Message from the Dean
In this issue of the Educator you will read about the achievement of some of our staff and students. We are thrilled with the high ranking of Education at UWA in 2014, and we are particularly pleased that our employer reputation is our great strength.

The extremely high rating of the employability of our graduates speaks to the quality of the teaching and student experience within Education at UWA. The initial teacher education courses that prepare Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary teachers for their profession are clearly valued in the workplace.

It is not only the pre-service courses that are valued. Our Faculty offers courses for those who are practising teachers and school leaders, through Masters and Doctoral degrees, both in Western Australia and in Hong Kong and Singapore, and our graduates occupy senior influential positions in many parts of the world. The International QS ranking of 33 by Education at UWA is an indication of the high quality of both our enthusiastic and talented students and also our dedicated and innovative staff.

Winthrop Professor Helen Wildy

The state’s most employable graduates
The Faculty of Education has been ranked 33rd in the world and 7th in Australia according to this year’s QS World University Rankings by Subject. The result recognises the commitment the Faculty’s staff and students have for high-quality education, and the Faculty’s good reputation not just in Australia but also internationally. Indeed, what is likely to be of great interest to current and prospective students alike is the Faculty’s high ‘employer reputation’. The QS World University Rankings by Subject is unique among university ranking systems in that it takes into account not only research impact, but also academic reputation and – crucially for students – employer reputation, measured by a survey of employers asking them to identify the universities that produce the best graduates. The employer reputation score for Education at UWA is higher than that of any other WA Education faculty, and even higher than that of UWA as a whole.

The 2014 QS World University Rankings attests to the increasingly outward-looking orientation of Faculty members. In recent years staff have engaged in international conferences, presenting papers and building research collaborations which have led to joint international publications in highly rated journals. In the 5 years from 2009, the number of high quality journal articles published by Faculty staff has increased nearly sixfold.

The QS rankings also show the good reputation of Education programs across all Australian universities, with nine of the country’s universities ranking in the top 40 for Education globally.

Mid-year Entry
Applications for mid-year entry are now open for our initial teacher education courses, as well as our professional courses aimed at practising educators, so visit education.uwa.edu.au/courses for information on how to apply.
Introducing Ger

Dr Gerardine Neylon has recently been appointed Assistant Professor in Early Childhood in the Faculty of Education. Ger hails from Ireland and completed her PhD at the University of Limerick. She is an expert in early childhood policy and pedagogy, with a special interest in the continued professional development of childcare workers and the development of services for children aged 0 to 5 years. Her experience will guide the Faculty’s development of Early Childhood education and care to meet the ACECQA national standards for initial teacher education.

Ger’s arrival in Perth with her family coincided with the colour and excitement of the Perth International Arts Festival, so the settling in period involved a good dose of the arts, with everything from cinema to the circus. Since then Ger and her family have happily embraced the great weather and their new life: “We found a lovely home near the river and close to the beach, and now, after six months, we feel quite settled and part of a community.”

In her short time in Perth Ger has already launched into researching Australian education: “I have commenced research on a collaborative project, with colleagues in Notre Dame University. We are exploring how educators working in toddler rooms apply the five learning outcomes of the Australian Early Years Learning Framework.”

Ger’s most recent paper, “An Analysis of Irish Pre-school Practice and Pedagogy using The Early Childhood Environmental Four Curricular Subscales”, has been published in Irish Education Studies.

Rewarding the pathway to research

A UWA program that helps undergraduate students conduct world-class research and even present at international conferences has won a prestigious award. The Faculty of Education’s Dr Wayne McGowan, together with Professor Sally Sandover and Associate Professor Lee Partridge, led the Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Research Internship Scheme (ULTRIS) and were presented with an Award for Programs that Enhance Learning.

“ULTRIS is an innovative and unique extra-curricular program,” said Wayne. “Each year it provides selected undergraduate students with an authentic research experience in teaching and learning.”

Established in 2008 at UWA, ULTRIS no longer caters only for local students. “In 2011, the program went international,” said Wayne. Workshop content is placed online, so students from around the world are able to interact and share perspectives, understandings and results as their research projects unfold. “In addition to UWA students, ULTRIS has included undergraduate researchers from Durham University in the UK, Queens University in Canada and the University of Otago in New Zealand,” said Wayne. “And we are excited in 2014 to have for the first time students from the National University of Singapore joining the program.”

ULTRIS has been recognised as a leader in the field, and we are proud of the program that is at the cutting edge of the global classroom in which undergraduate students collaborate on research into the scholarship of teaching and learning.

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Global and local knowledge: learning rather than borrowing

Winthrop Professor Lesley Vidovich is an international expert on education policy, having authored over 150 research papers in the field. In addition to her research activity, Lesley teaches across all course levels at the Faculty of Education, from the popular undergraduate broadening unit “Education for a Global Knowledge Society” to Masters and Doctoral units.

Lesley has also supervised over 40 postgraduate students to successful thesis completion, and she has won a series of Teaching and Supervision Awards at UWA.

Lesley is passionate about the importance of local knowledge in the globalising world of education. “As educators and administrators we have to be aware of international developments and the way educational policies and practices travel the world – but we should also be sensitive to local contexts,” she says. “What works in one country may not, for various reasons, work here, and our challenge is to critically analyse existing approaches so that we adapt and apply those that best fit our environment. The emphasis should be on policy ‘learning’, not uncritical policy ‘borrowing’.”

“Singapore is an encouraging example where they have taken to heart the idea that the policies that are most likely to succeed are adapted rather than simply borrowed. For example, privatisation and internationalisation of education developed there gradually, beginning with a few schools, so the participating schools could be studied and supported.”


Positive relationships at the heart of transnational research

Over the past ten years Professor Russell Waugh has supervised 16 Doctor of Education students from Hong Kong and Singapore through the Faculty of Education’s transnational program.

“Supervising overseas students has been a wonderful experience,” said Russell. “And the students worked incredibly hard,” he added. “They had full-time jobs and, in most cases, financially supported their ageing parents. I had a lot of understanding and sympathy for them, because I completed my own MEd and PhD while I had a full-time job and a wife plus three children. I knew what it was like to come home from work, give some time to one’s family, and then stay up late at night working on a thesis.” As a result of his own experiences Russell made himself available to students at night and over the weekends, when students were most likely to be working on their research.

Russell’s students measured psychological variables such as motivation and self-regulation in education, covering a range of topics from second language learning to virtual reality. “Generating new knowledge meant a great deal to the students. In addition, the completion of a world-class doctorate from a top western university also gave them increased recognition in their home countries,” said Russell.

“The transnational program makes a great impact in the world; it enhances the students’ self-confidence, and it helps build positive relationships between Australia and Asia.”
Success for graduate teacher

A high-achieving UWA graduate was named Beginning Teacher of the Year at the WA Education Awards. Rebecca Halse has a Bachelor of Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Education from UWA, and works as a Secondary Ancient and Modern History teacher at Shenton College.

“The secondary school classroom is a dynamic place,” says Rebecca. “It is a safe environment for the minds of our future to test ideas, challenge concepts and form opinions, confident in the knowledge that they are supported – that there is someone there to catch them if they fall. These are the leaders of tomorrow and I feel incredibly fortunate to shape their journey in some small, positive way.”

During her time at the Faculty of Education Rebecca was awarded the C. Sanders Prize for most outstanding student and the Convocation of UWA Graduates Prize for achieving the best academic result in the Graduate Diploma in Education. Rebecca is also in the Rhodes Program, an initiative led by Professor Lyn Beazley, Chief Scientist and Malcolm McCusker Governor of Western Australia to encourage potential candidates for international programs such as the Rhodes Scholarship.

Her advice for new teachers is simple: “Love what you do. If you have a passion for your subject and a passion for education then your students will thrive and there is no doubt you will excel in this profession.”

2014 Faculty of Education Prizes

Twenty-one people were recognised for their achievements at the Faculty’s annual Prize Giving Ceremony. Congratulations to all the winners!

Prizes

- Belinda Callaway – C. Sanders Prize
- Dr Jennifer Donovan – Cameron Prize in Education
- Amy Edmonds – Faculty of Education Master of Teaching (Primary) Prize
- William Ellis – The Bill Louden Early Childhood Prize
- Dr Mark Fielding – Fogarty Foundation Success Through Educational Excellence Graduate Diploma in Education Prize for Excellence in Pre-Service Teacher Education; Thomas Sten Prize in Education
- Dr Siew Yee Lim – Prize for the Best Piece of Research by a Transnational or International student in the Doctor of Education; Western Australian Institute for Educational Research (WAIER) Prize in Education (journal article)

Scholarships

- Aithne Dell – Alan Robson Rural Teaching Practicum Award
- Sarah Fox – Hale School Scholarship
- Clara Kasahara – Dale Cook Scholarship
- Marianne Loucataris – Centenary Trust for Women (CTW) Dr June Jones Master’s Scholarship in Education
- Dr Simon Moore – Christ Church Grammar ITE Scholarship; TEE Consultants Scholarship
- Sarah Nicholson – Christ Church Grammar ITE Scholarship
- Michelle Reinders – Hale School Scholarship
- Daniel Robson – Great Southern Grammar Scholarship

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We welcome contributions, photos, feedback and anecdotes.

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