A Message from the Dean

It must be close to the middle of the academic year as it’s exam time again. Students know that I don’t wish them luck (as luck has nothing to do with their success). As adult learners, their consistent efforts will always be rewarded.

Maureen Dawson is enjoying an overseas holiday, and has sent the obligatory post card - my policy is “no postcard - no come back!” I’m always greatly relieved when staff do return though.

I attended the RACP conference in Perth early this month, but this is the last year there was no Fremantle graduate on the new fellow list. We expect fellowships of all colleges to bloom from 2014 onwards, and as always would appreciate news and photos from alumni.

Readers will be interested to know that the School has received 373 first preference applicants (and 1818 overall) for the 2014 commencing MED100 class. Our sister school in Sydney received 895 first preference applicants, meaning that the University received the highest number of first preference applications in the country. Nationally 4828 applicants are applying for entry to medical schools in 2014. We are about to begin the scoring of the supplementary forms which contribute 1/3 of the ranking for interview. Interviewer training is scheduled soon, and so the cycle continues.

I wish peaceful concentration to our students and the success they deserve, and grateful thanks to all involved in the assessment processes.

Professor Gavin W Frost

Alumni News

Katherine (Kate) Hooper, who graduated in 2012 was the national winner of the John Snow Scholarship at the RACP Future Directions in Health Congress in Perth (May 2013). Kate presented her clinical audit on uptake of post-natal pertussis vaccination (scroll half way down the page) along with a very thoughtful reflection about surveillance, the potential of routinely collected data to inform public health practice and how her project’s findings could be applied to the promotion and monitoring of antenatal influenza vaccination.

Current students are encouraged to apply for this scholarship which provides travel and registration costs for a winner from each state to present their work at the RACP Annual Congress (http://www.racp.edu.au/page/johnsnow).

Professor Donna Mak
Chair of Population and Preventive Health Domain
Addressing the Problem of Chronic Pain

The University of Notre Dame Australia has launched an exciting initiative which is aimed at relieving the widespread suffering caused by chronic pain – a major health problem affecting more than 3.5 million Australians. Made possible through the generous donation of a $1 million donation by Rossmoyne couple, Geoff and Moira Churack, The Churack Chair of Chronic Pain Education and Research was established earlier this month.

Geoff and Moira Churack

The enterprise is believed to be a first for any university medical school in Australia and will see Notre Dame medical students enhance their learning about chronic pain management and rehabilitation as a core component of their integrated curriculum.

“We want to ensure that when our medical students graduate they possess a current and comprehensive understanding of chronic pain. It is important that they are aware of the strategies for pain management, including drug use and their side effects,” said Vice Chancellor Celia Hammond.

“This substantial donation will fund education and research and the appointment of an internationally-acclaimed medical specialist to provide the leadership required to prepare students to deal with patients suffering from chronic pain.

“The research will be undertaken by leading pain researchers at Murdoch University and, together with clinical research at Notre Dame, will underpin much of the education and rehabilitation teaching,” said Professor Hammond.

Mr Churack, a successful West Australian businessman, was diagnosed with chronic neuropathic pain more than five years ago. In this endeavour to find relief from his pain, he has independently researched chronic pain and has subsequently tried numerous types of treatment options.

His first-hand experience of the impact such pain can have on all aspects of someone’s life, as well as on their family and friends, has motivated him to provide whatever assistance he can to see that research into the treatment of chronic pain is advanced.
Notre Dame’s Fremantle School of Medicine Dean, Professor Gavin Frost, said chronic pain cost the community more than $34 billion and there were long lists of patients awaiting treatment, many of them experiencing excruciating pain as well as emotional and psychological damage.

“With Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, Physiotherapy, and other health disciplines including Health Sciences and Counselling, Notre Dame will bring them all together to holistically address the issue of Chronic Pain in the community,” he said.

“With input from advanced research we want our graduates to be well equipped to help relieve the suffering of so many Australians.”

The University is currently raising a further $2 million to add to the generous donation by the Churacks. Individuals or organisations wanting to learn more are encouraged to contact Notre Dame on (08) 9433 0860.

A Message from the Executive Officer

This is an extremely busy time of the year for the School - mid-year exams, updating of Regulations, developing the budget for 2014, preparing the annual report for the AMC, not to mention the usual round of committee meetings, ongoing curriculum development etc, etc.

So, how could we make life even busier? Relocate some staff members! To make the best use of the limited space we have on campus, the Office of the Dean will move to ND18 on Friday 28 June. ND18 is located at 21 Henry St. Along with the Dean, Maureen Dawson, Richard Clifford, Amanda Northcott and I will all be located in ND18. The Aboriginal Health Team and the BCS Domain will move to ND34 (where Reception is located) and the General Practice and Primary Health Research Unit will move to the University’s Research Office in ND40.

Please note the change of date for the end of year MED100 clinical exam (MSAT). It has been moved from Wednesday 6 to Tuesday 5 November. We will start contacting examiners for the end of year exams towards the end of July.

Maureen Nichols

AMA (WA) 2013 Charity Dinner

This gala event, supporting the Dr Yes youth program, will be held at the Hyatt Regency Grand Ballroom on Saturday 27 July and the School of Medicine will have a table. There are still spaces and the Dean will contribute $25 towards the price of the ticket so it will cost $200 per person.

Enquiries to Maureen Dawson, maureen.dawson@nd.edu.au

(Back to the top)
Meaningful Transitions

Transitions can be thought of as personal adjustments involved in change from the familiar to the unfamiliar. If the transition has been negotiated in a meaningful way then such experiences can often lead to positive future experiences.

One model developed by Harris (2008), suggests that we can thrive, survive or languish in various transitions. Based on a doctoral study, Harris has drawn up a cyclical model, which shows the key factors involved in the thriving process.

![Cyclical Model of Thriving Process]

This year the medical school started to run groups for new students who were interested in discussing their “transition” from states outside West Australia to our Fremantle medical school. Whilst not always easy to organise such groups, the critical importance of some of these thriving factors soon became evident.

What does seem particularly relevant is the need to be proactive and practical in addressing one’s own transition process ... not always easy! Clearly adjustment to a new State, a new course and a new university can be very demanding. Issues such as accommodation, finance, social support and transport leave alone the expectations of studying medicine (and all that that entails) ... all come into the life equation.

Based on these first pilot experiences and review this year we hope to further establish what functions and services could be developed to aid in meaningful transitions.

References


**Associate Professor Chris Skinner**
**Chair of Personal and Professional Development Domain**