DOUBLE FUNDING WIN FOR CARES POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW

In a matter of weeks, Dr Itamar Levinger was successful in winning two research grants from the philanthropic trusts, the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and the LEW Carty Charitable Foundation.

“On hearing this news, I was very happy as they are my first two external grants at VU. I really appreciate the work of the Office for Research, and particularly would like to thank Sandy Superina for her guidance, support and assistance.”

The funding support from these two trusts will aid vital research into the roles of bone structure and metabolism in the development of diabetes, and will support the examination of muscle proteins and their associated genes in people with and without knee osteoarthritis (OA).

“I am delighted to be a grant recipient from these prestigious trusts; both have a strong history of funding research that benefits the community, and I sincerely thank the Trustees for their support”.

Itamar’s advice to other young researchers seeking funding is to be proactive and ensure that the research study suitably matches the granting body’s priorities.

In addition to her research project, she has been busy spreading the word on women’s health and prevention of chronic diseases among academics, clinicians and students in Hong Kong and beyond. She has given two seminars at the CUHK, one at her host Department, Gynaecology and Obstetrics and one organised by the School of Public Health also at the CUHK on “Complementary and Dietary Supplements for Menopausal Health: What Works, What Does Not’. The well renowned University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the Hong Kong Menopause Society and the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Hong Kong are hosting a joint scientific meeting at which Professor Stojanovska is an invited guest speaker. Her presentation on ‘Diabetes and Menopause: Co-conspirators in heart disease’ will be to a large audience, mainly gynaecologists and general practitioners from Hong Kong who work in the area of women’s health. The seminar followed by the dinner, sponsored by Schering-Plough pharmaceutical company will be held on 28 July at the Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel.
In April this year Lily was invited as a guest speaker at the Slovenian-Croatian Menopause Society in Slovenia. While at the conference, she managed to give a newspaper and radio interviews and was invited for an interview in a morning talk TV program-all in her native language.

The Vice Chancellor has commissioned ICEPA to undertake a scoping study to investigate the issues of safety and well-being of international students. This has particularly become pertinent following the recent attacks on Indian international students.

The aims of this scoping study are:

To explore international students’ experiences of safety and well-being in private and public education systems in metropolitan Melbourne.

To conduct a comparative study of international students from India and China to establish the extent of racially motivated verses opportunistic attacks and its effect on student safety and well-being.

To gather information from educational institutions and student bodies on students’ expectation of Australian education experience.

To examine policies and responses of key stakeholders such as the police, public transport providers, key government and non-government agencies, education providers (both public and private), and student recruitment agencies.

To provide an evidence base to inform policy, community, education, and international students on safety and wellbeing.

The proposed scoping study is expected to provide insights to the nature of recent attacks on international students and understanding of other relevant information that would help to capture international students’ Australian education experience including community safety in metropolitan Melbourne. The resulting recommendations will inform police, VU and other education providers and government departments to develop sound strategies to tackle the existing issues and prepare for future similar problems. The project team is: Professor Hurriyet Babacan, Associate Professor Santina Bertone, Associate Professor Michele Grossman, Ms Joanne Pyke, Dr Gurjeet Gill and Ms Alex Bhatal.

Professor Chi Trung Bui is a visiting scholar from Japan who will be with ICEPA from June to September 2009. Professor Trung is professor of Multicultural Studies at Aichi Shukutoku University in Nagoya City, Japan. Formerly he has been the Director of the Foundation of Toyota International Association until 2003. Professor Trung has previous connections with Australia when in 1997-99 he was a Visiting Scholar to Asian Law Centre, Melbourne University. Prof Trung’s major research interests are on “Migrant workers and Immigration Policy in Japan, NPO/NGO activities in Japan, and Society and Cultures in the Mekong Basin. Professor Trung is interested in Australia’s immigration, settlement and multicultural policies. He has been attending meetings and conferences with government, service providers and NGOs. He has presented at various seminars. Prof Trung is working closely with ICEPA associates, particularly Assoc. Professor Santina Bertone from the Faculty of Business and Law. There will be future collaborations with Prof Trung and VU.

ICEPA NEWS

SCOPING STUDY TO INVESTIGATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SAFETY

ICEPA was funded a VicHealth Discovery grant to undertake a research project exploring the use of ICT by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The project explores community and participatory driven models for the uses and application of information technology in communicating messages of health and community wellbeing. This research will help to inform and guide ICT practice that has an explicit and tacit understanding of cultural knowledge when working with people of other cultures. Additionally, in order to communicate messages of health and wellbeing to CALD communities, many factors need to be considered in relation to how communication is received, such as type of language, space/place, cognitive/thought processing and non-verbal communication techniques. Communication content is also influenced by cultural understandings relating to religion, community identity, isolation, confidentiality and degree of trust in mainstream society. The research will consider these cultural factors and explore how ICT and multimedia platforms can be developed and used in culturally sensitive and strategic ways to communicate with CALD communities on health and community wellbeing. Three communities are used as case studies in the research: Samoan, Sudanese and Vietnamese. The project has covered Metropolitan Melbourne, and in June reached out to Warrnambool and Robinvale. The project team are: Dr Ben O’Mara, Professor Helen Borland and Professor Hurriyet Babacan.

BOOK PUBLICATION

Professor Hurriyet Babacan has had her book titled Ethnic Minorities: Negotiating Identity in Australia, published by VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Publications, Germany. The book explores identity formation in Australia within the context of globalisation. In particular, the book focuses on ethnic identity and how identity is negotiated and represented in dynamic contexts. Identity is multilayered and dual pronged: how you identify yourself and how others identify you. Identities are negotiated in complex ways as the struggle for recognition is about contested domains of how others identify you or your group, within invisible structures of power and privilege. In societies such as Australia, there are over 200 ethnic communities resulting from permanent migration policies since the 1940s. Australia also has had over 30 years of policies of multiculturalism which is an official of acceptance of cultural diversity. The Kurdish community is used as a case study to excavate the complexities of identity negotiation processes, particularly as Kurdish identity is not recognised in some of the countries of origin of the Kurds. The identity negotiations are considered in light of immigration, settlement, nostalgia and hope.
BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY THROUGH COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE SCHOLARSHIPS

Ten successful applicants from WERC’s ‘Building Research Capacity - Community of Practice Scholarships’ project recently presented their research for comment and discussion at the recent No Frills vocational education conference in Ballarat. Topics during the lively and enthusiastic discussion ranged from staff retention and adult literacy to electronic waste management.

Funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the Community of Practice Scholarship project kicked off in April at VU’s City Flinders campus with a two day workshop on research, followed by intensive research activity and the No Frills presentation.

VICHEALTH CONNECTED LIVES PROJECT: PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

VicHealth recently released a series of promotional videos featuring recipients of their Discovery research grants, one of which was the Connected Lives project, a cross-sectoral project involving staff from WERC and the School of Education that will investigate the use of new technologies to improve the lives of young disabled people living with multiple layers of disadvantage. The video can be viewed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXbC73oGq3A

CTSR RESEARCHERS CONVENE KICK-OFF WORKSHOP FOR AUSAID RESEARCH PROJECT: PACIFIC TOURISM-CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROJECT

Professor Terry DeLacy and research fellow Dr. Min Jiang of the Centre for Tourism and Services Research (CTSR) have attended a kick-off workshop for the 3 year AusAID funded research project on tourism adaptation to climate change in South Pacific on 24-25 June 2009 in Suva, Fiji. This Pacific Tourism – Climate Adaptation Project (PT-CAP) aims to develop climate adaptation policies and strategies to assist the Pacific Island tourism sector protect and grow local livelihoods.

The workshop participants also included researchers from the University of New South Wales’ Natural Hazards Research Lab and the University of the South Pacific’s School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, as well as industry/NGO partners and stakeholders from Foundation of the People’s of the South Pacific International (FSPI), South-Pacific.Travel (SPTO), and Pacific Asia Tourism Pty Ltd (PAT). A photo of key players at the workshop is presented below.

Chairied by Professor DeLacy, the workshop overviewed the project background including the tourism sector and climate change in South Pacific as well as potential vulnerability/resilience frameworks, reviewed the research goals, theoretical approach, methods and activities, partnerships and communications, case study locations, and practical and academic outputs.

By conducting a policy analysis (tourism, environment, climate change, disaster management) of 10 Pacific Island countries and detailed case studies in 3 destinations, the project will examine specific impacts of climate change to the tourism sector in the region and develop strategies and policies to enhance the resilience of tourism destination to the threats from future climate change.

Dr. Jiang will lead research teams undertaking primary research in these Pacific destinations over the next 3 years.

NEW GRANT TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE ON INBOUND TOURISM DEMAND

Dr. Nada Kulendran, a senior lecturer in the School of Economics and Finance, has successfully applied for a grant to study the impact of climate on seasonal demand for Australian inbound tourism. The grant, valued at over $34,000, has been awarded to a cross-university team comprising Dr. Kulendran (usually referred to as Kulen) and Professor Larry Dwyer of the University of New South Wales.

The team has worked successfully together before on other CRC funded initiatives. Drawing on the team’s expertise in tourism forecasting, the project will review the literature on tourism demand, construct a Tourism Climate Index, forecast future trends in seasonal visitor arrivals in Australia based on different scenarios and explore the implications for Australia of the effects of different climate change scenarios and the implications for destination management.

This project fits well with the Centre for Tourism and Services Research program on tourism and climate change, headed by Professor Terry de Lacy and also links well with the climate change focus of research in another University research centre, Centre for Strategic Economic Studies.
NEW BOOK: EFFECTIVE TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS: CONCEPTS, DIMENSIONS, PERSPECTIVES

A new book by VU academic, Dr Iwona Miliszewska, has been published by VDM Verlag, a German publisher, and is being distributed via Amazon.com in Australia, Europe, and the USA. Effective Transnational Education Programs: Concepts, Dimensions, Perspectives is based on Iwona's PhD thesis. It describes the development and validation of a model for effective transnational education programs. The model used student experience as a key indicator of program effectiveness and included various dimensions of the transnational education context including student, instructor, curriculum and instruction design, interaction, evaluation and assessment, technology, and program management and organisational support. The model was validated against transnational education programs offered by Australian universities in Hong Kong. The results of the validation indicated that students in all the programs were in agreement as to the factors they consider most important to the effectiveness of transnational programs.

As transnational education is becoming firmly embedded in the distance education landscape, governments and universities are calling for meaningful research on transnational education. The multidimensional model for effective transnational education programs presented in the book may serve as a source of information for academics and administrators involved in planning, design and implementation of transnational programs.

ISI POSTER PRESENTATION AWARD

Professor Stephen Gray, A/Prof Mikel Duke, Dr Bo Zhu and Mr Ludovic Dumee attended the Fifth Conference of ASEAN Membrane Society (AMS 5) Conference 12-13 July, Kobe, Japan. They also attended the 2nd International Symposium on Inorganic Membranes at Hiroshima, 14-15 July. Ludovic Dumee (PhD student) won the MSA travel award to attend the AMS5 conference and also won a student award for his poster presentation on carbon nanotube membranes for membrane distillation.

Ludovic Dumee (VU PhD student) on stage at AMS5 collecting his student award for his poster presentation.

VU RESEARCH START-UP FUND FOR NEW STAFF

AIM

The Victoria University Research Start-Up Fund for New Staff provides resources to assist eligible, newly appointed academic staff to establish their research career at the University.

- Research Start-Up Fund Guidelines

FUNDING LIMITS

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Region) can contribute up to $2,000 for each new eligible researcher under this scheme. This amount must be at least matched by the applicant's faculty.

ELIGIBILITY

This fund will be available to all new staff who have completed their PhD, and are appointed for 3 years or longer to a teaching and research position. This fund does not apply to new Post Doctoral Fellows and is restricted to Senior Lecturer (Category C) and below.

Applications are evaluated on academic merit by the relevant faculty Associate Dean (Research and Research Training).

Grants are normally of one-year duration, and should be applied for during the first year of appointment, and normally submitted with the Individual Research Development Plan.

The maximum sum that may be applied for is $4,000.

To access funds, researchers are to submit a research proposal form, describing their research project, and an indicative budget, to their Associate Dean (Research and Research Training).

The outline of the proposed project should briefly state the following information in lay language:

intended aims of the project

significance within the research field

the research plan

methods and techniques to be used

expected outcomes, i.e. potential commercial opportunities.

If appropriate, applicants are encouraged to indicate how this project relates to their research development plan.

Each Faculty will determine their own process for assessing the applications.

APPLICATION

Initially, the applicant is required to complete the Research Start-up Fund for New Staff: Research Proposal Form and on completion of the research project, the Research Start-Up Fund Recipient – Final Report is required within 2 months of the project’s end.

Research Start-up Fund for New Staff: Research Proposal Form - is submitted to both the Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Region) for their certification signatures.

Research Start-up Fund Recipient – Final Report is submitted to: Head of School or equivalent Associate Dean (Research and Research Training), and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Region) for their certification signatures.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Research & Research Training).

THANK YOU to all who contributed to the content of the Research Matters bulletin.