



Australian  
National  
University

# A

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE  
**2014 Vice-Chancellor's Awards  
for Excellence in Education**

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Centre for  
Higher Education,  
Learning and Teaching

# Recognising Excellence

**ANU, as a place of learning, is committed to encouraging and rewarding excellence in teaching. This commitment is demonstrated through the Vice-Chancellor's for Awards Excellence in Education and the support of teachers and programs towards national recognition at the Australian Awards for University Teaching.**

**This program of work is supported by the Promoting Excellence team who unearth new talent, recognise quiet achievers, reward proven performers and promote outstanding programs.**



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# VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CONGRATULATIONS

**At ANU we have many talented educators who are passionate about teaching. The Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education are an opportunity to recognise great teaching, and thank all those who contribute to the advancement of teaching at ANU.**

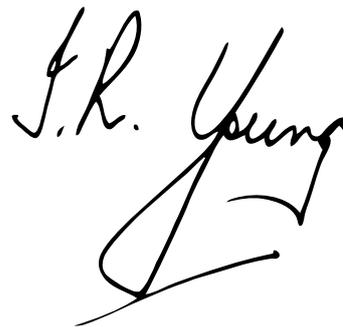
The Awards give recognition to ANU academic and professional staff for teaching, supervision and tutoring excellence and for their contribution to student learning.

These educators are brave, embracing a changing educational landscape by becoming innovative, reflective and responsive in their style. Their willingness to listen, adapt and improve for the benefit of their students is inspirational.

This book is filled with their insights into the art of teaching. You need only read the quotes from their colleagues and their students to understand the calibre and commitment of these educators.

As you read through the book, common themes of passion, encouragement, inspiration, humour, innovation, inclusiveness and challenge emerge. What becomes clear is that their interest in their students' success and welfare goes beyond the walls of the classroom.

On behalf of the University community I would like to congratulate all 2014 Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education candidates and recipients.



**Professor Ian Young AO**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
The Australian National University

# CANDIDATES FOR THE **Award for Teaching Excellence**

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**Mr Chris Browne**

Research School of Engineering  
ANU College of Engineering & Computer Sciences

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**Associate Professor  
Christine Phillips**

School of Medicine  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology & Environment

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**Dr Adam Butt**

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies &  
Applied Statistics  
ANU College of Business & Economics

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**Associate Professor  
Imogen Mitchell**

School of Medicine  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology & Environment

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**Dr Paul Burke**

Arndt-Corden Department of Economics  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

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**Dr Mark Gibeau**

School of Culture, History and Languages  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

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**Dr Alastair MacLachlan**

Research School of Humanities  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Dr Sharon Peoples**

Centre for Heritage & Museum Studies  
School of Archaeology & Anthropology  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Dr Maria Rost Rublee**

School of Politics & International Relations  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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# RECIPIENT

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Mr Chris Browne

Research School of Engineering  
ANU College of Engineering  
& Computer Sciences (CECS)

#### Synopsis

The jigsaw classroom is a systems approach to learning about systems engineering. Core to the approach is placing students at the centre of their learning, and providing a framework for students in which to develop, integrate and synthesise their knowledge. Group work is notorious for being dominated by group dynamics, and Chris Browne's jigsaw classroom provides a template for group work and the development of individuals in that group throughout the semester. Students are exposed to scaffolded scholarly activities, such as developing a peer-reviewed research paper, co-facilitation of tutorials, including the preparation of teaching materials, and the development of an individual portfolio applying the course concepts to a system in a research area of their choice.

#### Chris's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

I think about the world in systems. There are the clearly visible things, the parts, the components. There are the invisible relationships, the feedback structures that create the interactions between the things. Most importantly, there are the rules and the goals that determine the system behaviour. I think about my teaching practice as a system. The content makes up the visible components. The learning through class activities and feedback-rich assessment link the content together. The behaviour of the system is determined through my teaching philosophy.

In the jigsaw classroom, students must divvy up roles and responsibilities for each content topic. Each week, students engage in each topic through a different mode towards the ultimate benefit of their group project and individual portfolio. This structure becomes a feedback-rich learning environment, where learning opportunities are social and students are given a template for teamwork. To enable social learning, I replaced my content lectures with the Online Classroom: a walkthrough of a single concept, typically in less than five minutes. I am constantly surprised when I watch the group 'expert' lead their group through a content topic using my notes.

Drawing connections between course topics is often difficult in the rigid format that engineering courses are normally taught, with an emphasis on mid- and end-of-semester exams. Often, content taught before the break is quite separate to content afterwards, and students are not required to integrate their learning between course concepts. The jigsaw classroom alongside an individual portfolio is an approach to assessment with embedded feedback that fosters independent learning and allows students to integrate their knowledge across the course.

**“It’s a learned skill – watching people, seeing if they’re getting things, asking good questions, integrating people’s answers – even self-confidence. I wish it was done in more courses, because it’s a valuable skill set.”**

Student

**“The approach to learning and assessment that Chris took in his courses is one that puts the student in the driver’s seat.”**

Student

# RECIPIENT

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Associate Professor Christine Phillips

School of Medicine  
ANU College of Medicine,  
Biology & Environment (CMBE)

#### Synopsis

Determined to be both a doctor and an educator, Associate Professor Christine Phillips enrolled in a teaching degree while still a junior hospital resident. Over the last decade, she has taught applied social sciences to over 900 medical students, drawing the links between theory and practice using her clinical work among marginalised populations. This innovative program of teaching, Social Foundations of Medicine, has demonstrated that medical students can learn to value social sciences as much as hard sciences. Christine continues to mentor graduate doctors in the fields of social medicine, following their development from novices to experts.

#### Christine's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Why do the poor suffer a greater burden of illness? How can the way a doctor talks to a patient impact on their pain? Why

are some illnesses the focus of a great deal of medical attention while others are forgotten? To answer these questions we need to turn to the social sciences, particularly sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy. At the ANU Medical School, these are threaded through all four years of the curriculum.

Most medical students have a background in biomedical science, and have never engaged with the social sciences. Given students' lack of background, and potential lack of interest, my role as a teacher is to intrigue and delight them with the potential of the social sciences. I teach through case narratives and cognitive games so that students can apply principles, question their own assumptions and think synoptically about medicine in a supported fashion. I draw on my own clinical experiences in settings ranging from drug and alcohol clinics to developing countries, demonstrating the connections between social science and clinical practice.

I encourage students to break the tendency to memorise without understanding by clarifying the fundamental principles of the material and providing material that enables them to apply their understanding in different clinical contexts. This has benefits that extend beyond students' work in my field, to enable them to synthesise and think critically in other areas of their medical studies.

Because the material is challenging, I provide self-test questions and worked answers after each lecture.

Each year, I fine-tune my teaching, or develop new material, in response to evidence in the previous year of misunderstanding emerging from gaps in the formal curriculum or from the operation of the informal curriculum.

To meet gaps in the formal curriculum, I developed seminars on interpreter use and working across cultures. With colleagues, I developed a curriculum examining the impact of violence in the family and society on health and long-term well-being for later-year students. To respond to an informal curriculum on gender, which resulted in received messages about career paths and capabilities, I developed a set of lectures and resource materials to be used by

students to be able to recognise and respond to sexist comments.

Social sciences teaching has traditionally had a low profile in medical schools. Students across the world describe it as 'nice-to-know', common-sense knowledge, which distracts from the main game of hard science. The social sciences teaching in the ANU Medical School confounds these expectations. It is rigorous and intellectually challenging. Despite its difficulty, it has repeatedly been ranked as one of the most valuable subjects taught in the medical school.

Whichever field our graduates move into, a grounding in the social sciences will stand them in good stead. It helps them to be empathic and to understand the way the social world impacts on people's health and health care delivery. My passionate commitment to teaching this subject helps support the development of graduates who are capable of reading and responding to the needs of patients as people with lives that extend beyond the hospital.

**“Above all, Dr Phillips injects a sense of humour and fun into a challenging course, reminding students that learning can be enjoyable.”**

Student

**“Her teaching style, enthusiasm and clear interest in topics made it very easy to be stimulated by the subject. It has been one of my favorite aspects of the medical course”**

Student

# SPECIAL COMMENDATION

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Adam Butt

Research School of Finance,  
Actuarial Studies & Applied  
Statistics

ANU College of Business  
& Economics (CBE)

#### Synopsis

Dr Adam Butt is a Senior Lecturer in actuarial studies and statistics and has been teaching at ANU since 2005. A winner of the 2013 CBE Award for Teaching Excellence, his most significant innovation has been the development of a new core course for actuarial students that bridges the gap between theory and practice.

This new course, which is unique in Australian actuarial education, was developed in 2013 as a result of feedback obtained from graduates and employers as part of his research into actuarial education.

#### Adam's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

My primary philosophy on teaching is to focus on what students do, as I believe that learning outcomes are best achieved by students actively engaging in my courses.

As much as possible I like to encourage students to see learning as a problem-solving exercise. An important part of this is demonstrating to students how to go about solving problems and allowing students to interact with each other as they solve them. Empowering students to feel like they are able to solve problems gives them the skills they need not just for my course, but to be lifelong learners. It is also consistent with the way research works in practice.

In 2013 I redesigned the Actuarial Techniques course to use more of this approach. The rationale for this redesign was evidence that graduates were unprepared for the implementation of the technical skills they were being taught in their undergraduate degree.

The focus of this redesign was to structure the course almost wholly around two assignments that students work on in groups. These assignments are designed to replicate the sorts of problems and environments students are likely to encounter both in the workforce and in future study.

Students work in groups to produce an actuarial report for a fictitious client. As part of the course redesign I collaborated with the Careers Centre in developing a workshop on communication skills to help groups work together more effectively.

The assignments are deliberately unstructured. Whilst the scope of the client problem is clear, a variety of approaches to solving the problem are valid. Classes are structured around the relevant contexts of the assignments and also the techniques that may be useful in the assignments.

The unstructured nature of the assignments encourages students to be creative and analytical in their approach, and the assignments are also designed to be contextualised around 'hot button' issues so students can see the value of their prior and current studies when investigating issues of real importance.

Groups are also allocated a group consultant, one of the actuarial academic staff in the School, who they are able to meet with regularly and whose role it is to provide guidance to the group on the tasks required. Groups always have a place to turn to for direction if they feel lost.

**“The assignments were very useful in that you got to apply your knowledge in a practical way. I found this course really brought previous actuarial courses together in a practical and interesting way.”**

Student

# SPECIAL COMMENDATION

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Associate Professor Imogen Mitchell

School of Medicine  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology & Environment (CMBE)

#### Synopsis

Associate Professor Imogen Mitchell is a Senior Staff Specialist and Director of Intensive Care at The Canberra Hospital and has been interested in clinical research for more than 14 years.

Imogen's teaching philosophy embraces partnering with students in a shared understanding and negotiation of mutual goals in a context-specific environment.

Imogen's teaching is informed by her research and authenticated by her clinical credibility and leadership. These are critical ingredients in stimulating and motivating reliable, credentialed and capable medical practitioners for the future.

Drawing on her own experience Imogen places an emphasis on real clinical situations. As part of this approach she developed an evidence-based, inter-professional multimedia program called COMPASS. The educational program stimulates reflective evaluation

of students' patient deterioration knowledge and interdisciplinary practice in simulated clinical situations.

#### Imogen's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

The concept of demystifying medical concepts came early in my career. Feeling out of my depth and unable to perform practical clinical tasks as an intern, despite my extensive medical training, I was inspired to co-author a book that provides practical advice on transitioning from being a medical student to becoming an intern.

In light of my early experiences, my approach to teaching has been to facilitate the transition from being a student doctor to becoming a safe practising junior doctor in any Australian healthcare environment.

Much of the approach has been to demystify complex medical concepts into accessible and practical building blocks of knowledge that can be used easily by inexperienced and often terrified interns following graduation.

In first year I teach students to decipher complex cardiovascular physiological concepts while ensuring that they appreciate that the concepts have everyday relevance to their work as doctors.

In the clinical skills program in first and second year, a series of eight lectures are tailored to reflect the physiology relevant to eight disease entities that can manifest themselves into physiological deterioration, for example heart failure, respiratory failure and overwhelming infection.

During each lecture, we remind ourselves of the basic physiological principles: what generates blood pressure and how oxygen gets to vital organs. Together, we then work out the pathophysiology that underpins the specific clinical scenario. The students enjoy hearing about the clinical medicine during these lectures at a time when much of their academic life is dominated by significant amounts of theory.

In fourth year students take part in a multimedia education program, COMPASS. The program continues to

bring the relevance of physiology to the bedside but also provides opportunities, through low risk simulation of real clinical scenarios, for the medical students to work out what basic management they need to give.

The aim of providing real cases for medical students to work through is to help them 'decode' the physiology, allowing them to deduce the management they would be prescribing for these deteriorating patients. Simulating real life events eases the student's transition from the role of observer to active clinician.

**“Her outstanding success as our lecturer has undoubtedly been due to her ability to not only teach but also engage her audience's curiosity and critical thinking abilities ...”**

Colleague

**“Imogen is one of those few lecturers that can interact meaningfully with a class of 100 students.”**

Student

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Paul Burke

Arndt-Corden Department of Economics

ANU College of Asia & the Pacific (CAP)

#### Synopsis

Dr Paul Burke teaches graduate-level courses in microeconomics and environmental economics at the Crawford School of Public Policy. Paul's teaching mantra is that "economics is everywhere" and that learning economics should be enjoyable. He has developed curricula for his courses that combine the necessary theory with as many real-world examples as possible.

Paul's lectures are interactive, with students being challenged to apply concepts to policy contexts and to solve puzzles in 'Mad-Minute Quizzes'. Paul has consistently received strong student evaluations and feedback.

#### Paul's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

My goal is to create an environment in which students are excited to attend class and can feel the enthusiasm of their lecturer and classmates. There are five key ingredients to my approach: passion, clarity, interaction, variety and dedication. I love both economics and teaching, and

I make sure that I convey my passion in each and every class. I am never satisfied with a dry lecture that just goes through the required theory. I use colourful examples, stories, props, and pictures that reinforce the key points of the lecture to complement the theory. Sometimes I invite a student out to the front of the class to help role play a situation. Students often remark that they are amazed that economics can be applied to so many everyday situations. I encourage students to be creative and to explore.

I strive to deliver course content as clearly as possible. I put a lot of effort into making sure that material is delivered in a methodical order, both over the semester and during each lecture. I work hard to make my lecture notes and course webpages as logical and neat as possible. I aim to communicate complicated concepts in a way that makes them readily understandable. I am a keen implementer of Occam's razor – the idea that explanations should be as simple as possible, but no simpler.

My teaching style has been influenced by the Harvard 'case study' approach. The approach involves actively engaging students in in-class problem solving, which is a great way to foster their creativity. I also encourage students to speak up at any time if they have a different angle on an issue. I mingle with the students over tea and coffee after lectures, and the conversation from class often carries out into the foyer.

I try to vary my teaching style to avoid any hint of monotony. I vary my delivery during classes, using both well-designed PowerPoint slides as well as 'pen on paper' via the document camera. I surprise students with unexpected in-class challenges and case studies. I also use a number of interesting readings, videos, and online quizzes to provide students with varied learning material.

My students are my number-one priority throughout the teaching semester. I invite students to contact me if they ever have difficulties with any of the material. I personally grade all assessment tasks and provide as much feedback as possible. I care a lot about students' progress and welfare.

**"Paul in microeconomics is what Michael Jordan is to basketball; he makes it look easy and likeable."**

Student

**"In terms of teaching quality, Paul is simply – and without doubt – outstanding. He uses an interactive teaching style – perhaps the best among economists on campus – and he deeply cares that his students learn and apply the material he provides them."**

Professor Tom Kompas, Director of Crawford School of Public Policy

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Mark Gibeau

School of Culture, History & Languages

ANU College of Asia & the Pacific (CAP)

#### Synopsis

Dr Mark Gibeau believes blended learning should not replace face-to-face teaching, it should make it more effective. By moving such non-student centred tasks as lectures and grammar explication to an online environment Mark has been able to recover contact hours for activities that can only be conducted face-to-face. Mark moved 'mechanical' assessments such as vocabulary or grammar quizzes online to allow the expertise of human markers to be used for one-on-one meetings with students and to provide a continuous stream of feedback on essays. This approach created a student centred, communicative environment whilst giving students more control over what, how and when they learn.

#### Mark's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

The best way to ensure that a class is meeting a student's specific needs is to give the student a meaningful level of autonomy over the content, timing and assessment of their work. Research has demonstrated a high degree of correlation between learner autonomy and the development of lifelong learners and improved language proficiency outcomes. However, autonomous behaviour cannot be taken for granted: it must be actively encouraged, cultivated and in some cases even compelled. We have developed a course structure that embeds, encourages and rewards learner autonomy in every element of the course.

Assessment drives student behaviour and learning practices. While one may try to convince students that cramming minutes before a test is not a pedagogically effective approach these sermons will have little impact if assessment items continue to reward cramming. As such we redesigned our assessment criteria not simply to measure mastery of the material but to cultivate and reward effective learning practices.

We eliminated heavily weighted, one-off assessments that encouraged less productive study techniques such as rote memorisation and, exploiting the strengths of our learning management system, replaced them with an assessment regime characterised by a large number of repeatable, lightly weighted assessments that build directly upon one another and require and reward a careful response to instructor feedback.

**“There's no pressure. I don't get punished for being wrong, so I feel I am actually learning from my mistakes and building a better understanding as a result. The teacher's willingness to help was an enormous bonus during the semester.”**

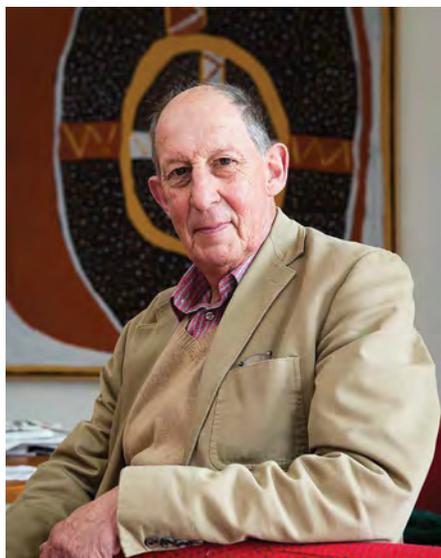
Student

**“Classes were fun as well as educational. I find that allowing for humour, particularly in language study, creates a much more relaxed class atmosphere which makes it easier to learn and makes students more willing to take the risk and try.”**

Student

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Alastair MacLachlan

Research School of Humanities  
ANU College of Arts & Social  
Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

Dr Alastair MacLachlan is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Research School of Humanities where he contributes to a number of programs and has formally and informally supported students.

Alastair's teaching-supervision strategy is based on a robust interrogative approach. He asks pointed questions, drawing upon his vast knowledge of history, philosophy, art and music. He also asks searching and insightful questions about structure, method and theory.

Alastair's approach is not only the provision of rigorous feedback for individuals but also fostering a culture of peer review more generally.

#### Alastair's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Although I am not a salaried member of staff, but an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre, I have been involved over the years in a number of teaching activities at the Research School

of Humanities, which I value enormously. I count myself very fortunate to belong to an institution with such a vibrant intellectual life and such a strong collegial ethos, where post-graduate students, staff and retired academics such as myself, can work so co-operatively together.

In 2012 I took over a colleague's duties while he was on leave. These included the supervision of his post-graduate students, the running of his fortnightly Thesis Writing Workshop and the first few meeting of his post-graduate course on Biography and Society. I have continued to co-ordinate the workshop and to meet many students individually to discuss progress on their dissertations.

The Thesis Writing Workshops are designed primarily for students in the Interdisciplinary and Cross Cultural Research Program of Research School of Humanities who have completed most of their primary research and are beginning to write.

I personally have found the sessions – inevitably on a wide range of topics embracing such disciplines as History, Literary Studies, Cultural Enquiry, Art History, Anthropology, Heritage Studies, Museum Studies, Musicology – enormously enriching both to mind and spirit. They are, I would say, very much a group activity and the peer review is, to my mind, much more valuable than anything that comes from me personally. We learn together.

**“In my long career as a student, researcher, part-time faculty member and university administrator ... I could count on the fingers of one hand the number of faculty members who inspire me as much as Alastair does.”**

Student

**“I cannot think of many academics in my 10 years at ANU who have been more supportive or respectful of me not only as a research student but as an individual.”**

Student

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Sharon Peoples

Centre for Heritage & Museum Studies  
School of Archaeology & Anthropology  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

Dr Sharon Peoples is the Convenor of Museum Studies at the ANU Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies. She understands that learning about museums cannot be contained within the walls of the University. Sharon has developed unique and authentic learning opportunities that teach and inspire graduate students. She does this by taking advantage of the geographic location of ANU, and forging and maintaining strong relationships with leading national institutions.

#### Sharon's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Each museum is a curious world in itself. For some visitors, it is the quiet contemplation of an Indigenous artwork. For others, it is the wild new technologies taking us to worlds beyond the museum walls.

A key part of students' learning experiences at the Centre for Heritage and Museums is our internship program. It is a joy to observe, through reading students' online journals, how the world of museums unfolds each day through their placements.

I supervise students in such a way as to provide a solid pedagogical basis, and allow the development of self-awareness through student's reflection of their own learning engagement.

I have designed and implemented innovative online, intensive and on- and off-campus courses in museums, heritage and museum education studies, responding to the industry by incorporating flexible learning approaches for graduate students.

Museum education is taught online. Here, the emphasis is on andragogy, that is, adult learning. In this program there is emphasis on the process of self-directed learning and as a facilitator I make sure learning is relevant to the student's own workplace, and that assignments are relevant to the industry.

I use a number of creative tools specifically designed to engage students, including exercises that help students comprehend their own learning styles and preferences, processes and intrinsic motivations. This is undertaken through a workshop where time is spent on a short 'tick the box' and self-ratings survey. We continue by discussing the range of different types of learners from visual and spatial learning, to mathematical and logical learning through to intra- and inter-personal learning. This makes students aware that people learn differently and museum learning is diverse.

We reflect on the best and worst learning experiences they have had and what learning in museums and at heritage sites mean. From personal understanding of their own learning, we then apply this to their designs of learning programs and exhibition designs. For the students, this also helps them to choose the assessment task that best matches their learning style. This understanding brings confidence to their abilities as future museum educators.

Back in the classroom, I enjoy the challenge of figuring out how to use each of the national cultural institutions as resources and for the development of curricula. I also integrate the work of 'local' world-leading museum and heritage sector colleagues by inviting them to participate in coursework.

**“Dr Sharon Peoples is one of our most valued members of staff in terms of her extensive contribution to teaching at both Masters Coursework and HDR level...”**

Professor Paul Pickering, supervisor

**“This experience is providing me with practical experience and academic insight into what museums collect, why and how this information can be interpreted to a wider audience. Thank you for your kind and positive feedback.”**

Student

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Teaching Excellence



### Dr Maria Rost Rublee

School of Politics & International Relations

ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

An award-winning author and teacher in international relations, Dr Maria Rublee enthusiastically harnesses a wide variety of tools to generate student interest, cultivate students' knowledge and skills, and ultimately assist them in becoming independent learners.

Within her field of international security, Maria helps students discover for themselves the critical relevance of security issues, using their newfound excitement to engage in analytical explorations of theory and policy. Key to Maria's success in the classroom are her passion for teaching and her respect for students. Students motivate, inspire and challenge her, and she endeavours to do the same for them.

#### Maria's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

During my previous work for the US government, I trained as a facilitator to lead group sessions for top government

executives. When I began teaching, I realised that many of those facilitation methods could be used in class to stimulate students to question assumptions and think out of the box.

For example, I use brainstorming and multi-voting, SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and 'think-pair-square-share' during tutorials or workshops to engage students with problem-based learning. In addition, I run a course-wide simulation during my courses, asking students to take on the identity and positions of different countries or international organisations on a current policy issue. These activities inspire students they are interesting and fun, but they also demand more from students, forcing them to confront material in ways that they are not used to.

I make learning interesting by explicitly combining theory with policy, both in teaching and in assessments. While at ANU, I have created three new courses: Politics of Nuclear Weapons, Current Issues in International Security, and Security Communities: From War to Peace. In each of them, I blend key academic approaches with current policy questions. For me, the goal is to use students' interest in current affairs to engage them and draw them into the process of improving their analytical and communication skills.

Additionally, I always include at least one policy-related assignment in my courses. While I am not opposed to traditional essays, my own background in working for the US government allows me to create realistic policy assignments for students. Students love policy assignments because of the idea that they might do a policy report or futures analysis in their careers.

I love policy assignments because I can harness students' enthusiasm to encourage them to perform their best on an analytical, research-based paper.

**"She was fantastically approachable, understanding and so enthusiastic, I automatically enjoyed the course a lot more as well as the content."**

Student

**"Maria's dedication to the class was evident on many occasions... It has been rare in my studies that theory has been made so tangible and relevant within a course."**

Student

# CANDIDATES FOR THE **Award for Excellence in Supervision**

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**Associate Professor  
Peter Christen**

Research School of Computer Science  
ANU College of Engineering & Computer Sciences

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**Dr Simone Dennis**

School of Archaeology & Anthropology  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Associate Professor (adjunct)  
Dr Helen James**

Australian Demographic & Social Research Institute  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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# RECIPIENT

## Award for Excellence in Supervision



### Associate Professor Peter Christen

Research School of Computer Science

ANU College of Engineering & Computer Sciences (CECS)

#### Synopsis

Associate Professor Peter Christen is passionate about research supervision, and believes that excellence in both supervisory and supervision-related administrative practices leads to successful candidates who are motivated and produce research outcomes of the highest quality.

Peter's approach to successful supervision is to acknowledge that every candidate is unique and has their own specific background, skills and aspirations. With each candidate he develops clear mutual expectations, research directions and time plans. He strongly believes that detailed advice, timely and constructive feedback, early submission of research for publication, and viewing failures as important learning experiences, allow his students to become successful independent researchers.

#### Peter's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

My approach to supervising research students is to see them as junior colleagues. I see my main role as one of mentoring them to become successful independent researchers who have the skills and expertise to conduct research of the highest quality at an internationally recognised level, are able to communicate to a variety of audiences, and are aware of the ethical aspects of how their work can impact individuals and society. My principle is to always have the best for my students in mind, and to focus on the candidate as a whole person, not just the academic aspects of research supervision.

Aiming for excellence in research outcomes, my approach is to ensure that my students start writing early, use the appropriate tools to produce high-quality documents, and follow methodologies and workflows that allow them to be highly productive and therefore progress well.

My overall aim is to provide a collegial, non-competitive environment that is fair, transparent, and inclusive. I want my students to compete with other leading researchers in their area worldwide. The environment should make students feel free to ask any questions, not just about their candidature. This is especially important for international candidates and those from a different cultural backgrounds, who are often not used to asking questions or being critical towards their supervisor.

I aim to excel in the administrative processes associated with research supervision. My goal is to make sure that at any time, from prior to start until after submission, a student has all the relevant information she or he needs for a smooth candidature.

Reflecting back on my own experiences, my strong belief is that rejection and failure are vital learning experiences for researchers. Many candidates at some stage have a time of self-doubt or they may be struggling, for example when their work has been rejected with critical reviewer feedback, or when they think they have pursued a 'wrong' research direction and have 'wasted' several

weeks of work. In these times appropriate encouragement and support is crucial. My approach to this is to describe my own experiences of self-doubt and rejection. If something is learned, I tell my students, then no time is wasted, and positive lessons can be learned even from the most critical feedback.

**"[Peter] gave me strength, courage, and confidence in myself. He guides me and shows interesting directions in my research. He is capable of explaining things well to students. And he is patient enough to listen to every little idea of students."**

Ms Dinusha Vatsalan, current student

**"Peter is very approachable and takes initiative to reach out...He provided ample feedback on my work, paying great attention to detail to ensure the quality of my thesis."**

Dr Denny, graduated student

# SPECIAL COMMENDATION

## Award for Excellence in Supervision



### Dr Simone Dennis

School of Archaeology & Anthropology  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

Dr Simone Dennis came to the School of Archaeology and Anthropology in 2008. As a comprehensively and formally trained educator of Honours and HDR students, Simone quickly became involved in convening the School's Honours program, and its PhD methods training course.

Access to all anthropology HDR students, as well as those from other disciplinary backgrounds, allowed Simone to appreciate how important a collaborative, hands-on approach is to the success of HDR students. As a result Simone applies these principles to her supervisory practice. Her 'learning by doing' approach turns out beautifully and comprehensively trained graduates who are research-ready, teaching-ready and have a track record of publications in their area of expertise.

#### Simone's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

My approach is mindful of the latest research into the pedagogy of good HDR student supervision, which finds that supervisors who take a 'hands-on' approach to their students tend to produce confident and well-rounded candidates who typically complete within time. Most new candidates do not possess all of the qualities associated with being a researcher and a member of a research community, and must be taught these early on in their candidature.

Relatively interventionist approaches are more effective than leaving students to equip themselves to move into scholarly communities and find appropriate training methods to enable them to carry out research. This hands-on approach is one I have taken in every aspect of supervision, including insisting that students learn to do ethnographic interviews on real, live people; white-boarding a student's thesis question, structure, argument and conclusion for the purposes of finding and fixing common problems; taking students to conferences and introducing them to networks of key scholars; and assisting them to make and carry out a publications plan as a key part of their candidature. Effective HDR supervision is also collaborative as it involves more than just 'my supervisor'. The supervisor's effectiveness is in no small part dependent on the skills of others: panel members, other anthropologists with particular expertise, librarians, technical staff, and the student's own peers.

Making contact with those with an interest in their topic or analytic area, or in some practical sense, can help students to take up the mantle of researcher and to see themselves as members of a research community.

Just as it is collaborative, my approach is also reciprocally genealogical. Just as I was once the recipient of supervisory wisdom, it now falls to me to pass on anthropological knowledge and skill

to those who will become the next generation of scholars. I take this very seriously, not only because the scholarly aspirations of people under my care depend in part on my ability to train them up to a high standard, but because anthropological scholarship is in many respects a competitive individual pursuit. The moments that are available for fully investing in others are few.

The opportunity to supervise offers up these moments – to assist an up-and-coming person to publish for the first time, to introduce them to the kinds of ethical practices that will keep them, their research participants and their institutions safe, to equip them with the skills to one day become a colleague and the next generation of anthropological scholars.

**“Simone is fantastic! She is very enthusiastic, and provides lots of information and further references.”**

Student

**“Simone is interesting and very knowledgeable. She has an engaging style and was very good at interacting with us and our planned projects.”**

Student

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Excellence in Supervision



### Associate Professor (adjunct) Dr Helen James

Australian Demographic & Social Research Institute  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

For Dr Helen James the supervision of students is both a privilege and an honour. She sees it as a responsibility for academics committed to the enhancement of human well-being and the advancement of knowledge which can be deployed in practical outcomes through public policy.

In accepting this responsibility, Dr James is passionate about giving priority to students, to ensure that their experience at ANU is an enriching one, on which they can look back with fond memories as they proceed in their future careers. She is committed to providing an inspiring intellectual environment which underpins students' success.

#### Helen's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

I aim to provide students with the same type of high quality, supportive, sustained mentoring and supervision as I have received both at ANU and when I did doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

A key part of my approach to supervision is that it should not stop with the graduation ceremony, but should continue to assist students throughout their careers. I take a 'whole of student' approach. I not only meet with each student once a week for personal consultation, feedback on draft chapters and advice on progress with the Thesis Proposal, Preparation of Initial, Mid-term and Final Seminars, but also provide a supportive environment in which students can explore intellectual matters related to their research.

I keep a close watch on logistical issues relating to accommodation, visas, health, transport and family commitments to ensure that students have an optimal environment in which to pursue their research. This is important in assisting students to achieve successful outcomes.

This perspective on education, supervision and academic philosophy has translated into richly rewarding experiences in supervising HDR students. In providing intellectual and personal guidance, mentoring and support for students, I introduce them to extended research networks, opportunities to attend and participate in conferences and seminars, publish jointly authored articles, and to the wider world of scholarship.

In accepting the responsibility to become the main supervisor for a HDR student, I discuss the proposed topic with the student in a friendly supportive environment designed to draw out the student's interests and thinking on the proposed topic. An important aspect of this discussion is to emphasise that the research must be able to make an original contribution to the field of knowledge; and that the topic be practicable within the theoretical and empirical frameworks to be investigated. It must also be ethical

research which will contribute to the aim of promoting human well-being. The research program for the student is then designed in consultation over a number of discussions. I try to challenge their intellectual contexts and to develop their critical acumen.

I put students in touch with internationally renowned scholars in their fields which enables students to gain a deeper appreciation of the importance of collaboration.

**“Her benevolence has encouraged and inspired me to begin, continue, and even enjoy my PhD journey”**

Student

**“Dr James' feedback was always constructive. It displayed a high level of sensitivity, engagement and expertise to know when to push for more from me and when to allow things to settle...”**

Student

# CANDIDATES FOR

## Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning

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**Dr Alison Behie**

School of Archaeology & Anthropology  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Dr Sue Cossetto**

Research School of Biology  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology & Environment

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**Drs John Debs and  
Nick Robins**

Research School of Physics & Engineering  
ANU College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences

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**Associate Professor  
Tony Foley**

ANU College of Law

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**Dr Stephen Loy**

School of Music  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Ms Grazia Micciché**

School of Literature, Languages & Linguistics  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Ms Pauline Thai**

ANU College of Law

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# RECIPIENT

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Dr Alison Behie

School of Archaeology and Anthropology

ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Citation

For sustained excellence in student-focused teaching that motivates students through intellectual excitement and encourages creative and independent thinking about real world situations.

#### Synopsis

In just two years at ANU, Dr Alison Behie has become an integral part of the School of Archaeology and Anthropology through the development of three new research-based courses that substantially increased biological anthropology course offerings – a field which is unique to Australian institutions.

By exposing students to research both in the classroom and in the field, with her primate behaviour field school in Cambodia, Alison has effectively combined practical research with theory. This is crucial for students to become independent learners who are able to identify their own strengths, passions and goals.

#### Alison's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Two of the key ingredients to truly motivate and inspire students are enthusiasm and passion. Regardless of subject matter, students get excited about what you are excited about. By showing my love for teaching and the subject matter I can help encourage students to develop their own strengths and goals for the future.

This is furthered by my continual goal of weaving research with teaching in such a way that students are given the opportunity to engage in research activities in a variety of ways – from developing a research question in the classroom to collecting data on wild primates in a field school setting in Cambodia.

I believe the real goal of a university career is student self-discovery. This makes it critical for lecturers to make students the focal point of each lesson and makes them feel comfortable in learning, regardless of ethnic or academic background.

I make it clear in all of my classes that the best way to learn is through interactive, inquiry-based learning. By participating in class or working in small groups, students are not simply passive learners but become more actively involved in the learning process, increasing their ability to critically assess material and to work with others to problem solve. This student-centred approach to teaching is linked to a deeper development of skills required for critical analysis, as well as the synthesis and integration of material.

To get students passionate and developing their own thinking skills I attempt to have them find value in what is being taught and connect it to their larger goals through drawing parallels between lectures and other facets of related disciplines.

Since starting at ANU I have developed all of my courses directly out of my research interests and projects, carefully linking classroom teaching with research. I am particularly proud of the field training course I run in Cambodia that gives

students the opportunity to put theory into practice conducting their own field studies on wild primates. This is a unique opportunity at an Australian institution, yet is necessary for students to develop skills within the discipline of Biological Anthropology.

Using this student centred and research-based approach I am helping to produce ANU graduates that have a well-rounded knowledge of the discipline as well as the skills required to be an effective researcher in any field. Seeing connections between classroom material and practical research also allows for students to discover, for themselves, the applicability of the material – which is a key component to student comprehension.

**“Dr Behie has had a significant impact. The passion and intellectual excitement she brings to her own research, and the support and dedication she provides to her students was an integral part of my decision to begin my PhD at ANU this year.”**

Student

# RECIPIENT

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Dr Sue Cossetto

Research School of Biology  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology  
& Environment (CMBE)

#### Citation

For the development and implementation of curricula that links graduate attributes and skills development within a research-led context that is engaging and appreciated by ANU students.

#### Synopsis

Dr Sue Cossetto has been involved in Teaching and Learning in Biology at ANU for more than ten years. During this time she has successfully designed and implemented both undergraduate and post-graduate curricula that have enhanced and extended the Biology curriculum. Her focus on connecting learning outcomes, graduate attributes and research-led pedagogy in both course design and assessment pieces consistently results in positive learning experiences.

Recently, Sue has been instrumental in creating new second year Biology courses - Big Questions in Biology and Experimental Design and Analysis in Biology from the 'ground up'. These courses aim to develop a number of graduate skills expected in a biologist,

including critical evaluation of the scientific literature, science writing, experimental design and statistical analysis. Course design integrates development of these transferrable skills with research-led teaching practices in a biology context.

#### Sue's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Aligning learning outcomes with effective teaching practices in the context of current biology research is central to my approach in curriculum development. I believe that developing a positive rapport with students by communicating effectively, facilitating discussions and being approachable is a key element to a successful learning experience.

My teaching approach views developing positive collaborations with fellow academics as essential. Biology is an ever-advancing field. Collaborating with research academics who can share their research has enabled me to keep courses up-to-date and relevant. By integrating components of current topics in biology into assessment pieces and practical classes, I believe students gain a deeper understanding of the content.

One challenge I faced in course design was developing assessment items to complement and extend the biology and that also emphasise skills development. A few examples of assessment items include: peer review of essays, writing funding proposals and reports that integrate statistical testing. Whilst not unique on their own, these assessment approaches combined in combination with the content give the students an opportunity to develop essential skills whilst exploring their interests.

I am always improving ways to give valuable, effective feedback to students. I also try to integrate the latest educational technologies and run large courses smoothly. My primary focus though is on curriculum design with clear articulation of learning outcomes, expectations and skills acquired. I believe this will generate well-rounded, capable students who are aware of the skills they have developed. Whatever career choice or further study they continue onto, students can recognise the value of their ANU education.

**“We were up to date with our lecture content, learned amazing stuff about technologies being used in biology, had amazing guest lecturers come in and it was all thanks to Sue for organising it and making sure the course ran smoothly through the semester”**

Student

**“Sue is amazing. She put in a lot of effort and was willing to spend her personal time to teach me. I have actually learnt a lot from the course just from that, and I am very grateful”**

Student

# RECIPIENT

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Drs John Debs and Nick Robins

Research School of Physics & Engineering

ANU College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences (CPMS)

#### Citation

For radically innovative teaching practices in first year, incorporating elements of studio teaching, inquiry-based learning, and modern technology that motivate and inspire student learning.

#### Synopsis

As a team, Drs John Debs and Nick Robins use a technology-powered, research-led approach to teach physics. They utilise inquiry-based laboratory sessions, dramatic physics demonstrations, automated online homework, independent online surveys, social media, and web-enabled examinations to create an inspiring and motivating course environment. Students are taught not only the physics, but to ‘think like a physicist’ — a set of professional skills that are highly transferrable to other courses, areas of science, and life in general.

#### John and Nick’s approach to teaching and supporting student learning

John and Nick currently teach the Foundations of Physics (PHYS1001) first-year ‘service’ course at ANU, to students with backgrounds spanning engineering, medical science, chemistry, biology, math, as well as ‘non-science’. Their teaching philosophy stems from their experience that nothing inspires student learning, memory and motivation more than experiencing authentic ‘eureka’ moments. We can all relate to those moments in our youth when a teacher excited and surprised us with new information and ideas: the point where the pieces of an intellectual puzzle fit, or a difficult problem is suddenly solved by insight or inspiration. These pivotal points in a student’s learning drive their vision for physics education at ANU, which can be summarised in the Foundations of Physics motto: ‘Think like a physicist.’

Thinking like a physicist embodies an idea that applies to science, and arguably life in general: that when tackling problems, and entering the unknown, you must question, make quick estimates and consider your assumptions, build models, critique those models and follow through with evidence-based arguments.

At its essence, science is about experimenting with ideas to reinforce concepts, which is precisely the environment of John and Nick’s classroom. They aim to teach their students to be better problem solvers, and equip them with tools that will be useful for their future study and profession, be it scientific or otherwise. Strong evidence that their approach influences, inspires, and motivates students to learn includes unsolicited student feedback, recognition by their colleagues and peers, annually increasing student experience of learning and teaching scores, and the overwhelming enthusiasm students have both in the classroom, and online in the Foundations of Physics Facebook page.

“Throughout the course, the emphasis was on discovering and hypothesising for yourself why something worked...I now focus in everything I do on learning why something happens, instead of accepting provided answers.”

Student

“This group of dedicated teachers are extraordinary role models for us all.”

Dr Penny King

# RECIPIENT

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Associate Professor Tony Foley

ANU College of Law (CoL)

#### Citation

For sustained excellence in implementing the ANU College of Law's clinical legal education program which fosters independent learning and promotes reflective practice in future lawyers.

#### Synopsis

The traditional view is that studying law means acquiring vast bodies of knowledge and learning to 'think like a lawyer'. While this is true, it has profound ill effects on students' mental health (O'Brien, Tang, Hall 2011). Student learning capacities, particularly their ability to cultivate judgment are diminished and devalued. The distinctive contribution Associate Professor Tony Foley's teaching makes is to reaffirm students' faith in their own capacities through assessment and feedback that fosters independent learning and reflection.

#### Tony's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

The ANU College of Law emphasises research driven and experiential approaches to teaching. My teaching in the Clinical Youth Law Program is grounded in both. It is led by my research and grounded in experiential learning. Clinical Youth Law is one of a small suite of courses increasingly seen as 'signature elements' in an ANU law degree. Uniquely my course is embedded in an operational community legal practice – the ACT Youth Justice Centre. Students work with lawyers and have direct client access. My course is wrapped around and enriches these experiences.

The hallmark of my teaching has always been its assessment focus. Early in my Practical Legal Education teaching career I was introduced to Biggs' notion of constructive alignment. I understood that students construct meaning from their learning and for this to happen effectively I needed to align my course aims, activities and assessments in such a way that students actually 'do the things the objectives nominate' with my assessment testing to see how well they have done this. Understanding the principle was a 'road to Damascus' moment for me, but the changes to my teaching were necessarily much more incremental.

My second important discovery was developing a discussion-based approach to teaching that could facilitate independent learning about the ethical foundations and obligations of being a lawyer. My third discovery was the insight that if I was to instil the habits of reflection-in-action in soon-to-be lawyers I needed to develop their independent learning habits in a significant way.

I brought these guiding principles into my approach to assessment and feedback when I started teaching clinical programs. In clinical practice, students work alongside lawyers, assisting real clients with real legal problems. My challenge was to construct a learning environment to enhance this exposure which allowed

students to construct deeper meaning about what they are doing in a supportive way. I set up learning activities which allowed students to immerse themselves in thinking about the law in operation (asking them to consider 'is it just/unjust?', 'does it promote equality/inequality?') and what it means to be a lawyer (is the job of a lawyer 'to do some good? to make money? to protect people's rights? to contribute to justice?'). Thinking about these things is at heart a personal journey so it was all the more crucial to foster independent learning. My approach is to develop this strong reflective environment, where student can reflect together about their often highly emotive challenges.

**“In a law school environment sometimes too focused on competition, Tony brings to the spotlight the importance of student wellbeing and understanding the impact of law in the wider community... His contribution and commitment to social justice sets a true example of how students can make a real difference in promoting access to justice and equality.”**

Student

# RECIPIENT

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Dr Stephen Loy

School of Music  
ANU College of Arts & Social  
Sciences (CASS)

#### Citation

For sustained excellence in developing and implementing curricula in the fields of music theory, music history and cultural enquiry in music.

#### Synopsis

Dr Stephen Loy joined the ANU School of Music in 2010, teaching first-year music theory. Drawing on his expertise in diverse fields of musicological study, he has since developed and taught programs in music theory and music history, as well as developing themed interdisciplinary courses in the cultural study of music. In 2013, Stephen authored an application securing a Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Enhancement Grant to develop an online course in music skills for commencing first-year students.

#### Stephen's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Since arriving at the ANU School of Music, I have developed and taught courses in the fields of historical musicology, music theory and musicianship and cultural enquiry in music. This period of my teaching career has been one of significant personal development as a tertiary educator, as my understanding of effective course design and teaching approaches has evolved greatly in parallel with my expanding grasp of these distinct areas of enquiry in music.

As a lecturer, I believe that it is my responsibility to instil in my students a hunger for knowledge and understanding that will inform a critical and inquiring approach in them for the rest of their lives. The few short years that a person spends at university can be such a formative period that I see it as my duty to do all that I can to assist every student with whom I come into contact with to develop these qualities to the best of their ability. It is this fundamental belief that informs all that I do in my teaching at ANU.

It is my firm belief that my role as a lecturer is not so much as a conveyor or information, but as a facilitator of students' interest in and passion for the knowledge and skills that will assist their development towards becoming fully rounded musicians and scholars. I also believe that, when presented in the appropriate manner, it is the subject matter of a course that can best inspire students to continue to explore those ideas and topics that most interest them. It is the cultivation of intrinsic motivation and inspiration in my students which informs the development of curricula for all my courses, and it is something that has been recognised by students.

My teaching of musicology and music theory is grounded in an understanding of the social, historical and political

contexts that give rise to the repertoire under discussion, seeking to explore the complex relationships between various aspects of society and the music it created. This approach seeks not only to connect the music studied to its historical and cultural contexts, but also to take an interdisciplinary analytical approach that investigates specific aspects of musical style and structure that reflect these contexts. In addition to placing the musical material in a broader social context, this approach also facilitates a greater number of ways in which students are engaged with the material, a fundamentally important consideration when developing curricula.

**“This course was the most interesting, stimulating and illuminating subject I’ve ever done during my BA. There were countless strengths to the course, but the most notable would be Stephen Loy’s dedication to presenting the most engaging material possible.”**

Student

# SPECIAL COMMENDATION

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Ms Grazia Miccichè

School of Literature, Languages & Linguistics

ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Citation

For sustained commitment and demonstrated development of approaches to learning and teaching that motivate and inspire students to learn Italian language and culture.

#### Synopsis

Grazia Miccichè was appointed the lecturer of Italian language and culture at the ANU Program of Italian Studies by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her almost thirty-year-long teaching career has been fuelled by her desire to find new ways of engaging students in a journey of cultural and personal discovery.

Grazia has incorporated new technologies in her teaching methodology, while, at the same time, keeping focused on the importance of maintaining a passionate and compassionate dialogue with her students. Over the last couple of years, student evaluations for her courses have often reached an appreciation level of 100 per cent.

#### Grazia's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

My mission is to help my students develop their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills in Italian, and in doing so to nurture their curiosity toward the Italian culture. Ideally students get to the point that they are capable and desirous of integrating some of its diverse elements into their own culture.

When I organise my language courses, I see the classroom as the space where a community is born, where individuals interact in a process of sharing knowledge and where traditional and technology-based forms of learning are literally woven together. At ANU I have taken this approach further, by finding and creating opportunities to explore and bridge gaps between teaching Italian and students' learning Italian in the context of other disciplines. My willingness to take risks, to be innovative and to learn from my colleagues and students has led me to specialised language courses, including Italian for Opera Singers and Language of Institutions and Diplomacy in Italy.

In Italian for Opera Singers I integrated face-to-face lessons and tutorials with blended learning, by collecting content material in the Wattle Book, and by organising recording activities and grammar quizzes for my voice students.

In Language of Institutions and Diplomacy in Italy I aim to give students an experience of what it means to be a diplomat in Italy. We look at the knowledge of politics and law, while developing the students' language skills in the context of juridically-focused language. Using my colleagues from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs I had the opportunity to find those who were eager to share their knowledge and expertise from the sector in the course.

Throughout this course, I made intensive use of the available technology to transcend borders of time and place, but was always focused on the main goal: to create an ideal community of critical thinkers and peace-makers. I invited guest speakers to engage students with stories related to each topic of the political theory outline. Students listened

to many of these guests talk in Italian via Skype live delivery or YouTube time-deferred lectures. I integrated these talks with language skills development activities that involved the sharing of content summaries via online forums, wikis and listening skill development exercises. Students also engaged in a mock trilateral (Italy, Europe, Australia) congress on migration issues, where the students had to discuss the topic from three different points of view and come up with a final joint document. The outcome of this went beyond my expectations: the students took on the challenge and plunged into all the activities with curiosity and enthusiasm.

**“All the guest lectures were great, they made the course more like a proper seminar which I wanted to go to, as opposed to a lecture I had to go to.”**

Student

**“This acknowledgement reflects [Grazia's] engagement in re-shaping the teaching of our language, motivating also non-traditionally targeted students, such as opera lovers and international relations students, into Italian language learning.”**

Gianludovico De Martino, Italian Ambassador to Australia

# CANDIDATE

## Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning



### Ms Pauline Thai

ANU College of Law (CoL)

#### Citation

For influencing, motivating and inspiring students from across the undergraduate Law program to be engaged, active and independent learners.

#### Synopsis

Pauline Thai's 'infectious' passion for the law has motivated and inspired students in a range of courses spanning the undergraduate program in the ANU College of Law. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to student learning, Pauline was awarded the 2013 ANU Commendation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, the 2013 ANU College of Law Award for Teaching Excellence (Team Teaching) and the 2012 ANU College of Law Award for Teaching Excellence (Early Career Teaching).

#### Pauline's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

I use a number of different approaches to influence, motivate and inspire my students to be engaged, active and independent learners.

First, I encourage my students to reflect upon the social implications of legal rules

and institutions. In addition to learning the rules that constitute the body of law, I urge my students to question, to critique and to challenge those rules. In our classroom discussions, we consider not only what the law is, but also what the law should be. We analyse the social, historical and political context in which the law operates.

Second, I create a supportive learning environment in which all students are encouraged to be active learners and to exchange ideas in a robust, and respectful, manner. I encourage my students to view learning as a collective endeavour and explain that our learning experiences (both theirs and mine – I am a learner as well as a teacher in the classroom) will be enhanced if students participate in class discussions. I also engage my students by sharing my enthusiasm for the subject matter with them.

I provide students with a clear explanation of the key concepts in the course and give them a framework for navigating the finer details independently. I draw upon a range of examples to facilitate understanding of the key concepts.

I also let my students know that learning does not cease at the end of class.

I make myself readily available for discussions outside of class time. I also provide students with sufficient guidance to pursue points of particular interest independently.

**“Pauline always explained things in context which made me really see the link between politics, world events and the law”**

Labour Law student

**“She posed questions that allowed us to discuss and argue about relevant topics. She allowed us to explore different possibilities to come to the best conclusion.”**

Foundations of Australian Law student

# CANDIDATES FOR THE **Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating**

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**Ms Jun Imaki**

School of Culture, History & Languages  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

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**Mr Joshua Soo**

Research School of Economics  
ANU College of Business & Economics

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**Dr Rohan Nicol**

ANU School of Art  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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**Mr Tuan Phan**

Crawford School of Public Policy  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

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## RECIPIENT

# Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating



## Ms Jun Imaki

School of Culture, History & Languages

ANU College of Asia & the Pacific (CAP)

### Synopsis

Jun Imaki currently teaches Japanese as a second language in the School of Culture, History and Languages. Her expertise is in the field of applied linguistics with research on assessment design. She has extensive experience teaching Japanese at high school, secondary college extension, TAFE and university levels in Queensland and the ACT. Jun has been teaching various Japanese classes since 2007 at ANU, and is a dedicated teacher who brings research-led teaching methodologies into the classrooms, catering to student's needs to cultivate their language skills and knowledge of Japan.

### Jun's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Teachers can make students study for exams, but they cannot make them learn unless they want to learn – that is what I believe when I teach. In order for students to learn, they must enjoy the class, be interested, know what they

are studying and be actively engaged in class. I believe in the power of curiosity and personal engagement with new ideas and information, and in my tutorials I always try to foster student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning.

I endeavour to use practical examples when teaching grammar or expressions to increase students' interests and encourage student engagement. It is impossible for students to fully master Japanese grammar if they only have textbook explanations to rely upon. I believe students find it interesting if the sentences are related to their lives, rather than repeating and substituting a word from textbook example sentences.

Of course it is not enough for classes simply to be interesting, they must also help students to develop critical thinking skills and Japanese language proficiency. In my classes one of the major assessment tasks is writing essays. Topics are deliberately designed to be flexible so as to maximise student engagement, with students being able to choose a topic they are interested in researching and writing, rather than being forced to do something that may not appeal to them. In Written Japanese C, students can compare any aspects of Japanese and Australian culture. In Written Japanese D, they can write about anything they choose, so long as it relates to Japan. Topics from students in 2013 included differences between Indigenous religions in Japan and Australia, and the relevance of girls' university in Japan in the 21st century.

An indication of my ability to inspire students is the high percentage of students from my Year 12 class at the ANU Secondary College who continue to study Japanese after their graduation. 10 out of the 14 students from 2011 and 12 of the 20 students from the 2012 class are now studying Japanese at ANU, with several of these students currently studying, and performing strongly, in my third year university courses as first year students.

**“It has been an enormous pleasure and privilege to work alongside Jun the past several years, and I feel that I have learned as much from her as her students.”**

Dr Mark Gibeau

**“Jun displays enormous passion and enthusiasm in her teaching, inspiring and engaging students with her presence. Her use of real-world material in the classroom stimulates the curiosity of students and encourages their engagement with the language material.”**

Professor Andrew Walker

## RECIPIENT

# Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating



## Mr Joshua Soo

Research School of Economics  
ANU College of Business &  
Economics (CBE)

### Synopsis

Joshua Soo is an Associate Lecturer at the Research School of Economics and an ANU Honours student. He has consistently achieved excellent performance across large-sized courses.

Joshua inspires students to learn new materials by developing simple, creative and highly-interactive tutorials. Using the power of mind maps to reinforce learning, he keeps students engaged with cumulative learning.

Joshua stimulates students to become independent learners and encourages higher order thinking by developing problem-based curricula. Students describe him as 'fantastic, entertaining and caring'. Joshua's teaching excellence was recognised by the ANU College of Business and Economics Award for Excellence in Tutoring 2013.

### Joshua's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

I believe that it is vital to inspire and develop students' interest in the materials and ensure that they have a good grasp of the course content. To make theoretical economic models enticing, I use various simple techniques such as 'Chalk and Talk', mind maps, pictures, graphs and innovative props.

As economics involves a variety of conceptually challenging theories, I believe it is essential for students to see the big picture before the details. So, I integrate lecture and tutorial materials by providing a comprehensive lecture summary, including mind maps, before discussing the questions. This helps students to understand and reinforce key concepts and hence approach the tutorial questions better. Colours, nonlinear branches and graphics in mind maps have been proven to be very powerful in associating central ideas and sub-topics, thus assisting students in studying and revisiting key facts.

In motivating students to learn independently, I adopt the Self-Directed Learning approach. In this approach my role is as a mentor to guide and facilitate student learning so that each student will develop their own learning style. Furthermore, I highly encourage peer-assisted learning as collaboration strengthens students' understanding and consolidates their knowledge, which assists in longer memory retention.

The learning journey can be challenging, so I believe that it is vital to create a supportive environment where students can learn independently and obtain help when required. I am prepared to give them my time to maximise their learning and make them feel more prepared. I have a strong respect and empathy for postgraduates with full-time jobs, thus I introduced after-hours consultations, to enable them to obtain sufficient academic support.

I frequently reflect upon my teaching strategies and believe in the importance of listening to my students' opinions and needs for continuous improvement. More recently, I introduced a mid-semester teaching evaluation, to obtain and respond to students' feedback and suggestions.

**"I think Joshua has been the most enthusiastic and dedicated tutor I've ever known...He puts in so much effort in his teachings and makes things very clear and concise so that all his students are able to keep up. It has definitely been the greatest pleasure to be in his class..."**

Student

**"The reason Joshua does so well, is not technology or any kind of gimmick. It's because he knows what he is talking about and goes to an enormous amount of trouble to make sure students get the best possible learning experience"**

Professor Kieron Meagher, Director of Research School of Economics

# CANDIDATE

## Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating



### Dr Rohan Nicol

ANU School of Art  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences (CASS)

#### Synopsis

Dr Rohan Nicol is a professional artist, academic and curator with 15 years teaching experience. At the ANU School of Art he teaches students through the undergraduate program and supervises PhD research. He places emphasis on learning as a project of enquiry, encouraging students to independently build connections between core course material and issues or themes beyond the course. His approach provides students with an authentic and contextualised learning experience and his command of blended modes of teaching has established a benchmark for course offerings at the ANU School of Art and served as a blueprint for others to follow within the school.

#### Rohan's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

I facilitate student centred learning environments and strive to establish and maintain an expectation of engagement, where the course operates as a project of enquiry. These approaches enable

each student to cooperatively and collaboratively construct a personal understanding of the course material. The learning environment I describe aims to establish the cohort's skills as knowledge producers, empowering them to identify and articulate a critical stance and connections to issues and themes beyond the course.

My command of the subject matter and my classroom technique have been developed and refined over 15 years of teaching and forms the basis of my capacity to motivate and inspire students. Yet, in recent years I have expanded traditional modes of course delivery to incorporate information and communication technologies into the learning environment.

The Wattle platform at ANU has proven to be a powerful mechanism for me to establish agile course collateral that complements more traditional delivery methods. I have developed resources and content that makes use of a wide range of formats, providing new avenues for engaging with material. The result has been to dramatically improve students' experience of both their learning and my teaching.

My students are motivated and inspired by the clear currency of the material I provide. I ensure that the curriculum is in alignment with relevant course objectives, that it is practical, research-led, meticulously prepared and that the assessment mechanisms provide meaningful measures of their progress. The assessment of courses at the School of Art commonly employs a mid-semester 'review' and a final portfolio presentation for 'final assessment'. These events are clearly flagged events that the majority of the cohort is very familiar. However, I also place significant emphasis on feedback opportunities throughout the semester. Students participate in class 'crit-sessions'. These require students to speak about their work for a given task and everyone has the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the outcome. This is a rich learning experience for all and brings a wide range of perspectives to the evaluation of any given piece of work. This is an empowering, motivating

and inspiring experience for students and serves to build confidence, trust and a community of scholarship in the process of constructing their own understanding.

**"... he encouraged students to populate an online forum by sharing weekly posts. Personally, this gave me the freedom to learn independently about the field of study (new technologies and new designs/ creations), see what other students were interested in, and create dialogue with my peers."**

Student

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### Mr Tuan Phan

Crawford School of Public Policy  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific  
(CAP)

#### Synopsis

Tuan Phan has been tutoring at ANU for more than three years and most recently has been tutoring and instructing micro/macroeconomics courses at the Crawford School of Public Policy.

The students he tutors come from many countries and have diverse backgrounds. Bearing in mind the characteristics of the courses and the students, Tuan conducts all of his teaching and tutoring with the objectives of clarity and inspiration.

#### Tuan's approach to teaching and supporting student learning

Before each tutorial, I try to find out the best method to convey explanations for each question. I put myself into a student's position and ask myself "How to start, and then how to provide the answer in the clearest way? If my tutor explains this point in this way, will I fully understand? If not, how should the tutor improve the explanation?"

During tutorials, I use the simplest language and a step-by-step process to provide ideas and concepts. After each question, I ask students, "Is that clear?"

After clarifying problems, the next challenge in my tutoring is to provide a linkage between mathematical formulas and real world activities. I never delve too deeply into a complicated formula without telling a story about why we should do it or what the intuition of the math expression is. I believe tutorials are not only about understanding clearly and applying smoothly, but also about making the subject interesting to students, so that they have more incentive to study. Sometimes, a creative and interesting example will result in us remembering things for much longer than something learned in a textbook. I try to include students in the examples while incorporating a bit of humour. This helps students understand and remember, and it also makes the tutorials more exciting.

I believe economics, regardless of whether it is macro or micro, can be looked at through many everyday activities, from shopping to working, even dating. Therefore, thousands of up-to-date real life examples can be brought into lectures or tutorials for helping students understand theory and its applications. Sometimes I ask students to assume they were President or Prime Minister of Country A, and to think about how they would go about solving a particular problem, such as the 'non-coordination' game between China, the United States and the rest of the world in the negotiation on pollution reduction treaties. Through these examples/games, students can embed themselves in the current issues of the world economy.

I believe that when tutorial problems have been clarified and linked to real world issues in interesting ways, the inspiration will come naturally to students. Towards the end of each tutorial, students will then become more willing to explore further knowledge in the related field.

**"He is an extremely inspirational tutor, and one who makes a large contribution to student learning outcomes at ANU."**

Dr Paul Burke, Lecturer

**"He has humour and I find it very easy to understand the content of the course."**

Student

# CONTACT US

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