

October 2007 News, SSS

Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

It will probably come as no surprise to you all that the ANU was again listed in the top band for teaching performance among Australia's universities by DEST for 2007. The VC was given \$4 million as a reward for this performance. Humanities and Social Sciences played an important role in this endeavour, so we should feel proud of our contribution. The money received from last year's excellence awards was partly used by the VC to fund initiatives such as the Swap Scheme and various student and ECA travel grants. As you can see from this newsletter below, our School has been able to take advantage of these windfalls.

Alastair

School of Social Sciences Retreat

There will be a one-day SSS retreat on Thursday December 6 this year. The Dean has requested that all disciplines undertake this exercise with the objective of drawing up 'strategic directions' documents for each discipline. The retreat will replace the annual Faculty Planning Day.

Further details of the event will be posted during November once the venue and the catering have been finalized. All teaching staff should place this date in their diary. It will also be an opportunity for members of the School to meet the new members of the teaching staff who will be starting next year.

My preference for a venue is University House and I propose that we finish the day with drinks at Fellows Garden.

Welcome

Tui Rakuita a new PhD student who arrived on October 22. David West is his supervisor.

Farewell

Chris Forth will be leaving us shortly to take up a new position at the University of Kansas, where he will be the Howard Professor of Humanities & Western Civilization.

We wish Chris and his family every success for the future.

Future Departures

William Sutherland has informed his colleagues in Political Science/IR that he intends to retire half-way through 2008. He will continue his Pacific Politics course up until then.

Success with the Swap Scheme

The School of Social Sciences was highly successful in the VC's Swap Scheme, designed to encourage greater interaction between the research School's and the Faculties. The School, we believe, scooped the whole pool dry.

During the first half of 2008, Joanna Sikora will be located at ADSRI and her course in International Inequality will be convened by James Rice from the Demography program in ADSRI. As part of the deal, the School also received funds to employ Larry Saha to teach the Sociology Honours Methods course during the first half of 2008.

The School also received funds for Maria Maley to be located in RSSS Politics for the second half of 2008. In return, Lindy Edwards will move to our School and teach a new politics course during the second half of the year.

Our congratulations go to both Maria and Joanna. Profiles of James and Lindy will appear closer to their arrival.

Congratulations

John Minns has been appointed as Director of the Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS). The Centre will operate within CASS and will attempt to develop research at ANU about Latin America and to become a focal point for Australian research about Latin America. The appointment is to last for three years. While ANU has historically had a strong Asia-Pacific orientation and there was a developing European Studies community of scholars, Latin American studies had, to date, been neglected.

John said that some research in the Humanities and Social Sciences on Latin American topics was already taking place by staff members and at doctoral and honours levels. In addition, the recent success of Spanish language teaching in CASS suggests that there could be a significant increase in this as students use their Spanish language skills to undertake theses on Latin American topics. ANCLAS will now try to coordinate and develop some of this work.

New Books

Congratulations to **Michael McKinley** on the release of his new book, **Economic Globalisation as Religious War**. The book is published by Routledge as part of its series, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics.

VC Travel grants for post-graduate students

Just a reminder to all PhD students who have used up their Faculty travel and study funds. The VC has a new Scheme in place for funding graduate students who wish to present papers at conferences. Our School has already been successful in applying for some of these funds for worthy PhD students. Please see Alastair for more details if you are unaware of the Scheme.

What's Been Happening.....

Andrew Hopkins

In October I was interviewed by the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a film they are making about a major accident at a BP refinery in the US two years ago. The accident killed 15 people and injured 180. The request for interview followed on from presentations I made to the Board in Washington last year.

Also in October I spoke about the BP refinery accident at a Shell global gas plant managers conference in Perth. I am in the process of writing a book about this accident.

Larry and Joanna Try Primary School Teaching

By invitation, **Larry and Joanna** visited Lyneham Primary School (where Joanna's son is enrolled) to talk to students about impending elections and the Youth Electoral Study, for which Larry is the Principal Investigator. Our audience was a class of Year 5 students and we felt a little nervous as our time to try our hand as primary education teachers approached. To ensure at least partial success, Larry obtained some promotional materials from the Australian Electoral Commission, including pens, rulers but also very tasteful washable tattoos, and so equipped, we set out. The discussion with 11 year olds turned out to be very engaging. First we quizzed them on their knowledge of the history of voting based on an interactive tool available from the AEC website (http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/interactives/history_of_voting/index.htm) and subsequently discussed possibilities for incentives the AEC could use to encourage young people to turn up to vote. The proposition that electoral polling places should hold little ceremonies to celebrate first-time voters was unpopular, but students were enthusiastic about the possibility of receiving a small gift when casting their first vote. Some would be happy with a green note; others suggested musical instruments and even a TV set. Yet, consumerist passions did not prevail and we also heard some impressive arguments advocating the importance of exercising an individual right to vote.

Christine Wright

Will shortly be taking up a three month Summer Fellowship with the Research Centre at the National Museum. The Research Centre is headed by Peter Stanley and other ANU colleagues there are Libby Robin and Nicholas Brown.

Deaths

It is with great sadness that we note the recent death of two former members of the History Department. These were no ordinary members but true movers and shakers of their time. **Eric Fry**, who was a member of the Department between 1959 and 1986, and **Bob Gollan**, a member from 1976-1982 (and before that in History RSSS from 1953), were both excellent scholars and teachers, and were the joint founders of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. The ASSLH, which produces the highly respected journal, Labour History, was established in 1961 and continues to prosper today. Their published work was highly influential, especially perhaps Bob Gollan's book, *Radical and working class politics: a study of Eastern Australia 1850-1910*. Eric died on 3 October and Bob Gollan only twelve days later, on 15 October. Ann Curthoys, History Convenor

It is also with great sadness that we note the death of one of our former history doctoral students, **Dr Ken Fry**. Ken was also the Federal Member for Fraser during the 1980s. A memorial service is currently being organized in Canberra, most likely on Friday 9 November. If you would like to attend the service, please keep in contact with Alastair Greig, who will be speaking at the event.