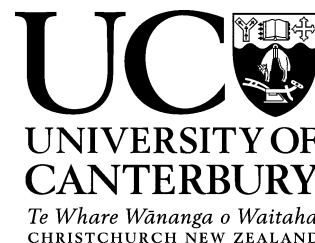


Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council



November 2024

This period marks the end of the second full semester of the year, concluding with exams. The Summer 'semester' started on 11 November and runs through to 13 December 2024.

Engagement

Sir Richard Taylor, co-founder and creative director of New Zealand's legendary Wētā Workshop, presented UC's annual free public Hopkins Lecture, *For the Love of Creativity*, on 1 October to a capacity crowd in UCSA's Ngaio Marsh Theatre. Hosted annually since 1978 by UC's Civil and Natural Resources Engineering department, the Hopkins Lecture supports UC to promote broad social discussions within the engineering profession while enhancing public understanding of engineering issues. The visit included a tour of UC's Kōawa Creative Technologies Precinct.

A UC team led by Product Design lecturer Oana Jones worked on projection mapping animation to bring the façade of the Arts Centre to life as part of the 2024 Illuminate Festival at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. The festival attracted thousands of visitors over three weekends during 5-22 September.

We received several notable bequests in September, including a \$1.1 million bequest for the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences from Dr Alan Happer who dedicated much of his career to UC. We shared the story during NZ Wills Month in September with media and on our channels to showcase the trust and support of alumni and former staff.

On 19 September UC announced the establishment of the John Rutherford Scholarship, made possible by the continuing generosity of UC graduate and donor John Rutherford. Expected to be available at the commencement of the 2025 Academic year, the gift of USD 250 000 (approximately NZD 402 500) to the University of Canterbury Foundation in America will support second-year undergraduate students who face financial hardship and have no other source of scholarship support.

On 24 October UC announced a new scholarship in honour of Dame Jacinda Ardern, who is quoted in the release. Through a USD 250 000 grant from the California-based Skoll Foundation the *Ōtautahi Aroha wa Salam: March 15 Scholarship* has been set up to provide financial assistance to survivors of the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks, along with family members and family members of victims.

We hosted a Donor Appreciation Celebration on 7 November to acknowledge and thank those donors, including current and former staff, alumni, and many generous local business partners, who contributed to support student success, access to education, and research at UC in 2024.

Education – Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

November 2024 saw 38 000 individual exam sittings. That comprised 420 exams of which the majority (278) were paper-based and on campus. There is a growing number of online exams (85); half of which were delivered on campus and half of which could be completed anywhere. In addition, there were 49 ‘non-invigilated’ assessments due during the exam period. The gradual growth in alternative types of assessment reflects the move toward more flexible options for students where it is practicable.

UC has secured TEC funding for \$4.97 million over two years to support the ongoing student success programme. The funding is for the He Kokonga Whare e Kitea consortium project between UC and VUW, which will accelerate learner success by using a data coaching programme to impact learners at scale. In addition, a further \$600 000 philanthropic funding has been secured for Te Kakau a Māui 2.0 programme, spread over the next four years.

On 14 October the Institute of Data announced its partnership with Tuihono UC | UC Online to offer three part-time courses focused on bridging the technology skills gap in New Zealand. Commencing 15 October, the new courses in Data Science and AI, Cyber Security, and Software Engineering will equip mid-career professionals with industry-relevant skills and provide ongoing career support for job placement.

The AI Learning and Teaching working group is presenting workshops for all staff in November. Presented by Associate Professor David Dempsey, the courses will range from the basics to more advanced use of AI. UC’s leadership in AI is also evident in our outreach to communities. Associate Professor Kathryn MacCallum presented her Scaffolded AI Literacy (SAIL) Framework for Education at the Digital Technologies Teachers Aotearoa (DTTA) Ara Ako AI Summit in Auckland.

Research – Impact on a Changing World

Two UC researchers were awarded medals by the Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi at a ceremony on 14 November. Distinguished Professor Charles Semple is the winner of the 2024 Hector Medal for undertaking work of great scientific or technological merit. Professor Natalia Chaban is the winner of the 2024 Mason Durie Medal, as the nation’s pre-eminent social scientist. It is intended to recognise an outstanding contribution to the social sciences that while originating in a New Zealand environment, has had an international impact.

Two members of the UC community were winners at this year’s Kiwinet Research Commercialisation Awards held in Wellington in October. Emma Arvidson won the Momentum Student Entrepreneur Award for her startup venture Teiny which is producing high protein oat milk powder. Distinguished Professor Geoff Chase won the BNZ Researcher Entrepreneur Award for his engineering work to improve medicine and a more resilient New Zealand in the area of earthquake engineering.

Professor Gail Gillon, Director of the Child Well-Being Research Institute, has been appointed as the Education Commissioner on the Board of the New Zealand National Commission by the Minister of Education, Erica Stanford. The New Zealand National Commission connects Aotearoa New Zealand to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Executive Dean of Education, Professor Joce Nuttall delivered two prestigious keynote addresses, including at the New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society on the need for leaders to mobilise the expertise of their teams in implementing change and maintain and orienting

narrative of the change process. She also presented at the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia Symposium offering her analysis of six persistent problems facing ITE and the potential solutions.

Professor Cheryl Brown (Education) was appointed as one of the Chairs of the Commonwealth of Learning and will focus on digital equity in Pacific nations. Her UNESCO report on equity and inclusion in Pacific Education was released at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as a background paper for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2024.

An article co-authored by Sarah Wright (UC Business School) has just been published in the Harvard Business Review. The article *We're Still Lonely at Work* was also featured on the front cover of this prestigious magazine.

UC was successful with ten Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Smart Ideas and Research Programmes either as the lead organisation or as subcontractors. The total value awarded to UC in the 2024 round is \$17.4 million. One notable project led by Associate Professor David Dempsey aims to remove megatonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year, and has received \$10 million over five years.

In this year's Marsden awards UC researchers received three Fast Start awards for early career researchers and seven standard awards worth a total value of \$7.3 million across both types of grants. Success was spread across the faculties of Arts, Engineering and Science.

On 14 November, UC along with visitors from MBIE and Technical University of Munich, celebrated the opening and recommissioning of the Canterbury-2 ('C-II') Large Ring Laser Gyroscope. The C-II ring laser is a globally unique device, originally installed underground in the Cashmere caverns in Christchurch. Following the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010/2011, the laser facility was closed. C-II is now housed in a state-of-the-art purpose-built laboratory at the University of Canterbury.

UC has fared well in the 2024 Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS) results. Eight subjects have moved up: Hospitality & Tourism Management, Law, Geography, Education, Earth Sciences, Business Administration, Agricultural Sciences and Biological Sciences. Hospitality and Tourism Management is now ranked 12th in the world and first in New Zealand, with publication and citation metrics making a major contribution to this result.

People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

UC has for the second year running won the University Tertiary Sport New Zealand (UTSNZ) Championship Series. We therefore maintain our place as New Zealand's top sporting tertiary institution and retain the 101-year-old UTSNZ Shield. The series runs throughout the year at various venues and involves eight sports.

In early September UC hosted the *Supporting Cross-Border Students Symposium* programme in collaboration with ISANA NZ, the International Education Association of New Zealand. The symposium brought together educators and researchers from the tertiary sector across New Zealand and Australia, offering a platform to share best practices and strategies for enhancing the support of international students.

A number of activities were run during Mental Health Awareness Week, 23-29 September. These included a week of free open access to the Recreation Centre, a *5 Ways to Fitness Challenge*

run by the Recreation Centre, a community lunch in Rehua, a *Take a Mate to a Cafe* discount scheme, and Run72 the annual Lads Without Labels three day running relay around campus.

The Student Wellbeing team ran another Study Week event to finish off the year and give students a chance to unwind and recharge prior to exams. Offerings across the week involved a variety of activities, snacks, and opportunities to engage with the Wellbeing Navigators. The sessions were very well attended with some days seeing almost 1000 attendees.

On Monday 4 November UC was advised by UniLodge, the operator of University Halls and Ilam Apartments, that a number of students had become ill overnight. UC's Accommodation Services and Student Wellbeing teams worked with UniLodge to support students' wellbeing, and all had recovered within about 24 hours. We await the results of the Ministry of Primary Industries' Food Safety Unit sample testing and their report, but their working hypothesis is that the cause of the illness was food poisoning, probably from a Sunday evening chicken dinner. Their preliminary view is accepted by all parties, including the UCSA, which is UniLodge's catering contractor.

People and Culture have launched a tailored process to guide onboarding and induction for new Academic Staff. The goals of this process, which starts when the new hire signs their offer and ends on their two-year anniversary, are to build a sense of belonging, build connections to enable new staff to be contributing colleagues, enable new starts to settle in and get up to speed, and provide a guided experience.

Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked

As part of the University's ongoing efforts to increase international student numbers, we hosted 25 international recruitment agents for a UC-exclusive trip to Ōtautahi Christchurch during 23-27 September. The conference-style event highlighted the best of the University and city, allowing them to experience firsthand the reasons why UC is an attractive study destination for international students, and why our city is ranked among the top 100 student cities in the world.

In September I travelled to Malaysia and Singapore along with members of the Advancement team. We met with business leaders, donors, and alumni across Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Sibul, and Singapore. We hosted an alumni reception at the New Zealand High Commissioner's residence in Kuala Lumpur, as well as smaller receptions in Kuching and Sibul. With strong historical ties to Malaysia and Singapore dating to UC's participation in the Colombo Plan, we have a large cohort of highly engaged and very generous alumni throughout the region. While there, I progressed partnership and philanthropy discussions with several major donors and key alumni-owned or managed businesses. I also met with potential university education partners. At the reception in Sibul, I was presented with a donation of \$12 000 from Dr Gregory Hii to support postgraduate scholarships.

During 12-16 October I visited Samoa along with Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific, Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva. We met with notable alumni and also the Prime Minister of Samoa Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National University of Samoa, and hosted a successful alumni event to launch Samoa's first UC Alumni chapter which was attended by prominent leaders, including the Deputy Prime Minister.

In my capacity as Chair of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, I returned to Samoa on 21 October for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) where I spoke at two events in the Business Forum Programme. I was able to highlight UC's research on Sustainable Cities

and how we foster graduate employability. On the evening of 24 October UC was announced as a partner of HRH King Charles' new King's Commonwealth Fellowship Programme. The programme offers fellowships for mid-career professionals and students from Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Samoa.

On 11 October UC Hosted the Fijian Honourable Minister for Education, Aseri Radrodro on campus to discuss undergraduate and postgraduate research options for Fijian students at UC. The Minister also met with current UC Fijian students.

UC's Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva presented findings from the POCCA study (Pacific Ocean Climate Crisis Assessment) at the Conference of Parties 29 (COP29) in Azerbaijan on 11 November. The three-year study was led by UC in collaboration with the University of South Pacific and is the largest study of climate adaptation in the Pacific region, involving over 100 Pacific scholars and community experts working across 16 Pacific Island Countries and Territories to examine the impact of climate change on Pacific communities.

Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva is one of 12 eminent Pacific Island scholars elected as a Foundation Fellow to the new Pacific Academy of Sciences, which was formally announced by Samoan Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa during CHOGM on 23 October.

Dr Jannik Haas (Civil and Natural Resource Engineering) visited Brazil as part of a team of Early Career Researchers funded by the Latin America Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence. He met with Professor Aldo Nelson Bora (State Secretary of Science, Technology and Higher Education of Paraná, Brazil), where the opportunity to fund PhD students to study at UC was greatly progressed. This visit built on very fruitful visit by Professor Bora and his team to UC in September.

Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030

The new Contact Centre system successfully went live for our main UC Contact Centre, the Security and Health Centre and the IT contact centre. The new system replaces the end-of-life Geomant system and integrates with our CRM (D365) which will speed up access to student profile information.

The new Software Asset Management process went live on 1 of November in the UC Service Portal. It provides a central place for Digital Services to manage software, and new streamlined workflows and forms for requesting and managing software across UC. It is expected that this will relieve many of the pain points that staff associate with procuring new software and improve the administration and overall cost of software for the University.

Work to recover the roofs at Dovedale has commenced. Ōtākaro is the main re-roof project and the Jack Mann Theatre sound stages are nearly complete. Work on the asbestos strip out of Jack Mann auditorium is underway.

Environmentally Sustainable

The Solar Array located outside the Engineering and Physical Sciences Library was officially opened. It is a 2.6-kilowatt system now feeding into the grid as a research centre for the UC Engineering School. This solar array "flower" moves with the sun so it stays at peak consistent output the whole day. It was kindly donated by Shawn Huang, a founder of Golden Solar BIPV. The installation will serve as a valuable teaching resource for the Master of Engineering Studies in Renewable Energy, facilitating data collection for ongoing research.

An educational Rock Garden in the refurbished area next to the new Ground Source Heat Pump plant room has been established.

EPECentre visited the Ōnuku Marae as part of the Future Architecture of the Network MBIE-funded research programme's Vision Mātauranga workstream's efforts to look at energy use. This ongoing work is aimed at maximising the energy use and efficiency of the Marae.

The Department of Chemical and Process Engineering recently developed the Pacific H2O module, an online tool for engaging high school students in the exploration of water treatment within the Pacific Island context.

UC's Sustainability team and EnviroSoc student club hosted a special screening of international film *Our Blue World: A Water Odyssey* on 30 September, welcoming over 280 people from the Ōtautahi Christchurch community to explore humanity's complex, evolving relationship with water.