

Head of School's Newsletter - March 2010

Staff Changes and Thanks - Effective from Tuesday 6th April 2010 Nelly Liew will no longer be the Finance Manager for the School of Physics and will be transferring over to become the Finance Manager for the School of Geosciences. Consequently Marlyn Horgan, the current Finance Manager for the School of Geosciences, will become the new Finance Manager for the School of Physics. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the School to thank Nelly for her long service to the School and wish her well in this new opportunity for her.

Congratulations - Professor Elaine Sadler, ARC Professorial Fellow in the School of Physics has been honoured by election to the Australian Academy of Science in recognition of her research in high energy astrophysics and galaxy evolution. The Fellowship of the Academy is made up of over 400 of Australia's top scientists, distinguished in the physical and biological sciences and their applications, who are considered to have made an exceptional contribution to knowledge in their field and have significantly advanced the world's scientific knowledge.

Prof. Ben Eggleton was awarded the Scopus Young Researcher of the Year Award for Physical Sciences at the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference Gala Dinner and Awards Presentation on 3 March. The Scopus awards were in five categories: Humanities and Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medicine and Medical Sciences and Life Science and Biological Sciences with one winner and two finalists in each category. They were presented by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, the Hon. Kim Carr.

Main School Office - The entrance to the Main School Office has being relocated to the former resource room and mail room. A counter service will be introduced to meet the needs of School staff. This facility will be operational from Tuesday 6 April 2010.

Promotions - Applications for this year's round of academic promotions are still open. Applications for promotion close on 6 April for Levels B and C, 19 April for Level D and 3 May for Level E. Academic members of staff who are considering applying for promotion this year and haven't yet contacted me should discuss this further with me as Head of School.

Enrolments - As of the start of Semester 1, 2010 our student enrolments are as follows:

- 1364 - 1st year undergraduate (Junior)
- 125 - 2nd year undergraduate (Intermediate)
- 107 - 3rd year undergraduate (Senior)
- 32 - 4th year (Honours)
- 35 - postgraduate coursework
- 123 - postgraduate research

Particularly encouraging are the 35 enrolments in postgraduate coursework. These include 11 students enrolled in the new Masters of Photonics and Optical Science program.

Space Audit - A new committee - the School Space Committee has been formed and to chaired by Professor Simon Fleming. The Committee will be undertaking a robust space audit of the School to determine our usage of space in terms of area and occupancy. This is important as we have ongoing and severe space constraints as a result of our growth and successes. With the introduction of a new University Economic Model the School will incur financial space charges. Having a thorough understanding of our laboratory and office space will ensure we are able to respond accordingly.

Technical Services Review - The terms of reference of the review of the School's technical services continue to be developed and will be circulated in due course. However, the review will now take place after the forthcoming review of School workshops in the Faculty of Science to be undertaken by the Faculty as an initiative of the acting Dean.

Science Foundation for Physics - The Professor Harry Messel Tribute event will be held on Thursday 20 May 2010 from 6:00 - 8:00pm in the Great Hall. Harry Messel was Head of School from 1952 to 1987. He founded the Science Foundation for Physics in 1954 to raise funds for innovative physics research including: SILLIAC - the first Australian-built automatic computer, the Mills Cross radio telescope, radio telemetry, nuclear science and solar research. The Professor Harry Messel International Science School (ISS) was created in 1962 to honour excellence in Year 11 & 12 science scholars from Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, the UK and the USA. Today there are over 4,000 ISS alumni. The 36th ISS will be held at The University of Sydney from 3-16 July 2011. All members of the School of Physics are encouraged to join in celebrating Harry Messel's visionary contribution to science and technology.

Green Paper - Consultations continue in the University with regard to the Green Paper. There will be opportunity to take part in discussing the Green Paper and how it may affect the School at the School Academic Meeting on Monday 12 April from 12-1pm in the Slade Lecture Theatre.

Denison Travel - Currently it is not known if there will be Denison funds made available for travel this year due to financial constraints imposed by the global financial crisis. Further information regarding this will be made available in due course.

For Further Information - The following documents and information are now available online:

DEEWR has published a full set of interim agreements with universities for mission-based compacts on their website at:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/Pages/InterimAgreements.aspx>

The Centre for the Study of Higher Education (University of Melbourne) has released a paper on First Year Experience Findings 1994-2009 available:

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/FYE_Report_1994_to_2009.pdf

The Australian Qualifications Framework is currently under review. The AQF Council has recently published the final draft levels criteria and qualification type descriptors (available at:

<http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Revised%20tables%20V6%209%20February%202010%20FINAL.pdf>) and associated terminology.

The AQF Secretariat is also conducting a survey to test the strength of the revised framework. The survey asks the respondent to select a specific degree on which to answer questions, and they are particularly interested in getting feedback on undergraduate honours. The survey is available online at:

<http://www.aqf.edu.au/Projects/tabid/186/Default.aspx#strengthening> (you will need to scroll down the page to access the survey link). The survey is closing on 6 April 2010. Recent honours students are encouraged to participate.