Farewell and welcome

As many of you will already know, Dr Madeleine Reeve, our former Pro Vice-Chancellor (International and Development), retired in late September after a long and successful career with RMIT University. The Vice-Chancellor has recently announced the appointment of Mr Stephen Connelly as the new PVC (International and Development) from February, 2010. In the transition period Michelle Hoodbhoy (Director, International Services) has taken on the role, and will be replaced by Julie Eisenbise (Director, Global Business Development) from the end of December 2009.

Mr Connelly is currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development and Engagement) at Swinburne University where he has worked since 2004. Prior to that time Stephen was Marketing Director, then Director of the International Programs Office at La Trobe University between 1997 and 2004. He brings a wealth of experience in international education to the role and has made significant contributions to higher education, as the Foundation Chair of the Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum and through his current role as President of the International Education Association of Australia. Apart from his extensive experience in international relations and international recruitment for both university and vocational education, Stephen has taught international students and managed programs in Australia and Malaysia. We look forward to welcoming Stephen on board in 2010 and introducing him to you in due course.

Offshore graduations

During 2009 RMIT University held graduation ceremonies in a number of offshore locations including Shanghai, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. In total more than 2,400 offshore students graduated and while the vast majority of these were undergraduates, a number of PhD researchers were also acknowledged for their achievements.

We congratulate all graduates of RMIT University offshore programs and acknowledge the assistance and support of our offshore partners in working together to ensure a positive learning experience.

Merging of two schools within DSC

Since July 6, 2009 The School of Media and Communications has replaced the former schools of Applied Communications and Creative Media. The new School is dual sector with both Higher Education and TAFE programs offered. Professor Stephanie Donald, the newly appointed dean of the School, will commence her role in early 2010. Academic and administrative staff associated with the undergraduate and postgraduate programs in advertising and communication design disciplines have moved to Building 9, Level 5. Honours and research staff and students, formerly in Building 4, have relocated to Building 9, Level 2. Staff telephone numbers and email addresses remain unchanged.

AUQA Audit Report 2009

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is an independent national agency established to consider, review and comment on the effectiveness of mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards within universities, institutions and accrediting agencies. Early in 2009 AUQA undertook an audit of RMIT University. The audit involved a number of offshore partners and we were very grateful for the time and assistance offered by our partners during these audit visits.

RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Margaret Gardner AO, said the University had implemented a range of strategies to address the recommendations of its first AUQA audit in 2003, which was commended by AUQA in their recent audit.

‘RMIT’s Strategic Plan has effectively guided our achievements in teaching and research, our strong financial performance and our culture of improvement of management and administrative systems.

‘The recommendations made in the report will help us continue to improve, build on our strengths and provide world-class, practically-focused education and research that has a real impact on the world.’

A full version of the report is available on the RMIT web site.

News flash

RMIT ranked in the top 250 universities in the world by the Times Higher Education QS ranking 2009! See the full story on the RMIT web site.
Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade

The graduation for Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade (SIFT) took place at the Sonjiang Campus on 30 June – with the aid of technology! Due to the outbreak of the H1N1 virus (swine flu) RMIT staff were unable to travel at this time, but RMIT’s Pro Vice-Chancellor Business, Professor Gill Palmer, pre-recorded her speech which was shown on large screens at the conferring ceremony. As Professor Palmer said ‘Although I and my colleagues from RMIT cannot be with you today in person, we are very much with you in spirit through the power of technology.’

Professor Palmer also made reference to the formal celebration in December 2008 of the 10th anniversary of the first graduates through the partnership between SIFT and RMIT University.

The June graduation was the last before the commencement of the newly launched Diploma of Commerce in September 2009, which will lead to new degree programs in international business, and logistics and supply chain management. RMIT University was represented by His Excellency Mr Tom Connor, Australian Consul General to Shanghai, who spoke as an honoured guest. Mr Suren Gunatillake, President of RMIT University Shanghai Alumni Group, also welcomed students. He said, ‘As a graduate of the SIFT–RMIT program, you are now a member of a global alumni network of almost 200,000 RMIT graduates’.

RMIT University looks forward to the next graduation of SIFT–RMIT students – and hopes to be present in body as well as spirit!

New programs at SIC

In addition to the Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering program already being delivered with Singapore Institute of Commerce, the School of Aerospace, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (SAMME) will, from 2010, be delivering an additional undergraduate program (aerospace engineering) and a suite of Master of Engineering programs (management, international automotive engineering and international logistics management). These new offerings will enhance both institutions’ efforts to achieve a strategic position in this important market. The mechanical engineering program at SIC has recently received commendations from Engineers Australia and has been awarded full accreditation.

Partnership managers on Skype

In order to further improve communications between RMIT and its offshore partners, RMIT partnership managers are now using Skype. This is proving to be a great success and it is hoped that the use of this communication tool can be further expanded. Skype address details for each partnership manager are listed below and are also listed on the RMIT web site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Skype address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott Crighton</td>
<td>scrighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Biantes</td>
<td>ebiantes1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgina Douglas</td>
<td>Georgina.douglas1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Mallinson</td>
<td>heather.m85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caryn Nery</td>
<td>Caryn.nery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact Us

For further information relating to the RMIT offshore partnership program please contact:

Scott Crighton
Associate Director Transnational Education
Email: scott.crighton@rmit.edu.au
Tel. +61 3 9925 1448

From our staff to yours … ‘Season’s Greetings’ and we look forward to working with you in 2010.

Student profile

At the recent Science, Engineering and Health College Postgraduate Conference, Iman Yusuf won the prize for best poster in the engineering stream. Iman has travelled a long way since she completed her undergraduate computer science degree through RMIT University as part of the African Virtual University (AVU) project.

The RMIT–AVU project ran from 2002 to 2007 and involved the delivery of RMIT computer science diploma and degree programs to nine partner institutes in six African countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Namibia. Through the project over 900 students have graduated with RMIT awards and many of those have gone on to further studies or have gained employment in some of the leading institutions in their home countries.

Iman was part of the first student cohort to enrol in the program at the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and completed her studies in 2006. Iman's results in her undergraduate program were of such a high standard that she was offered an RMIT scholarship to undertake a Doctorate in Computer Science at RMIT Melbourne. She is currently completing her thesis on the topic, Recovery-oriented Software Architecture for High-performance Grids (ROSA-Grids).

We asked Iman some questions about her past experiences studying with RMIT:

Could you tell us what aspects of your undergraduate program you enjoyed?

I liked the overall structure of the program. First of all, we were not taking any courses that were not related to computer science. The program especially focused on providing courses that made us ready either to join industry or academia shortly after graduation. There was a good balance of theory and hands-on experience.

Could you tell us some of the benefits of undertaking the RMIT program in your home country of Ethiopia?

I don’t have to worry about finding an apartment. I can live with my family and my life-long friends are there. I don’t have to worry about how to mix and blend into a new society and importantly I met the same quality education with less expense.

In what ways did your undergraduate studies affect your life and what were some of the positive outcomes?

I got the chance to apply and get the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS). If I were not an RMIT–AVU student, I would have had a nil chance of getting the scholarship, and to do research with people who have a tremendous knowledge in the field of software engineering. I never imagined myself doing a PhD at this time of my life. Apart from my academic life, I met a number of people whom I can call friends.

Contact Skype address

Scott Crighton scrighton
Elizabeth Biantes ebiantes1
Georgina Douglas Georgina.douglas1
Heather Mallinson heather.m85
Caryn Nery Caryn.nery

Newsletter Feedback

We are keen to receive your feedback on the information provided in Transnational Education News. Please send any comments or queries to:

Rachel Hancock
The Editor, Transnational Education News
Email: rachel.hancock@rmit.edu.au
Tel. +61 3 9925 1639
Fax: +61 3 9925 5153