ARC Linkage Project Success: 2010 Round 2

We are delighted to advise of our researchers success in the ARC Linkage Project Funding for 2010, round 2. We submitted 9 applications and 2 were successful. At a 22.2% success rate, we have unlike in multiple previous rounds, dropped below the 42.6% national success rate.

Congratulations to all the research teams and support staff involved in the submissions. We look forward to working with all applicants to build on this success.

Project Title: Development of advanced ceramic membranes: a robust solution to sustainable water treatment.

Funding:
2010: $45,000
2011: $90,000
2012: $90,000
2013: $45,000
plus $135,000 cash over the 3 years.

LP100200242 A/Prof Mikel C Duke (ISI), Prof Stephen R Gray (ISI), A/Prof Gayle E Morris (ISI), Mr Kenichi Nishizu (C.I. Ceramics (Aust.) Pty. Ltd.), Dr Domun Choi (Chosun Refractory Co Ltd), Prof Il-shik Moon (Sunchon National University)

Project Title: Real-time and self-adaptive stream data analyser for intensive care management.

Funding:
2010: $57,500
2011: $115,000
2012: $115,000
2013: $57,500
Including 1 APAI_IT
Plus $90,000 cash over the 3 years.

ARC Linkage Project funding outcomes:

RAI Policy Minor Amendments

The RAI policy has recently been amended to continue to align with the national drivers of quality and collaboration. Key amendments, from both 2008 and 2009 revisions, include:

- Quality and collaboration weightings - applied to 2008 and beyond research outputs. The weightings used were:

  Journals (includes ARC ranked conference publications)
  A*: x6
  A: x4
  B: x2
  C or unranked: x1
2008 publications utilise the draft ARC journal rankings available at the time while publications from 2009 utilise the finalised ARC journal rankings developed for ERA.

Conference Publications  x 0.25

Collaboration weighting x1.25 applied to publications or grants with multiple authors or chief investigators

National competitive grants

quality weighting  x1.25

- From 2008, no RAI points are awarded for enrolment in a PhD program

- Phasing out of points from 2010, for the completion of non-research professional doctorates such as the D. Psych program. DBA and DEd completions are not affected.

- Supervision of Honours completions from 2009 will attract 0.33 RAI points only where the Honours program includes a research component of 70% or greater.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MIKEL DUKE'S VISIT TO COOMBABAH STATE HIGH SCHOOL

On 28 May, A/Prof Mikel Duke visited Coombabah State High School on the Gold Coast in Queensland to give a talk on water quality and treatment followed by a live demonstration of ultrafiltration of dirty canal water and salt water desalination. The visit was sponsored by the CSIRO Scientists in Schools programme (http://www.scientistsinschools.edu.au/) which Mikel has become a member. With the help of the class teacher, Ms Heather Neilson, he gave the talk to a year 11 chemistry class and the students were very interested in the topic and discussed their ideas and participated in the demonstration. The talk fit well with the current activity in water quality that Ms Neilson had been teaching the students. They learnt about the issue of water in Australia, the roles of scientists and engineers in addressing such problems as well as setting up the separation experiment, calculating membrane area and flow rate, measuring water quality, adjusting flow and pressure as well as assessing results. Mikel plans to continue to deliver similar classes to schools in Melbourne’s Wester Suburbs as part of the CSIRO programme.

NEW WRITER TO BOOST VU RESEARCH MEDIA COVERAGE

VU has welcomed a new writer/journalist to help boost media coverage and publicity for the large amount of innovative research happening on our campuses.

Daniel Clarke started in the role in late May and is looking forward to travelling around to all the research departments and meeting staff.

If you would like to chat about any new research or story ideas for the media, don’t hesitate to contact him on 9919 9491 or 0407 771 072. His email is Daniel.clarke@vu.edu.au

WATER RESEARCH

Adrian Fisher is an affiliate of VU’s Institute for Sustainability and Innovation. With Professor John Cary from ISI he recently submitted a grant application to the National Centre for Excellence in Desalination (NCED) to explore consumer attitudes and responses to desalination and desalinated water. This has been supported by a number of water industry partners.

This project, wrapped into a bigger program involving Deakin, Murdoch and Edith Cowan researchers, has been approved for funding. VU’s share of the funding, including industry partner contributions, is approximately $200,000 over 18 months.

ENDEAVOUR AWARD

It’s not every day that a VU student receives a letter from then Deputy Prime Minister the Honorable Julia Gillard, so Heath Grow was naturally curious to recently receive one. Curiosity turned to joy when Heath realised he had been awarded a prestigious Endeavour Research Fellowship to undertake research in Hong Kong. Heath is enrolled in a Masters by Research in the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing. His study seeks to uncover the preferred leadership style of hospitality employees in Australia and Hong Kong. “I knew it would be a financial struggle to spend the time needed to collect data in Hong Kong” Heath said “so this award will really give my research a boost”.

“This is a great achievement for Heath and brings credit to VU” supervisor Barry O’Mahony said. “The Endeavour Award is a merit-based scholarship available to Australians to undertake study overseas, he explained. “They are highly competitive and this experience will allow Heath to add significant value to his study”.

Daniel Clarke
Once the extent of the problem is exposed, recommendations to manage Mallards will be submitted to the nation’s wildlife agencies. The sampling has already started in Tasmania and parts of Victoria.

“In New Zealand, it took less than 100 years from when the first Mallards were introduced from Europe and North America for wild Pacific Black Ducks to reach the brink of extinction,” he said.

“Most ducks in New Zealand now are hybrids between Mallards and Black Ducks,” he said.

Dr Guay said it was important for people not to release domestic ducks into the wild, nor to feed those in urban settings. Domestic ducks can be distinguished from wild ducks by their larger size, their orange legs and their yellow (males) or orange (females) bills. Their plumage ranges from white to black and all shades in between. The native Pacific Black Duck is smaller and has olive legs and a dark grey bill. It is mostly brown and has a black stripe through its eye.

Thank you to Tom Hodgson for the photo.

IMPACT OF TRIPS IN INDIA: AN ACCESS TO MEDICINES PERSPECTIVE - PRABODH MALHOTRA

PUBLISHED BY PALGRAVE MACMILLAN (TO BE RELEASED ON 29 OCTOBER 2010)

Over the last three decades, drug prices in India have declined from one of the highest to one of the lowest in the world. Yet, under the current healthcare model, only around 35 per cent of people in India have access to medicines. In the lead up to 2005, when TRIPS compliant regime was introduced in India, there were apprehensions about the drug prices rising under the new regime, which would further restrict access to medicine. This book examines the impact of TRIPS on drug prices and exports of drugs and pharmaceuticals in India. It goes on to develop a new healthcare model, which if implemented, would extend access to medicines to India’s entire population. Sensitivity tests show that the proposed model is affordable, equitable and implementable, and can be replicated in other developing countries. This book is indispensable reading for all interested in development economics, intellectual property rights in developing countries, pharmaceutical markets and health systems.

PRABODH MALHOTRA was born and brought up in India but has been living in Australia since 1980. Thus, he understands both systems. He has taught at a number of universities in Australia. Prabodh has PhD in Economics and Masters in International Business and has published conference papers, journal articles and government reports in these areas. This book is based on his extensive research and fieldwork in India.

The above text is available by clicking on the following link:

THE HUMAN BRAIN IN ALTITUDE

Dr. François Billaut, a newly-appointed Lecturer in the School of Sport and Exercise Science, is developing his research program to explore the perturbations of the cerebral function in altitude. As increasing numbers of people live, work, and compete at high altitudes, awareness of the neurological consequences of hypoxic environments becomes paramount. In a recently-published study, Dr. Billaut examined for the first time the effects of hypoxia on the brain haemodynamics, in particular the level of cerebral oxygenation, in team-sport athletes. The results demonstrated that cerebral oxygenation is reduced in altitude and contributes to the decline in performance. In fact, the athletes displaying
the largest decline in brain oxygenation exhibited the largest impairments in power output during repeated cycling sprints interspersed with brief recovery periods. More interestingly, the reduction in brain oxygenation was strongly correlated with the reduction in muscle recruitment during exercise, which is in good agreement with the contention that motor neuron activity is dramatically influenced by oxygen availability. In other words, this research confirmed that insufficient cerebral oxygenation depresses cortical neuron excitability.

Preliminary data from another study further indicated that women’s brain may be less affected by hypoxia than men’s brain. However, more in-depth research is needed to investigate the question of central nervous system limitation to exercise in men and women, and characterise, in particular, the role of oxygen delivery to the brain as a mediator in the sex-specific neural adjustments during exercise. Dr. Billaut has already partnered with the Australian Institute of Sport and other Australian universities to attract external funding and tackle these questions.

The effects of exposure to altitude might provide a relevant situation for the study of cerebral cellular hypoxia during physical activity in healthy individuals. Cellular hypoxia being a common final pathway of brain injury that occurs after severe hypoxia or asphyxia, the effects of altitude might also provide new insights into the understanding of hypoxia in the clinical setting. A better understanding of the brain behaviour during exercise has wide implications for sport science research but also for medical research.

VU POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS SPREAD THEIR MESSAGE TO AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE

Postgraduate students within the School of Biomedical and Health Sciences undertake a presentation of the current progress of their research studies. The exciting thing is that these talks are actually being presented to the other side of the world! Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, teleconference with content sharing, the powerpoint slides are beamed across to the other side of the world – the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to be exact – so likeminded individuals from the College of Health Sciences can hear, and see, the VU students present their research. Organised by Dr Alan Hayes (VU) and Associate Professor João Batista Ferreira-Pinto (UTEP), once a month, early in morning (or late afternoon at UTEP) students from both universities undertake an oral presentation, which is followed by questions and exchange of ideas. These talks not only allow students to improve their oral communication skills, but also to expose the research being undertaken at VU to an international audience. It is hoped that these presentations will lead to student/staff exchange and greater collaboration between the universities.

3 MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION

The Office for Postgraduate Research (OPR) and Victoria University Postgraduate Association (VUPA) are pleased to announce the inaugural Victoria University 3 Minute Thesis Competition (3MT) which is open to all enrolled PhD, Masters by Research and Research Professional Doctorate candidates (DBA, EdD, DSW). The competition asks research higher degree students to present a compelling three minute oration on their thesis topic and its significance in language appropriate to an intelligent but non-specialist audience in three minutes, with a single power point slide.

Heats (practice rounds) will be conducted at the Faculty level. The heats will serve as practice opportunities for each faculty’s students. Each Faculty judging panel will be required to nominate their top students (maximum of 6) to compete in the VU 3MT Grand Final competition. The Winner of the Victoria University 3MT Grand Final will receive flights and accommodation and represent VU at the Inaugural Australia and New Zealand competition in 2010 which will be held and hosted by University of Queensland (UQ) on Tuesday 21 September, 2010. The UQ first prize is $5000, the runner-up prize is $2000 and the people’s choice prize is $1000. More than 25 other universities from Australia and New Zealand have registered to compete in this competition.

ERA UPDATE

ERA SUBMISSION STAGES UNDERWAY

VURO was able to successfully submit the ERA data for Phase 1. This is a preliminary data submission to allow validation of submitted data by the ARC in Phase 2. VURO will also be running an internal validation process to ensure that a complete data set is included in the final ERA submission due later in July.

ERA BACKGROUND STATEMENTS

Background statements have been drafted at the 2-digit FoR (Field of Research) code where assessment is to occur. VURO Staff have been reviewing background statements for submission to the ARC, which is expected to occur within the next two weeks.

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