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DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH) MESSAGE

This year has been one of great progress for the Research Division and this reflects the unstinting efforts of the hardworking staff in the Research Division.

Let me pick just a few highlights of what has been achieved:

- Research Services has dealt with the increasing complexity of research grant schemes while continuing to provide high standards of client service.
- Our Systems staff, working with University IT Systems and our staff as systems users, have achieved great progress in the roll out of the Info Ed Research Management System with the ethics module at an advanced stage of implementation and other modules ready for commissioning work early in 2008. This has been accompanied by a fundamental review and upgrade to our human ethics procedures to achieve tiered ethics approval procedures that place us at 'best practice' standards in Human Ethics clearance management.
- The Animal Welfare Officer has progressed the engagement with researchers using animals, with work at the lab interface in improving our progress with the 3 Rs --reduce, replace and refine -- of animal use.
- The RQF unit has devised new systems, conducted Quality trials, developed Impact statements and helped a lot of academic staff in coping with the new requirements, even if they did not want to be helped!
- The Research Support Unit has made good progress with its advisory groups and strategic planning and will be bidding next year for major funds for the refurbishment of large equipment items under the 2009 ARC LIEF program.
- Staff in the Animal Services Unit have worked very hard to meet the demands of a complex workload and gain benefits from an improvement in facilities.
- Staff in the Office of Graduate Studies have coped with their normal big workloads while undertaking policy and procedure reviews and the rollout of the Research Student modules on the NUSTAR system.

So thanks to each and every one of you for your hard work and accomplishments over the last twelve months. You have done well and can be proud of what has been achieved. I hope you and your loved ones enjoy the Christmas recess and have a happy and safe Christmas - New Year break.

Barney Glover
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

DECEMBER
2007
RESEARCH DIVISION
NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK

VALE RQF

While there has as yet been no official announcement, it now appears certain that the new Federal government will, in accordance with its pre-election undertakings, end the current RQF and replace it with a new system which will be developed over the next 12 months, and will run during 2009.

According to a press release in September by Senator Kim Carr (who is now the relevant Federal Minister) the RQF replacement will be by an internationally-recognised, metrics based research quality assurance system, which will be rigorous, transparent, equitable, and will incorporate international peer review. It will employ verifiable metrics and will encourage research collaborations both within the public research sector, and between the public and private sectors (with luck, it will also come with a free set of steak knives!).

The University's RQF preparations have therefore been temporarily halted until we have more information on the new research quality assurance process. The current IRUA Context Statement review is proceeding, and work on the University's digital repository, Nova, will continue. However the preparation of impact statements and associated material at group level can be set aside for the time being.

I think the time and work which has gone into the RQF will not be wasted, and has already led to some positive outcomes. The RQF process has required both individuals and research groups to objectively evaluate their research outcomes and directions, and for some this has assisted to clarify their strategic aims and suggest new possibilities for future collaboration. The Newcastle/Macquarie trial was a considerable achievement in itself, and has provided useful feedback to researchers, and valuable information on our research performance, including the opportunity to benchmark against a comparable institution.

On a personal note, I have found the last 10 months exciting, exhausting and ultimately very rewarding. I've enjoyed the chance to get out and meet researchers, and I've appreciated the courtesy and forbearance which (mostly) prevented people from shooting the messenger. My colleagues Alan Hales, Simone Cox and Lisa Ogle have been wonderful – hard-working and unfailingly cheerful under pressure. I would like to particularly thank the group coordinators for the enormous amount of time and effort they have devoted to preparing group context statements and associated materials. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you when I'm back in my substantive role as Executive Officer.

Jenny Kirkby
RQF Manager

AWARDS FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

The purpose of these awards is to recognise research excellence in outstanding early-career and mid-career researchers from the University by awards for an outstanding researcher from each Faculty. The awards are based on a research publication published in the preceding year. Winners of a Faculty award receive a certificate and a grant of \$2,000 which they can use towards research expenses. They are considered automatically for the Vice-Chancellor's award for Researcher of the Year. This is awarded to the most outstanding of these researchers and is a certificate and a further grant of \$10,000.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR

In 2007 this award of recognition was presented to Dr Andrew Fleming from the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment for the research presented in his paper *Sensorless Vibration Suppression and Scan Compensation for Piezoelectric Tube Nanopositioners*, IEEE Transactions on Control Systems Technology, Vol 14, No 1 January 2006.

AWARDS FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE : FACULTY AWARDS

Faculty of Business and Law

Professor Aron O'Cass

Jay Weerawardena, Aron O'Cass, Craig Julian. *'Does Industry Matter? Examining the role of Industry Structure and Organisational Learning in innovation and brand performance.'* Journal of Business Research, 59 2006 pp37-45.

This paper makes a major contribution to marketing research in highlighting the dual effects of firm and environment on a brand's performance in the marketplace. It integrates areas that have previously been studied separately and makes a major contribution to the theoretical conception of industry forces and how they can be modelled empirically using formative modelling. Professor O'Cass and his colleagues conceived and conducted the study. He had a major role in the theoretical development, data analysis and authorship of the paper.

Faculty of Education and Arts

Dr Alistair Rolls

AliStair Rolls. *'Throwing Caution to a French Wind: Peter Cheney's Success Overseas in 1945.'* Australian Journal of French Studies 43:1, 2006, pp35-47.

Dr Alistair Rolls has established a strong reputation as a scholar of French noir fiction; his output is prolific and in high quality publications. In this paper he articulates with great clarity the view that French noir fiction departs from the Anglo-American tradition and is a phenomenon that reflects French social, political and cultural preoccupations. In doing so he opens a fresh conceptual framework for contemporary French literary and film research. Dr Rolls is the sole author of the paper which is published in a highly competitive research journal.

Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment

Dr Andrew Fleming

Andrew J Fleming. *'Sensorless Vibration Suppression and Scan Compensation for Piezoelectric Tube Nanopositioners.'* IEEE Transactions on Control Systems Technology, Vol 14, No 1 January 2006.

Dr Fleming's research presented in this paper addresses two of the foremost problems - vibration and hysteresis - in piezoelectric actuated mechanical systems. He presents new methods that are elegant, simple and effective; methods that are expected to be applied directly to almost any piezoelectric system to improve linearity and increase speed by a reduction in vibration. Dr Fleming is the lead author of the paper which has been selected for an outstanding paper award by the publishing journal.

Faculty of Health

Dr Nicole Verrills

Verrills NM, Poucha S, Liu M, Liaw TYE, Larsen M, Ivery M, Marshall G, Gunning P, Kavallaris M, (2006) *'Alterations in γ -Actin and Tubulin-Targeted Drug Resistance in Childhood Leukaemia.'* J Natl. Cancer Inst. 98 (19):1363-74.

This paper reports several novel findings that will be important in the development of anti cancer drugs. It is significant because of its contribution to our understanding of cell shape, cell division, intracellular protein and organelle movement as well as greatly advancing our understanding of the mechanism of antimicrotubule drug action and resistance, which is required to improve the effectiveness of therapies. Dr Verrills controlled the research direction, performed half of the experimental work and wrote the paper. The research has been recognised by several awards by international conferences and associations and two patents.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS FOR GENERAL STAFF EXCELLENCE

The Research Division would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the following staff on their presentation of a Vice-Chancellor's Award for General Staff Excellence. This significant award recognises the valuable contribution made by the below staff to the Research Division over 2007. Congratulations.

Ms Debbie Booth

Mrs Verne Sheather

Research Division/Academic Division

For exceptional initiative and achievement involving cross-unit cooperation through the auditing and reporting of the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC). This involved the electronic loading of data directly into the collection database which resulted in reduced manual entering; and significant improvements in data quality and reporting.

Ms Arianne Galvin

Research Division

For significant improvements to work processes designed to assist the University achieve its strategic objectives. Arianne has effectively improved the management of international and domestic scholarships through implementing various mechanisms which relate to scholarship spending. This has included the establishment of cross-unit relationships with key areas, the development of the 'fee waiver policy' and the attraction and retention of high quality Research Higher Degree candidates.

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to OGS Scholarship Officer Arianne Galvin on winning a Vice Chancellor's Award for General Staff Excellence. Arianne has demonstrated commitment and innovation in improving the systems for managing the complexities of research scholarships and is a deserved winner of the award.

Congratulations to the winners of the Vice Chancellor's Awards for Supervision Excellence.

The overall winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Supervision Excellence for 2007 is Associate Professor Alison Ferguson from the Faculty of Education and Arts.

Winners of the Faculty Awards for Supervision Excellence are:

Faculty of Business and Law: Professor Aron O'Cass

Faculty of Education and Arts: Assoc. Professor Alison Ferguson

Faculty of Health: Professor Margaret McMillan

Faculty of Science and Information Technology: Assoc. Professor Hugh Dunstan

IT ENHANCEMENTS

2007 has been the year for IT enhancements in the Office of Graduate Studies. The successful implementation of a number of enhancements will see improved management of processes for RHD admissions, scholarships and candidature in 2008. The latest enhancement to be rolled out is Student Self Service.

The RHD component of Student Self Service (myHub) went live on 23 November 2007. Student Self Service will allow research candidates to:

Accept, defer or decline offers of admission online

Accept scholarship offers online.

Acknowledge the RHD induction requirement

Enrol as a first time RHD candidate

Re-Enrol online. The system also allows for re-enrolment reminders and overdue notices to be automatically generated.

Check and update personal contact details

View candidature details including program, supervisors, research topic, submission due date/RTS date, scholarship details including current stipend.

Check financial accounts and make payments

Enhancements to be introduced in near future include:

Submission of a 'scholarship only' application for currently enrolled RHD candidates

Intention to Submit Thesis notification.

GRANTS

ARC DISCOVERY PROJECTS 2009

The application form for ARC Discovery Projects (for funding commencing 2009) is now up and running in GAMS. Funding Rules, Instruction to Applicants, FAQs and Budget/Salary information are also available on the Research Services website at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/grants/arc-grants.html>.

Eligibility Ruling Requests are due in the Research Office by 15 January. Drafts are due 18 February, and final versions by 5pm Monday 25 February.

For GAMS inquiries contact Neroli Finlay on x15353. Other DP inquiries should be directed to Carolyn Fairhurst (Mon-Tues) or Megan Stephenson (Wed-Fri) on x17188.

NHMRC PROJECT GRANTS 2009

NHMRC Project Grants are now open for funding commencing in 2009.

To prepare for the submission of an application for Project Grant funding, applicants are to ensure they:

- Read all relevant reference material (including Funding Policy and Instructions to Applicants)
- Obtain an NHMRC Application ID
- Download the correct version of Informed Filler and the Software User Manual

All information on Project Grants and the relevant reference material is available at the below link:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/apply/granttype/projects/index.htm>

To obtain an NHMRC Application ID please contact Elianne Renaud at the Research Office on x15944 or email Elianne.Renaud@newcastle.edu.au.

The key dates for the Project Grants 2009 funding round are as follows:

Drafts due at the Research Office - FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2008

Final Versions due at the Research Office - MONDAY 10 MARCH 2008

Applications due at the NHMRC FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2008

Should you require any further information please contact Elianne Renaud on x15944.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

COLLECTION OF 2007 PUBLICATIONS

The collection of 2007 publications for the next year's HERDC process has begun, the Library has entered over 600 publications, mainly journal articles at this point in time. Please note that a new process is now being followed, where all publications will be verified by the Library prior to input into Callista. The entry of data by Library staff will occur on an ongoing basis both from publications data identified by Library staff, and also by publications data forwarded by School Publication Officers. Researchers still need to send their publications plus verification evidence to their School Publication Officers who will then forward on to the Library, or they can send this information directly to:

It is hoped that this process will eliminate duplication of effort and ensure consistent entry of publications data. Please be sure not to enter any publications collected via this process into Portfolio Manager. All publications collected via the new process will still be available through Callista, WARP and accessible by Portfolio Manager automatically.

HUMAN ETHICS

It has been quite a busy year in Human Ethics with the introduction of new processes to provide for an expedited review pathway for low risk research. Feedback tells us that the new processes have been well received by researchers and they are benefiting from the faster turnaround of their applications and being able to get on with the research. This is particularly the case for honours and coursework students who are often working within a very tight timeframe. It was hoped that we would have moved to an online application environment by mid 2007, however that has had to be postponed until the early part of 2008. The Human Research Ethics team would like to thank researchers for their support during the year and we look forward to building on this progress in 2008 to further enhance the service provided to researchers.

ANIMAL ETHICS

Animal Ethics has undergone substantial changes during this year, with the new appointment of a part-time Animal Ethics Officer, partial roll-out of new services provided by the Animal Welfare Officer, and new administrative support staff in the animal ethics team. The Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC) conducted an extensive review of the application forms to improve the processes within the confines of the legislation, and enhance instructions to applicants. Development of an IT system incorporating on-line application forms commenced, with roll-out anticipated in 2008. The animal ethics team looks forward to continued liaison with researchers in order to improve services and support to the research community, and enhance the welfare of animals used in research and teaching.

STATISTICS CORNER – NOVEMBER 2007

Human Ethics	Nov	2007	Animal Ethics	During Nov	2007	Grants	Nov	2007
Human Ethics Total Initial Applications Processed	22	273	Animal Ethics Initial Applications managed	15	115	External grant applications processed	20	425
Expedited	20	246						
Full Review	2	27						
Human Ethics Project Variation Applications	11	141	Animal Ethics Renewal Applications managed	5	55	External grant awards processed	47	310
Human Ethics Approval Renewal Applications	2	10	Animal Ethics Variation Applications managed	25	214	Value of external grant awards processed	\$2.49M	\$85.3M
Human Ethics Registration of HNEH approvals	6	90	Facilities/ procedures/Animals/Records inspected	3	108			

Office of Graduate Studies

RHD completions since January 1 2007:	Masters	39	RHD scholarship applications:	International	Domestic
	PhD	109	2008	239	170
	Total	150	2007	158	156

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For newsletter enquiries, contact: Rebecca Palmer on ext 17739 or Rebecca.Palmer@newcastle.edu.au