

News from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine
Newsletter #21; October 2004

Edited by Kevin Forde (feedback to k.forde@unsw.edu.au)
October edition deadline is 27 October, all items to k.forde@unsw.edu.au

1. Welcome to newly appointed and reappointed conjoint staff
2. Visit to Calvary CRAGS
3. Smoking in the Workplace
4. Achievements
5. Funding available
6. Reflections on the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) course
7. Postcard from Stuart Saker

1. Welcome to newly appointed and reappointed conjoint staff

Congratulations to the following conjoint staff who have recently joined the School of Public Health and Community Medicine:

Ms Joan Burns was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 15 April 2004
Dr Jeffrey Ward was appointed as a Conjoint Senior Lecturer on 27 May 2004
Dr Andrew Bonney was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 1 July 2004
Ms Heather McDonald was appointed as a Conjoint Senior Lecturer on 1 July 2004
Dr Jill Timbs was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 15 July 2004
Dr Khanh Diep was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 29 July 2004
A/Prof. Andrew Cole was appointed as a Conjoint Associate Professor on 5 August 2004
Prof. Rob Sanson-Fisher was appointed as a Conjoint Professor on 18 August 2004
Dr Rowena Ivers was appointed as a Conjoint Senior Lecturer on 1 September 2004
Dr Cathy Allen was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 1 September 2004
Dr Christopher Carmody was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 3 September 2004
Dr Vipin Goyal was appointed as a Conjoint Lecturer on 3 October 2004

2. Visit to Calvary CRAGS

The International Health Programs in the School organised a visit to the Calvary Rehabilitation and Geriatric Service (CRAGS) Community Team at Kogarah on 25th August 2004. The multi-disciplinary team provides assessment, rehabilitation and assistance with the care of the disabled, frail and demented elderly living at home in the St. George district.

An in-patient unit provides acute rehabilitation services with a view of getting patients to their preferred destination - usually home. Patients are admitted after suffering any disabling medical or surgical procedure such as orthopaedic procedures, fractures and cancer. The services are administered by the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary.

The trip provided the 11 international students (from 3 programs and 6 countries) an opportunity to explore current aged care issues in Australia and a tour of the hospital's facilities (general ward, palliative ward, gymnasium, "Multi-faith Room", rehabilitation ward, driving assessment room for dementia patients etc.). A senior consultant, Dr. Raja Salgado, provided an insight into the running of the centre and the role it plays in the community. They also had an interesting opportunity to interact with few of the team members at their own workplaces.

The visit was both beneficial and interesting, especially for international students from developing countries where such facilities and services are quite rare. The visit highlighted an understanding of the extent of attention given to the care of the aged; palliative care to improve their quality of life; the practice of physiotherapy and real-life bus-rides etc. for physical practice

as well as mental strengthening; addressing the plight of the carers and supporting them; preparation for the transition from hospital care to private home care before discharge etc.

Heart-warming examples of senior citizens frequenting local shopping centres in their "hospital groups" were real-life societal benefits besides the obvious medical and psychological contributions of the health services.

The students had an enlightening time and encourage the School to organise more visits, which lends a very good hand in understanding and internalising the Australian health care system. These activities definitely needs to be regular and continued to expand the School's (and UNSW for that matter!) promise to international students.

Jenny Bolger would like to thank Fred Erlich and Raja Salgado for arranging the visit, and is eager to hear from any staff/conjoint who would be happy to host a visit to their particular health program.

3. Smoking in the Workplace

The UNSW Policy for Control of Smoking in the Workplace is presently under review. The policy has not been updated since being written in 1991 and there have been many changes in legislation since that time. With the many policy changes occurring around this issue at State/Local Governments and in the general community it seems timely that UNSW update our policy as well.

The OHS & E Risk Management Unit has convened a Working Party to revise & update this policy. Our School has two representatives on the committee - Professor Robyn Richmond and Gunilla Rupp.

Considerations include meeting current legislative obligations, OHS implications for staff and students exposed to passive smoke at work or study, and Health promotion activities to reduce smoker's level of smoking.

Some of the proposed policy changes include that the policy applies:

- to students, visitors, contractors and staff alike.
- more extensively to specific outdoor areas eg 3m from the walls of buildings; or in the proximity of entrances/exits; in the vicinity of windows.
- in food consumption areas and common rooms.
- to all university vehicles/boats (regardless of whether there is anyone else in the vehicle or not)
- to student residences owned by UNSW.

It is recognised that the introduction of signage will be a major factor in the success of the implementation of the new policy - there is currently minimal signage anywhere on campus and many people would be unaware that UNSW has a policy for control of smoking.

The review process involves a number of phases of revision, and the revised policy will be submitted to the DVC (Academic) for approval in December 2004.

4. Achievements

Congratulations to Karin Banna who has just had her first paper published. It is called: Auslan interpreting: What can we learn from translation theory? Deaf Words: International Journal of Deaf Studies, Volume 20: issue 2 2004.

Suzanne McKenzie has been successful (for the third time) in receiving a grant from the RACGP. The \$ 24,946 grant is for research into Reducing Cardiovascular Risk through Lifestyle Modification: Attitudes of patients and their General Practitioners.

Suzanne is the second investigator. Catherine Speechy from the NSW Faculty Research Unit is the chief investigator and Yvonne Zurynski from PHI is the third investigator.

5. Funding available

The Ian Potter Foundation offers funding for early career staff members to travel for the purpose of professional development (attend conference etc) and to gain further experience, meet their peers in the international scene.

The Foundation prefers to fund international travel but will consider travel within Australia. The level of funding is between \$1,000 and \$3,000 and funds must be matched by university.

You must have at least 3 years tenure and must apply through Uni's research office and have the support of the head of school.

Closing date is 1 November 2004. For further information go to:

<http://www.ianpotter.org.au/>

6. Reflections on the “Foundations of University Learning and Teaching” (FULT) course

Suzanne McKenzie received her certificate of completion for the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching course on 14th September. Here are some of her thoughts about the course.

FULT is a seven- day course designed specifically for University teachers and is aimed at those who are new to the university environment or those who want to take the time to reflect on how they might improve their teaching skills. The course provides an introduction to good educational practice and the presenters all model this practice in their sessions. There is a mix of theory and introduction to the vast literature on higher education; and practical teaching strategies. Participants who want to explore the literature further and reflect more deeply on their own teaching activities are encouraged to enroll in the Graduate Certificate of University Learning and Teaching.

The initial five-day FULT course included student approaches to learning, teaching for effective learning, engaging students, reflective practice, planning teaching, aligning teaching strategies with outcomes, small group learning, large group learning, assessment methods, online learning and teaching, and a practice session with feedback from peers. The two subsequent days (spread out some months later) focused on topics nominated by the participants and included reflection time, balancing academic roles, teaching tips, diversity, and evaluation strategies.

FULT highlights:

- Meeting a group of lecturers from other faculties with a vast range of experience and the opportunity of ongoing support and camaraderie that this has provided. A small group of us continue to meet regularly to discuss everything from our students, assessment tasks, teaching experiences (good and bad) to our families, pets and holidays.

- The opportunity to present a teaching activity to a group of peers and receive specific feedback. It was also a privilege to see others at work and experience the vast array of teaching styles and methods.
- Specific time to learn how to use CATS rooms and the brief introduction to online learning and teaching.
- The introduction to vast literature on higher education across all disciplines and the time to reflect on the similarities and differences (although not many of these) to the medical education literature that I am familiar with.

FULT challenges:

- Being a student again for seven whole days
- Having two large folders of resource material that I will probably never have time to read properly
- Realizing that all our comments about the course mirror what our students often say about us
- Its not always easy to put good theory into practice

More information about FULT can be obtained from Michelle Scoufis at the Learning and Teaching Unit. Her email is m.scoufis@unsw.edu.au

7. Postcard from Stuart Saker

Immediately after doing my residential week for Semester 1 of the Masters of Health Administration I was deployed with the Australian Army to the Solomon Islands. The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) had been operating there for over a year and had contributed greatly to the restoration of law and order in a previously anarchic state.

My unit is the 1st Health Support Battalion. It was tasked to provide a Health Company (ie tents) with an operating theatre and ICU complex, primary health care and environmental health teams and an aero-medical evacuation capability. As the officer-in-command of aero-medical evacuation team I had responsibility for a small team of medics and nurses. The paperwork took some getting used to and I had some first-hand experience of scientific management practices but the people were great and really helped me to fit in.

An average day involved a ward round, followed by a primary health clinic. At any time during the day there was the possibility of an evacuation. Time would be spent on stocking and preparing our kits, receiving and disseminating orders and other administration. This was often terminated by the need to perform a retrieval.

We evacuated military and civilian casualties on a range of aircraft including RAAF Caribous, New Zealand Air Force Iroquois and civilian Bell 212 helicopters. The work was exciting and rewarding. It seemed a bit bizarre at times landing on an isolated beach, on a little island, to treat and evacuate a local who spoke or knew little English. Added to this was the fact that we were in uniform, helmeted and carrying weapons and it seems fair to say we were quite the spectacle.

Now the sand has settled and my feet are back on the ground. In reflection I am left with nothing but admiration for an efficient and proactive organisation staffed by impressive and enthusiastic people; namely the Australian Army Medical Corps.