CURTIN ACADEMY NEWS
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

CURTIN ACADEMY FELLOW RECEIVES ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

Welcome to the very first Edition of Curtin Academy News. We hope that these newsletters provide colleagues with a snapshot of activities, highlight important events, and create a vehicle for discussing learning and teaching matters. If you have suggestions or topics you would like to see discussed, please let us know as we value your feedback.

For this Edition it is with immense pleasure that we acknowledge the work of one of our newest Fellows, Iain Murray. We also look at English language skills and Interprofessional Education. I hope that you can take a moment to relax and enjoy this newsletter.

Professor Dawn Bennett
Co-Chair, Curtin Academy Executive

‘Member in the Order of Australia’ Award

Curtin Academy Fellow Associate Professor Iain Murray received the “Member in the Order of Australia” for significant service to people who are blind or have low vision, and to education in the field of assistive technology as an academic and researcher.

A large part of this is from his role in the Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired (CAVI). Iain established CAVI in 2002 as a Curtin research project on accessible education and assistive technology whilst also establishing Curtin as a lead academy in the global Cisco Network Academy Program. The Cisco Academy Program is a blended learning model and currently runs in 9,000 educational institutions in 170 countries with one million students enrolled.

CAVI started with just five local students attending classes on the Bentley campus and rapidly expanded to now have students in 15 countries, including classrooms in India, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom with annual enrolments of just over 300 students.

CAVI delivers all lecture, tutorials and hands-on laboratories in a synchronous, instructor-led collaborative manner over the

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Curtin Academy Fellow Margo Brewer was invited to present the plenary address on her work on Interprofessional Education at Curtin at the United Kingdom’s Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education in London late last year.

Whilst there Margo developed a guide for team-based interprofessional placements for the Journal of Interprofessional Care with Emeritus Professor Hugh Barr.

Margo is travelling to New Zealand in early July to present a plenary and a workshop on Leadership in Interprofessional Education at the Auckland University of Technology’s Interpersonal Education Conference. Following this she travels to Otago University to conduct a masterclass and videoconference again on Interprofessional Education.

Margo has had three peer reviewed journal papers, one journal editorial and one book chapter accepted for publication this year. Margo’s work can be found at the Health Sciences Interprofessional Education Research website.

Margo is currently working on two major projects. The first is an international research grant with Dr Helen Flavell (Curtin University) and Professor Scott Reeves (Kingston and St George’s University of London). The second is a cross-Faculty (Health and Architecture) student learning experience with Curtin Academy Fellow Associate Professor Khoa Do.

Internet. The impact of CAVI has been life changing for students involved.

Unemployment in Australia for those with vision impairment is currently at 62% with underemployment significantly higher (Vision Australia, 2012). CAVI has successfully prepared vision impaired students for constructive employment with 75-90% employment rates for our overseas cohorts.

CAVI is now housed at Guidedogs WA and staffed by a group of volunteers who teach or work on the creation of new accessible courses. It’s worth noting that all of the instructors are past blind and vision impaired students that we have trained to deliver high quality, specialised training.

Iain acknowledges that this of course, was not a solo effort; many Curtin staff have been involved, including Ms Nazanim Mohammadi and Dr Azadeh Nazemi who work in research of accessibility and assistive technology. There are the vision impaired instructors and volunteers who assist in the conversion of materials (about 20 people all up) and our one and only employee (funded by donations from a local company – Fundi Software) Mr Kerry Hoath. Kerry was one of the very first students in CAVI and now teaches networking and maintains the considerable amount of infrastructure used in hosting and delivering our courses.

Congratulations Iain, this is an amazing honour, and a credit to the incredible work you and your team are doing.

For more insights into teaching vision impaired students, visit the CAVI wiki Iain uses for teaching materials or view a lecture by Donal Fitzpatrick, a vision impaired Maths and Computing lecturer from the School of Computing at Dublin City University.

A couple of tips for dealing with vision impaired students:

Talk a lot: A person who can’t see needs to know you are in the room and what you are doing, the only way to easily communicate this is to talk about everything you are doing.

Don’t use scanned documents: Any text document, pdf when created correctly, word, txt or even PowerPoint are accessible to screen readers ( a screen reader is a program that generates synthetic speech from the screen of a computer or tablet/smart phone). Poorly scanned items such as newspapers are not.
EMPLOYMENT OF GRADUATES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Employers continue to express concerns about graduates’ literacy and numeracy skills. Associate Professor Carmela Briguglio was contacted to respond to an Australian Industry Group report, Tackling Foundation Skills in the Workforce, released in January 2016.

Carmela was interviewed by Chris Illsley on 6PR on the 18 January and for an article in the Employment section of the Weekend West Australian of the 30-31 January 2016.

Employers tend to see that young people lack workplace readiness. The fact is that, particularly in regard to literacy skills, there are more demands on students to acquire digital literacy, but the demands for more traditional forms of literacy skills have not diminished. Students may be spending less time engaged in traditional forms of extended reading, for example, but we still expect them to be good readers and to comprehend an increasing range of texts. They may be spending more time in front of computers, but we still want them to be excellent oral communicators.

While all Australian universities are diagnosing students’ language needs and providing support strategies to help them continue to develop language skills, the fact is that, increasingly, we have much more diverse student populations with a diversity of needs. Moreover, the work world into which our students are progressing is increasingly globalised, meaning among other things, that there is an increasing mix of languages and cultures in the workplace, making communication more complex. We need to engage students in more active learning that will continue to develop their skills as well as their understandings.

For further information see the ‘Tackling foundation skills in the workforce’ report.

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS

The Curtin Academy Fellows have undertaken to conduct a number of Academic Conversations sessions in 2016 in collaboration with the Curtin Learning Institute. The first one ‘Promotion for Academics with Teaching Responsibilities’ was held in April and was very well attended.

Teaching Academics, Teaching and Research Academics and Clinical Professional Fellows who were considering applying for promotion attended, providing them with the opportunity to ask questions and hear directly from a promotions panel member, an expert on promotions and academics who were successful in their application for promotion.

The Curtin Academy hosted a panel session who comprised:

- Dr Rachel Sheffield, Senior Lecturer (Education)
- Miss Michelle Quail, Senior Clinical/Professional Fellow
- Ms Pip Rundle, Academic Promotions & HR Projects Coordinator
- A/Prof Lynne Roberts, Curtin Academy Fellow
- Prof Reena Tiwari, Curtin Academy Fellow
- Prof Jill Downie, DVC Academic, ex-officio member of the University Academic Promotions Committee
- Prof Simon Lewis, Curtin Academy Fellow
- A/Prof Khoa Do, Curtin Academy Fellow

A key topic of this Conversation was how you could successfully provide evidence of teaching excellence for academic promotions. Feedback from participants was extremely positive and considered the session to be very helpful, providing practical strategies and suggestions on turning CEAP into concrete examples.

Look out for upcoming ‘Academic Conversations’

- Date TBA - Peer Review of Teaching
- 2 September - Mentoring
- 17 November - Scholarship of Learning and Teaching/Education Research and Publications

If you have any suggestions for Conversation topics, please contact clt@curtin.edu.au
MEET THE CURTIN ACADEMY EXECUTIVE...

The Curtin Academy Executive is elected by the inducted Fellows to lead the Academy in achieving its roles and responsibilities. Those elected to the Curtin Academy Executive then elect a Chair and Deputy/Co-Chair.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce the Curtin Academy Executive...

**Professor Dawn Bennett**  
*(Chair)*  
Dawn is a John Curtin Distinguished Professor and Director of the Creative Workforce Initiative within Curtin. Her research focus is on enacting and enabling employability within higher education learning and teaching. Dawn is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Senior OLT National Teaching Fellow and convenes the Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows’ network. Dawn serves on numerous boards and editorial boards.

**Associate Professor Lynne Roberts**  
*(Co-Chair)*  
Lynne is Associate Professor in the School of Psychology and Speech Pathology and Director of Higher Education in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Lynne received an OLT National Teaching Fellowship in 2013 for her work looking at best practice in supporting honours and coursework dissertation supervision. Lynne’s research interests include learning and teaching in higher education, research methods pedagogy, learning analytics and the academic workforce.

**Professor Simon Lewis**  
Simon is Professor of Forensic and Analytical Chemistry and Director of Learning and Teaching in the Department of Chemistry. Simon teaches undergraduate analytical chemistry and forensic sciences, including Honours. Simon’s activities in analytical and forensic chemistry education have resulted in a an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Teaching Excellence award and he has a number of discipline-related awards.

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**Dr Katharina Wolf**  
Katharina is Course Coordinator of the Public Relations program at the Curtin Business School. She is passionate about student centred, work integrated learning, a commitment that has been recognised with a number of local and national awards, including . Katharina is particularly known for her industry connectedness and active role within the Public Relations Institute of Australia (both locally and nationally). Katharina has been actively contributing to scholarship in learning and teaching, with a focus on reflective practice, virtual collaborative team work (GlobCom) and in particular graduate employability.

**Associate Professor Lisa Tee**  
Lisa is Associate Professor in Pharmacology in the School of Pharmacy. Lisa’s mission is ‘Learning and Teaching with the Triple E: Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy’. While Lisa has a strong interest in her discipline research (diabetes and drug transporters in mammary epithelial cells), she has a passion for learning and teaching education and in particular engaging learning practices. Lisa has received numerous national awards including an Australian Learning and Teaching Award for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, and is an OLT National Teaching Fellow.

**Associate Professor Carmela Briguglio**  
Carmela is Manager of the Communication Skills Centre in the Curtin Business School. Carmela’s research interests include the socio-linguistic and study needs of international students, internationalisation of curriculum, intercultural communication and embedding English language across the curriculum. Carmela has received a number of internal and external learning teaching awards, including an OLT Fellowship for embedding English language development across the curriculum.

For more general information on the Curtin Academy and all the Fellows, visit the Curtin Academy website.