Message from the Head of School

The start of the new academic year is always a frenetic time but with the roll out of our new curricula the start of 2010 has presented more challenges than most.

The School’s commencing enrolments are extremely strong which is very pleasing but the prospect of teaching large classes on campuses not set up for them is proving challenging and led to some highly innovative solutions. It is clear though that the hard work and sound preparation of staff over the past year is standing us in good stead.

I am sorry to announce that this is the last issue of SoSS Goss to be compiled by Jacqui Nelson who is ‘retiring’ to concentrate on her PhD research. I’m sure you will agree that Jacqui has done a terrific job in setting the newsletter up and making sure that it is packed with interesting content each month. Many thanks Jacqui on behalf of the School. Kathie Hill is to add the editorship of SoSS Goss to her portfolio of responsibilities.

Best wishes to all for a happy and productive 2010.

Deborah

Office Upgrade & Refurbishment

Over the past few months the offices housing SoSS administrative staff have been refurbished. As you can see in the photos below, the new admin areas look great. But, importantly, the refurbishments at both Kingswood and Bankstown mean that administrative staff are now located close together. This is helpful given the extent to which our administrative staff work collaboratively.
SoSS Travellers

Natalie Bolzan visited Launceston from 1-3 February to attend the Australian Association of Social Workers Council Meeting for Heads of Schools of Social Work.

Kevin Dunn, Vidhu Gandhi and Jacqueline Nelson went to Adelaide to meet with partners the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission. They also conducted fieldwork for the Challenging Racism Project.

Jan Falloon attended the Social Work and Mental Health Academic Workers Forum held in Melbourne from 4-5 February.

Tim Griffin travelled to Auckland, New Zealand from 2-12 December to attend and present at the ASCLITE Conference (e-learning).

Zareen Shahid and Brigid Trenerry travelled to Canberra to attend the ASPRI Research Training course which ran from 18-22 January.

Julie Wen went to Hobart from 6-13 February to attend the CAUTHE 2010 AGM and Heads of School meeting on behalf of Deborah Stevenson.

UWS Planning Alumni Win Awards

Two UWS graduates figured prominently among the 2009 Planning Excellence Awards bestowed by the NSW Division of the Planning Institute of NSW.

Matthew Thompson, who is a Transport Planner with AECOM, received an award for his company AECOM. They had gained a commendation in the Transport Planning category for their South West Sector Bus Servicing Plan. AECOM worked with the Department of Transport and Infrastructure to generate underlying principles for a sustainable plan to provide public transport services to 300,000 people of the South West Growth Centre.

Nazia Pokar is a member of the Mosman Council Urban Planning team who won an award for the Mosman Design Awards 2009 in the category of Media public/professional. This recognised Mosman’s bi-annual Urban Design awards program that acknowledges outstanding local contributions to design and heritage conservation. It involves a purpose-built in-house website that displays examples of local best practice by built environment professionals.

Both Matthew and Nazia were at the awards evening on 15 October 2009 to receive the awards on behalf of their organisations. Well done to Matt and Nazia! The Awards e-book can be found at: www.planning.org.au/nsw/piansw_awards/

There may have been other UWS alumni acknowledged in the awards, our apologies if we didn’t spot you. Please keep us abreast of your victories, as you find time. Meanwhile we are looking forward to meeting our next batch of brand new Planning Students for 2010. Very exciting.
Introducing New SoSS Academics

Emma Power

Emma joined the Geography and Urban Studies team in January. Before joining UWS Emma taught in the urban and environmental studies programs at Macquarie University and the University of Newcastle.

Since Emma became a human geographer she has been asked more times than she can count if human geography is “the study of the contours of the human body”. This is not what Emma (or any other human geographer she knows!) does. Rather, she is a cultural geographer whose research cuts across the fields of urban nature, everyday practices of sustainability and homemaking, and human - animal studies. She has a secondary interest in (dis)ability, mobility and performance.

Emma finished her PhD in April 2009 at Macquarie University, where she researched people’s everyday experiences cohabiting with nonhuman natures. The research focused on the experiences of people who had recently brought a new dog into the home, as well as those whose homes had been invaded by uninvited common brushtail possums that noisily took up residence - and even died - in the ceiling and wall cavities. Emma used this research to develop a more-than-human geography of homemaking, as well as to justify getting two dogs of her own who took on a starring role throughout the thesis.

Emma is in the process of kick starting some new research around sustainability and urban living and is working towards a large project that will examine the everyday practices of sustainability in medium and high rise apartments.

Rae Dufty

Rae completed her PhD in 2008 at the University of NSW. This research examined the changing provision of rural public housing. In addition to this, Rae has previously taught in the geography and planning programs at the University of Newcastle and the University of New England.

Her primary research focus is on the political-economic geographies of neoliberal policy approaches in both urban and rural settings. This has resulted in a wide range of research projects from the archival analysis of housing policy in Australia, to investigating the causes and actual migration pathways of Australian rural youth. She has recently published articles in the Journal of Rural Studies (2008), Geography Compass (2009) and Australian Geographer (2009). Rae is currently part of an ARC Discovery Project team examining the factors informing return migration decisions of rural youth.


Kevin Dunn and Greg Noble (from the Centre for Cultural Research) spoke to Deborah Cameron on ABC Radio 702 on Wednesday 20 January. They spoke on the question of whether there a certain level of toxicity has come to be associated with Australia Day. Has Australia Day itself become un-Australian?

Brigid Trenerry had an opinion piece published in The Age newspaper in Melbourne, ‘The High Cost of Racism’. The article argued for government action to deal with racist attacks on Indian students.

SoSS Publications and Media Appearances
Proposed SoSS Discovery Projects

Kevin Dunn and Rae Dufty applied for an ARC Discovery Grant to investigate *Ethnic Discrimination in the Private Rental Housing Market*. This project will also involve former SoSS member Heather MacDonald (UTS) and Yin Paradies (University of Melbourne).

Mary Hawkins hopes to look at: *Engaging Islam through the New Electronic Media: Young Women, Popular Culture, and Popular Religion*. Adam Possamai (UWS) and Julia Howell (Griffith University) are also chief investigators on this project.

Erin Kruger applied for funding to undertake the project: *Tracing the Accused: Corporeality and Law from Habeas Corpus to DNA Analysis*.

Awais Piracha, with collaborators Peter Phibbs (UWS), Paul Maginn (UWA) and Robin Goodman (RMIT), has proposed to investigate *Australian Public Attitudes towards Town Planning*.

Alphia Possamai-Inesedy has applied for funding to examine *Individualisation and Prenatal Genetic Technologies: An Examination into the Decision Making Processes of the Expectant Woman*.

Deborah Stevenson will look at *Private Neighbourhoods: An Examination of the Emergence, Structure and Governance of ‘Collective Private Ownership Estates’ in Metropolitan Australia*. Other chief investigators on the project include former SoSS HDR student Therese Kenna (Sydney), Robin Goodman (RMIT) and Katherine Douglas (RMIT).

**Q & A with Diana Curuenavuli & Kylie Jackson**

Diana and Kylie are both Senior Administrative Officers, specialising in course advice for students. Diana is based on the Bankstown campus, while Kylie looks after students at Kingswood.

1. **What do you like most about your job in SoSS?**
   *Diana*: The staff. They’re all fabulous! *Kylie*: I like the interaction with our students and the satisfaction of being able to make an impact on their study journey!

2. **Favourite thing to do in your spare time?**
   *Diana*: Spare time is very rare in my house... But I do love a good DVD with a packet of Tim Tams at my fingertips (yes Michael... A PACKET of Tim Tams!) *Kylie*: Relax with my feet up, drink wine and eat cheese (lots of it!).

3. **If you could have a free ticket to anywhere, where would it be to?**
   *Diana*: I wouldn’t mind a free ticket to Whitney Houston’s Hunter Valley concert. What does life after Bobby Brown sound like? *Kylie*: I would go to Italy! No questions asked...

4. **The book that changed my life was… (and why?)**
   *Diana*: The Bible. It is impossible for this book to not have some impact on your life. *Kylie*: I can’t say a book has changed my life... but I did cry a lot during Jodi Picoult - *My Sister’s Keeper*. And Melissa... I would not be able live this down without mentioning Edward Cullen!!!

5. **What was your dream job growing up?**
   *Diana*: I really wanted to be a primary school teacher. I told my mum I needed a pair of high heels to become one! Not an education, just 6 inch pumps. *Kylie*: I wanted to be a teacher. I sat my teddies and dolly’s up to listen to me read stories and boss them around. I think I may have even put some in the corner for not listening!!! (and I didn’t copy Diana’s answers).

6. **What is the first thing you notice about someone when you meet?**
   *Diana*: Eyes and then shoes... Shoes say so much! *Kylie*: I notice face/eyes, whether they smile and have a warm personality.

7. **If someone made a film of your life, who would play you?**
   *Diana*: Hmm... It would be a musical of course! And Beyonce would play me! *Kylie*: Julie Andrews (Sound of Music). How do you solve a problem like ‘Maria’!

Thank you for your contributions. If you would like something to be included in the next issue of the SoSS Goss, or have any comments or questions please contact Ka.Hill@uws.edu.au