Message from the Director

Most students are now well and truly settled into first semester and university life. However, for the majority of international students this also means settling into a new country. As most people appreciate, this isn’t always easy. To assist with this transition, RMIT University recently launched a new web resource that allows international students to share advice with newcomers.

The International Student Stories site, part of the University’s Learning Lab, aims to explain academic life and expectations in Australian universities. Seasoned international students share their experiences as new international students via videos posted on the web site. The advice is focused on four areas that students often find new and difficult:

- expectations about studying in Australia
- structuring assignments
- understanding referencing
- developing critical thinking skills.

The aim of the project is to ease the transition for new international students and to let them know that they are not alone in any initial confusion they may face. By demonstrating how other students have dealt with the same issues makes the situation seem less daunting.

If you know of any students who have used this service, we would welcome any feedback they may have. Simply let us know.

Happy reading!

Michelle Hoodbhoy
Director, International Services
International and Development Portfolio

Funding boon for better teaching and learning

RMIT University will receive AUS$45.3 million in government funding to help deliver world-class teaching, learning and research facilities.

‘This extraordinary investment in the sector is a significant boost for RMIT, allowing us to forge ahead with our AUS$500 million capital works program in the RMIT quarter of Melbourne’s central business district.

‘By bringing together industry, government, community and education sectors, the Design Hub will build design capability to develop new and improved practices, techniques and tools for industry,’ Professor Gardner said.

The 12,000 square metre facility will have an environmentally sustainable design, including a smart second skin of 16,000 sand-blasted glass discs that will rotate with the sun to help heat, power and cool the building.

The building has been designed by architect and RMIT alumnus, Sean Godsell. Construction will begin in March/April 2009.
RMIT services for Muslim students

RMIT is committed to supporting the religious practices of staff and students from a diverse range of faiths.

RMIT chaplaincy staff include the Imam of the West Heidelberg Mosque, Riad Gail, who is a teacher and a member of the committee of the Jewish Christian Muslim Association.

The University provides eight Muslim prayer rooms, two (male and female) on the City campus in Bourke Street, two on the Brunswick campus and four on the Bundoora campus. The rooms have ablution facilities. RMIT Training is also opening a new Muslim prayer room in Swanston Street.

In addition to this, Muslim staff and students have access to two multi-faith prayer rooms within the University's City campus Spiritual Centre.

For further information on prayer rooms at RMIT please visit: www.rmit.edu.au/chaplaincy/spiritualcentre/prayerrooms

AusAID Semester 1 2009

RMIT would like to welcome the Semester 1 2009 cohort of AusAID students who arrived in early January. Nine new scholarship awardees have commenced their studies at RMIT from a wide range of countries including: Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Laos, Indonesia, Mongolia and Pakistan. We also welcomed two students transferring from other institutions in Melbourne. The majority of students are taking postgraduate coursework programs in areas such as: aviation management, international development, environment and planning, and computer science. There are two students studying for a Doctor of Philosophy (Applied Communication and Land Information) and also undergraduate students in the School of Business, and School of Computer Science and IT.

We also congratulate the students on successful completion of the Introductory Academic Program (IAP), which ran throughout the month of January, to prepare students socially and academically for their study at RMIT. The IAP included information sessions on accommodation, campus orientation and welfare issues. The full academic program includes working on skills such as: writing, referencing, public speaking, computers, library and research. Comments from students on the IAP included: ‘It helped me a lot in improving my reading, writing and presentation skills. It was not only learning but a great joy to meet all the staff and other students.’ The program also incorporated a trip to Healesville Sanctuary, to see some native Australian wildlife, and a celebratory dinner at the completion of the program. One student said that the trips were ‘a good introduction to Australian culture and life’.

International delegations

RMIT University regularly hosts international delegations, including those on study tours, exchange partners, government and business groups. During the January to March 2009 quarter, we have had the pleasure of meeting with the following individuals/organisations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Individuals/organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Parliament of the Republic of Chile, Universidad Tecnica Federico Santa Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Pontificia Universidad Javeriana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture, European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Berufsakademie Mannheim, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Murokan Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Professor Sam Aroni, UCLA</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: RMIT University Protocol Office

Fresh approach to design wins acclaim

RMIT University design and art graduates have won three prestigious prizes in Craft Victoria’s annual Fresh! awards.

Joe Li, a Foundation Studies (Art, Design and Architecture) and Bachelor of Design (Industrial Design) graduate, won the major Filippo Raphael Fresh! Award for his stunning collection of mourning jewellery.

Fellow RMIT graduates Tobia Clark and Aly Attken were also prize winners in the awards, which have helped launch the careers of some of Melbourne’s best known practitioners since the awards began in 1993.

Mr Li created his prize-winning White Widow jewellery collection using Teflon Tape, a product commonly used in plumbing.

RMIT Industrial Design lecturer Gyungju Chyon congratulated Mr Li on winning the $5,000 Fresh! award and on his outstanding work for his major studio project, which involved a full year of research, experimentation and visualisation.

‘It is wonderful to see an industrial design student win this major Craft Victoria award,’ Ms Chyon said.

‘And it shows that RMIT is right at the forefront of the shift in paradigm that is currently taking place, from globalised efficiently produced products to those that place an emphasis on enhancing the relationship between people and products.’

Joe Li winner of the annual Fresh! award.

Mr Li’s White Widow jewellery collection impressed the judges.
Change in PhD duration

RMIT University’s Higher Degrees by Research policy allows full-time students a maximum of four years to complete their PhD. Registration of all PhD programs offered to international students has been amended to enable students to obtain a student visa for the maximum duration of the program. PhD students may submit their thesis after a minimum of two years of study and before the maximum of four years is reached.

This four-year alignment is within University policy and not the result of RMIT reviewing program durations.

Invoices

Invoices for Semester 2 have been forwarded to sponsors. If your finance department’s contact details have changed please let us know.

What’s on RMIT’s web site?

2009 academic calendars
www.rmit.edu.au/academic-registrar/academic_calendars

Publications
www.rmit.edu.au/programs/international/brochures

Programs and fees 2009
www.international.rmit.edu.au/info/programfees.asp

Refund policy
www.rmit.edu.au/policies/refunds

RMIT University Alumni information
www.alumni.rmit.edu.au

Scholarships web site
www.rmit.edu.au/international/scholarships

Newsletter feedback

We are keen for your feedback. Please address all comments and queries to:

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