Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council
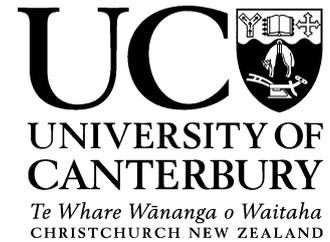
June 2024

Introduction

Semester 1 concluded with over 40 000 exams administered across a two-week period. With grades being released on 9 July, it will be a quick turnaround before classes start again on 15 July.

With the end of Semester 1 many staff took leave as I did from 2 to 11 July.

Engagement

This year we saw a record-breaking number of students attend our annual Te Rā Tūhura | Discovery Day on 6 June. Over 1,700 students and careers advisors attended to explore the wide range of learning opportunities available at UC.

We hosted MP Andy Foster during his visit to Christchurch. After our meeting covering a briefing on the UC Strategy, student success and research priorities, he visited the UCSA, hosted by Luc MacKay.

Over two days in June, Arts' Global, Cultural and Language Studies Department hosted Spanish Day, Japanese Day and German Day with over 1,000 students attending from 15 different Canterbury High Schools. Students were able to explore various opportunities related to studying languages at UC and attended workshops to help in preparation of NCEA assignments and exams.

On 27 June the Doc Edge Festival, which UC supports, hosted their Awards evening, with Acting Head of School of Product Design Associate Professor Adrian Clark presenting the award for 'Best Secondary Film' in the 'NZ Student Awards' category. UC's partnership with Doc Edge provides opportunities for students to be exposed to festival production and industry leaders in documentary film.

After 10 weeks, the UC Centre of Entrepreneurship (UCE)'s Smart City Challenge wrapped up with an award ceremony celebrating all those involved – 27 individuals, 17 ventures and 8 Finalists for 5 awards. The challenge, with support from ChristchurchNZ, Smart Christchurch and Christchurch City Council, sought ideas, research projects or products that could positively impact the city's transport, tourism, environment, or resilience.

Education – Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on education is a current issue for both staff and students. Two staff hui were conducted to discuss how students and staff can best use AI to enhance learning. A follow-up session with the Academic Board saw staff from Engineering, Education, Business, Future-Learning and Development and Digital Services sharing their practices. The AI Teaching and Learning group comprising staff from all across UC have put together resources for improving AI Literacy for both staff and students with practical examples and ideas. This newly developed Learning and Teaching Support Hub serves as a repository for resources for staff on not only generative AI, but all facets of educational technology use for learning and teaching at UC.

One of the key members of the AI group, Associate Professor Kathryn MacCallum, was an invited participant for the AI Forum New Zealand's workshop to share her expertise in AI and Education, informing New Zealand's AI strategy.

Related to AI, the Kia Angitu team have been running workshops on the newly developed aspects of ACETeach. ACE (formerly known as Analytics for Course Engagement) has been known best for its student facing components. The teacher facing components have been developed with input from teaching staff across UC and is now being showcased for further development. Feedback has been positive in terms of how teaching staff can have a better view of their students' performance, even in large classes.

In terms of curriculum, UC has had all qualifications and regulations presented at round two Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approved. These include two new qualifications, Master of Advanced Nursing (Nurse Practitioner), and Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Registered Nurse Prescriber) approved. This coincides with the Nursing Council of New Zealand formally approved Accreditation of the two qualifications. Other approvals include major changes to the Master of Professional Accounting and the Master of Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Education.

Research – Impact on a Changing World

Professor Bronwyn Hayward (Political Science and International Relations) delivered the opening keynote address to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (June Climate meeting) in Bonn, Germany. Professor Hayward reviewed the way children had been treated in the last 10 years of climate research reports and draw on her own insights from leading research groups at UC.

Professor Simon Kingham (Earth and Environment) was an invited speaker at the Intelligent Transport System's Asia Pacific Forum in Jakarta and attended the Times Higher Education Global Sustainable Development Congress 2024 as part of the UC delegation. Professor Kingham has also completed his role as the Chief Science Advisor for the Ministry of Transport.

Professors Elena Moltchanova and Christoph Bartneck (Computer Science and Software Engineering) have together developed the 'Fair Para Swimming Points System', which New Zealand Master Swimming (NZMS) has now included into their official Rules and Regulations.

Health Research Council Explorer Grants have been awarded to Associate Professor Arindam Basu (Health Sciences) for a new model to manage Type 2 Diabetes and Professor Nick Draper (Health Sciences) to study '*Collisions in Junior Rugby: Incidence and magnitude and potential health effect'*.

Dr Matt Hobbs and Professor Philip Schluter (Health Sciences) are investigators on a successful grant titled *'The efficacy of community water fluoridation in Aotearoa New Zealand'*. This work is funded by the Clare Foundation, a progressive philanthropic New Zealand foundation.

Associate Professor Ann-Marie Kennedy (Management, Marketing and Tourism), Dr Rachael Dixon (Health Sciences) and Ms Jennifer Smith (Teacher Education) have collaborated for funding from Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand National Public Health Service titled *'Symbolic meaning of zero alcohol beverages for young people: policy implications'*.

People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

The staff survey results were released to all staff in mid-June and there were two staff hui where the results were presented and discussed. The results will be discussed in more detail at Faculty and Service Unit levels, and plans developed to focus on areas for improvement.

HIT Lab NZ is running weekly game evenings, led by its students. These are advertised as a chance to nurture relationships within the lab and develop an appreciation of great game design.

The University Health Centre received Foundation Standards reaccreditation from the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners. The standards are legislative, regulatory and clinical requirements for all general practices in New Zealand, and a benchmark by which a practice can measure its current quality of care and progress toward health equity outcomes.

The University's recently formalised framework of support for pan-university Communities of Practice (CoP) recognises the value in sustaining group activities that facilitate cross-organisational collaboration and peer support. The framework, developed by People and Culture, ensures CoPs receive advice and encouragement from initial set-up through to their achievement of autonomy. Examples of active CoPs include: TechCoP (Faculty Technical Staff), UC Admin (for our administrative professionals), one for Mentors in the Academic Mentoring Programme, and another for Academic Heads of Schools and Departments.

Staff training has included a variety of workshops: Introduction to the Intranet, intermediate-level LinkedIn and X training for academics to support building research and teaching profiles and networks, and workshops for applicants in this year's academic promotions round.

UC graduate Jennifer Berry is one of nine New Zealanders who have recently been awarded the prestigious William Georgetti Scholarship. Berry has a Bachelor of Engineering (First Class Honours) from UC, and recently graduated with a Masters in Space Engineering at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). The Georgetti Scholarship will support Berry to complete a PhD in Space Engineering, also at Caltech, where her area of further research is in Autonomous Space Systems.

Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked

All 8 universities were represented at the NZ China High Level Education Forum 'Looking into the Future' on 14 June. The Forum, organised by the governments of New Zealand and China, was hosted by Tertiary Education and Skills Minister, Hon Penny Simmonds for the visit of Chinese Premier Li Qiang. I spoke on the topic of *'Cooperation Empowered by Digital Education'* during a roundtable meeting held that afternoon.

That evening I attended the Prime Minister's Gala Dinner, prior to which Prime Minister Luxon recognised two University of Canterbury students with the Prime Minister's Scholarships for Asia (PMSA). Additionally, UC's Business School will be running two, three-week study tours for up to 33 students in November 2024: one to China and the other to Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia). The tours will focus on industry engagement and are designed to build students' understanding of the opportunities and challenges of doing business in these countries.

Professors Joce Nuttall and Jayne White were also named as one of three recipients of the 2024 New Zealand-China Tripartite Partnership Fund, an Education New Zealand-sponsored initiative to encourage the development of strategic research relationships between New Zealand and China.

I was invited to join the Prime Minister's business delegation to Japan during 16-19 June. Supported by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and Education New Zealand, the visit reflected the Government's commitment to lifting its engagement with Japan, diversifying trade and accelerating New Zealand's economic growth. UC extended invitations to our Japanese university partners and alumni to attend a reception hosted by the Prime Minister. The attendance of President Hitoshi Takahashi of Sendai University reflects the strength of the relationship between our institutions.

The Electrical Power Engineering (EPE) Centre was pleased to host a delegation from Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation, who are seeking to collaborate on a project led by Professor Neville Watson (ECE) and managed by EPE Centre.

UC Law hosted the Asia-Pacific Disaster Law Conference during 25-27 June. Nearly 100 attendees registered and included practitioners, including those working in government, civil society and international and regional organisations as well as academics and researchers. Executive Dean Professor Petra Butler opened the conference, which focused on issues relating to disasters, international law and its domestic implementation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Professor Paul Ballantine was one of four panellists at this month's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PMRE) Global Forum on Learning and Teaching for Sustainable Futures. He stressed the importance of fostering critical thinking skills to develop compassionate leaders in a session focused on the critical ingredients needed to equip today's business students with the understanding and ability to manage complex challenges aligning academic institutions with the UN Global Compact's work and Sustainable Development Goals.

Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030

Since the launch of the new website experience in November, the Digital Services web team have been making improvements based on feedback from staff, reflecting the much more agile platform enabling quick changes to the experience. Some significant improvements have recently launched into a new research home page design, improvements to hover states, improvements to staff profiles and content structures for the Graduate School, Libraries and Career Hub. The web and Marketing teams will continue to listen to feedback and continuously improve the website experience.

As part of the vision for Digital Services to enable e-research at UC, a new e-research web portal has been launched on our website. The portal provides information and access to services and support in undertaking e-research at UC, making it simpler for Academic staff and postgraduate students to know what's available and where to find support. The portal includes the start of a new Digital Services catalogue for research services, which is expected to grow as cloud compute and AI service options become able to be provisioned through the service management platform.

Environmentally Sustainable

In June a UC delegation participated in the Times Higher Education (THE) Global Sustainable Development Congress in Bangkok. UC sponsored the track '*Sustainable Cities and Communities'* and delivered a panel discussion, track opening keynote, and Impact stage presentation. UC speakers included Assistant Vice-Chancellor Engagement Brett Berquist, Professor Simon Kingham and Professor Jan Evans-Freeman, as well as invited speakers Joyashree Roy (Asian Institute of Technology) and Liam Carroll (Lime). Thirty alumni gathered for a dinner with UC attendees.

The THE Congress aligned with the annual Impact Rankings announcement where UC was ranked in 89th in the World and received a top 50 in five Sustainable Development Goals: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, and Life on Land. UC has moved from 5th to 3rd in New Zealand and now trails only Auckland and Massey.