson at Hunter Water Australia, who was their Hunter representative last year," Julie said. "I wonder if the Institution has many families of four generations of engineers on their register?"

In the name of research

In what is becoming a tradition, a number of University staff put their bodies on the line in the 2003 Sparke Helmore/Prime Television Corporate Triathlon to raise money for the Hunter Medical Research Institute. Over 290 individuals and more than 60 teams competed in the 500-metre swim, 20 kilometre bike ride and five kilometre run on the Newcastle foreshore. Several of the University competitors were attempting their first ever triathlon.

The following staff took part:

Individuals: Janet Aisbett (3rd place - Corporate Female 50 years plus), Greg Gibbon, Ron Day, Jenny Williams (1st place - Corporate Female 40-49 years), Damien Ryan, Sue Beach (3rd place - Corporate Female 40-49 years), Andrew Licata, Louise Wilson, Adam McCluskay, Peter Turner and Steve Mitchell

Teams: Uni Tunes 1: Pat Murphy, Jane Ramplin
Uni Tunes 2: Veronica Pettifer, Toni O'Donoghue (1st place Corporate female team, over 120 years combined age)
Uni Tunes 3: David Donnelly, Natalie Downing, Shane Hughes (3rd place Corporate mixed team, over 120 years)

PVC leads by example

Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Business and Law Bernard Carey led by example last month when he had his annual flu shot.

Professor Carey is providing free access for all Faculty staff wishing to have their immunisation.

"The health of my staff is important to me," he said. "The Faculty has a responsibility to encourage staff to protect themselves and remain as healthy as possible."

Further details about the flu immunisation can be obtained from the University Health Service.
New York exposure for Newcastle artist

Fine Art graduate and artist-in-residence at Newcastle's Regional Art Gallery Ian Burns benefited from the help of one of the University's exchange partners to gain entry to renowned New York art school, Hunter College.

Ian, who is due to complete his Master of Fine Arts at Hunter College in December, said it began with him going on exchange to Buffalo State College in New York state for the second last semester of his Bachelor of Fine Art.

"Another Fine Art student from the University had been to Buffalo the year before and had won a place offered by the College to complete her studies in Siena, Italy," Ian said. "I'd hoped to study in New York and the people from Buffalo helped me to get into Hunter College for the last semester of my undergraduate degree."

Ian, an installation artist and sculptor, was the first foreign student to win one of the highly competitive national scholarships to study in New York. He has exhibited in a number of different venues and group shows across the US and his work was recently chosen for the CAA (College Art Association) selected National Exhibition in the United States.

Although Ian has always been interested in art, it wasn't his first choice as a career. He began industrial engineering studies at the University when he finished his HSC at Booragul High School, completing his degree at Swinburne University in Melbourne.

"I had this whole career as an engineer," Ian explained, "but then I began working as a professional potter. I started doing the Bachelor of Fine Art in 1996 because I felt like my brain was going to sleep. I think the main thing you get from studying any discipline is intellectual stimulus."

Studying and working in New York has given Ian a much better understanding of art, through exposure to the broad range of work from around the world that the galleries of that city attract.

"It's like I'm living out some sort of fantasy," he said. "I'm really taking advantage of working in the studio and have learned new ways of thinking about creating art since I've been at the College."

Ian says his days in the fully equipped studio routinely begin at 8am and finish between 10pm and midnight. It is this work ethic, as well as the heightened opportunity for exposure that he most values about his experiences in New York.

The work Ian has constructed at the Regional Gallery is made from found materials, including a lens from a theatrical projector that he found in a New York garbage bin, which now acts as the lens in a camera obscura. While his engineering training helps him when he's preparing an installation, he says his work exhibits more of the 'mad inventor' than engineering skill.

"My work at the gallery is a reaction to what I've seen and experienced," he said. "The New York art world portrays things in a notoriously slick way and my thesis examines the way that people perceive art."

Ian uses a single light bulb to power his work, which has art history precedents that go back to before cinema. Pictures displace each other using moving light to create the effect of ships moving across the horizon and a plane across the sky.

"My research is about people's desire to read things into art," he said. "The image is very compelling and people can sit and watch it. It looks very high tech but when you walk behind it and see what runs it, it's quite simple. Watching it can be quite therapeutic. It hits a line between madness and pleasantness."

Ian delivered guest lectures to undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University during his visit and returned to New York at the end of April.

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People & Places

Bookshop offers add-on services

Manager of the United Campus Bookshop at Callaghan, Margaret Lockwood, knows practically everything there is to know about books and how to order them.

After 37 years in the book industry — in both retail and publishing — she has a wealth of experience to offer the University's students and academic staff.

Margaret Lockwood

Margaret also has experience of the University, having worked in the Coop Bookshop at Callaghan in the days when Professor James Auchmuty was Vice-Chancellor. She is keen to tell everyone about the add-on services that the bookshop can provide to academic staff, above and beyond ordering in the texts they are setting for their courses. The bookshop staff hand-deliver textbook order forms to discipline areas throughout the University at the beginning of each semester or trimester. They also set up a stand at the Graduate School of Business for the first couple of weeks of each trimester to sell the prescribed texts.

"We can arrange book signings and launches for the work of University academics or for their visitors," she said. "We can also organise to have displays of books and copies for sale at conferences and seminars."

The Bookshop hosted the launch last month of a new book co-authored by A/Professor David Gamage, with a full-counter display of the work and copies available for sale on the night. A book by University academics John Burgess and Duncan McDonald will be launched at the bookshop on May 5.

Margaret and her staff can also set up displays and sell copies of books at conferences on campus. Last month, they set up a stall at the 'Airs, Waters, Places' conference on ecosystem health in Australia to offer the works of keynotes speakers including Mary White, Helen Caldicott and Tony McMichael.

"If academics let us know three to four weeks in advance of a conference, we can get in copies of the books to offer for sale," Margaret said. "We can access the latest works or search for backlist titles and the lead-in time allows us to get them in from overseas if necessary."

With their head office in Sydney, United Campus has 16 bookshops at universities and TAFE colleges and has been selling books at Callaghan since 2000. For information about services offered by the bookshop, drop in to the shop under the Shortland Union building or call Margaret on 4960 3045.

Thanks for caring

Students from the Faculty of Science and IT who have acted as mentors to commencing students were rewarded at a barbecue lunch last month.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Bill Hogarth presented the student mentors with a $50 book voucher and certificates of appreciation at the thank you barbecue on April 10.

"The mentoring program was introduced last year as part of the Faculty's efforts to support students during their first semester of study," Professor Hogarth said. "The student mentors meet with commencing students during Orientation Week and offer them advice and ongoing contact. We're very grateful to those who volunteered for this valuable program."

Doing time for the Smith Family

Two members of the University's academic staff did time in gaol earlier this year — all in the name of a good cause.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian English and Head of the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences Professor John O'Connor were imprisoned at historic Maitland Gaol in March but were sprung when their supporters paid to have them released.

John and Brian were incarcerated to raise funds for the Smith Family's Learning for Life Program, which aims to unlock opportunities for students from disadvantaged families and help them to participate more fully in education and society.

Professor John O'Connor (top) behind bars for charity, while Professor Brian English (left) faces the judge at the Smith Family fundraiser
Bob plans busy retirement

When former Manager of the University's Supply and Payments section Bob Richardson was planning a farewell speech to mark his retirement from the University after 36 years of service, he thought he might talk about the ‘good old days’ but then reconsidered.

“When I looked back on the way we used to do things in the workplace, I’m not sure they were so ‘good’,” Bob said. “For instance if we needed to correspond with someone in the ‘60s, we’d dictate a letter and a secretary would type a draft, which we would read and make corrections to and then a final draft would be prepared and sent in the mail. Today, you sit at the PC and rip out an email and get an answer back almost immediately.”

Bob has embraced technological change enthusiastically during his University career, which began in November 1966 as an Accounts Payable clerk. He was the University’s longest serving member of non-academic staff when he finished work on March 28 and has negotiated myriad changes in work practices as well as surviving several major restructures at the University.

“To be in any way successful, you have got to be able to change with the times,” he said. “I think I’ve been reasonably innovative in my approach to life. Technological advances have made our working lives completely different from when I started and you need to be flexible to keep pace with change.”

Bob described his years at the University as ‘an interesting trip’, where he has seen the campus change physically from the 100 acres of bushland with four buildings on it that he encountered in 1966.

“I’ve watched lawns turn into mounds and bushland and seen the wildlife on campus increase from virtually none to a position where it is nothing to see rabbits, ducks and wallabies every day.”

He remembers working with the University’s ‘icons’ like James Auchmuty, Godfrey Tanner, Eric Hall, Allan Carmichael and Cliff Ellyett. He remembers the buzz on campus when a talented young entertainer named Olivia would drop in to visit her father, Professor Brin Newton-John. He also got to meet a range of personalities who came to the University to speak at Union dinners over the years including Dr James Wright, Justice Michael Kirby and media-savvy scientist Dr Karl Kruszelnicki.

Bob admits that when he leaves, his colleagues may have to look around for answers to questions that he previously would have answered for them, from the masses of information about the job he collected in his head over his 36 years at the University. But he says that no one is indispensable and that they will cope without him. And he may be hard to find if they do need him, with travel one of his first priorities for retirement.

“I finish on Friday and we leave on Monday,” Bob said, describing two weeks trout fishing in Tumut, followed by a four-wheel driving holiday to Cape York Peninsula and beyond. “Retirement gives me the opportunity to completely change my life and indulge myself in all the areas I didn’t have time for while I was working – hobbies, family and travel.”

Bob will continue his work as a tax agent – a part-time business he has run for 20 years – during the winter, before taking off again early next year to see more of Australia.

“I have a few retired friends who say they are so busy now they are finished that they wonder how they ever found time for work,” Bob jokes. “I expect it will be like that for me.”

Training teachers to lead

Teachers are usually trained only to teach but many of them find themselves in management roles. A book was launched at the Callaghan campus last month that provides comprehensive coverage of educational leadership and administration.

The book, Leadership and Management in Education, is co-authored by Associate Professor David Gamage, Director of the University’s Leadership and Management in Education program, and Associate Professor Nicholas Pang from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It draws on a rich set of data from many international cases to outline the essential skills and competencies for successful leaders in education.

The book was launched by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English and Pro Vice-Chancellor Terry Lovat at the United Campus Bookshop.

A/Professor David Gamage is congratulated by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Brian English (centre) and Pro Vice-Chancellor Terry Lovat at the book launch.
They probably wouldn't even think of it, unless you mentioned that Resi's multi-award-winning Complete Home 5-85% Loan has no hidden fees, a very low standard variable rate, and a 3-year written honeymoon guarantee (which means you'll pay less over 3 years with Resi compared to many other standard variable rates) and a very low standard a very low standard loan has no hidden fees, unless you mentioned that Resi's multi-award-winning Complete Home 5-85% Loan has no hidden fees, a very low standard variable rate, and a 3-year written honeymoon guarantee (which means you'll pay less over 3 years with Resi compared to many other standard variable rates) ...