TWO RECENT APPOINTMENTS TO THE VU RESEARCH OFFICE

It is with great pleasure to announce two recent appointments to the VU Research Office.

E-RESEARCH ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr Glenn Moloney is our e-Research Associate Director in this newly established position. Glenn is an experienced researcher with a PhD in Physics from the University of Melbourne, a substantial publication list and ARC grant track record, combined with an established track record in e-Research. Glenn led the establishment of the Australian node of the Worldwide Large Hadron Collider computing grid, as well as leading Australia’s participation in the EU funded Enabling grids for e-science program, the world’s largest e-research infrastructure.

In this role, Glenn will also work closely with ITS and the Library in providing leadership to VU’s e-Research strategy and support.

Glenn began on Monday, February 1 and is located in C310 at Footscray Park campus.

2010 HERD COLLECTION

The 2010 HERD Publication Collection for 2009 data commenced in early December and is due to be completed by 26 February 2010. The collection is targeted at the HERD categories including research books (A1), chapters in research books (B), refereed journal articles (C1) and full refereed conference papers (E1). However, categories other than HERD are also collected. If you had any research outputs published in 2009 and haven’t submitted them to your school or equivalent, please fill in the proformas, attach evidence and send them to the designated data entry coordinator in your school/area. Proformas and other documentations are available at http://research.vu.edu.au/herdc_pub.php. Any queries, please contact Cora Ng on ext 5354 or Neale Yates on ext 4601.

For those authors who are outside the Faculty system, please send all documentation directly to Cora Ng, VU Research Office, C303, Building C, Footscray Park.

ERA NEWS

VU RESEARCH OFFICE IS NOW COLLECTING YOUR ERA DATA

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) requires VU to report ALL staff who had a research output between 2003 to 2008 and who were employed by VU on 31 March 2009 in the 2010 ERA submission. Professor Linda Rosenman sent out an email to all staff on 23 February 2010 detailing the requirements and instructions for reporting research outputs. Please ensure that you have read this email.
and that you have logged onto the portal and sent us your data by 12 March 2010.

Please note that in some clusters there is now an opportunity for us to collect non-traditional research outputs such as research articles published on websites or in magazines that were made publicly available during 2003-2008. If you believe you have a ‘non-traditional research output’, please check the following link to see if it falls under a discipline where we include it. http://research.vu.edu.au/ordsite/management/ERA2010_DisciplineMatrices_for_non-traditional_outputs.xls.

2009 ERA TRIAL OUTCOMES

During 2009, the University participated in the Physical, Chemical and Earth Sciences (PCE) and Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA) ERA trails. As our PCE trial submission did not reach the assessable threshold of 50 indexed journal articles for a field of research, although included in the national report, our material was not individually evaluated. The Australian national report showed Australia’s research strengths to include Astronomical and Space Sciences; Optical Physics; Macromolecular and Materials Chemistry; and Geology.

Our HCA trial submission showed the strongest research performance in Performing Arts and Creative Writing; Cultural Studies and Historical Studies, receiving a rating of 2 or equivalent to the world performance benchmark. The Australian average in these HCA disciplines was 2.4-2.6.

All ERA enquiries can be directed to Dr Melanie McGuire at melanie.mcguire@vu.edu.au or on 4704.

COMMUNITY SAFETY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN MELBOURNE

The report ‘Community Safety of International Students in Melbourne: a scoping study’ presents findings of a multi-method exploratory research project implemented by the Institute For Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives (ICEPA). The study draws on data gathered through an on-line survey of 1,013 international and domestic students, indepth interviews with 35 international students and interviews with 29 stakeholders from across government and non-government organisations concerned with the safety of international students. The report analyses this data and identifies key priorities in order to inform future research, policy and program development.


STAFF WIN IAN POTTER FOUNDATION GRANT

Associate Professor Santina Bertone and Dr. Beata Leuner from the Institute for Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives (ICEPA) have won a grant of $19,997 from the Ian Potter Foundation for a study focussed on employment barriers and success factors for skilled immigrants in the public sector.

The inspiration from the study came from conducting an extensive literature review into racial and ethnic discrimination in employment in Australia and overseas. The study found that migrants are statistically more likely to work in the private sector than in the public services.

Santina and Beata’s study will run interviews and focus groups in two local councils and two state government agencies in Victoria. It will also investigate which strategies work best to ensure that public agencies achieve adequate cultural diversity in their workforce. The project is expected to take 12 months, with a final report due in February 2011.

The study follows on from a very successful seminar run by ICEPA last August - “Overqualified and undervalued: Employment barriers for culturally diverse people in Australia” - which attracted an audience of over 120 participants from local and state government, companies, universities and community organisations.

VU RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME AWARD UPDATE

Andy Schmulow is in Jakarta thanks to a VU Researcher Development Grant Scheme Award. The award aims to assist early career researchers to initiate their research career post PhD completion. Andy’s PhD investigates the collapse of the Indonesian banking sector in 1997-1998: the worst banking collapse in modern recorded history.

Ten years later, Indonesia’s banking system is looking robust and stable, and has emerged relatively unscathed from the GFC. Andy’s purpose in Indonesia is to determine this: is the ‘patient’ really cured, or is it simply in remission?
Recently, and as evidence of remaining fundamental flaws in the Indonesian banking system, a serious political scandal began to take shape when it was revealed that Bank Century was recapitalised, with much of the recapitalisation funds ending up in the hands of a few selected shareholders. The image shows Andy in the front lines of a 10,000 strong rally to the Presidential Palace where the protestors made their unhappiness about the Bank Century bailout clear.

**HIGHLIGHTING OUR CARIBBEAN HISTORY**

Dr Karina Smith of the School of Communication and the Arts worked with CaribVic: the Caribbean Association of Victoria on an exhibition about the Caribbean community’s stories of migration to Australia, currently on display in the Community Gallery at Melbourne’s Immigration Museum. Nine members of CaribVic (including Dr Smith) liaised with two museum staff over a two year period to curate the exhibition, titled Callaloo: the Caribbean Mix in Victoria. The exhibition, the first specifically about Caribbean migration to Australia, was officially opened by the recently appointed British High Commissioner, Baroness Valerie Amos on December 2nd, 2009. The exhibition closes on March 6, 2010.

**WOMEN’S GALLERY - EXHIBITION**

**ART IN THE SHADOWS**

This exhibition is an emotive reflection of loss, emerging out of the shadowy world of trauma and particularly sexual abuse.

Children’s clothes made fragile by their encasement in clay, is one way artist Anne Riggs expresses the vulnerability and tragedy of abuse. Painted bones speak of the distortions and ‘little deaths’ that are part of the trauma experience.

“Much of my own work explores grief and loss; it is a passion that has been sustained throughout my artistic life. I am deeply interested in art and its potential for understanding, acknowledging and accepting loss and grief. This interest forms the basis of my PhD research and much of my work within the community,” says Anne.

The work is a contemplation of the long term impact of trauma, the losses, the distortions and the seemingly miraculous beauty that remains within people who have been carelessly and brutally treated by others.

Anne Riggs’s artwork partly emerges out of her close artistic relationship with women attending the South East Centre against Sexual Assault for counselling. Their experiences and stories find their way into Anne’s emotive work as expressions of pain, loss, vulnerability and their extraordinary inner beauty and strength.

Anne claims “Art can help us understand and acknowledge - perhaps better accept - sorrow and loss, by providing the space to find clarity and express deep feelings. This can be useful for the viewer and or the maker. Creating art at a time of sorrow and grieving, perhaps by making a memorial piece to remember or commemorate a loved one, can be an uplifting experience for individuals, families or groups.”

Locations: QV Women’s Centre
The Women’s Gallery
Ground Floor, 210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Date: Feb 8th to March 3rd
Time: 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and 11am to 3pm, Saturday
Cost: Free
http://www.anneriggs.com

**WERC UPDATE**

**WERC COMMISSIONED TO EXAMINE AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (AQF)**

The Australian Qualifications Framework Council has commissioned Associate Professor Shelley Gillis from the Work-based Education Research Centre, in conjunction Associate Professor Margaret Wu and Mark Dulhunty from Educational Measurement Solutions to empirically examine the architectural structure of the strengthened Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) using item response modelling procedures. Further information about this investigation can be found from the AQF Council’s website www.aqf.edu.au

**RESEARCH PROJECT TO EXPLORE RETENTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

In response to the finding in the 2006 Census that only 71 per cent of Australian 19 year olds have attained Year 12 or similar, TAFE Directors Australia and the Australian Council of Educators have commissioned WERC to undertake a series of national case studies examining best practice in the retention and transition of young people to Year 12 who are involved in vocational study. A range of innovative models will be examined with findings helping to formulate guidelines for the development of effective vocational programs.

**WERC CIRCLE BEGINS AGAIN**

The WERC Circle is firing up again in 2010. A productive forum for the exchange of ideas in work-based research, WERC Circle is open to any VU staff members. Meetings are every 6 weeks and occur on Wednesday afternoons in Whitehall St, Footscray. For some background on some of the topics covered already, take a look at the WERC blog site: http://www.werc.vu.edu.au/blog

**SPORT SCIENCE IN TRANSLATION**

NEW STUDY LEADS TO IMPROVEMENT IN TREATMENT FOR COMPLICATIONS FROM PREGNANCY LOSS

A study by Australian researchers at a Thai hospital has greatly improved post-abortion care available to Burmese and Thai women.

Dr Suzanne Belton, of Charles Darwin University’s Graduate School for Health Practice, and Dr Bhensri Naemiratch, of Victoria University’s Australian Community Centre for Diabetes, conducted a research study at Mae Sot General Hospital in Thailand. They designed, analysed and reported on the outcomes in collaboration with Burmese refugees and Thai doctors and nurses.

With maternal mortality killing thousands of young women in developing countries each year, and unsafe abortion contributing to at least 13 per cent of the deaths, Dr Belton said it was hard to overstate the importance of the study.

"Women face multiple barriers in managing their fertility and use dangerous traditional techniques often with the help of lay midwives," she said.

"This project improved both the standard of care given to women once they were admitted to hospital and the quality of treatment, and increased the uptake of family planning methods."

Evidence-based treatments and culturally appropriate information, counselling and referrals increased in the public hospital during the intervention study.

Dr Naemiratch noted the challenges in working across cultures.

"We noticed that with the Thai staff not only was there an improvement in clinical technical skills, but cultural confusions and prejudices against Burmese women also decreased," she said.

"The Thai staff were better able to understand the difficult situation of the patients."

Dr Belton said some of the Burmese cross-cultural staff produced a low literacy booklet which aimed to give women health promotion messages to address the problem of sickness and death associated with backyard abortions.

"The messages encourage women to go to hospital earlier if they are experiencing heavy blood loss or infection."

The research will be presented in Bangkok in January 2010 at the 1st Asia-Pacific Congress on Women’s Health and Unsafe Abortion.

The study was one of the Safe Abortion Action Fund projects funded by the International Planned Parenthood Federation in London.

ARC PROJECT TEAM MEET IN MELBOURNE

Our ARC project, Developing a Responsive Regulatory System for Australia’s Small Corporations is partnered by The Australian Treasury and COSBOA.

The research team met in Melbourne at Victoria University on 18th November 2009 to receive a report on the progress of the project from Professor Anona Armstrong and meet the new APAI awardee Mr Yongqiang Li.

The team learned that meetings were held with Treasury and COSBOA; a bibliography on small business has been produced; a draft questionnaire to guide interviews with CEOs of small corporations and a survey has been developed; the questionnaire will be circulated to the team for their comments; and modified following comments and the results of the interviews; Yongqiang is preparing the ethics application for the project and his proposal for his PhD project. Papers have been submitted for publication and the papers from the small business conference held to report on two projects will be edited and included in a special issue of the Journal of Business Systems Governance and Ethics.

Following is a photograph of the research team who attended the meeting.

SUPPORT FROM AUSTRALIAN POWER INSTITUTE FOR ATTENDANCE AT 2010 POWER ENGINEERING SUMMER SCHOOL

Dr Juan Shi from the School of Engineering and Science has successfully obtained $8,800 sponsorship from the Australian Power Institute (API) to attend the API 2010 POWER ENGINEERING Accelerated Development Summer School (Residential), being held on Sunshine Coast from the 8th to the 19th February 2010. The API sponsorship has been offered to only two academics at Universities in Australia. The theme of the summer school is: “Sustainable Power Industry Solutions in Challenging Economic Times”. The program includes presentations from respected industry professionals, CEO forum and expert panel sessions, syndicate work and field tours to Powerlink South Pine 275/110kV substation, AEMO control centre, Tarong Thermal power station, and Tarong hydro power station to provide first class, comprehensive learning in power engineering. The program is recognised by Engineers Australia for continuing professional development.
Dr Juan Shi said that the attendance of the API 2010 POWER ENGINEERING Accelerated Development Summer School will enable her to

- enhance knowledge in all areas of power engineering;
- develop networks with industrial engineers;
- design Electrical Engineering courses to meet the requirement of the current power industry;
- train Electrical Engineering students to be competent power engineers;
- identify relevant postgraduate research projects in power industry;
- apply for research grants from industry and Australian government;
- run industry consultancy and training courses;
- establish teaching and research facilities at Victoria University;
- promote engineering courses to potential students especially to potential female students to address the engineering skill shortage in Australia.

Dr Juan Shi is very grateful that the School of Engineering and Science has provided the funding for the travel costs so that she is able to attend the intensive two weeks program on Sunshine Coast.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR FRESH SCIENCE 2010

This national event brings together scientists, the media and the public to:

- enhance reporting of Australian science
- highlight and encourage debate on the role of science in Australian society
- provide role models for the next generation of Australian scientists.

Fresh Science 2010 will be held at Melbourne Museum from Monday 7 to Thursday 10 June. Stories will be released to the media during the event and in the weeks following. The Fresh Scientists need to be available to talk to the media during this time.

Nominations close at 5pm on Thursday 25 March 2010.

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

More information and the online nomination form are at www.freshscience.org.au