Chinese Raindancing Guru

By Angela Erini

A chance meeting with an inspirational teacher in Thailand set the tone for Felicia Zhang to teach one of the world’s most difficult languages in a most unconventional way.

Meditation, clapping, dancing and humming are tonal methods Ms Zhang uses to teach Mandarin Chinese - methods that have reaped rewards for her and her students.

After the first two weeks of teaching the new moves, one of her students said the entire sequence was like doing a "rain dance" - so it is now affectionately known as rain dancing.

But cute names aside - this new form of ‘dancing’ has propelled her students to a higher learning level.

It was these achievements, together with her aspirations to create multi-media multi-language databases, which were rewarded with a $40,000 university teaching award on December 2, at Parliament House.

Thrilled at having won an Australian Award for University Teaching, Ms Zhang paid tribute to her students:

"I was very grateful for this group of students because they were the only group of 'guinea pigs' to go through this whole thing," Ms Zhang laughed.

"They were extremely supportive of the humming and gesturing that we do. They found it extremely refreshing, as nobody has done that - ever - and they found it very useful in remembering vocabulary."

Ms Zhang was initially encouraged to enter the Awards by department head Kate Wilson and was motivated to complete the entry process because, if successful, she knew her new ideas would help her PhD.

"While writing up my chapters in my PhD I decided this (the humming) was a crucial part of the whole training exercise," Ms Zhang said.

"It's not just an add-on that you could do later - I have to experiment with it and see how it goes."

After finding success Ms Zhang felt she had to publicise her findings, and entering the Awards seemed like the perfect avenue to do so.

The reason Ms Zhang said she chose the non-mainstream teaching methods were because of the Chinese language tonal characteristics and current intonation teachings were not up-to-speed.

"This methodology deals with that as its centre, rather than using intonation as its peripheral," Ms Zhang said and added that the methodology could help teach all languages.

"All languages have intonation in them. They may not be tonal like Chinese where each character has a tone attached to it, but every language has intonation at the end of a sentence and every language has different stresses and rhythms," Ms Zhang explained.

"Most teaching methodologists don't deal with that - they deal with how to pronounce - they don't deal with rhythm and stresses and intonation very much."

While this methodology was a breakthrough for teaching Chinese - and any language for that matter - the techniques have been used for speech rehabilitation in Europe.

For further information about Monitor Online contact Angela Erini, Monitor Editor, on: Anj.Erini@Canberra.edu.au

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Last Updated on February 18, 2004
The University's new student centre opens its doors

By Josephine Banens

The new and improved Student Administration, to be called the University of Canberra Student Centre (UCSC), opened its doors to students on January 17.

Originally named the One Stop Shop, UCSC combines students' administration, the International Office and Financial Services.

Project Manager Michael Werts said the one location: "prevents students having to go all over the place."

"It's more accessible and provides all administrative functions in one area," he said.

The Centre's opening marks the completion of phase one of construction, with phase two being the new support services, which will house HECS, PELS and fee administration and the new contact centre for incoming calls and emails.

Support Services will be located behind the UCSC front counter and construction is expected to be completed in late April or early May.

"It's not a particularly good time to undertake [construction] work, but no time is good," Mr Werts said.

Corporate Services allocated $150,000 in funding for the new centre, with provision for additional services such as student photocopying, printing and additional computers.

"We will need to have discussions with all stakeholders ... I'm happy to take any comments from any staff or students," Mr Werts said.

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Last Updated on February 16, 2004
Herbert Burton Medal winner has heart of gold

By Angela Erini

Family tragedy, dedication to her work and a passion for suicide prevention were qualities that won Megan Shipley UC’s most prestigious award.

The Herbert Burton medal is awarded annually to reward a student’s academic and community contributions - and the Psychology Honours’ student was indeed a worthy recipient.

Miss Shipley’s own family was affected by suicide, even before she was born after. Her Grandfather took his own life.

And although the 22-year-old does not entirely attribute the tragedy to her present interest in suicide prevention, she admitted that aftershocks from the incident still rippled through her family.

“It had a big impact - it’s affected my life, and my dad’s life,” Megan said.

During her final two years at UC, Miss Shipley worked tirelessly supporting and educating those around her as a part of the Suicide Intervention Project.

It was the dedication to the project, coupled with a grade point average of 5.6 that prompted Megan’s supervisors, Associate Professor Deb Rickwood and Susan Beaton to nominate her for the medal.

“It was exactly the sort of person we need to promote as an example of what our young people can do in these complex and difficult times,” Professor Rickwood told The Canberra Times.

Although Megan was shocked to receive an award she was not aware existed, she gave credit to her project supervisors.

“Deb Rickwood and the project manager Susan Beaton, kept us enthusiastic and helped answer endless questions,” Miss Shipley said. The program did pay off for Miss Shipley, and revealed that some of her friends were not coping with the pressure of work and study and displayed some signs of depression.

She was able to prevent them from sliding further into the depths of despair by recognising those signs and simply asking them if they were OK.

“lt’s important to ask if someone is thinking about suicide,” Miss Shipley said. “The fear that they will actually put the idea of suicide into someone’s head often stops someone from asking, but it is proven that it won’t [give them the idea].

“For every person who suicides, it affects about 100 people - sometimes even more.”

After four intensive years, Miss Shipley has left UC in style - receiving the Herbert Burton medal and being published in the International Journal of Mental Health Promotion.

She has decided to take a well-earned break and work as a nanny for a year in New Jersey, USA.

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Last Updated on February 16, 2004
By Angela Erini

The desire to play tennis won out over a law degree when the 2003 ACT Tennis Coach of the Year, Andrew Bulley studied at the University of Canberra.

Andrew commenced a double degree at UC in Law and Sports Coaching after leaving school in 1988, and although he found law interesting, his desire to play tennis won out.

Andrew capitalised on his tennis prowess and specialised in coaching, graduating with a Sports Coaching degree in 1991.

"It was only towards the end of the degree that I thought - yes - that's [coaching] what I really want to do," Andrew said.

Now over 300 avid juniors and about 100 adults hone their skills in the various programs he offers.

And as the game's popularity increases, it is unlikely that business will slow down for the Canberra local.

After being nominated by one of the local clubs he coaches, he said it was good to be rewarded for his efforts.

"It's good recognition because you have to work so many hours and [work] so hard, you put a lot of work in at schools, so it's good to be recognised for that," Andrew said.

As a junior competing on the Canberra circuit, Andrew was quite successful, and even reached the semi-finals of a national tournament.

But at age 16, while trying to balance school and sport Andrew's coach suggested an alternate career as a coach.

"I always knew that I was not quite strong enough to make a living as a tennis player - but I just love the sport and I love coaching," Andrew said.

"You have to be so, so good [to make it professionally], and I was going to Uni and trying to play some tournaments at the same time and I was coming up against 15-year-old kids who were full time tennis players."

This opportunity gave him the chance to be involved with tennis and concentrate on his studies and has now been crowned as ACT Coach of the Year 2003, the second time for him, after being awarded the title in 1996.

Andrew said the coaching degree has changed a lot since he attended UC, but credits the University with kick-starting his successful career coaching future ACT tennis stars.

"At the moment I am working with the ACT Elite Program for juniors...and I coach quite a few Australian ranked juniors," Andrew said.

And although Andrew hasn't completed any university post-graduate studies, he has upgraded his skills through various courses with Tennis Australia.

His next aim is to be chosen to attend Tennis Australia's biennial Elite Coaching Course, a course that could propel him further up the elite coaching ladder.

But for now he will concentrate on his latest 13-year-old female tennis prodigy who is ranked 60 in Australia in the under 18's, and gained a wildcard entry into the 2004 Australian Open junior qualifying.
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

I think you'll find that this little madam has been eating porridge, sleeping in beds and breaking chairs all over the forest!

Jaybee ‘03

Breeding cockroaches and feeding them to a flock of orphaned birds isn’t most people’s idea of fun, but for RSPCA wildlife carer Jenny Truong, it’s all in a day’s work.

"I breed cockroaches and mill worms at home," Mrs Truong said.

"I really drive my family mad because whenever we find moths or spiders around the house I generally try to catch them."

Although Mrs Truong is a full-time UC finance officer, she has worked as a volunteer wildlife carer since last May, taking in orphaned, injured, and sick birds until they can be released back into the wild.

Her volunteer work involves feeding, monitoring, and caring for up to 30 feathered friends at a time.

Mrs Truong’s passion for animals was fostered from a young age, but her decision to become an RSPCA carer came when she discovered an injured magpie outside UC’s Building 1.

With it’s feet bound with wire - struggling to walk or fly - the bird was in desperate need of help.

Mrs Truong removed the binding and nursed the magpie until it could be released back into the wild.

She continued to feed it daily, but sadly the magpie developed an infectious disease and had to be euthanased.

It was this loss that motivated her to become a volunteer.

Caring for birds now permeates her whole life and she describes it as a love and a joy.

"One of the most rewarding things about being a volunteer is being able to release [the birds] back into the wild," she said.

And it isn’t just those birds that she cares for, admitting she has a menagerie of other animal friends at home.

"A dwarf rabbit, a 13-year-old poodle and another young poodle, three budgies and a wounded cockatiel," Mrs Truong laughed.

Many of the birds RSPCA volunteers care for have been orphaned through animal attack or human intervention, however Mrs Truong says that some of the birds that are brought to the carers shouldn’t be.

People who come across what they believe is an abandoned bird often take it in without full consideration.

"They need to consider whether these birds are truly orphaned or not," she explained. "The best thing they can do is call the RSPCA."

Mrs Truong also says it’s better they get advice first because: "we [the carers] are never going to be as good as their parents."

For those who share her love for animals and have the time and dedication, the RSPCA is always searching for volunteers.

As well as carers, people can also get involved by breeding food, manning the after hours phone, working at the animal centre or fundraising.

If you would like to find out more contact the RSPCA on 6287 8100 during business hours, and 0413 495031 after hours.

For further information about Monitor Online contact John Martin, Monitor Editor, on: monitor@Canberra.edu.au
Short-film comp for budding ACT filmmakers

By Jasmine Phillips

From March 5 to 15 Canberra is set to become a hotbed of filmmaking excitement. Teams of filmmakers will be capturing special locations in a bid to earn the prize of best film in the Lights, Canberra, Action Festival and the fame, glory and financial reward that will follow.

“Points will be awarded for including the items in the films,” said Festival director Matthew Fallon.

Points will also be awarded by the judges for story, camera work, directing and all of the other elements that go towards making a good short film.”

The items will be announced on March 5, giving filmmakers only 10 days to write, cast, shoot, edit, score and commit their creative genius to tape.

This festival is a great excuse for 1st and 2nd year students to jump into a car see some areas of Canberra that they might not otherwise get to see.

The inclusion of a prize for best student film means that a place is specially carved out for dazed and confused ressies to careen around Canberra shooting their scenes.

The overall theme of the festival is ‘Places in the Heart’.

“We are not going to be giving away clues as to what the locations are until the 5th of March, when the big announcement is being made,” Mr Fallon said.

“The ‘Places in the Heart’ could be anywhere, so you can only do so much planning before starting filming.”

If you have a ‘place in the heart’ go to www.abc.net.au/canberra to suggest it as a location - it may end up being immortalised as part of the Lights, Canberra, Action filmmaking festival.

The films will be screened in early April as part of the Heritage Festival.

Registration forms are available at www.celebratecanberra.com/lca.htm

Enquires: Matthew Fallon 0417 318 995, 6297 0432 lightscanberra@iinet.net.au

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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
$367k grant awarded to University researchers

By Josephine Banens

A $367,000 research grant was awarded to a University of Canberra-led consortium for improving the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in mainstream classes.

The grant, Learning Outcomes: Students with Disabilities Project, was awarded by the Department of Education, Science and Training on February 4, and will consist of four studies over two years.

UC's Educational Support and Inclusion Program manager, Professor Tony Shaddock said the research will answer key questions about ways to include students with disabilities in classrooms.

“Our research focuses on key issues in the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms and it researches those issues from the point of view of classroom teachers,” Professor Shaddock said.

The grant will give Australian teachers evidence-based strategies for including students with disabilities in their classrooms.

“The exciting aspect of this research is that as well as contributing to the stock of knowledge about inclusive practice, we will also be providing classroom teachers with practical strategies that they can use in their classrooms immediately,” Professor Shaddock said.

The four studies will focus on areas such as providing relevant curriculum for students with disabilities, the types of adjustments made by teachers for the students, collaboration between mainstream teachers and teaching assistants and professional development needs of mainstream teachers who have students with disabilities in their classroom.

“Several of the studies will explore current ‘best practice’ in schools across Australia,” Professor Shaddock said.

“I’m really hopeful that [the research] will provide teachers with a range of strategies and support that will enable them to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms,” said leader of NSW DET Access and Participation team, Ms Julie Hook.

Ms Hook’s team will research current literature in inclusive practices and technology and communication strategies for students who require such support for their learning needs.

Another important research outcome is the development of cost efficient, user-friendly ways of spreading information to educators across Australia about inclusive practice.

Other UC staff involved in the research include, Associate Professor Brian Gray, Lena Hoffman-Raap, Dr Chris Kilham, Dr Joe Murik, Steve Thornton, Tony Sprinks Gary Woolley and Professor Alison Elliott from the Australian Council for Educational Research.

Collaborators from the NSW Department of Education and Training’s Access and Participation and Learning Assistance teams, and international consultant on inclusive education, Professor Loretta Giorcelli, is also participating in the research.

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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
Deek's marathon effort to make Aussies healthier

By Angela Erini

Robert de Castella has a vision for Australians - to put health higher on their agenda.

Fear for the future of an overburdened health system struggling to cope with an aging population has prompted Mr de Castella to try and promote healthy lifestyles to younger Australians.

Mr de Castella wants families to put exercise and health first - rather than work.

Over the past four years Mr de Castella's team of professionals have successfully implemented school programs to try to control obesity in Australian children.

The SmartStart program, originally Mr de Castella's idea, has tested 25,000 young Australians, providing a continual cycle of measurement, analysis, feedback and support on their health.

He told Monitor that he wants exercise and healthy habits to become second nature to Australian households.

"Exercise has to be a three star priority, rather than just a one star priority," Mr de Castella said.

"We want exercise to become as second nature as the old Slip Slop Slap campaign.

"20 years ago no-one put sunscreen and a hat on - now that is the first thing people do before they leave the house."

Mr de Castella met with UC's Health, Design and Science division to discuss the possibility of a postgraduate course to train professionals to help communities become more active and aware of their health.

He said the SmartStart team was looking at expanding the services and roles they were currently providing, and that was where he thought UC could help.

And although the SmartStart organisation had already been approached by Geelong's Deakin University, they are committed to remaining in Canberra.

Health, Design and Science Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mohamed Khadra said Mr de Castella had merit in his ideas and was happy to support such studies if they were viable for UC.

Prof Khadra thought the corporate sector might also benefit from professionals who had studied such a course.

He said that Mr de Castella could provide statistics from the results of SmartStart, and UC could provide the expertise to conduct the course.

Mr de Castella's vision is to open an institute that would specialise in Australian's health and fitness, but said the idea was still in the pipeline.

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Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

See you tomorrow Tom!

Yeah, catch you later, Ralph!


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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
PR manager bound for third Olympic Games

When much of our sports-mad nation is glued in August to either television or radio coverage of the Athens Olympic Games, one member of the university community will be getting a slightly better view.

To use sporting parlance, PR Manager Robin Poke will be 'trackside'.

Robin received a call recently from the Australian Olympic Committee asking him to help run the Australian Team Office in the Main Press Centre in Athens. It is a role similar to the one he performed four years ago in Sydney, and needless to say, Robin didn’t need too much persuading.

“It took about .001 of second!” he said. “It was a huge thrill, and I’m naturally very pleased to have been asked.”

It will be Robin’s third Olympics as an official. He was a team media liaison officer in Atlanta. He meanwhile holds executive positions within the Olympians’ Club of the ACT and the ACT Olympic Council.

Robin says his tasks at the 2004 Games will be many and varied, ranging from supplying information to Australian and international media to liaising with athletes and coaches in the Olympic Village and helping to arrange special media conferences for both the team and the International Olympic Committee.

He will also help produce a daily eight-page newsletter for Australian team members aimed at keeping them informed about coming events or results, assisting them with their preparation and at the same time helping to keep them relaxed in what he describes as “one of the biggest pressure situations in which any of us will ever be involved.”

Robin said if Sydney is any guide, he will be working from eight in the morning to late at night, for three weeks. “In 2000 we existed on coffee and adrenaline. But it was immensely satisfying, hugely rewarding and a great privilege.”

Can Athens overtake Sydney to be the “greatest ever” Olympics?

“I think the best thing Athens could do for the Olympic Games is to promote a return to symbolism and simplicity,” he said. “There are many in the movement, myself included, who are concerned at the ‘gigantism’ inherent in the Games.

The Olympics have basically become a ‘multinational’. I’d like to see a return to perspective, and greater recognition of the fact that, essentially, the Olympic Games is a two-week sporting festival that helps unite the world.

And in these very tense times, I think that, rather than the rivalry and pressures that the holding of the Games generates, is well worth promoting.”

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Playing possum in the name of the environment

By Josephine Banens

You may have noticed some strange displays around the UC landscape recently.

The School of Design and Architecture's second-year landscape architecture students built 17 environmental installations around Building 7 and the Library for their annual Possum Art exhibition.

"The aim is to sensitize [the students] to the Australian environment, and to provoke thought," the head of Landscape Architecture, and Possum Art founder, Dianne Firth, said.

"[The students] take an idea and make something at no cost using the environment's materials, which then goes back into the environment."

The installations were displayed from March 29 to April 7 and showed a number of works with strong social meanings and political statements.

One included an island made from tree branches, representing Australia's refugee policy, entitled F*** Off It's Mine.

"We've got some serious ones and some amusing ones," Dr Firth said. One exhibit featured a metre-long kangaroo made from kangaroo poo, and another displayed a pile of handpicked cigarette butts made into a no smoking symbol. Student designer Lena Hammond said she spent 12 hours collecting the cigarette butts from around campus for her work.

"Ironically, there were lots [of cigarette butts] under bins and outside of the environmental building where there are lots of flammable gases, and no-smoking signs everywhere," Ms Hammond said.

The students could not use any glues or fixatives and collected all materials from around the campus and returned them to their environment when the displays were taken down.

Dr Firth introduced the project to UC 10 years ago, and said it was inspired by the environmental art movement. She stressed the importance of getting out and playing in the natural environment.

"All of us do this as children. As adults, we often lose this ability to play," she said.

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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
An international exchange program propelled UC's Heather Rietdyk smack-bang into the epicentre of Western politics - Washington DC.

The third year communications student applied for the Uni-Capitol Washington internship about 12 months ago and went through a long and arduous process before finally being chosen as the inaugural UC representative.

Out of the 35 applicants from around Australia, only 12 students were chosen to go for the six-week stint in DC.

The international exchange scheme was founded in 1999 by senior congressional advisor, Eric Federing, who had spent many years working in the House and the Senate.

Heather left for the US on December 28, and went from the scorching Australian heat into one of Washington DC's coldest winters in 15 years.

While working in Congressman Sam Farr's Washington office for six weeks, Heather was able to experience working on many projects, which ranged from working with the press secretary to shadowing him on tour.

"Shadowing for those four days was a really great experience," Heather said.

"Seeing how he related to his constituents, and to the media - to see it from one angle to another [was good]."

And Heather did not only get the chance to experience office politics - she was lucky enough to be invited to see the President of the United States, George W. Bush, deliver the State of the Union Address (an exclusive invitation usually reserved for spouses).

Heather explained that Congressman Farr wanted her to experience the special functions because she had put herself out to take time off work, and left her husband to go there. "He [Congressman Farr] really respected the fact that I had travelled half-way round the world, left my husband, my home, and forked out all of my own money to get over there" she said. "He wanted to make it a really fantastic experience for me."

While working in DC, Heather got the chance to visit the White House, but only after waiting six weeks for a security clearance due to the heightened security after September 11.

Although she had not been there before September 11 Heather said security in Washington was intense, particularly during the State of the Union Address when nearly all members of Congress were present under the one roof.

"The person who is last brought into congress has to stay at home [during the address], so that if it got wiped out, there would still be one person to run the U.S."

She admitted she wasn't overly concerned about security - and agreed this was probably due to her current career as a Qantas flight attendant. Heather said she would not rule out continuing her relationship with Qantas, but she admitted the internship had opened up a world of opportunity.

When asked if she wanted to now work for a politician, Heather said the experience had not cornered her into thinking that she could only work for politicians and said there were many areas within political communication where she could now work.

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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
Hanging Ten: UCU Surf Safari

By Josephine Banens

Getting in the ‘green room’ may not mean much to the non-surfer, but to those in the know, surfing inside the belly of a wave is an indescribable feeling.

Although not all of the 20 staff and students on the UCU surf safari on the South Coast in March made it into the ‘green room’, most got a taste for the sport and caught the bug that is spreading across UC.

Sports Union’s Health and Sports co-ordinator John Stelzer said this semester’s trip proved more popular than ever. Growing interest in the sport meant places for the safari were quickly filled.

“We’re in a situation now where we don’t even have to advertise really to get the trips filled,” John said. “It’s word of mouth.”

Now in its fourth year, the March trip was the first time the sport’s union had opened it up to staff members, with previous years consisting of mainly international students. The group was based at Lake Tabourie, south of Ulladulla, and instructed by Tony ‘Gandolf God’ Palmer of Pines Surfing Academy.

Tony received his nicknames after the November 2003 trip for his legendary surfing prowess, which includes headstands (while surfing a wave), the ‘budda’ sitting position, and the ‘dead cockroach’ where you lie on your back with legs and arms upright. As well as tricks, Tony also taught the group the importance of water safety.

“Tony teaches you about your tides and your rips,” John said. “You’ve gotta be so careful because so many Australians die each year from drowning.”

UC student Tom Kearny received the Crazy Karnage trophy (half a surfboard) for the biggest wipe-out. He broke a surfboard in half in the first five minutes of the first day.

The award started in 2003 after a similar incident. The ‘Biggest Coconuts’ award went to student Jimmy Crimmins for catching the biggest wave of the weekend.

“On the Sunday there were six- or seven-foot face waves,” John said. “The majority of people stood up.”

The union runs two surf safaris each year and the next is a five-day stint in November, with the possibility of visiting different breaks along the South Coast. John mentioned the possibility of another safari to cope with demand.

“We may look at having two trips at the end of the year just to give people the opportunity.”

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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

Well Dave, looks like we finally reached the fork in the road!

Jaybee '04


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Last Updated on April 14, 2004
Looking through the window of the universe brings recognition to maths professor

By John Martin

Professor Robert Bartnik works in a world few of us can even imagine.

Well, not in it exactly. His area of interest is space.

And he does much of his work here at UC designing computer models and analysing data of things that cannot necessarily be seen.

His work over many years has just been recognised by the Australian Academy of Science.

He received the award of Fellow of the AAS in recognition of his work of the geometric structure of space times, including the definition and properties of energy in general relativity, and in the numerical simulation of the scattering of gravitational radiation by a black hole.

Few more than 15 receive the honour each year so it is quite prestigious.

There are some spin-offs to this kind of work. But that is not what drives Professor Bartnik, who is a Professor of Mathematics in the School of Mathematics and Statistics.

Nor is he interested in inventing a better mouse trap, for that matter.

It is the search of the unknown and the quest for new knowledge that motivates him.

"Every time you develop a better way of measuring things you discover something that wasn't expected," he said.

"It will give us a completely new window on the universe and tell us things we did not know."

For instance, no one knew what happened when two black holes collided. It is probable, however, that Professor Bartnik has a better idea than most of us.

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Last Updated on May 18, 2004
For many first-year students, university life is about hanging with friends, juggling assignments and perhaps even settling in to a new home.

But for 19-year-old swimming sensation Frances Adcock, you can add training for five hours a day, jet-setting around the world, oh yeah, and the Olympics.

Frances, who is in the first year of her International Studies degree at the University of Canberra, qualified for the Athens Olympic team when she finished second in the 200-metre backstroke at the National Swimming Championships in Sydney.

"Qualifying was sort of like a dream," Frances said. "Something I'd been working towards for ever was right there and it's kind of hard to put that feeling into words."

Frances is just one of a fleet of current and previous UC students to become Olympians.

Swimmer Petria Thomas will contest the 100-metre and 200-metre butterfly events, and compete in three team relays. Petria hopes to graduate her Sports Administration degree in July, just one month before her third Olympic games.

Olympic sailing medallist Michael Blackburn will also make Athens his third games. Currently working as a sports scientist in Sydney, Mr Blackburn graduated from a Bachelor of Applied Science at UC in 1992.

Marathon walker Nathan Deakes has qualified for the 20-kilometre walk, while taking a break from his Banking and Finance degree.

Frances is one of the babies of Australia’s star swimming team, which she had dreamed of being part of from a young age.

Born in England and then moving to Adelaide when she was four years old, Francis remembers always being involved in sports. At 14 she narrowed her love of triathlons down to swimming, and began focusing on it competitively.

She moved to Canberra in 2002 to begin swimming with the Australian Institute of Sport.

Shortly after she qualified for the World Short Course Swimming Championships and came seventh in the 100-metre backstroke.

At last year's World Championships, Frances came 10th in the 300-metre backstroke.

She said her selection this year for the Athens Olympics was a "definite career highlight".

"I was ranked second going into [the National Championships] so I kind of thought I should be going," she said. "But it's hard to actually imagine that you could be one of the best in the world."

In the lead up to Athens, Frances admits she will not have much time for study or her part-time job as a guide at the AIS.

Frances, who is in Queensland for training workshops, will return to Canberra for a couple of weeks, then it's back to Queensland for team workshops, then to Singapore for 10 days, and then finally to Athens.

"I've already done all of my tutorial presentations and handed in most of my assignments for the semester," Frances said. "I've only got the exams left to worry about."

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Problems & Technical Issues?
Content & Data Custodian

Last Updated on May 6, 2004
More copying paper please as students come to the party 200,000 times

By Josephine Banens

More than 200,000 pages have been printed since the opening of the Students' Association Print Centre in February.

Students have embraced the new $20,000 centre on the concourse which offers low-cost printing and Internet access.

"It's more popular than we expected when we first established it," Students' Association President Adam Verwey said.

SA Finance officer Frances Doherty said even during the Easter break students were printing up to 500 pages a day, and 20,000 a week during semester.

The SA said on busy days students have had to line up to use the centre's six computers. They are looking at expanding with an additional three to four computers to be installed in Semester 2.

The SA has received positive feedback from students about the new centre.

"A lot of people have been saying that they now print out their lecture notes, whereas before they couldn't afford it. Hopefully, that's having a positive effect on their studies," Mr Verwey said.

He said other services in the SA were getting more use since the centre opened.

"It's a vibrant, community atmosphere in here now."

Ms Doherty said charging students five cents a page was not making money for the SA, but the students were pleased about it.

"We're covering costs. It's another worthwhile use of student fees," she said.

The computer centre has responded by reducing its A4 printing prices from 20 cents to 15 cents a page.
A decade and a world away from working on community development projects in refugee camps, Dr Sandra Heaney-Mustafa is using her knowledge and experience to teach Community Education students at UC.

Trained in tertiary level nursing, Sandra embarked on a journey that lasted years and took her to some of the most remote places in the world.

Following a six-month stay as Orkney’s resident midwife, Sandra began her journey home via the Middle-East. When an earthquake struck the city of Ezram, Turkey, destroying the city’s hospital, Sandra stayed on to set up field hospitals with the British Red Cross. From Turkey she travelled to Iran and Pakistan, working as a volunteer in border refugee camps, before returning to Australia.

Once home, Sandra enrolled in a BA in Education at Newcastle University, which introduced her to radical South American philosopher Paulo Friere, whose approach to literacy is based on teaching words that generate emotion and meaning.

“Reading words that have meaning to people is an empowering form of education and one that is also relevant to areas of health promotion,” she said.

Sandra was six months into her doctorate when she was approached by Community Aid Abroad to take up a post as Director of a community development project in a refugee camp in Sudan. Putting her PhD on hold, Sandra set off for Sudan for what was to be two years. “It was a community development project masquerading as public health care, which was the only way the Sudanese military regime governing the country would agree to the project taking place.”

True to Friere’s philosophy, Sandra began her work by setting up literacy programs, initially for the men and then for the women in the camp. While Sandra encountered challenges, it was the initial men’s literacy program that landed her in jail, the first of several dangerous encounters with the Sudan government.

Undaunted and spurred on by the results of the program, Sandra spent weeks negotiating with the elders to allow women to learn to read. Her efforts were rewarded and the program took place. “It was ground-breaking in a predominately nomadic, patriarchal, Muslim society. The women worked 20 hours a day, so we worked out a roster for the men to collect the firewood and water from the well, that released the women from their duties, so they could learn.”

Ultimately, the community development project lead to women being trained, for the first time in the country’s history, as health workers. “Even though the project did not alter the mortality rate, it left valuable skills in the population in terms of health and empowering women through literacy.”

Sandra returned to Australia in 1991, taking up a position with the NSW Rural Doctors Network. And her PhD?

“I finally finished it in 1995, in which time I also took up Arabic lessons, got married (to her language teacher), and converted to Islam.

“What has endured in my memory of that time is the resilience of the human spirit. People had so little - their food ration was equivalent to one bowl of porridge a day - but they were thankful ... not to me, but to God.”

In addition to teaching Community Education to undergraduates at UC, Sandra works with the ACT Council of Social Services, is a member of the ACT Muslim Women’s Support Group, and is organising the 2005 Australian Health Promotion Association Conference.

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Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

"Wedgie" Politics

Troops Out?

National Security

Jaybee '04


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Last Updated on May 6, 2004
Jaye Allan with "Waggy", one of her 70 pandas on the prowl on the UC campus.

Jaye goes on panda patrol at UC

By Josephine Banens

When Jaye Allan first met Shi Shi, her one-year old, 80kg “baby” it was an overwhelming and surprising experience.

Shi Shi is the offspring of Cheng Cheng, a giant panda from the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in China whom Jaye adopted in 1997 and donates $1000 a year to support.

“After only one year of growth [Shi Shi] was about four foot high on his back legs,” Jaye said.

It is a considerable amount given that Pandas begin life the size of a mouse. Jaye recalls Shi Shi, now four, as “very lively, playful and intelligent,” and refers to both mother and son as part of her family, “I don’t have children so my husband and I decided we would have pandas”.

Jaye, 46, is translating her Masters into Mandarin for her Graduate Diploma in Languages (Chinese) at UC. Following on from her graduation from a Bachelor of Arts (Chinese) at UC in 1998, she has just graduated from Charles Sturt University with the Masters in Captive Vertebrate Management. Her research involved surveying over 20 zoos with pandas in captivity.

Determined by an interest to work with pandas in China, she has shaped most of her learning specifically for it.

Her BA was completed in a distance-education format to accommodate her teaching timetable at Karabar High School where she teaches French, German, Italian and Chinese.

Jaye capped off her degree by winning the Con Kiriloff Chinese prize for the top graduate.

As a translator and interpreter of Mandarin, Jaye has been offered a job in China working as the English editor of a new scientific journal called PANDA. She will leave in August and plans to “spend every weekend” she can visiting Cheng Cheng and family.

She says her fascination for pandas began when she received a toy panda from her grandmother as a young child.

She now has over 70 toy pandas, as well as a different panda T-shirt for each day of the week. With the giant panda in the top 10 most endangered species list, and only 900 estimated left in the wild, scientists have given them 25 years until extinction.

“I figure I’ve only got another 25 years, pandas have only got another 25 years. I’m going to do my darnedest to make sure that I get extinct before they do.”

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Last Updated on May 18, 2004
Talking tourism ahead of games

By John Martin

When the first Olympic Games were held in Greece in 776BC, there probably was not a lot of focus on sports tourism.

The stadium at Olympia had a capacity of 45,000 spectators but, with the exception of the high priestess of Demeter Chamyne, only Greek men were allowed to watch the games.

Well, times have changed. Not only do the athletes wear clothes these days and women are allowed to watch, but the Olympics are big business - in terms of tourists and the economic spin-offs they bring.

But there are some social pitfalls, according to University of Canberra's Dr Brent Ritchie who will be one of the guest speakers at the pre-Olympic Sports Tourism conference in Rhodes, Greece from June 4 to 6.

Dr Ritchie, who is UC's Director of Tourism, will speak on tourism impacts of hallmark events such as the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games and the Rugby Sevens.

About 100 people, mainly from North America and Europe, will attend the conference. Speakers will include people from the Athens Olympic Organising Committee and the International Olympic Committee.

The other Australian speaker will be Dr Leo Jago, of Victoria University, who will talk about impacts on Australia from the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

One of the guest speakers at the pre-Olympic Sports Tourism conference in Rhodes, Greece from June 4 to 6. Dr Brent Ritchie.

Dr Ritchie, who came to UC in 1998 from New Zealand, is an authority in his area.

Due out in June is a book, called Sports Tourism, that he has co-authored with UC's Director of the Centre for Sports Studies Dr Daryl Adair.

Dr Ritchie was also involved in a post-2000 Sydney Olympics conference, which attracted about 60 delegates to Canberra and was a forerunner to the conference in Rhodes.

He believes there are some lessons to be learned from past events - for instance, the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, England, in 2002.

Dr Ritchie will also be speaking at the UC on May 27 on his experiences at the University of Brighton and the lessons we can learn from the British university system.

The discussion is part of the CELTS Higher Education Forum series.

Dr Ritchie spent three years at Brighton, which is a former polytechnic college of 15,000 students. It has similarities with UC in terms of its past and a move towards more research-based activities. The British government spends 100,000 pounds a year on ensuring teacher and course quality, and there is a greater emphasis in the UK on flexible delivery.

Dr Ritchie's discussion, entitled Academic Experiences from the UK: Lessons for Australia?, is on from 12.30pm to 1.30pm.

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Last Updated on May 18, 2004
A grandfather's legacy comes home

By John Martin

Professor Paul Edwards' five grandchildren are too young to appreciate some of his achievements.

 Heck, they were not even born in 1990 when he published the first account of the generation of “quiet light” in Australia, beating ANU quantum physicists by several months, despite working to a shoestring budget.

 But he is clearly proud of them (they range from 10 years to three months) and now he has left them a special legacy.

 Professor Edwards, 66, who has been around the UC campus for as long as most people can remember, has been awarded by the Council of the University of Tasmania the prestigious degree of Doctor of Science.

 As his doctoral thesis, and with his four children and grandchildren strongly in mind as readers, he put together 60 of his publications and patents into a single volume, Studies in Aeronomy, Astrophysics and Astronomy, Fluctuations and Noise, and Quantum Electronics, recording more than 40 years of scientific research.

 The DSc is the highest degree in science that can be awarded by a university. It recognises original contributions to scientific knowledge made over a period of many years.

 Fewer than a dozen of these higher doctorates are awarded each year in the whole Australian university sector.

 Professor Edwards directs the work at UC of the Centre for Advanced Telecommunications and Quantum Electronics Research in the fields of semiconductor junction noise theory, quantum noise reduction, and quantum cryptography.

 He joined the Canberra College of Advanced Education 20 years ago and has been here since.

 Professor Edwards has also worked in a wide range of physics and engineering fields at the Universities of Tasmania, Adelaide, Texas at Dallas, Otago.

 But Tasmania holds a special place in his heart. The University of Tasmania was where he completed his first degree in 1960 (first class honours in physics).

 Highlights of Professor Edwards’ work included the detection of radioactive debris over Hobart indicating that a high altitude thermonuclear explosion over the equator in 1962 had temporarily blown away the earth’s magnetic field. In another article published in the journal Nature in 1969 he and New Zealand colleagues reported the discovery that radio waves transmitted through the earth’s ionosphere were affected by X-rays from a star thousands of light years from the sun.

 Later work in New Zealand in the 1970’s helped lay the foundation for the installation of wind power turbines in Australia and New Zealand.

 The first account of the generation of “quiet light” in Australia was followed by the discovery that arrays of lasers and light-emitting diodes could be configured to generate correlated light beams. This led to the invention, patented with the late Dr William Cheung, of a novel type of low noise opto-electronic amplifier.

 Professor Edwards retired in February last year from his full-time position as founding Professor of Electronic Engineering and Applied Physics at the University of Canberra but, well, he is still here.

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UC, coming to a movie theatre near you in eight-week ad campaign

By John Martin

The University of Canberra plans to hit moviegoers right between the eyes - 1680 times - with its latest advertising campaign.

Starting from Thursday, May 20, a 15 second-UC Digital Motion Graphics ad will be screened before six crowd-pulling movies at Hoyts cinemas in Belconnen, Woden, Tuggeranong and Manuka 30 times a day over eight weeks.

The movies, covering action, adventure, drama, thriller, sci-fi and comedy genres, are Troy (starring Brad Pitt and Eric Bana), the third Harry Potter instalment Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Thunderstruck, The Actors (starring Michael Caine), The Cooler and The Day Before Tomorrow.

UC marketing tried cinema ads last year but only as static images with voiceovers. This will be cutting-edge motion graphics.

UC marketing's Rob Crispe used his design experience to create the conceptual design, storyboards and artwork. The project was then handed over to Val Morgan Cinema Group's visual effects studio in Canberra.

Mr Crispe art-directed the ad's final production.

The ad, which aims at potential post-graduate students to age 50, has a message which tries to convey the quality, creativity and professionalism of post-graduate education at the university.

It hopes to make people stop munching their popcorn and ask themselves: "Where am I now? Is it worth me developing my skills at UC?"

The ads will screen seven days a week.

At the end of the campaign there will be a marketing assessment of its impact, using figures from Val Morgan and feedback, to see whether the forum should be used again.

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Last Updated on May 18, 2004
Journey of healing comes to campus

By Josephine Banens

Singing, didgeridoo playing, storytelling, meditation, poetry and a smoking ceremony came to the University of Canberra on Wednesday, May 26.

It was part of the seventh national Sorry Day since the inception in 1998 following the Federal Parliament’s Bringing Them Home report in 1997.

The University of Canberra Ngunnawal Centre, in collaboration with the Harmony and Faith Project marked the occasion with colourful activities.

Stolen Generation Audrey Ngingali Kinnear told her story in a public lecture.

A mural of hands was also created, with staff, students and community members adding their print on the concourse. The mural will be added to the UC art collection. The day was followed up with a free lunch including damper.

It is the first time UC has celebrated Sorry Day on this scale. In the lead-up to NAIDOC week (July 4 to 11) a Sorry Day book was distributed around UC collecting signatures from staff and students. The book will be presented during NAIDOC week on behalf of UC.

The UC library is also exhibiting indigenous artefacts until June 11.

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Last Updated on June 4, 2004
Answering some burning questions

By John Martin

Anyone overseas or interstate who saw live television of the January 2003 bushfires might have been given the impression that the whole of Canberra was burning.

As awful as the devastation was, that would have been a wrong perception.

But whether it is an enduring perception is one of the questions confronting University of Canberra's Kate Armstrong who has begun a PhD looking into the effects of the January 2003 bushfires on the ACT tourism industry and what lessons are to be learnt for tourism recovery.

Kate is a lecturer for UC's Tourism Program and is doing her PhD part time. She began last August and hopes to finish by the end of 2007.

By that time, she hopes to have constructed a model that sets out an ideal recovery process for a destination after such a natural disaster.

It should be valuable information. "Very little has been written on the impact of bushfires on tourist destinations and their subsequent recovery, to my knowledge," she said.

Large parts of the Canberra tourism industry were untouched by the fires. And some that were affected have bounced back.

But some of our natural attractions, such as Tidbinbilla Nature Park, Namadgi National Park and the recreational areas along the Murrumbidgee River, such as the Cotter and Casuarina Sands, will bear scars for many, many years.

Door counts at the Visitor Information Centre on Northbourne Avenue showed a steep decline after the fires.

In January 2002, they counted 49,937 visitors. In January 2003, it was 32,750. By February it was down to 17,733.

Whether visitor numbers have recovered fully will be of interest to Kate.

Kate will compare and contrast the effect of the Canberra fires with other natural disasters around the world, such as the Mt St Helens eruption and tornadoes that wreak havoc in Florida.

She will also interview up to 40 people involved in the ACT tourism industry, some of them repeatedly over the life of her PhD research to monitor how the recovery is progressing.

Kate, who studied at UC as an undergraduate, returned here in 2002 as a lecturer. She spent 10 years in Melbourne teaching tourism management at La Trobe University and Monash University and working as a consultant.

She has also worked in environmental management with the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (now Environment Australia).

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Last Updated on June 4, 2004
Lights, camera, action for film industry

By John Martin

Lights, camera, action for ACT film industry if Canberra is chosen one day as venue for a blockbuster feature film, some of the credit can go to University of Canberra's Michael Sergi, who lectures here in film and television.

Mr Sergi set the ball rolling with a report in 2002 that led to the ACT government allocating $1.2 million over four years to establish and run a Film, Television and Digital Media Office to be known as ScreenACTion.

The film and TV industry, which employs several hundred people in Canberra, has an annual turnover of tens of millions of dollars a year.

But with the new ScreenACTion office soon to flick into action and drumming for more films, TV and commercials to be made in Canberra, Mr Sergi believes that could double or even triple within months.

"If a feature film were to come to Canberra for a week you could expect $100,000 to be spent within the local economy," Mr Sergi said.

It would bring with it 50 or more people - actors and crew including soundpeople, camera people, make-up people, wardrobe people - who would all have to eat and sleep in Canberra.

It would also bring spin-off jobs and publicity to Canberra - and that's a hard thing to put a value on. Who has been to New Zealand lately and seen the way some former sleepy hollows are cashing in on Lord of the Rings?

The sky is the limit here, too, with the possibility of increased production also of TV commercials and TV programs. Parts of feature films have previously been filmed in Canberra, but Mr Sergi clearly believes the time is right to step that up.

In his report, Mr Sergi said: "...if the Lord of the Rings could be filmed in Wellington, New Zealand, then there is no reason why Canberra could not also be an international film destination.

"The ACT has very clear advantages as a film location that make it an attractive destination for filmmakers from Australia and overseas. Canberra, itself, has distinct filmmaking appeal that clearly differentiates it from other Australian cities. It would be very easy to market the ACT to these filmmakers and, unlike other industries, the results of that promotion would become apparent quickly."

Mr Sergi was a freelance TV director in Australia and New Zealand for 10 years before joining the UC staff.

He is vice-chairman of the ACT Film and Television Council, which is driving ScreenACTion.

The office is being attached to Business ACT, under the umbrella of the Chief Minister's department.

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Last Updated on June 4, 2004
Callista: exciting times ahead with new system

By Isobel Wiber

Callista - the University of Canberra's new student information system - is set to provide significant long-term benefits, from improved enrolment procedures to on-line voting in student elections.

Callista went live within the university on April 27 and was available to students over the Internet from May 3.

The "Phoenix Project" team, set up by the university to coordinate the implementation of Callista, said the new system would also enable the university to move forward with its strategic plan.

"From an IT perspective it's not good to have different parts of your infrastructure on different types of machines," Mrs Horner said.

"For instance, Callista is on an Oracle platform. So if you want to upgrade the library system, for instance, you might decide to make that compatible with an Oracle platform so that the systems can talk to each other easily."

Business, Law and Information Sciences Student Affairs Manager David Sneddon attended a conference at Deakin University to view its use of the system, describing the experience as "phenomenal."

On-line voting arose as one of the most exciting possibilities of the new system.

"Deakin is doing their students' association elections from it," he said. "So people vote on-line - it's completely secure."

"They were saying that their students' association elections went from a really poor turn-out to almost everybody putting in a vote."

"It took them years to filter it through, but once it was in place it worked really well."

While implementation is still causing significant problems, "Phoenix Team members say the difficulties will work themselves out in time."

"Nothing is ever problem free," Mrs Horner said. "You can't expect that, but overall it has been received really well."

However, Macintosh users across the university have experienced significant difficulties with the new system.

Communication lecturer Annabelle Beckenham said Callista had caused major problems for Mac users in the Communication and Education division.

"I have to install a new running version on my Mac because it can't cope with Callista," Ms Beckenham said. "I've got colleagues who have installed it and they still can't cope with Callista."

"This was always going to be an issue and we have always informed users that it won't be compatible with Macs," Ms Amini said.

"We won't be able to get a 100 per cent result until the next release. There have also been concerns the new system would increase the busy workload and responsibility of academic staff."

Academic unit convenors would ultimately be responsible for downloading class lists and uploading student results into the Callista system each semester.

However, Mr Sneddon said any increased workload would only be a short-term concern. "If the long term, once it connects with WebCT or they get their Excel file at the beginning of the semester, I think it will be great because they will have used it all throughout the semester."

So, while there are still some hiccups, Callista seems to be offering significant future benefits to a university committed to keeping to the forefront of technological development.

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Last Updated on June 4, 2004
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

Finally, after six months of intensive surveillance, the milk thief was caught!

BRRINNGG!!! BRRINNGG!!!


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Last Updated on June 4, 2004
By John Martin

Elizabeth More came to farewell another group of international exchange students to the University of Canberra. She left with a bunch of flowers after they farewelled her too.

It was a touching moment.

Professor More, UC's Deputy Vice-Chancellor who leaves UC on July 16 to take up a post as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) at Macquarie University in Sydney, was invited to say some parting words to the students who spent the last semester at UC and were returning to their home universities.

The UC intake numbered 35 and came from Canada, the United States, Mexico, Italy, Norway, Japan, China, Sweden and Thailand. They were in a celebratory mood amid good coffee and cake at the farewell function at the Staff Club on June 7.

Professor More has good reason to empathise with exchange students. Her daughter Lisa, 21, has been studying in Hungary since January and will not be back until next January.

She is studying at the University of Szeged, sharing an apartment with a Hungarian student at the university and, aside from a range of academic subjects, does eight hours a week of Hungarian language training.

So Professor More knows about those e-mail pleas "to send more money", and she knows how emotionally hard separation can be, but she also appreciates the benefits of foreign study in broadening the mind and providing the chance to experience a different culture.

Professor More said she was thrilled to be associated with the exchange student program, and she told the students: "Please send others to us."

"I hope you have had a good time," she said.

When she asked, "Who plans to come back?" she was met with a chorus of "Yes".

Tina McDonald, manager of Student Exchange and Study Abroad, presented Professor More with the flowers in appreciation for the support she had given the program in her time at UC.

"I know there will be lots of official farewells but this is our chance to say goodbye."

Another person who needs no persuading of the benefits of foreign study is Vice-Chancellor Professor Roger Dean who addressed many of UC's 45 Student Exchange and Study Abroad students at their pre-departure meeting in the Council Room the next day.

Fittingly, the UC students are going to the same countries which sent us their students.

Professor Dean, who had to learn to speak French early in his career when he first worked abroad and has gone on to work in a dozen or so countries, spoke of the benefits of experiencing different cultures and languages.

He said that international study was a two-way street for UC.

"We welcome international students here, and we encourage our students to go elsewhere too," he said.

Later, he also had some parting words for Professor More too.

"Elizabeth came to UC in 2002 as Deputy VC, from her previous position as Director of the highly successful Macquarie Graduate School of Management," Professor Dean said.

"Her management expertise, as well as her wise and supportive council, have been invaluable to me, and to VCAC as a whole."

"I am personally very sorry to see her leave, but extremely glad to have had her support through my 'start-up' phase at UC; it would have been very much more difficult without her."

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Last Updated on July 22, 2004
Funny memories of UC pioneer

John Raynor vividly remembers the first time he met Sam Richardson who died in England on June 23. Dr Richardson was on the interview panel when John, fresh from studying at the ANU, applied for a job at the Canberra College of Advanced Education in 1972 as a lecturer in physics.

"Why the bloody hell would a bloke like you want to come out of your ivory tower to a place like this?" Dr Richardson asked the startled applicant.

Needless to say, John got the job. Thirty-two years later he's still here at Bruce, as head of the School of Information Sciences and Engineering.

He heard the news of Dr Richardson's death in an e-mail which went around the campus from the Vice-Chancellor's office.

The significance of his death might have been lost of many of the more recent arrivals on the campus. How many students, for instance, have given a second thought to the name behind the Building 2 Richardson Building Lecture Centres?

The Vice-Chancellor's office received many phone calls and e-mails from people saddened at his passing.

Dr Richardson, AO CBE blunt, funny and brilliant, was regarded as perhaps the father of University of Canberra. He was the head of the CCAE, UC's forerunner, for 15 years beginning in 1969 on a site which had been formerly used as sheep paddocks.

By 1972, according to John Rayner, the campus was nothing more than a dusty building site with Building 1, Building 2, the first half of Building 3, Building 4 and the gymnasium.

"Sam was a terrific person for getting a new institution off the ground. He believed in a minimum of red tape. He was very much a get-it-done person."

He could be quite rude. Crude even.

He once hung up on a student who phoned to complain about a junior lecturer (John Rayner). When the student rang back, and said "it appears we were disconnected, Dr Richardson," he was told in no uncertain terms it had been no accident.

He had a running battle with another lecturer who liked to park in his designated parking spot and there is a story of a dutiful parking attendant trying to remove an errant car with the university forklift!

Dr Richardson also had a compassionate side as John found out in 1975 when his first wife died, leaving him with two young children.

"He was a great comfort to me."

Dr Richardson was a graduate of the universities of Oxford and London and was awarded an honorary Doctor of the University of Canberra in 1999.

Dr Richardson, who received earlier this year a Centenary Medal for Services to higher education in Australia, said in a letter to UC Alumni this year that the UC campus was better than most he had seen in the UK.

UC sent a wreath to his funeral at Wylye Anglican Church in Wiltshire on July 6 on behalf of the Vice-
EME, with a staff of 34 in its Canberra offices, is headed by head is Director-General David Templeman.

It also helped to organise air transport for the dead and injured and deceased after the Bali bombings in 2002.

Each state and territory has its own plans and organisations, such as police, fire, ambulance and state emergency services, but the EMA, through the EMA, which is part of the Attorney-General's Department, is a back-end brains centre which is called into action to co-ordinate responses to both human-...
Beijing 2008 Olympic translators hone skills

By Jasmine Phillips

For the next 12 months, the University of Canberra will become a home away from home for students from China with Olympic ambitions.

As part of a University first, 16 students will prime their English skills to become translators and interpreters for the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008.

The students will be the first of four annual groups to undertake a year-long Master in Professional English with the School of Languages and International Education, thanks to an agreement with Beijing Public Security Bureau.

The students, aged from 25 to 32, come from various professional backgrounds from criminal investigation and security, to education and traffic control.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Roger Dean said the agreement was a great step for relations between the university and our international counterparts.

“Even though we are a relatively small university we no doubt a very emerging and innovative one,” he said.

He said this program in particular showed the universities goals of giving students “ideas on how to innovate in their profession”.

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Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

This manuscript is abstruse, pedantic, prolix and intellectually impenetrable...
We'll publish immediately!


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Problems & Technical Issues?
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Last Updated on July 22, 2004
John finds a home away from home

By John Martin

Luckily for the University of Canberra, there’s a pattern emerging with American John Roe who has won the W. J. Weeden and Vice-Chancellor’s Postgraduate scholarships.

He has studied snakes, lizards, salamanders and frogs and now he has been lured to Canberra to do a PhD on the Eastern Snake-Necked Turtle in and around Booderee National Park on the NSW coast.

For the next three years or so John Roe will be his home away from home (Canberra) away from home (Nashville, Tennessee) as he tries to find out all there is to know about the turtle.

He arrived here at the end of May/beginning of June. “I can’t be sure. I lost a day somewhere,” he said.

The money from the scholarships made it financially possible for him to come here (he gets $25,000 per annum for the Vice-Chancellor’s Postgraduate Research Scholarship and $8000 per annum for the W. J. Weeden Scholarship plus a 100 per cent fee waiver of the full tuition fees for an international student in PhD applied science) but there was also a lure of working under the internationally-acclaimed Professor Arthur Georges.

“This is a really cutting edge group.”

He said, though, that turtles would be something new for him.

His last port of call was the Savannah River Ecology Lab in South Carolina where he studied salamanders and the effects of them living in a contaminated environment.

Before that he was studying aquatic snakes in Indiana.

He hoped to build on work already done by Professor Georges and his team on the Eastern Snake-Necked Turtle (“I can give you the scientific name if you want it,” he said. “It might confuse readers and certainly would confuse me”).

This year he hopes to trap 30 turtles and fit little transmitters to their shells. When he releases them he will be able to see, Big Brother-like, where they go and how long they take to get there.

“Freshwater wetlands are pretty much endangered throughout the world, and Australia is no exception.”

He said the Eastern Snake-Necked Turtle relied on wetland habitats and sometimes had to travel multiple kilometres to other wetlands.

That raised issues like the potential for road mortality if it comes into contact with human infrastructure.

John plans to come up with some management suggestions through his research. He has already been to Jennis Bay but it is three hours’ drive from Canberra and, from spring, when the turtles become active, he will spend most of his time, until well into autumn, there with all the equipment he needs in a backpack.

He is used to carrying a backpack in Australia. This is his third visit here. Six years ago, he spent several months tracking lizards near Cairns as part of his undergraduate studies.

Last year, he and his wife Alicia came here for their honeymoon and hiked in Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia.

It is just turtles that are new to him.

For further information about Monitor Online contact John Martin, Monitor Editor, on monitor@Canberra.edu.au.

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Problems & Technical Issues?
Content & Data Custodian

Last Updated on July 29, 2004
Transformation from dressed up gym to splendour of the Great Hall

By Jasmine Phillips

For many students, the word “graduation” conjures thoughts of a regal ceremony in the Great Hall at Parliament House. But graduation ceremonies at UC haven’t always been so grand.

In fact, just six years ago the ceremonies were held at the basketball courts in the UC gym. And when the campus was known as the Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAE), lecture theatres and courtyards were as grand as it came.

Jenny Coggins has been a university staff member for 30 years and is now the secretary for council. She remembers the first time she went to a graduation ceremony, six years after the CCADE opened in 1968.

“It would have been in April of 1974, and it was probably only the third or fourth ceremony we ever had,” Ms Coggins said.

In 1973 ceremonies were held in Lecture Theatre 2B9, however this ceremony was small enough to be held outside in the courtyard of Building 5.

“It sort of had a medieval feel to it,” Ms Coggins said. “With people in their robes and the music in the courtyard, it was really quite lovely.”

With the student population expanding, the ceremonies were moved to the gym in 1975. According to Ms Coggins, the ceremonies at the gym were both time-consuming and costly. The university invested in expensive curtains and decorations to “try and make it looks less like a gym”, and it took dozens of staff to set up over several days.

In 1997, the wheels were set in motion for future ceremonies to be held at Parliament House. Organisers had arranged for renowned architect Romaldo Giurgola, who designed Parliament House, to be the guest speaker at the April ceremony. He would also be awarded an honorary doctorate of the university.

Somebody thought, well wouldn’t it be good to have the graduation ceremony in the building that he designed,” Ms Coggins said. And so it was done.

The ceremonies returned to the UCU gym once more in the second semester of 1998, and following a staffing reshuffle, Vice-Chancellor Don Aitkin asked Ms Coggins to head the organising team.

She says it was one of her most hectic times at the university, made even more stressful by events on the day.

The guest speaker, ALP Senator for the ACT Susan Ryan, was also to be awarded an honorary doctorate, however her flight from Sydney had been delayed, so the Vice-Chancellor was asked to prepare a speech in case she didn’t make it.

“She didn’t arrive and Don made a speech... quite virtuously at the point where his speech naturally ended, she arrived,” Ms Coggins said.

“The secretary of council at the time had to run all the way over to Building 1 from the gym to pick up her doctoral robes and then run back.”

“By the time Susan Ryan got up on the dais he was there with her robes and then actually robed her on stage. It all looked like it was part of the ceremony, so it sort of worked... but it was really quite scary because we weren’t sure we were going to make it.”

After weighing up the pros and cons, the ceremony returned to Parliament House the following year.

University records show that more students accepted invitations to attend ceremonies at Parliament House, and the cost of hiring the Great Hall was not much greater than using the gym.

“The Parliament House location is far more attractive to people and very prestigious, wonderful place for international students particularly to have their families watching them. The disadvantage is that it used to be quite nice for the families to come on to the UC campus. Even though the building wasn’t as grand as Parliament House they did quite enjoy it.”

For further information about Monitor Online contact John Martin, Monitor Editor, on: monitor@Canberra.edu.au
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

Darin, I know he'll flush the goldfish if we don't give him a Mega Neutron Blaster, but if we give in to terrorism now, where will it stop?


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Problems & Technical Issues?
Content & Data Custodian

Last Updated on July 29, 2004
Doctors cut out his tongue but did not remove his spirit

By John Martin

John Spinks' brave road to graduating from the University of Canberra began one day in 1997 when, as he puts it, a man in a white coat looked into his mouth and knew he had oral cancer.

A week later, John woke up in intensive care at John James Memorial Hospital with a tube running up his nose to his stomach, a surgical opening in his trachea and his jaw back in place after being ripped open so his diseased tongue and salivary glands couldn't be cut out.

There was more pain to come. A plastic surgeon rebuilt his tongue using tissue from his left bicep but it took him six months to learn to speak and eat again and he had to have three more operations. Then last year he went through a long period of depression and wondered whether he could go on at all.

Fast forward to Thursday, January 29, 2004, when John's wife Judy Barfield and his children Anna, 17 and Steven, 15, were at the Great Hall to watch him graduate with a Bachelor of Education and it is no wonder it was such an emotional day for the family.

John, 55, has been working on relief since September at Turner Primary School as a special teaching assistant, teaching children with special needs such as autism, behavioural problems and cerebral palsy, but now he is free to get his ticket as a fully fledged teacher. It is the culmination of a dream born from a nightmare.

The keyword is determination and John said it is common to cancer sufferers. "When you get cancer you learn to fight," he said, just days before the graduation and, coincidentally, the morning after American cyclist Lance Armstrong, a survivor of testicular cancer, had won his sixth Tour de France.

"I don't plan to win the Tour de France but I do hope to become a bloody good primary school teacher." And so he tells them and then they ask to see his tongue. He has showed his tongue to a few students at UC too.

He speaks with a slur, rather like a punch-drunk boxer who has had a few too many beers, but he has a message worth listening to.

"I got cancer from smoking cigarettes," he said, matter-of-factly. "I smoked 20 cigarettes for 25 years."

He sees young people smoking, hears the smoker's coughs and smells the smoke in their clothes and he is living proof of where it can lead.

One of the things he said he had learnt from his illness is that life is very fragile.

John's background is as a public servant, specialising in the areas of export finance and insurance. He worked for Foreign Affairs and Trade for 21 years, centring on South-East Asia. He rose to executive level.

He came into contact with teachers via his own children at Campbell Primary School when he took time off work to accompany them on excursions. He marvelled then at the patience teachers had.

He planted those seeds in 2000 when, having used up all his sick leave, he took a package and left his then-employer, the department of Industry, Science and Technology, and began his degree at UC.

All was going well until last year. Five years after his life-threatening brush with cancer, he got the all-clear from his doctor. "I was told was no more likely to die from cancer than anyone else. I had beaten it. I really wasn't going to die."

But he now feels he let down his psychological guard. After so much pain and struggle, he despaired: "I've lost my tongue, I've lost my job, I've lost my good looks."

He plunged into nearly a year of depression, barely able to get out of bed each day, contemplating ways to end his life, and, with just a unit of his degree left to go, putting study into the wastebasket.

Things turned around when he applied for and got the Turner Primary School relief job. "When you see some of the problems some of those children have got you wonder what you have to be depressed about."

"I was embarrassed coming back here to do the last unit but the students here have been so good to me," he said. And hopefully they've learnt from him too. "Don't smoke."
Some worldly advice from refugee Alex

By Josephine Banens

Sudanese Alex Donato is leading the way for up to 238 refugee students at UC.

Approached by counsellor Liz Brumer from the Spiritual Meeting Place, Alex was asked to be involved with UC's new Refugee Support Group, which held its first meeting on July 22.

The 25-year-old left Sudan with his family in 1991 to neighbouring Uganda after witnessing the devastation of civil war which has plagued the country since the 1950s. After moving to Kenya and Tanzania, Alex came to Australia in 2001 and, when granted a Permanent Resident Visa, began his studies at UC in 2003 doing Public Relations.

"I mostly grew up in exile," he said.

The idea behind the group was to bring together those in similar situations, and those interested in refugee issues for the opportunity to share experiences.

"I know it's a very hard thing. Not many people want to talk about it. I first thought, people don't even care so why talk about it?" he said.

"Without warning from a good life you're just thrown out there without anything, so you have to start from scratch." Like the 238 students with Permanent Resident Visas or refugee status, Alex came to UC for the opportunity to study in freedom.

Because Alex performed well at school, he gained two scholarships, the first at a high school in Kampala, then to University in Dar Es-Salaam, Tanzania, where he studied journalism for two years.

"There wasn't much freedom given as a refugee in Uganda. You don't have chances to get a good education. It's a matter of struggling to get your chance," Alex said.

"I was lucky because I constantly went to school in quite a prestigious school that probably an average Ugandan would not have money to go to."

Sudan, about the size of Western Australia, is the biggest country in Africa, and now in what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Fighting between rebels and Janjaweed militia in Darfur, western Sudan, has killed at least 30,000 people and uprooted over a million.

"The concern now is about humanitarian intervention," said. Alex recalls international intervention being denied in the past.

In 1988 there was a similar case where the Sudanese Government evicted all the humanitarian workers from a region called Bahr el Ghazal.

"It raised concerns from all over the world."

Alex believes the Government is doing the same thing now by saying no to international intervention. he said it was assisting in ethnic cleansing in Darfur.

"They know it and they're doing it purposely just to starve all these people- which the UN calls genocide. It's quite appalling."

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Problems & Technical Issues?
Content & Data Curation

Last Updated on August 17, 2004
Enough of the theory, student nurses go live

In keeping with the University of Canberra's increased push on nurse training, UC's undergraduate nursing students are getting intensified training in real work situations.

UC has formed partnerships to give student nurses clinical practice off campus: in Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) in several wards at the Canberra Hospital, at Calvary Hospital, in aged care and with Community Health, ACT.

No longer will they spend a bit of time here and a bit of time there.

Under the DEU scheme, the nurses, undergoing a three-and-a-half year Bachelor of Nursing degree, are joined on wards two days a week for a whole semester - uniforms, overnight shifts and all - to learn the practical and human aspects to being a nurse.

Nursing is a growth area at UC.

This year 370 students were enrolled.

The July graduations farewelled 66 nurses, which was more than ever before.

In the wake of recent decisions to phase out nursing courses at both Sydney University and La Trobe University, UC has been given the go-ahead by the Minister for Education, Science and Training to offer an extra 40 places next year.

The DEU scheme was established on trial in the second semester last year, though only at two wards at the Canberra Hospital and Calvary Hospital.

In the first semester this year six DEUs were made available. This semester, ward 11B (orthopaedics) at Canberra Hospital has been added to the list. The others are paediatrics, surgical (Ward 9A) and oncology (Ward 14B) at the Canberra Hospital, Calvary Hospital (Ward 4W/6W), Aged Care and Community Health, ACT.

It is hoped that with future DEUs coming on line in the areas of mental health and rural nursing that all nursing students will undertake their clinical practice in a DEU.

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Problems & Technical Issues?
Content & Data Custodian

Last Updated on August 17, 2004
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

All I'm trying to tell you is if you want to use your computer you'll have to unplug the toaster!

Jaybee'04

It's not Metheselah but Dr Chris Radnell checks one of the trees on campus.

By Jasmine Phillips

Being part of some of the world's most groundbreaking research, including a paper that led to discovery of the Greenhouse Effect, is a far cry from management at UC.

But for Dr Chris Radnell, the new Director of Information and Community Technology (ICT) Services, it is no less exciting or challenging.

Dr Radnell has spent much of his life in research and teaching across three continents. He has counted tree rings in the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California, carbon-dated the Shroud of Turin, and studied atmospheric history with core samples from Antarctica and the Great Barrier Reef.

Perhaps his greatest career highlight, however, was his contribution to research on the Greenhouse Effect, stemming from his first job in the late 70s, where his research team used ancient tree rings to measure the changes in atmosphere over the past 10,000 years.

"I'd spent over a decade as a student in the United States so it was great to finally be doing research that earned money," Dr Radnell said.

"It was in summer and we were on the snow line in the Sierra Nevadas. "Looking out over Lake Tahoe, you could see everyone arriving for summer vacations and we were at 10 thousand feet."

His research used some of the world's most ancient trees, including the 4500-year-old tree named Methuselah, to map the changes in the atmosphere, particularly since human industrialisation.

"We were trying to see how the atmosphere would have normally gone through its standard fluctuations and at the end of that trying to see what influence man had had," Dr Radnell said.

The work discovered an increase in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, which then lead scientists to discover what is now called the Greenhouse Effect.

"At that time we didn't consider CO2 a pollution. "We didn't realise it was actually going to cause the problem it is today."

Another instance where Dr Radnell's research made headlines all over the world was when he was part of a team to carbon-date the Christian relic the Shroud of Turin, which many people believe was used to wrap Christ's body.

The Catholic Church had long resisted a scientific dating of the shroud because of the destruction it would cause to a large piece of the relic.

However, with the refinement of carbon-dating techniques that required only a very small piece of cloth, Pope John Paul II gave permission for the shroud to be dated in 1986.

Two years later, three separate laboratories were given samples to carbon-date. Their independent figures found that the shroud (with 99.9 per cent certainty) originated between the years 1000 and 1500, long after the time of Christ.

"Once we publicised that we certainly weren't very popular," Dr Radnell said. "Even though three laboratories dated it independently and got the same answer we were told that we were wrong."

He said although the research team treated the shroud as any other material to be dated, the attention from the world and the media was overwhelming.

"We hadn't even thought about security. "When the piece of material was delivered it came in an armed vehicle and we actually had papal visitors there to watch us go through the process to make sure we didn't cheat."

Among some of his more unusual research, Dr Radnell has spent time in the deserts of America searching for urine-drenched pack rat nests.

"The pack rats urinate over their environment which acts more like a resin and protects the material that they've urinated on."

"So around the center of their nest where they're urinated, all the material is preserved and we can date that back to about a thousand years."

In later years, his work has shifted to management and information technology, working with various government departments. He has most recently worked with AUSAID and for the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, delivering a new computer system, before starting at UC.

Dr Radnell also owns one of Canberra's first energy efficient homes. He designed the property in the 80s to harness nature's elements and reduce the need for heating and cooling. His home has often been a stop-off point for architects and environmental groups who see this design as the way of the future.
By Josephine Banens

UC graduate Petria Thomas does us proud

With four medals and two world records, recent University of Canberra graduate Petria Thomas has made the perfect exit from her third and final Olympic Games.

Of the six UC students to compete in Athens, the "bionic butterflyer" as she is aptly nicknamed because she has had so many operations, won gold medals in the women's 100 metres butterfly (her first individual Olympic title), the women's 4 x 100 metre medley relay, the women's 4 x 100 metre freestyle relay, and a silver in the women's 200 metres butterfly.

Thomas, who graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science in July, was unable to attend her graduation ceremony at Parliament House's Great Hall because she was preparing for the Olympics with the Australian swimming team in Athens.

UC Bachelor of Commerce student Nathan Deakes joined the medal rush by winning bronze in the 20 kilometre walk. Unfortunately, he was disqualified in the 50 kilometre walk with not much more than 10km to go.

Deakes was sponsored by UC for some of his lead-up training to Athens.

One of Petria's swim team-mates in Athens, Frances Adcock, who finished eighth in a semi-final of the 200m backstroke, is a former UC College student and now studying a Bachelor of Arts, International Studies at UC.

Rowers Donna Martin placed third in the repechage to make it into the finals of the women's double sculls, where she placed ninth with crew member Jane Robinson.

Fellow rower and sports media student Sally Robbins made headlines in the women's eight finals for stopping mid-race.

Stuart Rendell, a Bachelor of Education student, came 11th out of 18 competitors in his pool of the men's hammer throw qualifying rounds.

Some former students to compete in Athens include sailor Michael Blackburn, who ranked 19th in the mixed open dinghy-laser, and graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science in 1992, and former CCAE student, Suzanne Balogh, who won gold in women's trap shooting.

Our Olympians

- Petria Thomas (swimming): Gold in women's 100 metres butterfly, gold in women's 4 x 100 metre medley relay, gold in women's 4 x 100 metre freestyle relay, silver in the women's 200 metres butterfly.
- Nathan Deakes (walking): Bronze in 20km walk, disqualified in 50km walk.
- Sally Robbins (rowing): 6th in women's eight finals.
- Stuart Rendell (hammer throw): 11th in hammer throw qualifying round.
- Donna Martin (rowing): 9th in double sculls finals.
- Frances Adcock (swimming): 8th in 200m backstroke semi-final.

For further information about Monitor Online contact John Martin, Monitor Editor, on: John.Martin@Canberra.edu.au.
Wonders of speech recognition

By John Martin

In keeping with the University of Canberra’s increased push on nurse training, UC’s undergraduate nursing students are getting intensified training in real work situations.

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Last updated on September 21, 2004
Hey, we've got good rocks too

By John Martin

Why would 7000 of the world's leading minds on geology converge on one of the world's most culture packed cities, Florence, Italy?

"Oh, they have some really good rocks in Italy," said University of Canberra's Dr Ken McQueen who was among geoscientists from 140 countries who met at the 32nd International Geological Congress in Florence in August.

Some of the earliest geological work was done in Europe and the first congress was held in Paris in 1878. That attracted 310 scientists from 23 countries. It has been held every four years since and is commonly referred to as the Olympic Games of geology.

Dr McQueen presented in Florence the results of his research on chemical weathering processes and in particular the concentration of trace elements like arsenic and lead in the iron oxide rich surface materials common over much of Australia and other deeply weathered parts of the world.

It was well received and he has had six inquiries from colleagues for more information.

The congress also gave him a chance to put faces to names and interact with geoscientists from other countries.

And he did field trips from the conference. One was to the Carrara Quarries north-west of Florence where white marble is mined. There he visited the Michelangelo Cave from where the Renaissance artist got his marble.

He also went to the Chianti area, which is of interest because of the relationship of geology and soil type to the wine industry.

Like the International Olympic Council, the bid to stage future congresses was a hot topic in Florence.

Oceania was one of three bidders at Florence for the 2012 congress - and won with 54 per cent of the vote. It was not without cost though. About 2000 giveaway miniature koalas sent as excess luggage to Italy went missing in transit!

The 2012 congress will be held in Brisbane. Associated trips to every state in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Pacific and possibly Indonesia are planned.

And why not? Our rocks are good too.
The day the gloom returned to Bali

By John Martin

A group of students and staff, from UC’s tourism program and UCU Club Tourism, who went to Bali to find out how tourism had coped since the 2002 bombings got a first-hand taste of the new gloom that has descended on the Indonesian resort island.

On Thursday, September 9, they were taking a break from their research and were on a trip to a volcano on the north of the island when some fellow tourists asked them whether they had heard of the bomb blast at the Australian embassy in Jakarta.

After a flurry of phone calls to family at home, the awful news was confirmed.

The cheerful, welcoming demeanour of local tourist operators - hoteliers, shopkeepers, taxi drivers, tour operators and craftspeople - changed to despair. It was happening again, and they feared the worst.

Part-time tourism lecturer Todd Wright recounted how downcast locals in Kuta asked him if he was going home now. When he said no, not yet, he was thanked profusely for staying. It is not hard to understand why.

After the Sari Club and Paddy’s Bar was bombed on October 12, 2002, killing 202 people, tourism took a dive in Bali.

Before the bombings, 25,000 Australian tourists visited Bali each year. In the eight months after the numbers dropped to a couple of thousand.

Two years later, it has reached 17,000 to 18,000. Whether it will keep creeping up now seems unlikely.

After the 2002 bombing, many businesses went bankrupt. Bali relies on tourism for 95 per cent of its economy. People lost their jobs; some kept plugging on in tourist ventures that had no tourists while others returned to the land to tend crops.

“One fellow told me that as long as he had a roof over his head and a couple of meals of rice each day, he’d survive,” Mr Wright said.

Despite all, Mr Wright said it was a great trip and an unbelievable experience for the students and staff involved.

They arrived on September 4 and left, as scheduled, on September 12. The group - which included 14 undergraduate students, one postgraduate student, himself, tourism lecturers Dr Brent Ritchie, Ms Helen Ayres and Dr Jeremy Huyton - went to Bali with a focus on finding out about tourism recovery but they did the touristy stuff too, including white-water rafting, jet ski-ing, shopping and partying.

Six of the group had not been overseas before. They paid their own way with assistance from UCU Club Tourism the UC Tourism Students Association.

As if they needed another reminder about the gloom that went before, they stayed in a hotel about 700 metres from the 2002 bombing sites.
Indian doctor meets Jack Frost and Aussie Rules

By John Martin

A bit more than six months ago, Dr Gayle Rebello knew nothing about hamstring injuries in the Australian Football League. Heck, she did not even know that Australian football existed.

But why should she?

Gayle, from the mid-western Indian state of Goa, was a junior resident in a neurosurgery ward. For a year and a half, she worked in casualty dealing with car accident victims, fall victims and people with brain tumours, and she assisted in hundreds of operations.

Now, however, she is at the University of Canberra doing a Masters degree looking at hamstring injuries in sport.

She will not start her thesis until next year but is already doing a preliminary study on hamstring injuries in the AFL (40 plus this season). She is trying to pinpoint when in games the injuries occurred and determine what role fatigue plays.

"The reason I did neurosurgery was to find out whether I had the aptitude for sports surgery," Gayle said.

Her Masters is not related to that goal but she said that bio-mechanics was a stepping stone that would increase her understanding of the subject.

India, the world's second-most populous country, is not a sporting power. It is strong in cricket and hockey but not many other sports.

Its sole return from the recent Olympic Games in Athens, for instance, was a silver medal - something that embarrasses Gayle a tad.

But she feels she has a role to play in sports medicine in India some time in the future. "Who knows," she said. "Maybe people just stopped playing sport for one reason or another. Maybe we just need to break the cycle."

Lots of children played soccer (Gayle said "football" at first then corrected herself for local consumption) around Goa.

When Gayle was a young teenager, she was India's national 100-metre sprint champion in her age group. When she was 12, she clocked 12.86 seconds.

And that's probably when she became interested in sport and, later, sports medicine.

But why Australia? And why Canberra, which is so, so far from home? Well, she ruled out the United States because of its expense and Australia has a fine reputation in the area.

Once she settled on Australia, the Australian Institute of Sport drew her like a beacon and finally she fixed on UC. A long-distance phone conversation with her supervisor to be, Dr Mark Sayers, clinched the deal.

She seems glad it is spring now. In her backyard at home, she has mango trees and coconut trees - and being a coastal state, the temperature rarely drops below 16 and rarely tops 34.

So it was a shock to the system when Gayle arrived in Canberra on April 9 and had to get through winter.

It was probably a shock, too, to residents of Ngunnawal who found handprints on their car windows some mornings. Gayle got into the habit of going for 6am runs and, well, the frost and ice on car windows was just too much of a novelty not to touch.

For further information about Monitor Online contact John Martin, Monitor Editor, on: John.Martin@Canberra.edu.au

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Problems & Technical issues?
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Last Updated on October 1, 2004
Cartoon (by JayBee)

The Drum

Australian Idle

Financial planner breaks the mould

By Rebecca Stones

The terms “financial planner” and “rugby fanatic” seem at odds with one another - that is, until you meet Jenny Rolfe, UC’s senior lecturer in financial planning.

Ms Rolfe, with ambitions like completing a triathlon by the end of the year, is a far cry from the stereotype of the finance industry. While she conceded there is some truth in the stereotype, the finance sector being predominantly male, Jenny believes this creates great opportunities for people like herself.

"It’s like anything - there’s a stereotype. But it’s my goal to rise to the challenge of breaking those ideas ... [the industry] change has started," Ms Rolfe said. Going beyond people’s expectations is a value Ms Rolfe hopes to convey in UC’s new major, Financial Planning, as part of the Bachelor of Commerce.

Hailing from Wagga Wagga, Ms Rolfe said she made many financial mistakes before establishing her finance career in Queensland and that understanding finance had empowered her, a feeling with which she hoped to motivate students.

"There’s a huge need for new-age advisors ... and [in the course] we want to go beyond the minimum standard. You need more to be really good - that’s our vision." She also emphasised the importance of students being genuinely passionate about helping other people and not just making money if Financial Planning was their career of choice.

"Of course the money is an element ... [but] you have to be a people person. You can have all the knowledge in your head, but you can’t put it into practice if you can’t communicate."

While the human-focus of financial planning might seem surprising, Ms Rolfe believes this is simply due to confusion between different areas of finance.

She believes Financial Planning is highly social because of the high level of human contact, with clients disclosing not only financial information, but their aspirations and dreams.

Ms Rolfe, who operated her own Financial Planning business in Brisbane for four years, said most clients were, “average people ... some clients become close friends.”

She admitted the work could be frustrating, having seen many financial opportunities missed, but found satisfaction in changing bad financial habits.

"My family and friends were my first guinea pigs - they’re still talking to me, so that’s a good sign. A budget is like a diet - everyone says they’ll do it but no one ever does."

"I’m biased, but if everybody, from the moment they got their first pay cheque made a plan - they’d be set by the time they were 30 [but] there’s no such thing as too late, it’s never too late."


Or contact the School of Business and Government.

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Problems & Technical Issues?

Content & Data Custodian

Last Updated on November 4, 2004
One, two, three coups in Fiji and he was out - and it's UC again

If it had not been for three military coups in Fiji, the new head of the School of Information Sciences and Engineering, Associate Professor Dharmendra Sharma, would not be at the University of Canberra. No question.

He would probably still be at the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

But within one week of the George Speight coup in 2000, Fiji's third coup, Associate Professor Sharma's family was on the way to Australia. He soon followed.

The security issues in Fiji and the ripping of the social fabric there was enough to make him sell house, cars and property cheaply and get out. He joined the staff of UC in 2001.

Associate Professor Sharma is not dwelling on the past. There are too many challenges here for the future. But he knows he is unlikely to go back to Fiji to live and he despairs about what the future holds for students at USP, given the brain drain since the coups.

Associate Professor Sharma, who grew up on a sugar cane farm in western Fiji and first went to university to study mathematics, has specialised in computer science and that is a growth industry that changes quickly. Lecturers need to keep abreast of those changes.

When he was at USP he headed up the computer science discipline and was the only regional staff member with a PhD in Computer Science, which he got at ANU in 1994. He also founded the South Pacific Computer Society in 1994 with 40 members. It now has 140 members and this year he was made a Fellow of the Society in recognition of his vision for the inception of the Society and his guidance as president for its first eight years.

Associate Professor Sharma was previously head at UC of Software Engineering and Artificial Intelligence. But in his new role as ISE head, he overseas a number of other departments: Information Systems, Electronics and Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics and Software Engineering and Artificial Intelligence.

He has come a long way. When he first went to the USP as an undergraduate student in the mid 70s, it was to study mathematics but had his first taste of computers, then a rather large main-frame computer.

"I found mathematics exciting and challenging and computers even more exciting," he said. "I got pulled that way and my interest just grew in time."

Now his focus is on good courses that will prepare students for increasing opportunities, good marketing, good quality research and nurturing community links. And it will be here, at UC.
By John Martin

In some ways, life will be easier this time in Antarctica for Associate Professor Peter Morgan who will spend six months down there in the name of science.

He was there for 12 months 40 years ago when he was a 25-year-old graduate student of the University of Melbourne.

The purpose of that trip was to measure the density of the ice. So is this one.

The difference though is that this time Peter and his party of four others, including his PhD student from Macquarie University, will have GPS technology so the measures will be much more precise and he will be able to chart the differences from 40 years ago.

That would tell us, he said, how the planet is coping with environmental change.

Despite blizzards and temperatures plunging to minus 40, they did not get standard issue superfine merino wool underwear when he last went.

Now they do. And when they are at Casey base, they will have Internet and e-mail access and telephones.

Last time the only reliable way to get messages out was by telegraph. This time there are videos. And there will be good food prepared by a proper chef (though Peter, like the rest of the expeditioners will be expected to do his turn as kitchen hand).

But it will be a different proposition when Peter's group makes its three or four trips (weather depending) to Law Dome, a 200kg diameter ice cap on the edge of Antarctica, where most of the research needs to be done.

He expects, in total, they will have to travel across about 2000km of snow to get there and back.

There are no buildings at Law Dome, just what they can drag behind them. Last time, they left a marker in the ice so the testing area could be found again. They had to navigate by the sun and the five stars they could see in the daylight.

This time, GPS should take them straight there. Last time, they did a lot of the travel on dog sleds. Now there are no dogs allowed in the Antarctic and they have quad motor bikes.

They will dig a series of deep holes in the ice to do their measuring. They'll happily work in temperatures between minus 20 and minus 30 but if the mercury plunges to minus 40, they'll have to stop.

Associate Professor Morgan's first hurdle will be the voyage on the wild Southern Ocean aboard the 94-metre Aurora Australis.

It left Hobart on October 5 but is expected to take about 30 days to get there because marine scientists onboard want to do some experiments on the way down.

If all goes well - and the ship does not get stuck in ice, as sometimes happens - Peter and the other 47 expeditioners bound for Casey base will be dropped off in early November and complete the last 100km across the ice by helicopter.

Members of Peter's group - who also include a diesel mechanic, a field officer and a survey - had a week-long intensive training camp at Bronte in the Tasmanian highlands, where they were drilled in riding quad motor bikes, fighting fires, discussing clothing and being trained in living and working in extremely close proximity to other people.

Last trip, he recalls being holed up in huts sitting out bad weather. That's just a fact of life down there.

But the scientific study will be rewarding. And there will be side benefits. Peter can't wait to see those stunning two-hour sunsets and sunrises again. He calls them "tremendous pink shows".

Some people get to see them just once in a lifetime; Peter feels doubly privileged.
Cartoon (by JayBee)

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Problems & Technical issues?
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Last Updated on November 4, 2004
IT Matters?

By Professor Andrew Cheetham, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Information Management)

October 19, 2004: In May 2003 Nicholas Carr published an article in the Harvard Business Review provocatively titled “IT doesn’t matter”. The rumblings, even outrage, generated by this article have not yet died away.

However, when the responses are analysed, it is clear that there is a large proportion who have only read the title and an equally large proportion who have misinterpreted the thrust.

Carr has since published a book that enlarges on his theme: “Does IT matter? IT and the corrosion of competitive advantage” (Harvard Business School Press, April 2004). The most frequent misinterpretation of the article is that it implies that IT is no longer a useful business tool. This is of course far from the case and indeed Carr states effectively that IT now so firmly underpins just about all aspects of what business does, that no business could survive without it.

The real thrust of Carr’s article is that IT has become to a very large extent commoditised, that is, it is so cheap that anyone can afford it and it therefore offers little differentiation. IT no longer delivers a competitive advantage in the same way that early adopters of new technologies previously obtained. This is quite different to saying that IT doesn’t matter; it matters and it matters a great deal. If we look at the issue from another direction we can say that even if IT systems no longer deliver a competitive advantage, not having those systems will deliver a significant disadvantage.

It is therefore no longer that simply having technology gives us an advantage; it is how we use it that will deliver the edge. So how does this affect us in the higher education sector? In the education domain we are dealing with an age group that is used to, and demands connectivity. They work that way, they play that way, they are connected socially and professionally through technology, through the internet, email, IM, chat rooms, SMS, mobile phones etc; they are always-on-line. Those of you who have watched your children grow through this, will know that they develop singularly robust and supportive social networks, always in contact; so much more so than previously.

As a university, our competitive advantage through technology will be in how we use that technology in our teaching to tap into these highly connected social and work networks. Just providing lectures and tutorials will soon not be adequate. Just having ‘stuff’ up on WebCT will not be adequate. We have the IT tools and more are being rolled out next year just to keep up with the same technology advantage enjoyed by other universities. Our only advantage will be in how we use these tools to connect meaningfully with our students and our colleagues.
Research matters

By Professor Andrew Cheetham, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Information Management)

November 9, 2004: The Semester is over and academics have greater opportunity to concentrate on their research; so to complement last issue’s article titled IT Matters - available in hard copy only - it is perhaps an appropriate time to assert that Research Matters!

Now that the election result is known and we have a fourth term of the Howard Government, what’s more with a sympathetic Senate, we should try to look to the future in research matters.

Under the Coalition, research has in fact done quite well with significant increases in funding to be maintained through to 2011. It could, of course, always be better, but realistically it is business investment in R&D that is wanting, as well as a more strategic target for our gross expenditure on R&D (GERD).

Recent ABS figures indicate that Australian GERD has risen slightly relative to our GDP; it is currently at 1.62 per cent (13th in the OECD). The AVCC suggests that Australia should be aiming to increase GERD to about 2 per cent of GDP by 2010 and 5 per cent by 2020.

It is now clear that Australia will implement a Research Quality Assessment process. DEST will be consulting with stakeholders during the next 12 months with a view to submitting a firm proposal to the Minister by December 2005 for implementation possibly as soon as 2006.

What we should expect is probably something that is simpler and cheaper than the United Kingdom’s Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) but that is perhaps more sophisticated than New Zealand’s Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF). Either way, academics should be prepared; the quality of your personal research output will be up for scrutiny.

One of the major issues that affects research and research productivity is that of workloads. Approximately 44 per cent of Australian academics do not publish research papers with any regularity or at all. It is important that they have the opportunity to carry out teaching and scholarship activities that will allow them to develop a career path based on demonstrated excellence in education as opposed to research. At the same time we must ensure adequate time for our productive researchers to flourish.

As was recently suggested by Gavin Moody in The Australian, Higher Education:

“it would be far better to develop a mechanism that gave all staff a reasonable opportunity to establish a research career, but to make continued research time and access to research infrastructure conditional on research performance. This would increase the pool of potential research stars, broaden limited opportunities to establish a research career and reduce inefficiencies.”

From the research perspective this represents a good target for UC and should be borne in mind during the current debate on research funding within the University.
Sustaining a scholarly approach to teaching

By John Dearn, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

November 9, 2004 - Writing to learn

John Dearn

November 9, 2004 - One of the perennial issues in higher education is the tension between teaching and research. However, the distinction between teaching and research is a lot more uncertain than usually implied.

The concept of research is particularly problematical. On the one hand it can be viewed as a process of systematic sustained inquiry, a particular way of thinking and interacting with the world. On the other hand research is conceived by many as a specific activity involving considerable resources and support and the expectation of tangible outcomes in the form of peer refereed publications. Between these two extremes sit a diversity of activities often described by the term scholarship.

So when terms such as the scholarship of teaching and research-led teaching are being widely used in higher education, what is the relationship between teaching, scholarship and research?

One approach to this important issue is to start with the view that teaching in higher education should be a dynamic process involving the original construction of knowledge by both students and academic staff. Under this conception, every act of teaching should be a form of scholarship that carries at least the potential for originality and the exploration of new ideas.

However, presenting knowledge as inherently contextual and relativistic sits uneasily with a model of teaching based on information transmission and forms of assessment that reward recall and rely on the production of "right" answers. It shifts emphasis to learners exploring problems, identifying assumptions and values, and placing issues in political, cultural and social contexts. It is an approach to knowledge that values diversity, respects different perspectives and crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Capturing this approach to constructing knowledge embodies notions of creativity and serendipity, of openness, even playfulness. It creates a space for students to bring their own interests to their learning and involves the development of a strong sense of personal knowledge and identity.

Academic staff facilitating this form of teaching are engaged in a form of ongoing inquiry at the boundaries of knowledge. They read and think very deeply and widely and are able to see their discipline in a rich socio-cultural and historical context.

As a University it is essential that we focus our research efforts on those few areas that clearly represent our particular strengths. However, finding ways of nurturing scholarship across all areas of the University is an equally important challenge if we are to ensure our teaching is of the highest quality.

john.dearn@canberra.edu.au

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Last Updated on January 31, 2005