We were the 'first cab off the rank' this year for the annual Profiles 2001-2003 meeting with DETYA. The meeting was held on the Central Coast Campus on August 4 and proved to be a very significant one for the university, given the major topic for discussion, which was the implementation of the policies arising from the White Paper on Research and Research Training, announced last December.

The Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) received major attention, particularly with respect to our aspirations to be a fully comprehensive university across undergraduate, coursework postgraduate and research postgraduate areas, and to be research intensive, with designated areas or centres of international and national significance. Our Research and Research Training Management Plan provided a platform for specific discussions of these plans for research enhancement as a university, and we were complimented on the comprehensive nature and clear setting of directions and goals for the university's programs in these areas.

Of major significance were the discussions about allocations of funded student load for the university, particularly the proposed removal of the so-called 'gap places' for research postgraduate students from operating grant funding. You will be aware that the Federal Government proposes to reduce funded places for higher degree research students by approximately 3,500 (from 25,000 to 21,500). The White Paper revealed that there were 21,500 HECS-exempt scholarships for research students in the system, but approximately 25,000 effective full-time domestic research students – hence the plan by the Government to phase out these plans for research enhancement as a university, and we were complimented on the comprehensive nature and clear setting of directions and goals for the university's programs in these areas.

Other topics for discussion included the university's performance against targets for enrolled students (we are meeting all of our targets); our modest over-enrolment in 2000 and subsequent years (currently around seven percent over-enrolled, which is manageable); fee-paying student enrolments and targets, including international students; a bid for funding of rural medical student places and Rural Health Centres under the Commonwealth Government's Rural Health Initiatives Scheme; Enabling Programs; an application for 200 growth places to serve the Hunter and Central Coast communities primarily; our financial and capital plans; quality assurance; indigenous teaching and research issues; equity issues; and a Capital Development Pool proposal bid for 2003.

Funding for enabling program students is currently under review by the Commonwealth Government. It was recognised that the University of Newcastle has the largest and most successful enabling program in the country, which has served our primary regions, Hunter and Central Coast, well for more than 20 years. Enabling programs provide an important opportunity for those members of the community who would not otherwise come to university, to gain a tertiary education as well as enhanced employment prospects. The Government will announce their decision later in the year. I am hopeful for a sympathetic and successful outcome.

Overall, the discussions went well and the visiting 'team members' from DETYA were obviously impressed by the facilities available to University, TAFE and Community College students and staff on the Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah.

Speaking on the Central Coast Campus, I must make special mention of the successful work undertaken by Professor Les Eastcott for more than 10 years at Ourimbah. Professor Eastcott has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua and New Guinea from October this year. I thank Professor Eastcott for his major contributions to the development of the Central Coast Campus as a viable and lively campus of the university, and congratulate him on his appointment as UPNG's Vice-Chancellor. We wish him and UPNG well for their future.

August edition

Editorial enquiries and contributions should be directed to the Editor, Uninews, Marketing and Media Services, phone: 4956 1869 or 0412 128 727, email: pkkh@alinga.newcastle.edu.au
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Cover: Wearing the colours - students from the Department of Communication and Media Arts tried on their Olympic uniforms before their involvement in the 2000 Games in Sydney this month. For a round-up of the university's Olympic connections see p10.

Photo by Chris Patterson
Newcastle alumni chapter launched

More than 150 graduates spanning the university’s 30 year history and representing every faculty attended the launch of the Newcastle Chapter held at the Newcastle Region Art Gallery in July.

Director of Community and Alumni Relations Dr Bernie Curran said that those attending the cocktail party launch included final year students and recent graduates, as well as alumni who have succeeded in their chosen fields since graduating.

"The establishment of a Newcastle Chapter provides a splendid opportunity for those who are about to graduate from the university to meet with those who have graduated and achieved prominence," he said. Apart from the networking benefits, alumni gatherings help the university to learn about the achievements of its graduates, which is an important element in establishing the institution’s reputation in an increasingly competitive market, Bernie said.

Emeritus Professor Ken Dutton spoke at the launch about the release of his biography of the university’s first Vice-Chancellor, Professor James Auchmuty. As well as graduates, a number of former and current council and staff members attended including the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations), the Dean of Science and Mathematics, Norman Talbot, Don Morris and John Peschar.

The aim of launching a Chapter in Newcastle is to enhance the relationship between the university and its graduates living in the Hunter and Central Coast regions and to increase opportunities for graduates to be involved in the life and work of the university, Bernie said. It will also help make graduates aware of opportunities for continuing education as well as encouraging their participation in university strategic planning and the practical formulation of courses and curriculums.

Alumni chapters have already been established in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Brisbane, providing avenues for renewing friendships and professional networking. For information on chapters, contact Reah Kay on ext 6459 or email rkay@mail.

Improving the health of cancer patients

New research at the university indicates that cancer patients may experience physical benefits by joining a support group while being treated for the disease.

Dr John Shea from the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Science and Mathematics and his team carried out a two-year pilot study into the effects of support groups at Newcastle’s Mater Hospital. The team found that at the end of the study, people who attended the support groups had much less severe symptoms than a control group who did not attend the meetings.

"The physical symptoms of all patients at the beginning of the study were the same," explained John. "But at the end of the research project, patients who had attended support groups had less chest pain, could breathe more easily, sleep better, had more energy and better sexual functioning than the control group."

He says the results were surprising.

"We expected that most of the positive outcomes would be related to psychological factors, such as quality of life, mental health, emotional problems and time spent on work and other normal activities," he said. "While there were also benefits in these areas, the physical results were so unexpected that we are hoping to gain funding for a large scale research project to be conducted over the next few years."

John is also forming another free support group for cancer patients, which will not form part of a research study.

"This group is a program I am offering through the Department of Psychology to help people living with cancer," he said. "It will include training in meditation, deep relaxation and stress management, and offers the opportunity to learn how other people have coped with their cancer diagnosis."

Cancer patients and their support persons interested in attending the group should call the Department on ext 5935.

Uninews 2000 Schedule

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L-R: Vice-Chancellor Professor Roger Holmes, Emeritus Professor Ken Dutton, graduate speaker Frances Kay-Lambkin, Dr Bernie Curran and Chancellor Ric Charlton

Graduates of the future: students and staff from Event House at the Chapter launch
Chinese law students welcomed

The first group of Chinese students enrolled in the Faculty of Law's innovative Master of Common Law program are currently studying at the Callaghan campus.

The eleven students, who have successfully completed their Graduate Certificate in Common Law at Nankai University in China, arrived in Newcastle last month to complete their study. Newcastle is the first Australian university to have a law course taught in China.

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Anne Finlay, said the students have a steep learning curve in adjusting to notions of Common Law that are completely new to them.

"The idea that judges can declare what the law is and the fact that the courts are independent of government are completely foreign notions to people from countries such as China," Anne said. "The skills they need to succeed here are very different to those they have encountered at home. Most of them have had very little exposure to a good law library and some of them had never used a computer before."

The students will do four subjects to complete their Masters program including Legal Research Methods, a course formulated specially for them that teaches conventional library research methods as well as electronic methods.

The students come from a variety of regions and backgrounds in China, with some undertaking a 30-hour train trip to study at Nankai, which is 70 minutes by train from Beijing. Many have been practising lawyers and they are all interested in bringing an international focus to commercial law practices. All of them are studying company and employment law at Newcastle.

Behind the success of the Common Law program is former Central Coast Campus lecturer, Graham Brown, who is now based in Beijing. He conceived the idea for teaching a law course in China while on sabbatical there in 1997.

"There are two advantages to Chinese lawyers in studying Common Law," Graham explained while on a recent visit to Newcastle. "Firstly, international law is somewhere to look for guidance in areas where Chinese law is silent. This is becoming less useful as Chinese law becomes more complex. Secondly, they can make a lot of money doing legal work for the increasing number of foreign investors pouring millions of dollars into China each year."

With many lawyers heading to the US to study common law, Graham is anxiously awaiting the completion of the first batch of students at Newcastle in order to establish a successful precedent for his course. "Our approach to legal education is quite different and I think the students were a bit shocked at what is expected of them," he said. "The legal concerns are difficult and working in English is also challenging but it is the expectation for independent study and research that is very different to the 'these are the rules, remember them' style of learning they are used to."

Australian universities are conservative in their requirements for English proficiency, particularly for postgraduate students. Studying for the Graduate Certificate in Nankai allows students to improve their language proficiency while still in China. Dealing with Australian culture was another hurdle for the Chinese students, most of whom are living close to campus.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," Graham said. "If the students do well this semester it will reinforce what we are doing in China."

Murder on campus

Forensic Science students at the university examined a fake crime scene on campus last month as part of their studies.

A murder was staged at the start of the Don Morris walk on Friday 21 July, and the 13 students applied their forensic skills to solve the crime.

Dr Adam McCluskey, Coordinator of the Forensic Science program, says the exercise is a first for the university.

"The Forensic Science double degree is a new restricted entry course, which combines a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Science (Forensic)," said Adam. "The students are all in their second year of study, and are undertaking the exercise as part of the 'Introduction to Forensic Science' unit."

The crime scene was set up by staff from the Department of Chemistry, based on advice from the Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Educators, of which Dr McCluskey is a member.

"We set it up as a drug deal which went wrong," Adam said. "A mannequin was used as the body, and numerous pieces of evidence were scattered through the bush for students to find."

To make the scene as realistic as possible, the students wore white overalls and used metal detectors, evidence bags, and other equipment. The event was videotaped, and the 'murder case' will go before a staged court at the end of the year, where the students will be called to testify as forensic experts.
Design success a virtual reality

The university has taken a step into the future with the appointment of a virtual reality expert to a chair in design.

Professor Tony Eddison, who will also be Director of the university’s commercial design group TUNRA Design, will draw on his experience to create a multi-media based postgraduate coursework program at Newcastle.

“Incorporating multi-media is the natural move for visual communications now,” Tony said.

“While 3D modelling has been used by designers and architects for a while, virtual reality is the next step and is used as an aid to design, not just a way to display a completed design.”

Virtual reality equipment allows the designer to create a simulation of the design, whether it is for a building, a piece of furniture or a pen, that can be walked through and around, flown over and more importantly tested.

“By donning the head gear, a home buyer for instance can walk through the building for themselves, looking at any aspect they’re interested in,” Tony said.

“You can simulate traffic flow, build in stress factors, see where the shadow of a tall building will fall during different times of the day, even incorporate sound.”

The university has purchased an Intergraph hardware system that produces real-time images using active stereo and can be upgraded for use in a small theatre. The virtual reality equipment will be used in the proposed multi-media coursework Masters program, and with final year undergraduate students, Tony hopes to work with local industries through TUNRA Design, with applications for the virtual reality technology including modelling for urban regeneration projects and environmental impact analysis, as well as having an increasing role in the heritage and tourism industries. He is well qualified for consultancy, having worked on a range of projects with industry around the world. From his base at York, Tony worked as far afield as Athens, where he contributed to the digital reconstruction of the ancient city of Miletus for display in a virtual museum, and Poland, where he consulted with universities following the fall of the Berlin wall to establish courses in marketing, industrial and commercial design, and styling to help them meet the challenge of the influx of Western competition.

“With the digital imaging systems becoming more affordable, they are increasingly being used by designers and artists in preference to more traditional modelling methods like photography or constructing physical prototypes,” he said.

“This is particularly true for interior architects and industrial designers, who are using virtual reality techniques and rapid prototyping to bring realistic three dimensional models a step closer to reality. We will be looking at using rapid prototyping with industry here, which is quite unique to NSW.”

Originally from Aberdeen in Scotland, Tony studied environmental design at the City University in London before getting involved in design research and methodology with the Royal College of Art. After practising in London and later Chester for a few years, he began teaching in the design faculty of the University of Manchester, moving to Teesside to establish their Virtual Environment Design Research Unit. He is joined in Newcastle by his wife Nathalie (due to give birth to their third child any day!) and children Kayleigh (13) and Antoine (10).

Caravan idea brings Qik Action

Darrin Gray had an idea when he noticed the substandard housing of many of his clients in the Family Action Centre’s Caravan Project. Why not improve their accommodation and at the same time provide training and work opportunities for the many young people living in caravan parks who are at risk of becoming involved in the legal system?

Darrin’s idea became a reality with the launch at the university last month of the Qik Action project, a collaborative venture between the Family Action Centre (FAC) and the Hunter STAR Foundation Inc (HSF). The project seeks to establish a commercially driven light manufacturing business where young people at risk manufacture and erect a caravan awning system.

The HSF is a charitable organisation established in 1988 to support young people at risk of dropping out of structured education. An HSF nominee will chair a Qik Action Management Committee with members from the FAC, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Department of Juvenile Justice, the business community, an education and training provider. The project has also been supported by Advitech Engineering, who has volunteered their expertise to design the awning system, and NRMA Ltd, who have provided financial assistance.

“It has been a collaborative venture to bring Darrin’s idea to this day when we have a project that will provide real and wonderful opportunities for youth at risk to gain work experience,” Director of the FAC, Di James said at the launch on July 18. Di paid tribute to Darrin for his idea and to David Jack for helping to make it into a viable project.

“David and Darrin are the ideas people and we are enormously grateful for their energy, vision, creativity and generosity.”

The project will begin in 2001 and funds earned will be fed back into youth programs.
Focus on customer service

Newly appointed Deputy to the University Secretary and Registrar Robyn Drake says that her talent for working with people will help to create a strong customer service ethic among staff of Student and Academic Services Division (SASD).

"Working with people is my forte," says Robyn, whose work as Deputy General Manager of Canterbury City Council in Sydney won her awards and acclaim. "Traditionally there hasn't been a culture of customer service in universities and it is something that needs to be addressed. I want to help people to develop in their jobs and get away from reactive types of work."

Part of helping people to do their jobs better is getting to know them and what they do. Robyn, who will be responsible for oversight of the assistant registrars and the work of the faculty secretariats, plans to get around to meet all the faculty staff in coming weeks. She recognises that getting everyone pulling in one direction for the good of the students is challenging given that there are anomalies between the numbers of students and the volume of work taken on by faculty secretariats.

"There are a lot of artificial barriers within any organisation and protecting your territory is instinctive," she said. "Shifting to a customer service focus isn't something that happens in one area, it is a general thing that comes with cultural change in an organisation."

Robyn comes well qualified for the task, having developed a customer service centre and call centre at Canterbury that is responsive to the needs of the local community. She says that the introduction of a training program in customer service for all council staff helped to break down the "roads, rates and rubbish" mentality where anything that happened outside your department was nothing to do with you.

"As part of a staff enterprise agreement we incorporated workplace reform that built customer service into everyone's performance review," Robyn explained. "People became accountable and had to incorporate their training into their work."

Robyn, who grew up in Newcastle, studied Early Childhood Education in Adelaide when she left Newcastle Girls High School. She returned to Newcastle and worked with preschool aged children with disabilities and their parents. Through this she developed an interest in child welfare, which led her to a position with the Department of Youth and Community Services. In 1985, she went to Sydney to take up a position as a policy adviser with the Department.

"I worked with three different state ministers, both Liberal and Labor," Robyn said. "You need to be very persuasive in that advocacy role and I had to assist ministers with some very sensitive issues that they often had difficulty confronting for religious or cultural reasons."

Robyn took the position as Director of Community Services with Canterbury Council in an effort to get back to the grass roots, with local government providing her with an opportunity to get immediate feedback on a policy decision from the community. The area presented her with some unique challenges. With 140 different cultural groups including a large Muslim cohort living in 35 square kilometres and 70 percent of families earning less than $24,000 a year she had her work cut out for her.

"I arranged for staff from non-English speaking backgrounds to be trained as accredited language aides, who between them spoke 14 different languages, to help us to talk to people. I also implemented a Community Relations Program that allowed me to introduce the Muslim community to the rest of the world so that people could understand their culture and to lay their fears to rest."

Robyn also introduced a plain English policy that saw a total rewrite of all the Council's documents and won her a Best Practice Award. "The rules and statutes of local government were written in formal, stilted language, which is totally inappropriate when you are dealing with non-English speaking people," she said. "We threw out all the documents and came up with new forms of words which were simple and meaningful for everyone."

Another of Robyn's talents is administration. As Deputy General Manager of the Council, she was responsible for a restructured department that included not only the administration of council minutes and agendas, but also the corporate side, which included strategic planning and budgeting.

"If in 10 years I did nothing else, I got the management plan to drive the budget," she said. "So often, the plan sits on the corporate coffee table and doesn't influence operations. I was able to devolve financial control to program managers and directors and get rid of central control."

With her contract at Canterbury due to expire and work towards her PhD almost complete, Robyn was recuperating from an operation at her holiday house on Lake Macquarie when she saw the advertisement for the Deputy University Secretary and Registrar. "I set myself five year goals and with my contract up at the end of the year, it was time to move on. I wasn't in a hurry to look for a job but I liked the idea of working in Newcastle again and the university offers a lot of challenges."

As well as supervising faculty secretariats, Robyn will be responsible for the student support services including counselling, careers, disability support and the chaplains. She will also act as a Deputy to Gem Cheong by taking on projects with a divisional focus.

"I will be a bit of a jack-of-all-trades," Robyn joked.
Farewell to the Hamiltons

The university last month farewelled the former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Professor John Hamilton and his wife Alison, who are leaving Newcastle to return to their native England.

Dean of the faculty from January 1984 to December 1997, John qualified at Middlesex Hospital in London in 1960. He spent two years at St Francis Hospital in Zambia before returning to London to undertake research. In 1969, he and Alison joined McMaster University in Canada, which was establishing a new curriculum that would become a model for innovation, problem-based learning and student selection. He returned to Africa in 1978 as Professor of Medicine at the new University of Ilorin in Nigeria and then took up the post of Public Health Specialist at the World Bank.

During his fourteen years at Newcastle, John continued the commitment of the university to community-based and innovative health care training that has made the medical school a model throughout Australia. He sustained a high level of involvement as a member of the Boards of both the Hunter Area Health Service, and the Mater Hospital during challenging times and has contributed to the reform of medical education nationally. He became the foundation Chairman of the Australian Medical Council Accreditation Committee in 1985, and has chaired the Commonwealth Government’s Rural Undergraduate Steering Committee. He has been a long time member of the Board of the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute, and latterly Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Studies.

John chaired the Consortium for the Quality of Australian Health Care Study, which led to national initiatives to improve health care and is being replicated in Great Britain. As Chairman of the Diarrhoeal Diseases Control Program, he has continued to contribute to the work of the World Health Organisation. His work as a WHO Consultant and his many cooperative initiatives abroad have raised the international profile of Newcastle.

Fifteen cohorts of Newcastle graduates have benefited from John’s support and leadership. His kindness, commitment to academic matters and to meeting the changing health needs of our community have been major factors in the success of Newcastle’s Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

John’s wife Alison has made a substantial contribution to the faculty. She has taught students in the ante-natal and sexual health clinics, and has worked as a tutor. Her most distinctive contribution to curriculum development is the third year BMed program in human sexuality, which has received universally positive appraisals from the students for whom she has been responsible. She has recently developed an interest in palliative care and has completed the Cardiff Diploma in Palliative Medicine.

A sabbatical in Britain has led to the next challenge for the Hamiltons. While Alison hopes to continue in palliative care, John will establish the undergraduate medicine program at Durham University in cooperation with Newcastle University (England). The curriculum will be established at the Stockton Campus in the Teesside region. This region has been severely damaged by loss of industry, unemployment, poverty and poor health. The two universities will address the extensive social and health needs of North East England.

Interestingly, many of the original settlers of the Hunter Region came from that part of the world. In a sense, a circle will be completed.

PWCS Scholarship winners

First year students Sarah Ellicot and Zane Sell have been awarded the Port Waratah Coal Services inaugural Undergraduate Scholarships, each worth $7000 a year.

Chairman of Port Waratah Coal Services, Professor Eileen Doyle said that as well as offering ongoing financial support, the scholarships will provide Sarah and Zane with valuable work experience during their summer breaks.

"Sarah and Zane were selected on their potential to graduate and establish successful careers in business. The scholarships demonstrate the ongoing support that PWCS has for the university and the undergraduate students."

Sarah, from Eleebana is undertaking a combined Commerce and Law Degree. She said that PWCS will provide her with an opportunity to experience aspects of commercial services, including financial and business management, corporate law and human resources.

Zane from Coal Point is aiming to complete a combined mechanical engineering and business degree. He said that the work experience with PWCS will provide him with hands-on training and an involvement in day to day business.

The PWCS Undergraduate Scholarship program will continue each year and is open to students in a wide range of areas including engineering, commerce, accounting, information science, mathematics, statistics, computing, science, human resource management and industrial relations.

For information on the PWCS Undergraduate Scholarships, contact the Scholarships and Prizes Officer Louise Hermann on ext 6541.
New challenge for Director

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director of the Central Coast Campus, Professor Les Eastcott, will leave the Campus at the end of September to take up the post of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea. He will commence his new role in October.

Professor Eastcott, who has played a major role in the development of the Central Coast Campus, has not only been Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director of the Campus, but also the Dean of the newly established Faculty of the Central Coast. His efforts and vision have guided the Campus to the state-of-the-art facility that exists today.

He is eminently qualified to take on what could be perceived as a very challenging role. He is recognised for his pioneering skills as well as his capacity to enact change.

“It was decided at the outset to make the Central Coast Campus a multi-sectoral facility with three partners, the University of Newcastle, the Hunter Institute of Technology and the Central Coast Community College,” Les said.

“The Community College provided the original portable classrooms, which enabled the door to be opened to students in 1989.”

“We started off in quite primitive conditions by usual standards and there have been many stories told of those early days. What has developed is something we can all be justifiably proud of, not just in academic terms, but as a real asset for the Central Coast region.”

Dr Jocelyn McKinnon, Drama Coordinator at the Central Coast Campus, is brimming with energy, creative ideas and enthusiasm.

Since taking up her position about a year ago, Jocelyn has been busy taking the drama program in new directions as well as forging strong creative links with the community, which, she says, create important opportunities for the students.

Jocelyn is no stranger to working with the community. While lecturing at James Cook University, she set up La Luna Youth Theatre, a government funded initiative that is still going. With an age range of eight to 25, La Luna conducted classes and also created original performances that depicted life and local social issues from a youth perspective.

“I worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” Jocelyn said. “It was important that their story was told through the medium of theatre. A large amount of my time was also spent training young professional actors and that was very rewarding.”

The Central Coast Campus presents exciting challenges according to Jocelyn, providing her with the opportunity to develop a drama program that creates a pathway for students interested in a more flexible range in theatre. “The Central Coast has quite a healthy theatre community and it makes sense for our students to be working with local creative artists.”

Jocelyn has recently been appointed as the Chair of Conglomerart, a group of professional artists interested in producing new contemporary works for Central Coast audiences. She says it is pushing new boundaries and has been very well received so far.

“The spin off is that more people are becoming aware of the opportunity to major in Drama through the Central Coast Campus School of Humanities. Student numbers in first year have doubled.”

The networking is paying off in other ways too. Jocelyn has been asked to host the Year 12 Drama Curriculum Day for Central Coast high schools next year. She says the drama course is heading towards cutting edge contemporary performance with an emphasis on original work. This is reflected in two new subjects to be introduced next year — Creating Original Performance and Australasian Theatre and Performance. Both subjects involve studying facets of fine art, creative writing, theatre, multimedia, film, lighting, sound, set design, history, politics and literature, and will build an awareness of Australia’s multicultural makeup.

With performances from Conglomerart planned for later in the year, Jocelyn is gearing up for a busy time. “The students are getting the benefit of working beside professional actors, artists, musicians, dancers, choreographers, writers, set designers and technical theatre artists. That’s invaluable,” she says.

Jocelyn, already a dynamo, is looking forward to a new lease on life after she undergoes a long awaited operation to alleviate osteoarthritis. “I will be getting lovely designer hips from Melbourne. I think I’ll have lots more energy then,” she quips.
For drug and alcohol pain – see your GP?

Marketing lecturer Phillip Morgan has helped to develop a campaign to raise public awareness of general practitioners as the first point of call for drug and alcohol problems.

Phillip, from the School of Management, said the "if (drug and alcohol) pain persists see your doctor" campaign, which was launched on the Central Coast in July, was formulated in response to a market research survey conducted in NSW.

"The survey showed that only 29 percent of people were in favour of seeing a GP and only 23 percent said GPs were capable of providing drug and alcohol services," Phillip said. "This shows there is not a high level of acceptance in the community, although there is greater acceptance of GPs providing treatment for addiction to prescription drugs compared to alcohol and illegal drugs."

Phillip's involvement with the project began two years ago when he joined a steering committee set up to encourage people to go to their GP for drug and alcohol related problems.

"My first response was to suggest we carry out some market research to discover what people's attitudes were to using their GP for this sort of advice," he said. "The survey, conducted last year, sampled 500 people on the Central Coast and 500 from the rest of NSW."

The results showed that the community views drug and alcohol problems as complex and requiring specialist intervention.

The campaign sets out to change these community attitudes by raising awareness of GPs as the first point of call for drug and alcohol related problems.

"If you have an earache, you go immediately to the GP, even though you might then get a referral to a specialist if necessary," Phillip said. "We want to convey the message that it is equally appropriate to go to your GP for drug and alcohol problems."

The campaign involves three stages, with stage one launching the program to the Central Coast media, community opinion leaders and allied health professionals. Stage Two involves a media campaign and the delivery of information packs to GPs surgeries and pharmacies on the Central Coast. Stage Three will see an ongoing public relations campaign and marketing to the university, TAFE, community centres, hospitals, shopping centres, gymnasiums and the Central Coast Councils. Attitudes will again be assessed in October to test the effects of the campaign.

"Marketing has a unique role to play in shifting people's perceptions about drug and alcohol problems," Phillip said. "There is incredible interest in this campaign nationwide and if the Central Coast trial is successful, it could be extended to the rest of NSW."

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The thrill of a lifetime

When 2nd Year communications student Michael Kriesch went “back to school” at the age of 35 to pursue his interest in radio, he never expected he would be part of the 6,000 to 7,000 strong crew of broadcasters covering the Olympic Games in Sydney this month.

Michael, who has been selected as a Media Liaison Officer by the Sydney Olympic Broadcasting Organisation (SOBO), is one of 130 students from the departments of Communication and Media Arts and Leisure and Tourism Studies who will take part in the Games broadcasts. After 10 years working behind the scenes in theatre and at live music shows, he believes he is well suited to the stress and intensity he is likely to encounter as he looks after the needs of journalists at the games.

“It will be wonderful for my career to be working with the best crews in the business at an extraordinary event like the Olympics,” Michael said. “To go back to school at 35 and wind up falling into this is like a dream.”

The students will be paid entertainment industry award rates for their work with SOBO and have undergone training to familiarise themselves with the Olympic venues and with the technological requirements of their jobs. Many of them have undertaken a directed reading course as part of their communication studies, based on the work experience they will gain at the games. They will work as camera assistants, audio assistants, and in liaison positions such as Michael’s.

“The 10 credit points from the directed reading course is just an added bonus,” Michael said. “We’ll be getting money, experience and the thrill of a lifetime.”

Some of the students, like Norwegian Stian Jansson, have been selected for specific venues because of their knowledge of a sport. Stian will work as a spotter, looking out for interesting things happening on and off the field of play at the handball competition. Hugely popular in northern Europe, handball is a team sport and Stian not only knows all the rules and many of the players, but also speaks the languages of the major competing nations. Stian, who has been studying communications at Newcastle for 18 months, was part of a group of students who began training with SOBO in 1998.

“I was a teacher in Norway before I decided to combine travel and study by coming to Newcastle,” Stian said. “I think my experience as a teacher has helped me to gain the sort of skills that SOBO wants in a spotter - the ability to communicate and interact with people.”

Second year student Jane Goldsmith, who will be stationed at Ruscutters Bay during the games, was chosen for her knowledge of yachting.

“Dad is a keen yachtie,” Jane explains. “I love sailing - it really gets into your blood.”

She is hoping that the sun shines on Sydney Harbour during her tour of duty as Broadcast Liaison Officer. Third year communications student, May Tan, from Singapore, will work as an audio assistant at the softball centre at Blacktown during the games. The students collected their official Olympic uniforms from SOBO trainers, Alistair Jackson and Rachel Masters at the Great Hall on August 21.

Several international groups are also carrying out pre-Olympic training at the university’s Forum Sports and Aquatic Centre including the Dutch, Guatemalan, Argentinian and Lithuanian swimming teams, and the Irish Olympic squad. The Forum is also expecting paralympic athletes to use their training facilities in the lead-up to the Paralympic Games in October.
The university has a number of staff and students performing some role in the 2000 Olympic Games to be held in Sydney in September.

One hundred and thirty students from the departments of Communications and Media Arts and Leisure and Tourism Studies will play significant roles in technical support at the games. The Sydney Olympic Broadcasting Organisation (SOBO) has been grooming students from NSW universities since 1997 to work as camera and sound assistants, cable handlers, CCU operators, spotters and in production liaison, with credits for their work contributing to their course.

Lynette Sheridan Burns, Head of the Department of Communication and Media Arts will work in broadcast liaison with SOBO during the games. She is Chief Liaison Officer in Pavilion 2 at Sydney Olympic Park where handball preliminaries will be contested followed by men's and women's modern pentathlon.

Sister Pat Healion, who has been a chaplain at the university for nine years, will help care for the religious needs of the athletes and officials during the games. The Religious Services Centre in the Athletes Village at Homebush Bay will cater for more than 15,000 athletes and officials during the Olympics and around 7,000 during the Paralympics.

"My role is to be available to run services and mass," Pat explained, "and also to offer counselling and provide a religious presence, especially for the athletes."

Dr Hugh Dunstan from the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences will review the results of tests conducted on the Olympic site at Homebush Bay to monitor the success of land rejuvenation undertaken over the past eight years. He will provide advice to the Olympic Coordination Authority (OCA) on aspects of ecotoxicology of the site, which was identified as polluted and degraded in the early 1990s.

"My role will be to help assess whether the work that's been done...has been effective, and will continue to be kind to the environment and people," Hugh said.

"I need to consider what toxic elements might affect the ecology, what impact people will have on the site, and whether or not more stringent testing is needed."

His appointment will last for a year.

Judi Geggie, Acting Director of the Family Action Centre, will act in a voluntary capacity as Protocol Liaison Assistant to the Bulgarian Olympic Association President.

"I volunteered to SOCOG because I just wanted to be involved. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity," Judy said.

Five university staff members took part in the Olympic torch relay last month. They are: Tim Roberts, who carried the torch for 400 metres along Watt Street, Newcastle; Phil Foreman, who ran 500 metres along Cessnock Road at Cliftleigh; Michael Kmet, whose leg took in 500 metres of Allandale Road at Cessnock; Neil McGregor, who ran in Abermain on August 30 and Peter Brown, who ran along Broke Road, Pokolbin. Peter summed up the excitement felt by the torchbearers when he said:

"It was one of the highlights of my lifetime's involvement in sport."

Dean of Arts and Social Science, Professor John Ramdall, SOBO trainers Alistair Jackson and Rachel Masters, and Head of the Department of Communication and Media Arts Lynette Sheridan-Burns, with some of the participating students modelling their uniforms.
Chaplains attend multifaith conference

Four of the university’s chaplains attended a multifaith conference in Canada at the end of June. The Phoenix Rising Global Multifaith Conference brought together 393 university chaplains and campus ministers from 25 countries and seven different faiths.

Coordinator of the Chaplain Service, the Reverend Dr Julia Perry, said the conference offered 68 workshops on various aspects of faith within the academy and the role of chaplains in universities and colleges.

"It was an extraordinary conference and we were very grateful to the university for providing the funding for our registration," Julia said. "Multifaith and even ecumenical faith concerns are issues for the university and apparently this is so around the world."

The first of three keynote speakers at the conference, held in Vancouver from June 22-28, was Jewish feminist theologian Professor Judith Plaskow, who reflected on wisdom and spirituality in the university. The second speaker, Sulayman Nyang, considered the Muslim perspective of pluralism, quoting several Muslim texts that support unity and diversity, coexistence and interdependence, rather than domination, Julia said.

The third speaker, and the one which had the most relevance for Julia as an Anglican Christian, was delivered by the Dean of Kings College London, the Reverend Dr Richard Burridge. He compared the situation of St Paul in the academy in Corinth, where teaching and learning were the best reasons for existence, to today’s universities, which he believes are places dominated by the economic marketplace that are turning out specialty staff for big business.

"Chaplains are the only ones with the potential to bring together disparate groups for dialogue, who can demonstrate a love of learning and assure staff and students that they are not just products in an economic rationalist factory," Julia said. "Reaching students and forming a sense of community in an environment where they hardly even get to know each other is very challenging. We provide an essential service by helping young people integrate values and spirituality into their increasingly fragmented lives."

The three other chaplains to attend the conference were Matthew Wilson (Uniting Church), Roy Hazelwood (Anglican Church – Central Coast Campus) and Bev Patterson (Presbyterian Church). The four are all members of the Australian Tertiary Campus Ministers Association (ATCMA) and were part of a 30-strong ATCMA contingent from around the nation to attend the inaugural international conference.

Get the rub

Physiotherapist Chris Norgard, pictured with Jennifer Allen from the Faculty of Education, says the sports medicine group goes beyond treating sporting injuries to cater for wider needs.

"Being within the Forum, we have a sports base but we all have backgrounds in treating all sorts of patients including those with work-related injuries and general physio problems," Chris said. "We work with musculo-skeletal problems, backs, necks, as well as plastering and making orthotics."

Chris, who has been selected as part of the largest team of Olympic physiotherapists in history, said they saw a lot of players from the men’s and women’s rugby teams on campus, as well as soccer players, hockey players and members of other university sporting clubs.

"The Forum is a great location for us as we’re able to provide a comprehensive rehabilitation treatment, including a gym program and hydro-therapy where required."

The other members of the Performance Sports Medicine Group are massage therapists Christopher Hutton and Michelle Brown, who offer remedial, therapeutic and relaxation massage; Dr Glen Murphy, who specialises in sporting injuries; and Trent Watson, who provides nutrition and dietary advice and programs for weight loss, eating disorders, diabetes and other medical conditions, as well as specific sporting needs such as dietary supplements.
Dr Ali Shah
School of Health Sciences
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Disciplines
Health Sciences includes four disciplines: Environmental and Occupational Health, Medical Radiation Science, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Occupational Therapy.

Compatibility
Various called allied health or health sciences, our graduates provide services in a health-related area but are not medical practitioners. In one sense the disciplines make a natural grouping because they all share a common history, having come from the college sector. They share common teaching values (with an emphasis on Problem Based Learning) and each one offers an undergraduate degree program.

Strengths
One of the greatest strengths of the school is the quality of our undergraduate programs, which are well regarded and in high demand by both students and employers. We are also very strong in postgraduate coursework enrolments, with more than 20 percent of our total enrolment in this area. This is primarily due to the success of the Occupational Health and Safety program, which is offered both locally and by distance learning mode to students all over Australia and internationally. Another strength is our location within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, which is unusual in Australia. Rubbing shoulders with other people working in health and medical education sets up a collaborative environment that has already led to a number of joint programs. Our school is part of a faculty-wide initiative to develop teamwork in medical and health practitioners using multidisciplinary learning techniques.

Challenges
Our staff currently has one full professor and one associate professor. We aim to boost that to provide academic leadership, to enhance research output and the ability to attract funding from public and private sources. We aim to increase the proportion of staff with research higher degrees (most non-doctoral staff are now enrolled in PhD programs). Attracting research higher degree students is another challenge for us as most of our graduates get jobs with high starting salaries, making it hard to entice them back to study. There are few incentives offered by employers for higher qualifications, which is a problem we share with other professions such as law and architecture.

Head of School
Being the head of school is a very difficult and at times frustrating job, with a lot of responsibility and limited resources. It is made more difficult by the financial squeeze on the Higher Education sector, and there is a marked acceleration in the pace of change due to developments in technology.

I have had three changes in my career to date. As a consequence, I have moved out of the big research grant areas. I am the only head of school in the faculty who is a Senior Lecturer. I see being a head of school as a chance to serve the faculty and the university. I have a good understanding of financial issues and the school needs that kind of expertise. In many ways the financial management in the faculty is more transparent and less subjective than may have been perceived previously.

The future for the school is very exciting, with a physiotherapy program about to come on board and further developments planned in multidisciplinary learning. That will put the school in a very enviable position in Australia. Our graduates are already highly regarded but by providing a "multiprofessional teamwork" learning environment to our students we will increase their attractiveness to employers as well as the appeal of the courses. In the broader perspective, if such learning fulfills its promise by increasing the quality of the delivery of health care to the patient, then we will have achieved our aims.

Sport and recreation review

The Vice-Chancellor has established a Task Force to investigate proposals for an amalgamation of the university’s sport and recreation services.

There are currently two principal bodies – the Sports Union and the University Sports and Aquatic Centre (The Forum).

Recently, three proposals regarding the establishment of a single body to oversee sport on campus have been put forward.

The Vice-Chancellor established the Task Force “in view of the significance of these proposals, particularly for our clients of sport and recreation on campus – our students, staff and community-based clients”. It will consider the proposals, consult with members of the Sports Union Executive and the Forum Board, and bring forward recommendations. Dr Bernie Curran is chairing the Task Force. The other members are: Stuart Allen, Adrian Jakin, Martin Kelly, Diane Pascoe, Ian Webster and Amie Grierson. Interested observers are welcome to attend all meetings of the Task Force.

For details of the proposals, visit http://murray.newcastle.edu.au/users/ staff/sport.
Wildlife illustration winners

An idyllic childhood alternating between her family home on the beach at Narabeen and a farm on the other side of the Blue Mountains had instilled a love of nature in the winner of this year's Margaret Senior Award, Sally Birch.

"I had a wonderful upbringing and raised baby animals that were injured as well as collecting everything from shells and gum nuts to dead frogs," Sally told Uninews at the August 14 award ceremony. "From the time I heard about the wildlife illustration course at Newcastle, I have wanted to do it."

Sally, who teaches art at Dora Creek primary school, said her illustrations of plants and animals, completed during her Honours year this year, had fired the imaginations of the children in a recent biodiversity project she ran.

"If I could end up with just one greenie out of each class, I would be happy," she said.

Eight wildlife illustration honours students contested the 2000 Margaret Senior Wildlife Illustration Award. First presented in 1984 following a bequest by renowned illustrator Margaret Senior, the award showcases the achievements of students in the course, the only one of its kind in Australia. The $1,000 award was presented by Director-General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Brian Gilligan.

Senior Design lecturer Chris Sanders said the highly specialised wildlife illustration course aims to produce people who support the natural history side of science. She praised the students who took part in the competition, saying that some of them were science graduates who had never studied art before.

"The winner of last year's award, Rebecca Robinson, is now working as Chief Illustrator for the Marine Institute of Science at the University of California in the United States," Chris said. Winners from previous years had found work with the Royal Botanic Gardens, museums, the CSIRO, publishing companies and as freelancers, she said.

Sally Birch hopes to establish an artists' cooperative in Morisset, using a former hospital building.

Dr Eric Kennedy, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering, has won the Royal Australian Chemical Institute Green Chemistry Challenge Award for his work to handle and treat waste CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) and halons, which deplete the ozone layer and contribute to global warming.

"We have developed a way to chemically transform halons into new, safe fire suppressants which don't harm the ozone layer," said Eric.

The long-term goal is to develop an environmentally responsible process for the treatment of halons through their conversion into safe chemicals.

Associate Professor Bill Collins from the School of Geosciences has won the 1998 Stillwell Award for the best paper published in the Australian Journal of Earth Sciences. His paper, 'Evaluation of petrographic models for Lachlan Fold Belt granitoids: implications for crustal architecture and tectonic models', summarises the development of three main models on Lachlan Fold Belt granite genesis over the past 25 years and aims to clarify their implications for the tectonic evolution and crustal architecture of the region.

"My research shows that the Lachlan probably developed on the oceanic basement, which accords with our knowledge of Early Palaeozoic geology in eastern Australia," Bill said. "In part, the work was done to break a common mind-set that the Lachlan Fold Belt and its granites are unique and unrelated to normal tectonic processes."

Frank Morgan, Associate Professor of Communication and Media Arts, was elected president of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) at their conference in Singapore in July.

"Media and communication research can be all too abstract and irrelevant. But it can never be too theoretical. The world desperately needs better explanations, better justifications and better frameworks for understanding its media and communication."

Frank was a founding member of ORBICOM, UNESCO's worldwide network of chairs in communication. He is President of JOURNAL - the global network for professional education in journalism and media. Frank took up an appointment as Visiting Professor of Journalism at the University of Tampere in Finland in August.

Three other honours students from the course have also been recognised, winning all the prizes in a national illustration competition. The Australian Entomological Society Insect Illustration Competition is an annual event open to professional illustrators and students across Australia. First place was awarded to Greg Slevin for his illustration of a winged beetle, second place was won by Jan Sherlock for her illustration of a bull-ant; and third place went to Sunny Hong for his illustration of cicadas.

The work of students from both competitions can be viewed in the foyer of the design building.

The 2000 William Fletcher Memorial Trust Grants to Students also resulted in a top class performance by illustration students of Visual Communication Design.

Four students won awards. They are: Camilla Seamer, 4th Year Graphic Design – $1,000; Sally Birch - Honours Wildlife Illustration – $1,000; Emma Johnston – Fine Art (Illustration as an elective subject) – $500; and Samantha Howe – Visual Communication (also with Illustration as an elective) – $600.
Engineers win top UK research medal

Three engineering researchers from the university's geotechnical research group have been awarded the 2000 Telford Medal by the Institution of Engineers, London. Professor Scott Sloan, Richard Merifield and Associate Professor Hai-Sui Yu received the medal for their paper "Rigorous plasticity solutions for the bearing capacity of two-layered clays" which was published in the international journal Geotechnique last year.

The Telford Medal, established in 1835 by famous engineer Thomas Telford, is the highest award offered by the Institution for a technical paper in any area of engineering.

"The medal recognises the development and application of powerful new methods for predicting the stability of earth structures such as foundations, slopes and retaining walls," Scott said. "These techniques are unique to the geotechnical engineering group at Newcastle and a world first."

It was gratifying to see Australian research recognised on the world stage and to see a young investigator such as Richard, who is completing his PhD, encouraged to pursue a career in engineering research, he said.

Scott will be presented with the medal at the President's Reception on September 11 at the Institution's home in Westminster.

Internet Access Policy

There has been a 97.7 percent growth in Internet traffic downloaded by students and staff at the university, comparing the first quarter 2000 with the same period last year (see table). Internet traffic costs have grown steeply from $177,000 in 1998 to over $900,000 expected in 2000. More than half this usage is from off-campus via the dial-in modem facilities. One study of staff modem usage revealed 10 out of the top 25 web sites from which material was down-loaded were 'recreational'.

The current arrangements are financially unsustainable. A draft Internet Access Policy is currently under consideration. The proposed policy was developed through the Information Services Committee of Academic Senate, which includes both academic and student representatives. At the Academic Senate meeting of 2 August, it was decided that further consultation be undertaken within the university community regarding the draft policy. The policy will be amended, based on the feedback received, and presented to the Academic Senate meeting of 11 October, for a final determination.

Genetic link to reflux found

A genetic link has been reported in infants and children who suffer from gastrooesophageal reflux disease (GORD).

Dr Bernice Mathisen, a lecturer in Speech Pathology, collaborated with the authors of a recent American research study that exposed an underlying genetic predisposition in babies and children, inherited from their parents.

Bernice recently researched the issue of feeding problems of babies with GORD in the USA and Canada. Whilst she found that someone in the family had suffered from colic or a similar condition, which may have gone undiagnosed and untreated, GORD ranges in severity from mild to life threatening. Symptoms may include inconsolable crying, asthma and breathing problems, voice changes, frequent night waking, copious vomiting, ongoing feeding problems, failure to thrive, and even SIDS.

"Once GORD was considered rare in children" she said, "but it is now known that this is a common medical problem, affecting one in 20 babies and children of all ages."

GORD was highlighted in Speech Pathology Week (24-28 July), because it can affect speech patterns as children develop.

Parents can get help from their speech pathologist, the support group Vomiting Infants Support Association (VISA) and their local GP.

"Mapping of a Gene for Severe Pediatric Gastroesophageal Reflux to Chromosome 13q14" was published in the July 19 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.
Ray Watt Oval

The new Ray Watt Oval Pavilion has been completed and is now operating. The Pavilion replaces the old change shed constructed by the former Electricity Commission, which was in very poor repair. The design of the new building was undertaken with a long term vision in mind, taking account of anticipated regulatory changes and providing for the facility to be adapted to a range of sporting activities. A life expectancy of at least 50 years is anticipated for the facility.

Anthony Furniss, PPE's design coordinator for the project, consulted closely with the Sports Union's Executive Officer, Adrian Iakin and Sports Union representatives to formulate the building's design brief. Architects Shaddock Smith produced the functional design, which incorporates compliance with regulatory requirements for a high grade sporting facility and other practical considerations including the need for security, vandal resistance and ease of maintenance.

The raking roof of the new pavilion, combined with operable windows to the south, allow good cross ventilation across a fairly narrow building plan. An added advantage of this design is that it maximises the penetration of natural light into the building to reduce energy costs. The verandah roof provides shade to the viewing deck in summer. Solar panels are used for hot water heating.

Rainwater from the pavilion roof is used to irrigate the oval through an underground "herring bone" drip fed system designed by Mim Woodland, Manager Landscape and Ovals. This assists in reducing water consumption for the maintenance of the oval.

Hardened concrete pre-cast panels have been used on the lower level walls to reduce maintenance. These also serve as thermal mass to capture the solar energy during the day to be slowly released when the sun goes down.

A disabled ramp is provided from the car park to the upper level viewing area including disabled amenities.

Separate change rooms and showers are provided for referees and a First Aid facility is provided for the administration of preliminary first aid.

An attractive Meeting Room with a view of the oval is provided primarily for Sports Union club meetings and related university functions. A small Media Room is included to allow for the possible broadcasting of games played on the Oval.

Who can use the Pavilion?

This facility is designated primarily for the Cricket Club in summer and Soccer Club in winter. The facility is also available for limited hire by sports clubs in the region. Naturally the Sports Union imposes specific terms and conditions on such hiring.

The building contractors for this project, R W Black, have nominated this building for a Master Builders Award. The new building was in very poor repair. The facility is now operating. The $0.5 M project was undertaken with a long vision in mind, taking account of anticipated regulatory changes and providing for the facility to be adapted to a range of sporting activities. A life expectancy of at least 50 years is anticipated for the facility.

Who funded the facility?

The Friends' Wetland Pavilion is designated primarily for the Cricket Club in summer and Soccer Club in winter. The facility is also available for limited hire by sports clubs in the region. Naturally the Sports Union imposes specific terms and conditions on such hiring.

The building contractors for this project, R W Black, have nominated this building for a Master Builders Award.

Paper Recycling - a reminder!

Our cleaners have noted that the university's waste load has increased by 2 tonnes per day. However, paper recycling quantities have remained constant. It appears that a considerable proportion of the increased waste is paper based. We therefore seek your support to reduce waste going to landfill and to make use of this resource otherwise wasted. If you have any queries or suggestions please contact your Environment Officer, Latha Lewis on 7328.

Posters and Banners

The university has an official Posters and Banners Policy that provides the framework for any advertising of university functions. For placement of banners or large advertisements, please contact your Environment Officer for an application form. The policy is available from PPE in hard copy and on the web at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/cwis/Admin/ppe/policy/posterpol.html.

Student Services Centre: Landscape

In line with the objective of the Master Plan to make the core academic areas of the campus more pedestrian friendly and less dominated by speeding vehicles, the road between the Hunter building and the new Student Services Centre has been closed, and will be landscaped as a pedestrian mall. The Richardson Wing staff car park and the Hunter Union (Bar on the Hill) are now accessed only from the ring road, and provision has been made to widen the existing access points.

The car park servicing the Student Services Centre (accessed off the Commonwealth Bank road) has now opened and provides level access for disabled students and staff, as well as limited short term and service vehicle parking.

The Friends' Wetland Pavilion

Environmental Biology students are using the wetland pavilion as a classroom and the wetland as a field study area. This facility is suitable for small groups of up to 20 for informal knowledge sharing. Please contact Tony Schlutz on 6485 to book.

Photo competition

Our first entry in the photo competition captures a rocket in flight during Open Day 1998. The colour photo was taken using a Ricoh 500 series. Entries for the competition close on November 30.
IESD recently hosted a workshop on Web-based Learning and Educational Technologies. Teachers from secondary and tertiary levels participated in the workshops, conducted on 11th and 12th August by Dr Curtis Bonk, associate professor in the Learning, Cognition and Instruction Program of Indiana University. His visit to the university came about as a result of a visit to Indiana University by Dr Carol Richards of the Faculty of Education.

Curtis, formerly an accountant, left the corporate world to do a psychology graduate program, obtaining a master's degree and a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. He became interested in whether education or psychology could inform the development of imagination, decision-making and higher-order thinking. His learning-centred philosophy to teaching and research led him to become involved in web-based learning and educational technologies. He is one of three world-experts in this highly topical field.

Explaining that the United States is probably two to three years ahead of Australia and Europe in the field of web-based learning, Curtis commented that he had received messages from academics all around Australia asking for advice during the lead-up to his Australian visit – indicative of the growing interest in Australia in this new approach to learning.

Although admitting that web-based learning has problems, his experience has shown him that students learn more deeply and work harder by exposure to educational technologies. He also noted that a student's learning becomes less individualistic and more co-operative with fellow students.

On-line journal to improve communication

Professor Malcolm Gillies, President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, questioned the right of the refereed journal article to still be sacrosanct as the "basic unit of scholarly currency" (Canberra Times, 14th August, p.9). Such thinking is partly a response to the dysfunction we currently see in the scholarly communication process. Our scholars usually give their articles to a journal publisher for free, often surrendering copyright. Our library then struggles to pay for it. Technology may be one part of the solution. Malcolm Gillies goes on to say: "The electronic world enables sophisticated visual and sonic materials, instant critique, and immediate connection to other sites, affording a richer kind of reading than paper-based text allows". Certainly there is a growing interest in professional bodies, research agencies and universities publishing their scholarly works electronically.

Within the university there is concern about the quality of communication yet a realisation that we are flooded with information. To improve our communication IESD is launching a new on-line journal, Eunexus. Eunexus is a Greek word which means "good connection". This will not be an electronic journal to rival the refereed scholarly publication but we hope that through Eunexus we can create good connections and some of the advantages to which Malcolm Gillies refers. Eunexus aims to act as a forum for the dissemination of information and the exchange of ideas for the university community and the wider world. It will be broad in the material it presents, to allow visitors to the site to obtain a good profile not only of the diverse skills of IESD, but also of the interests and talents of its staff. Articles on this site will be presented in a manner which is readily accessible; not only is the content of our articles important, but the way we use emergent multimedia technologies to present them. Eunexus will promote the development of imagination and creativity. Visitors to the site will be encouraged to discuss the articles with the authors and responses or contributions will be published on the site.

For the first time The Teaching Review will be presented on-line as part of Eunexus. Amongst the many interesting articles in this issue of the review is one by Dr John Fisher, Confessions of a technological illiterate. Elsewhere on the site there is a comprehensive and informative article by Trevor Gerdsen on the thorny issue of Copyright and Universities, and an article about the WallSEND University Partnership. Michael Sternbeck has contributed an article about the little-known Gothic Revival church architect William Munro. Please take a moment to visit the site now: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/iesd/publications/eunexus/index.htm

Contributions to Eunexus can be forwarded to ieds-publications@newcastle.edu.au. Anyone with suggestions for articles they would like to see in such a journal, could also send a message to the above address. We will publish in Uninews details about any new articles added to the site.

Linda O'Brien
Executive Director IESD
For sale

Snowboard Rossignol “Nomad” 150 with Rossignol bindings 1999 model (unused – never been on the mountain!) $450 (willing to negotiate) and snowboard boots Northwave to suit Rossi board - Size: Ladies 7" - Mens 7 (Only used 3 times) $100 (or will sell Rossi board and Northwave boots for $500 – willing to negotiate). K2 four 88 (188 cm) new condition (New price is $750) available with fabulous Salomon Prolink S-800 bindings (new $319) will sell $500. Entrant Ski Parker Size 38 Medium $100. Salomon Twin padded ski bag $45. Please call Paul Munro on 5278 or email buprm@admin.uninews.org or call Melissa Thomas 0414913639 (mobile)

Girls push bike, with training wheels, good condition, suit child up to 5 years. Chest of drawers (nine drawers) 45 mm wide x 64 mm high, good condition. Bodytech Exercise Walking Machine, very little use, excellent condition. Ph 49 335006 or email alantry@southernnewcastle.edu.au

House exchange

Exchange academic requires 3/4 bedroom flat or house from mid/late January to beginning of April, 2001. Contact Maree 5368, lgmer@alia.lungw.newcastle.edu.au or Sue sryan@univ.lfcr

Wanted

Non smoker to share terrace house in Carrington with university lecturer (suit female post-grad student). No bond. $75/week. Ph: 0414 913 639 (mobile) Ext: 8664 (w)

Young Australian of the Year Award

Nominations are sought from people between the ages of 14 and 27 who deserve to be recognised for their outstanding achievements in the arts, sports, community service, services to the environment, and science and technology. Nominations close on September 8. Ph 9899 7251, fax 9899 6196, email nsw@yaya.com.au, website www.nadc.com.au.

Uninews the web

Uninews is now on the university’s website. The six issues for 2000 are on the web and each successive edition will be uploaded soon after publication. It can be accessed via the News and Events link from the university’s home page or through the News & Info link from the Staff page; the address is:

Health, Safety and Development
Risk management in action

The mail is a bit like the plumbing...one of life’s little luxuries that we only notice when something goes wrong. We place the envelope into the ‘out’ tray and confidently expect it will be delivered promptly to our colleagues throughout the university or beyond.

The Callaghan campus is Australia Post’s largest customer in Newcastle. Last year the mail service received one million items, which the six-member team distributed to some 138 delivery points scattered about the campus. This high traffic load, and the resulting tight time frames, has presented the mailroom with a multitude of health and safety hazards over the years. Working both individually and as a team, mailroom staff have continuously identified such hazards. Together, and with the occasional help of expert advice, they have been able to eliminate or decrease the risk presented by the most significant of these hazards.

The majority of the mailroom hazards fall into the category of manual handling. This is not surprising when you consider that in the past six months each of the five messenger drivers has handled an average of 65kg of mail per day. Having to lift mailbags from the Australia Post truck, carry them over uneven, slippery surfaces or up and down stairs, and in the early morning cold, can increase the risk of injury.

To manage this, monthly team meetings are held in which everyone is encouraged to participate and discuss changes necessary to make the work easier, less hazardous and fairer for all. Issues and suggestions raised by the team are investigated by their manager, and, where practical, are subsequently addressed by the group.

Examples of mailroom staff initiated changes include:

- Light, fold up trolleys that can be lifted in and out of a van and used to transport heavier loads.
- Mail vans now all have a rear opening door, as well as a sliding door on both sides, to reduce the need to stretch to reach an item.
- Better procedures to unload the Australia Post van, including using two people to lift heavier items.
- Mail satchels to carry the mail, especially in buildings with lots of stairs and no lift.
- All new staff attend manual handling training.
- A ‘pick-up’ service for heavy or large items. This service has been initiated to decrease manual handling issues for other staff, who may not have the correct lifting equipment, and also to prevent bulky items blocking access routes.
- Floor mats to decrease the strain on neck, back and legs when sorting mail.
- Good quality footwear.

Whilst these initiatives have gone a long way towards reducing the risk of injury, the cooperation of mail service users is also necessary. For example, we all should:

- Address mail correctly to save multiple handling - internal mail should be addressed to the person by name and department.
- Contact the mail service about any bulk mailing; mailroom staff can then come prepared.
- Observe the weight limits where possible: 16kg for bags and 20kg for parcel packages; articles exceeding these limits must have a ‘two person handle’ label applied.

The mailroom is a good example of working together to create a safer workplace.

- If you are interested in a tour of the mailroom or in discussing any of the initiatives in place, please contact Michael Rye extension 5203 (11am - 12pm) or email michaelr@ncc

Next Month: Critical Incident Management
"It is an honour for me to be standing here representing 24 of my friends in the second cohort of the MQIH... We realise that our achievement today is part of a long process... helped and supported by many people. Therefore, we are all very grateful to the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia for providing the opportunity, through the Health Project IV Secretariat, to study the MQIH subject from the CCEB.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all ELICOS, CCEB, University of Newcastle, and Faculty of Public Health, University of Indonesia, lecturers, staff and supervisors for their kindness... We would also like to thank the Indonesian Cultural Communication (ICC) for their support as well as our family, relatives and friends for keeping our spirits up during our studies.

Our study of the Masters program, which took about a year and a half to complete, is unique because it allowed us to study and live in Australia, the land of dreams. And living in Newcastle made us all agree to that statement as it is a hospitable place and a nice environment in which to study. The program gave us the benefit not only of increased knowledge about Quality Improvement in Health Care, but also improved our English and computer skills... and widened our vision and life experience.

I also remember when we first began our studies, we all had the same perception about the way in which Australians speak, which is gurgling. But thanks to Professor Gibert, who insisted on gurgling a lot, we all came to understand. There are too many memories to mention on this occasion although those memories will always be kept in our hearts...

While we are proud to have achieved the MQIH... we are certainly not over-confident because we realise that graduating from the program doesn’t mean an end to our duties. We are aware that the MQIH title has a greater responsibility attached - that of finding a way to apply our knowledge to improve the quality of health care services...

It is necessary that we always improve our health care performance. In order to do this as public health providers, we have to serve and fulfill the needs of our customers, whose expectations have become higher over time. If we do not fulfill their needs, they will go elsewhere for health care. We face a real example of that in West Kalimantan, where most people from Pontianak choose to use health services in Kuching, Malaysia. We have benchmarked against the health services there and found that we are left behind in the quality of our services. This only motivates us to catch up... We need to work hard to build a strategic system in health quality. As our first step, we hope we can build good teamwork between our MQIH colleagues, supervisors from both universities, and other colleagues in health care. Since graduating, many of us have improved our careers and been able to apply quality improvement principles. Unfortunately, some of us still face challenges in convincing health care providers that quality improvement is one important answer to Indonesia’s health care problems. Please bless us on our journey to improve quality...