

Promoting Excellence
Centre for Learning & Teaching

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION 2022



Australian
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University



2022 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE 3

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CONGRATULATIONS 4

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE 6

Recipients

Professor Adrienne Nicotra and Dr Megan Head
Associate Professor Dale Roberts
Ms Karlee Johnston
Dr Stacey Ward (Early Career)

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING 32

Recipients

Associate Professor Geoff Warren and Dr Anna von Reibnitz
Dr Fiona Beck, Professor Kylie Catchpole and Ms Jenny Simmons
Dr Xuan Liang (Early Career)

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPERVISION 48

Recipients

Professor Hrvoje Tkalčić

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING 52

Recipients

Ms Marina Hirose
Mr Zhi Yang Tho
Mr Dixin Wu, Highly commended
Ms Shalom Chalson, Highly commended



View the videos of all applicants
on the CLT blog

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

The 2022 Vice Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education provide the ANU community with an appreciative platform for recognising outstanding educational contributions to student learning.

As profiled in this publication, all 42 candidates began this year's process as worthy nominees; bringing with them existing reputations as highly valued teachers, supervisors, tutors and/or demonstrators.

Given this talented pool of educators, a well-credentialed selection panel set about the challenging task of identifying this year's finalists. Their brief, supported by staff from CLT's Promoting Excellence Team, was to seek distinctive teaching stories that speak to our University's mission of educational excellence; and furthermore, can be used to exemplify teaching at its best and most inspiring.

As you'll meet in the following pages, we have arrived at a commendable list of enthusiastically refereed recipients; representing the qualities of teaching that academic peers admire, students recall as exceptional; and quite rightly, our community celebrates.

Promoting Excellence Team

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CONGRATULATIONS

Each year, the Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education are an opportunity for us to come together and celebrate the outstanding contributions of our educators at ANU. Behind every great student, is a great teacher.

Everyone has had a teacher who has inspired them to reach their potential. For me, one such Professor was Thomas Swihart at the University of Arizona. He gave me, a kid from the sticks, confidence in myself as he taught me much of the Astronomy and Physics which my career has been based on. In addition to time in class, I regularly went to his office and discussed everything from astronomy to politics with him. He was much more than just a professor to me – and not just to me, he nurtured a whole generation of my fellow students.

Our teachers, supervisors and educators inspire the next generation of experts and leaders. Their unwavering commitment to our students is what sets us apart and distinguishes us as one of the world's best universities.

This year, we have received 42 inspiring nominations for the 2022 Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education – recognising a diverse field of outstanding teachers, supervisors and educators from across our University.

I congratulate all the candidates and recipients for 2022 and I look forward to celebrating with you on the awards night.

Professor Brian P. Schmidt AC
Vice-Chancellor and President
2011 Nobel Prize (Physics)





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Asilata Bapat

Mathematical Sciences Institute, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Asilata Bapat is passionate about conveying the excitement and beauty of mathematics to her students via an interactive style of teaching. Her courses range from interactive large lectures to seminar-style “inquiry-based” or IBL classes. In her courses, she builds up complex mathematical concepts using copious examples and hands-on exploration. She encourages a positive and welcoming culture in her classes, guiding students towards constructive and respectful communication practices.

Teaching mathematics is a fine balancing act between maintaining precision in the content while simultaneously conveying the excitement and fun of the subject to the students. I teach example-driven courses, so that students get ample opportunity to really “play” with the content. I find active learning techniques such as inquiry-based learning, flipped classrooms and group work particularly effective in learning and teaching mathematics. I therefore design my classes and assessments with the aim of active engagement and learning. Discovering the aha moments on your own is the best part of doing mathematics, so I also throw in plenty of easter eggs for students to find!

Mathematics is not usually a solo endeavour. The most successful research projects are collaborative; moreover, solving problems with other people is more fun! I want my students to master the skill of engaging productively with others to solve problems. To this end, I incorporate group and oral activities in my courses whenever I can, to build communication and collaboration skills.

I aim to teach content that every student can appreciate, but that also has offshoots to challenge the strongest students in the course. I actively build bridges between the topics students learn in my course to the topics they learn throughout their degrees. This approach reinforces learning and highlights the cohesion of mathematics and connections to other subjects. It stretches students in new ways, providing little bursts of surprise when they see a forgotten topic come up again. I have found that students highly appreciate seeing these connections.

I design assessments with a similar underlying philosophy: ideally, each assessment should have at least one portion that appeals to and challenges each student in the class. In practice, this means designing assessments with several “layers” of tasks, such that each layer tests students on basic, intermediate and advanced understanding of the content.

“Asilata was an incredible teacher. She made learning the material so easy to understand because with any topic she started with the very basics to give us context, and not assuming that we know the basics already.”

Student comment

“I really enjoyed Asilata's method of teaching, I think writing as she explains and giving lots of examples definitely helped my learning.”

Student comment

CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Stephen Dann

Research School of Management, ANU College of Business & Economics

Synopsis: Stephen Dann's story is about using authentic assessment, lived experience and applied theory to create student-centric learning environments that withstand the challenges of digital delivery and pandemic enhanced semesters. Education in the 2020s is about putting content, community building and pedagogical support to the test under the unusual conditions of recent history while enabling student learning experience in a fully digital learning space.

I am the one who goes first. Be it as a member of ANU's inaugural cohort with the Jawun Indigenous Secondment Program, or historically as a PhD student in the 1990s looking into where this "Internet" curiosity would go, I am a front-line educator who steps forward to find out where the next uncharted pathway will lead for student learning journeys.

My teaching philosophy has been about trying new ideas, sharing the results, and giving my students space to explore with a sense of curiosity about technology. My teaching demonstrates my willingness to find a way to make a novel practice valuable to learning. My approach as a marketing lecturer is to embody the theory – encountering co-creation on the page as an idea of shared experiences is one thing, and to live the opportunity of creating something of mutual value with students (and students with each other) brings the theory to their lives through experiential learning.

Co-creation in my classroom is about embracing the assessment opportunities for authenticity, enabling real world

connections between students, and working with the audience to explore what we can learn together.

Embracing the new also has a mean backstory of going early – classroom videos and VHS tapes in the late 1990s, online lectures in Real Media in 2001, audio streaming MP3 classes in the early 2000s, and live streaming lectures to YouTube in 2016. Sometimes the pedagogy and technology outpaces the audience adoption, and at other times it has been a chance for students to get a head start on the wider world. Ultimately, it's always about finding a way to make the classroom more accessible for students – whether it be about providing downloadable files for rural access students with low bandwidth capacity alongside high-resolution streams for campus-based participants, or about putting content through Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to open the options for engagement in-room and between sessions, technology is always driven by student need.

My approach is driven by finding out "What does this button do? And will it do that twice? And how can it help bring different education opportunities to more students?" as technology refines our ability to make a difference to student lives.

"This course has changed me. It made me realise the importance of networks and the strength of a community. I never felt so close to my classmates, in my four years at university"

Student comment, 2020



RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Ms Karlee Johnston

ANU Medical School, ANU College of Health & Medicine

Synopsis: Karlee Johnston has revitalised and delivered a modern and comprehensive pharmacology curriculum for the ANU Medical School across all year levels following her appointment in 2018. Karlee is also the Chair of the Professionalism and Leadership (PAL) teaching committee in Phase 2 (years 3 and 4), where she works with an interdisciplinary team to develop and deliver professionalism and leadership teaching.

Having worked as a pharmacist clinically with doctors, I have always had a passion for medication safety, good prescribing practices and knowledge sharing. Taking on responsibility for the pharmacology curriculum in the Medical School was such a privilege, and I still feel an overwhelming responsibility to improve prescribing in the graduating medical students, but also to grow enthusiasm for pharmacology and professionalism, and to provide a safe and enjoyable learning environment. Due to the integrated nature of pharmacology, prescribing and professionalism in medicine, I actively engage with other educators to integrate these topics into their teaching, and I invite and encourage others to collaborate with me on my teaching.

Both prescribing and professionalism skills are critical skills for medical interns, and are noted to be skills graduates across Australia feel underprepared for when going into practice. The importance of providing the students with the best possible teaching and learning opportunities in these areas is crucial to the development of safe, effective and

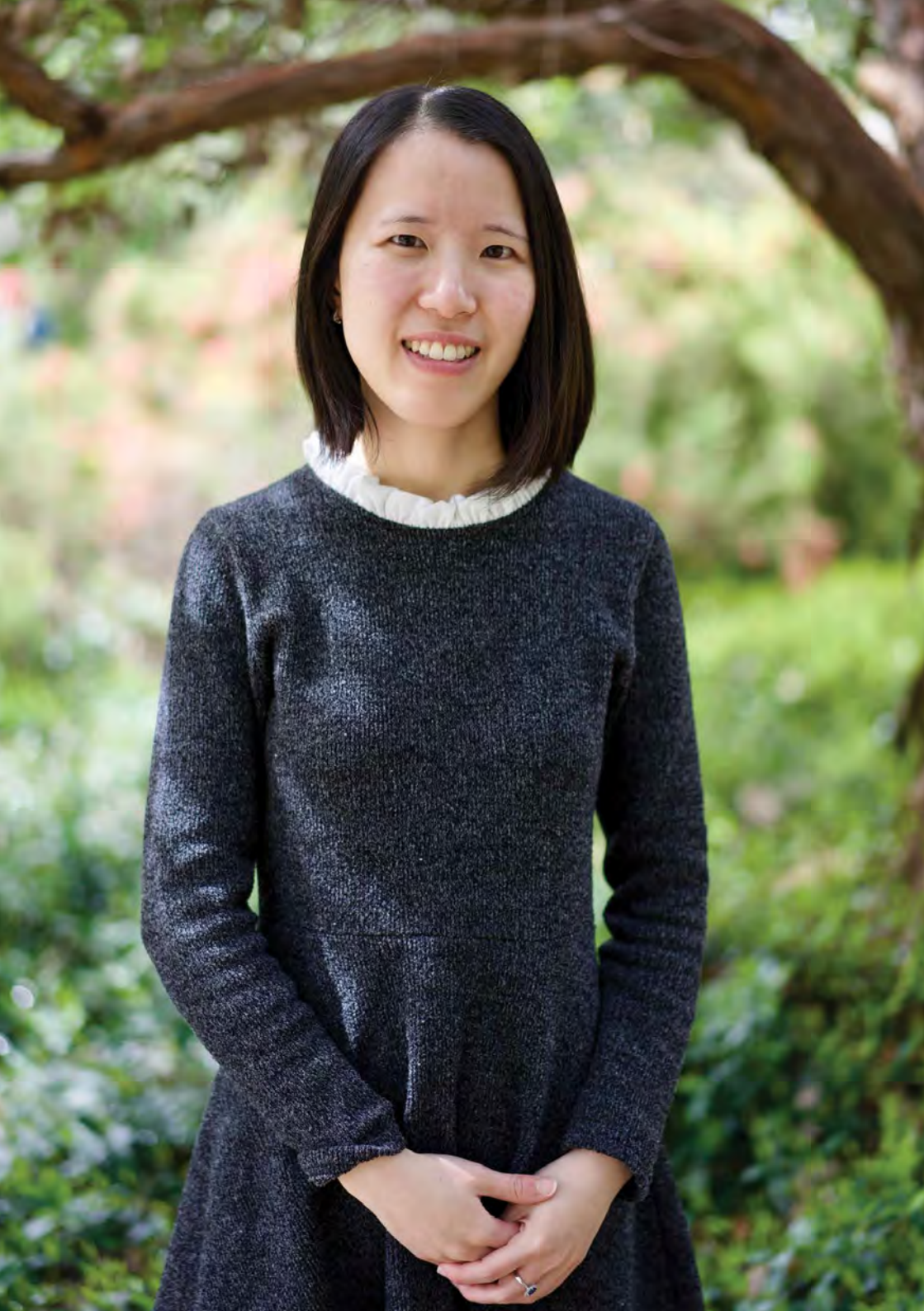
professional doctors – a responsibility I do not take lightly, and enjoy thoroughly. I believe that I have a responsibility to prepare the medical students for the challenges of their roles as doctors, by arming them with the skills to continuously learn and seek understanding, to know how to access and interpret information and to ultimately demonstrate professionalism and leadership in their roles as doctors.

My approach to student learning has come from the fact that I am not a doctor, and yet am teaching future doctors. This approach has enabled me to feel comfortable in not knowing all the answers, and instead to prioritise a safe and supportive environment for practical learning that values vulnerability and authenticity. Both professionalism and prescribing require practice and both topics suit an experiential learning environment. I encourage students to participate and learn by creating an environment that not only reflects the 'real life' practice of doctors but also supports students to feel safe in being wrong, to ask questions and to work together to solve problems and build confidence.

“Sometimes it is difficult to feel confident in asking a “stupid question”, however to you, there really isn't a “stupid question”. Thank you for always being happy to revisit the basics with us and providing a safe space for the students to explore together.”

Student comment





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Eunice Khoo

Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business and Economics

Synopsis: Dr Eunice Khoo is a passionate educator who shares her industry experience to connect students with the current business landscape. Her teaching encourages students to embrace intellectual challenges and share responsibility for their learning goals in a supportive environment. By emphasising student engagement, clarity of language and commercial relevance, and by ensuring an inclusive, vibrant and equitable learning environment, Eunice guides her students to develop powerful critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills.

My teaching philosophy centres around four important roles that I play as a teacher. First, teachers as facilitators. I am committed to creating a student-centred learning environment that promotes active deep learning, as opposed to surface learning. In the context of active deep learning, my main objective is to help students explore their potential and learning interests. Rather than the traditional approach of just imparting knowledge to the students, I guide and encourage students to find the answers themselves. I foster a safe, positive and productive learning environment where students are able to raise or answer questions without being criticised.

Second, teachers as enrichers. During tutorials, I promote class participation by encouraging students to express ideas and share thoughts. I facilitate small group discussions where students work in small teams to solve practice questions. These group discussions promote peer learning, collaboration and teamwork to facilitate learning and knowledge acquisition. During lectures, I design in-class online quizzes

to engage students. These quizzes provide avenues for me to use enrichment activities to help students turn the information they have learned during a lesson into useful knowledge.

Third, teachers as mentors. I believe in the importance of life-long learning that extends beyond the classroom. Therefore, I place special emphasis on integrating education with relevant real-world contexts to help students engage with the current business environment and develop marketable skills. By engaging in intellectual conversations with students about their personal interests, career paths and views on current affairs, I act as a mentor and provide advice and encouragement based on my experience and knowledge.

Finally, teachers as learners. I constantly reflect on my teaching practices, and seek guidance and advice from my mentors and colleagues to learn and improve my ways of teaching. The adoption of a student-like mindset helps me learn and incorporate new tools and strategies within the learning process to boost students' learning and to achieve better outcomes.

"I can feel your passion and enthusiasm in every lesson. You have further introduced us into the world of accounting and taught us to really think about the ideas rather than remembering the concept on the lecture slides. You have committed much of your own time to ensure that we learn and get the most out of the course."

Student email, 2021



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Associate Professor Joan Licata

Mathematical Sciences Institute, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Joan Licata (SFHEA) has taught in the Mathematical Sciences Institute since 2012. Joan is known for her enthusiasm, accessibility and passion for engagement. Her classes are shaped by her belief that both mathematics and teaching are people-centric activities.

Establishing a connection with my class and our shared interest in mathematics has always been at the heart of my approach to education. Mathematical learning is about developing new ways to think, and this requires time, energy and flexibility. I always ask my class to work hard, but, in the words of one student, learning should be 'productive struggle' rather than drudgery. Subject mastery and good pedagogy are essential, but I've always thought we might as well have fun along the way, too.

Building relationships with my students brings out the best in my teaching, so I'm delighted to be back in the classroom after a few semesters on Zoom. Remote teaching offered one silver lining: the challenge to try something new when my usual approaches were unavailable. Recognising that I want my students to see both mathematics and teaching as deeply human behaviours, I introduced new practices to teach alongside the technical content. My students now get a mix of the old (snacks at office hours, suggestions for maths tattoos) and the new (online forums for community building, intentional transparency about pedagogical choices).

When I applied to ANU, my teaching statement invoked circus skills as metaphors for my approach: juggling, tightrope and trapeze. While I still think

these images capture the dynamic energy and competing interests of the classroom, the circus version of my role today would now also include negotiating contracts, selling tickets and erecting the big top – less flashy jobs that are nevertheless essential for an audience to get the most from the show. With time and experience, I've found satisfaction in making a complicated institution like a university work for students. Good administration and efficient feedback mechanisms don't sound that exciting, but smooth systems and safety nets ensure that the show can go on, so everyone can enjoy the trapeze.

"Joan oozed enthusiasm – it was contagious!"

Student comment

"I loved that before teaching a concept, she would explain why it was important in the bigger picture, and how it's helpful to us."

Student comment



RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Professor Adrienne Nicotra, Dr Megan Head

Research School of Biology, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Adrienne Nicotra and Megan Head's innovative approach to Field Studies in Functional Ecology (FSFE) builds both scientific and professional skills. Adrienne brings extensive experience in developing courses that enhance learner autonomy. Early career educator, Megan, has a passion for promoting scientific literacy and integrity. Together they are developing the next generation of evolutionarily and ecologically literate professionals who understand research practice and have the soft skills needed to make a difference.

Through a series of intensive 'just in time' workshops accompanying an iterative and intense research cycle model – up to four 'rapid prototype' small-group projects in two weeks – FSFE uses cognitive apprenticeship pedagogy to enable students to absorb and develop a diverse skill set working alongside a team of expert researchers, often producing publication-quality research. Both Professor Nicotra and Dr Head are high impact researchers in evolutionary ecology.

Our intermediate-level course seeks to shift student social identity from 'student' to 'researcher' early in their undergraduate studies. Our advanced-level course offers more experienced students the opportunity to develop original independent research projects while also training them to be peer mentors for intermediate student groups. FSFE thus provides a unique and enriched educational experience that leads students through an intensive and structured process enabling them to explore their own insights as researchers and peers, yielding richness in both professional development and content delivery.

At the core of FSFE are research projects developed by students and supported by specialist researchers. These specialists assist, coach, model and advise, but do not determine the direction of the research. This approach ensures students feel ownership over their projects, as scientists do. The short, iterative nature of the projects relieves pressure on students to obtain perfection, and invokes personal evaluation, built around reflective practice.

The research projects are supported by a series of workshops which focus on building researcher identity and collaboration skills alongside technical skills in experimental design, data collection, management, analysis, interpretation and communication. By enabling our students to iteratively model the scientific process, while explicitly developing both 'soft' and 'hard' scientific skills, FSFE provides a unique educational experience that yields rich content delivery alongside professional skill development.

"I am consistently impressed by the course design which allows students autonomy to establish their own research project yet is guided by the support of an expert in the field which produces consistent learning outcomes through reliable data collection, analysis and presentation. The unique settings in which I have seen this course delivered motivates the students to learn about environments that are otherwise inaccessible for practical learning at the undergraduate level."

Ali Caitling, Course demonstrator



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Eva F Nisa

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

Synopsis: Dr Eva Nisa is a Lecturer in Anthropology and a passionate educator in Southeast Asian Studies and Religious Studies. Key to her successful teaching philosophy is the idea that students learn best in inclusive and safe environments. Dr Nisa believes that both students and teachers have responsibilities in the teaching and learning process. Students are co-participants in the process of knowledge production, rather than passive receivers.

Eva is an outstanding educator who believes that effective teaching is a continual process to be developed throughout one's teaching career. Her international teaching and learning experiences have cemented her belief that being an educator is a continuous journey of learning the craft of teaching. As a researcher with an ARC DECRA and ARC Discovery Project, she embodies the commitment of ANU to research-led teaching.

Dr Nisa's motivates and inspires students to learn by focusing on three aspects of learning: 1) understanding motivation in learning; 2) creating a democratic and safe environment; and 3) incorporating inclusive teaching practices. Additionally, teacher self-reflection is central to her teaching philosophy. Dr Nisa's reflective process happens throughout the span of her teaching journey, not only when she encounters challenges. Her reflection involves other parties, including students. She emphasises students are part of her 'course community' and highly values their feedback.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Dr Nisa has encouraged students to work in

collaboration with their peers. She believes that peer support, including co-studying, is beneficial for wellbeing. She has actively explored several online platforms to help students adapt to online learning and created an 'I want to learn' environment from the challenging COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Nisa uses more than eight interactive platforms, such as Padlet, Socrative, Poll Everywhere and Kahoot, for different teaching contexts and various specific goals. Her proficiency across a range of online platforms has inspired others. The CAP DES team invited her to share her learning strategies during their Education Showcase. She led a workshop on "Class Interaction and Engagement" and created a video tutorial with her students on how to use Padlet to create a more engaging and dynamic class. These efforts led her to win a CAP Dean's Commendation for Teaching Excellence in 2021.

"Truly, I think I've learned so much about history of Southeast Asia in your course than I have three years of my undergraduate degree. I think you provide such challenging scholarly debates and a non-orientalist perspective to the culture and politics of the region. I find that you're also a great lecturer and your enthusiasm radiates through the class. I hope to stay in touch and perhaps learn/ bounce ideas with you again some day."

Student email, 2021

CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Gen Nowak

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

Synopsis: Dr Gen Nowak is a Senior Lecturer in statistics. He brings a wealth of teaching and research experience gained through his work at the ANU and at leading universities overseas. Gen is passionate about teaching and committed to developing globally competitive graduates who have the skills and confidence to apply statistics across broad-ranging areas of economics, finance and scientific research. His interests include statistical applications in computational biology, cancer research and climate change.

My teaching philosophy centres on teaching students 'how to think' so that they can confidently approach any given statistical problem and arrive at methodologies for reaching a solution. I believe that the role of a university educator is to provide a learning environment where students gain the knowledge and skills to confidently take their next steps in their chosen field. For statistics students, their chosen field may be in further statistical research, or work in other scientifically related fields or in a profession that relies on statistical analysis. Given the globally competitive environment in which we operate, I also believe that students should be able to operate at a standard on par with graduates from other high-ranking universities around the world.

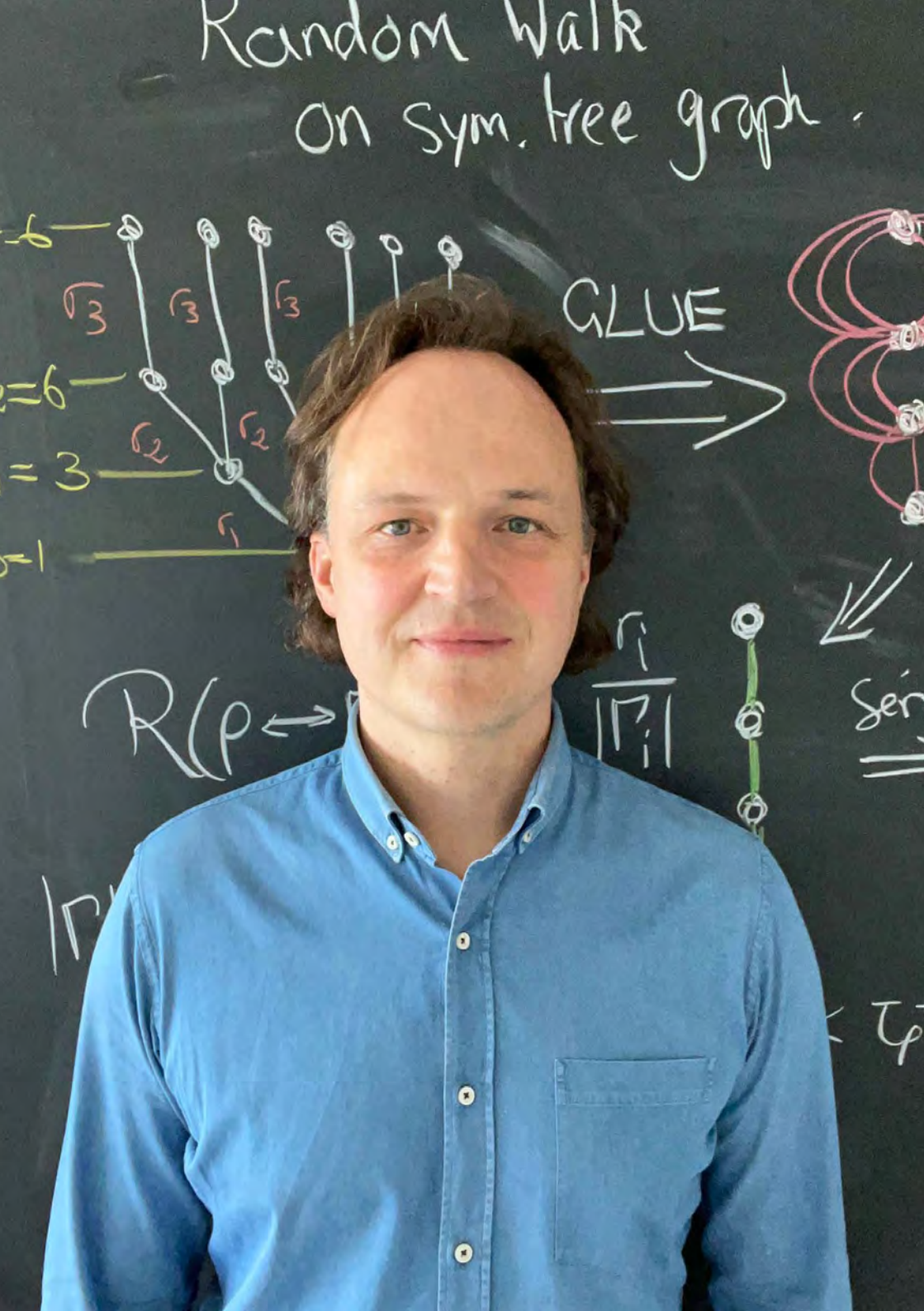
The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of innovation, adaptability and evaluation to ensure quality learning outcomes in a changing environment. To ensure that students continue to have a tangible, interactive and personalised learning experience,

I focus on applying a combination of innovative teaching methods and modes of delivery, with regular evaluation. I am influenced and driven by the successful teaching methods I experienced as an undergraduate and PhD student, as well as by the application of new methods that are adaptive to the diversity of the student body and changing needs of the current climate. Two key aspects of my teaching methodology that I regularly employ in my teaching are: 1) the use of diverse real-world examples to convey complex statistical concepts; and 2) the maximisation of opportunities for active student participation to motivate and expand learning. The use of practical examples motivates and inspires students by highlighting the real-world relevance of statistical analysis and provides an insight into the type of work they could be undertaking in the future. I apply a variety of techniques to engage my students and encourage active participation. My courses ensure that students gain the benefit of small group discussions, workshop style sessions and a question-and-answer based dialogue approach.

"This is literally one of the best mathematic-related courses that I enjoyed learning and understood the most in terms of practicality. The R assignment is a really good approach to apply the knowledge learnt in real world projects too."

Student comment





RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Associate Professor Dale Roberts

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

Synopsis: Dale Roberts is a mathematician specialising in probability theory. His deliberate style has evolved to 'humanise' his teaching by blending old-school mediums (live "chalk and talk" blackboard lectures and hand-written notes instead of slide decks) with modern technologies. This approach allows Dale to make his interactions more bidirectional, his teaching more personal, and his lecturing more dynamic.

Teaching Mathematics is hard, and therefore it is not surprising that there is always fierce discussion around how to teach the subject at all levels of the education system. If this subject area is to be effectively taught, I've come to the realisation that one can't just stand there and talk to slides, and students can't just sit there and listen. As our teaching transitions to digital delivery, this teaching method is made all the more difficult. So how does one fix the shortcomings of this modern lecturing approach?

Pondering this question made me start to suspect that Mathematics was taught on blackboards over centuries for a reason. The blackboard is an ideal medium: it allows you to tackle the formal mathematical material in an informal and dynamic way through sketches, drawings and calculations. Perhaps the theatre of a lecturer at the blackboard is what keeps the audience engaged. Photographer Jessica Wynne says: "It is almost like this interesting dance or performance as you watch these mathematicians and it is really beautiful". That is something I wanted to bring back to my teaching. It's

raw, emotional, personal, and unscripted as questions from the audience sometimes drive the lectures in unintended directions. Over the last ten years, I've actively transitioned from focusing on making beautiful slide decks to making my teaching more dynamic, artistic and raw.

I feel my time is best spent getting my hands dirty, solving mathematical exercises on the topics with the students, and digging as deeply as I can into the material so I can explain things in the clearest way possible. It's my belief that when the students watch me doing this every week, it encourages them to interact with the material as well, further promoting fluency, transfer and overall comprehension of the material.

"Dale is incredible. He is so knowledgeable about the subject matter and has such a knack for teaching"

Student comment

"Dale is definitely one of my favourite lecturers at ANU. He is so easy to approach with questions and he always asks for feedback from students to improve his teaching. He shows great respect to his students and his lectures are a pleasure to attend, every single one."

Student comment

CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Amanda Stuart, Aidan Hartshorn, Alison Simpson, Shane Herrington

School of Art & Design, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Synopsis: The School of Art & Design *Balawan* and *Buugang* Electives are the culmination of many dedicated minds, hearts and hands. They are made possible due to the generous contributions of First Nations contributors. These field-based courses provide students from across the ANU with meaningful learning opportunities that encompass the depth and vibrancy of Aboriginal culture. Key values of respect, reciprocity, truth telling and cultural safety are central to course objectives and emergent outreach programs.

diverse perspectives and approaches to the creative process results, as well as a rich academic 'gene pool'. The courses combine both undergraduate and postgraduate students, stimulating broader conversations and appreciation for different learning levels and capacities.

At the heart of these courses are the sustained collaborations with contemporary First Nations voices and an unequivocal commitment to including these perspectives – unfiltered. Alongside nuanced cultural material and truth telling opportunities, students frequently encounter challenging themes. Great care is taken to support their pastoral needs, along with individual academic learning requirements.

Field-based educational environments are acknowledged internationally as promoting transformational pedagogical learning opportunities. They cultivate community bonding and a learning culture of kindness, camaraderie and care. Learning first-hand from First Nations peoples in a safe environment has been described by long term collaborator Yuin artist Natalie Bateman as “living reconciliation”.

“Overall the experience was incredibly valuable, it was more than just a course it was knowledge that I will use for the rest of my life and a reminder to hold myself accountable to continue to learn about the country I live on and most importantly listen to First Nations voices to be the best ally I can.”

Student email, 2021

The Environment Studio's *Balawan* and *Buugang* Electives are unique in their repeat format, field-based delivery. They are co-designed with First Nations staff and collaborators who, alongside non-Indigenous contributors, engage students in culturally safe, respectful and, at times, challenging learning environments.

Camping on country, the students experience the potency of peer learning and course content directly from local, cultural knowledge holders. Such a format is not only intellectually invigorating, but also often personal and deeply motivating. It provides students the “breathing space” to reflect and creatively respond within a safe framework, frequently described as “life changing.”

This Studio provides proven opportunities for transformational learning, encouraging students to explore their own creative learning journeys in a multitude of ways. Students are drawn from a wide range of creative practices, spanning all visual arts workshops, as well as from the wider University. A healthy respect for



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr Nici Sweaney

Fenner School of Environment & Society, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Nici is passionate about inspiring learners to become the next generation of great thinkers and leaders, and is proud to have positively influenced the learning journey of thousands of students. She focuses on adopting innovative approaches to learning and increasing student engagement and is intensely passionate about teaching pedagogy. In 2020, Nici received the Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Education for Teaching Excellence.

Great science is embedded in a child-like wonder: the freedom and fascination to explore questions like 'where do rainbows come from?' and 'why do kangaroos hop?'. It is this freedom and fascination which made me fall in love with science—and my goal as a teacher is to ignite my students with the same curiosity. I aim to inspire my students with passion for their chosen field by displaying enthusiasm for learning, engaging students using innovative and research-led practices, and using evaluation and assessment strategies that encourage creative, collaborative and interdisciplinary thinking.

The University landscape is changing, and now more than ever we need to think creatively about how we deliver information and engage with our students. To meet these evolving needs, we need to move beyond traditional methods of content delivery and course assessment. I have been able to achieve this by adopting innovative approaches to my teaching: for example, by creating short, documentary style lecture videos that combine real-world footage, interviews, animation and music into everyday learning. These videos

engage students at double the rate of other pre-recorded lectures. I have also replaced traditional content-related exams and essays with group work that requires development of all-important soft skills, testing not only intellectual abilities but also creative talent, social communication and collaborative efforts. It is my goal to equip students with an appreciation for the connected, interdisciplinary nature of environmental science and an appreciation of the importance of a wide skill set to future success.

I also work to support and nurture mental health, believing that happy students are engaged students. For example, my students have regular stress management training, actively practicing skills in resilience and mindfulness. Our classrooms are sometimes even transformed into sound healing and meditation spaces. I work to bring a community spirit to my classes, encouraging socialising and networking as important tools to increase feelings of belonging.

I am an education fanatic. It is what I get excited about. The energy and enthusiasm I receive from students motivates me and drives me to continue to expand and grow as an educator, and to help others do the same.

"Your docu-style lectures have made my week! Thank you for putting so much thought into them to make online learning more engaging, and other students that I've spoken to absolutely loved them too!"

Student comment



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Mr Aaron Tang

Fenner School of Environment & Society, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Mr Aaron Tang is a PhD Scholar and co-convenes Climate Change: Science, Society, and Policy. Aaron focuses on using interactive activities to foster interdisciplinarity and practical problem solving and policymaking skills. Aaron completed the course Science, Society, and Policy in 2015 as an undergraduate, where he found a supportive mentor and a passion in climate. He now tries his best to pass on the same transformational experience.

Good teachers and good educations change lives. A supportive and simulating education environment can help students find their passions in life. I know because I lived it.

As a student, I never felt like I belonged at university. This changed when I met a passionate lecturer who helped me develop my interest in climate policy. He has since left the ANU, and now I try to pass on the same passion and support to my students.

The main principle in my teaching approach is experiential education. Students don't just want to read about or listen to how climate change is difficult. They want to have a go at solving complex and interdisciplinary problems. My classes include activities ranging from talking to climate deniers, op-ed writing, and role playing as a climate diplomat making a new climate treaty (what we call 'The Canberra Agreement'). These activities put students in the same complex problem-solving environments they would face in real life, directly developing the interdisciplinary skills necessary to tackle the climate crisis. These are skills that can only be developed through interaction and experience.

Part of embracing complexity also involves embracing the interdisciplinary challenges of climate change. Understanding climate change involves understanding climate science, politics, policy, and so much more. However, I would contend that there is no one on Earth who individually has the interdisciplinary knowledge to cover the myriad of topics important in climate.

Rather, I make sure to be explicit in what I don't know, and endeavour to include other valuable perspectives not usually represented in university contexts. For example, I am knowledgeable about the general theory and international climate politics and policy, but I do not have the lived policymaking experience of a real-life climate diplomat. The solution? Get a high-ranking Australian diplomat to directly brainstorm policy strategy and ideas with students. These are the interactive and interdisciplinary principles that drive my teaching approach. These are the types of experiences that helped me find my passion, and I hope my students can say the same.

"Aaron is one of the finest early career educators I've seen. He has taken on a vital and challenging course, and has delivered it to the highest standards"

Saul Cunningham, Fenner School Director

"Aaron is so fun and I love the passion and energy he brings to the lectures and workshops...Also his memes are so dorky but I love them."

Student comment, SELT 2019





RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE EARLY CAREER

Dr Stacey Ward

Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts & Social Sciences

Synopsis: Stacey is a cat mother, lover of Star Trek, and Lecturer in Biological Anthropology. She joined the ANU in November 2020, where she teaches courses in human skeletal analysis. Stacey draws on her deep understanding of the skills and scholarship of her field, accrued through years of study and fieldwork, to provide her students with an authentic and engaging education in this discipline.

As a bioarchaeologist, I study human skeletal remains from archaeological sites to discover how people lived in the ancient past. The cornerstone of bioarchaeology is recognising that all people exist in a rich context of societal, cultural, biological and environmental influences, and that these factors all interact to shape lived experiences. As a bioarchaeologist, I also explore the themes of growth and development, and adaptation and innovation.

I leverage these unique perspectives in my role as an educator to provide teaching excellence. My understanding of context enables me to see that learning is a vulnerable process. To support learners on their journey through this messy business, I create an engaging and inspiring learning environment. I do this by embracing realness, enthusiasm and imperfection. I grow and develop my courses over time through innovative course and resource design; as a designer, I draw on interactive teaching techniques to include students as partners in learning, enabling them to grow and develop into independent thinkers. I proactively seek evaluation and use this as part of an on-going, iterative process

of adaptation; this process ensures that my courses continually meet the needs of today's students. I am working to lead and innovate education in my field through research and creative resource design, and, as bioarchaeology education is an extremely underexplored topic, this work stands to make a significant contribution to my discipline.

My educational approach is founded upon equitable core beliefs: Everyone deserves respect, understanding and the opportunity to learn, yet these will all look different for everyone.

“Dr Ward made a significant difference in my experience this semester – she was approachable, helpful, understanding and extremely knowledgeable. Her capacity to explain complex ideas and concepts in a way that is easily understandable was impressive.”

Student comment, SELT, S1 2022

“Stacey was amazing!! Always created an interesting and supportive learning environment. Adapted to the online learning environment very well and was so helpful in the labs! I was always excited to join class as Stacey has such a passion for her work, and treated students like her peers. So grateful to have taken this course - was such a valuable experience.”

Student comment, SELT, S2, 2021

RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Fiona Beck, Professor Kylie Catchpole, Ms Jenny Simmons

School of Engineering, ANU College of Engineering, Computing and Cybernetics

Synopsis: How do you convert a large, highly interactive introductory engineering course so it can be delivered remotely? Thinking creatively about how to provide the key elements of interaction, accountability and support for our students during the COVID years improved student learning and experience. We built in flexibility and designed high quality on-campus experiences to make Discovering Engineering a fun, welcoming and supportive introduction to both engineering and university.

Flagship engineering course at ANU, *Discovering Engineering*, or 'Disco', encourages students to think like engineers by practicing a range of professional, design and technical skills. At the heart of Disco is the Rover project: a hands-on, 'design, build and test' group project that is challenging but achievable for our varied first-year cohort. The teaching and learning activities deliberately step students through a structured process to solve complex design problems and to develop as independent learners.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit us, the idea of transferring to remote learning was terrifying for such a large, hands-on course. Working together with a strong teaching team, we brainstormed ways to provide our students with the critical elements of interaction, accountability and support. A key innovation was the introduction of project group updates which gave students a chance to report on progress and get feedback from their tutor. Equally important was transparency and

letting our students know that our priority was supporting their learning.

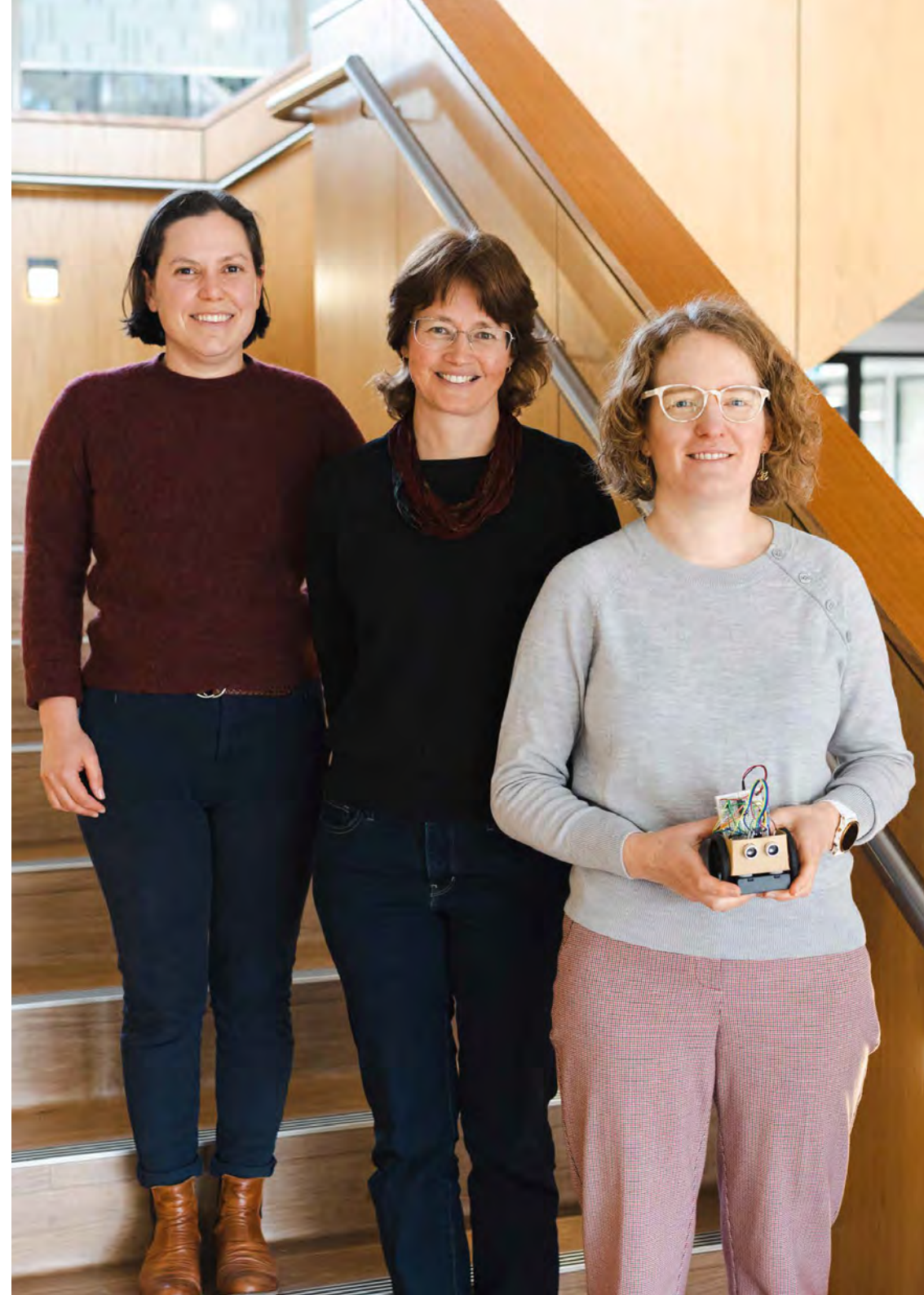
With the documented rise in stress and other mental health issues in our students, as well as a higher instance of illness, we designed assessment and learning activities to be flexible and to support the transition to university. We deliberately incorporated foundational skills for learning and critical thinking into the content and assessment of the course that will be required through university and beyond. Students who were struggling were systematically identified and offered extra guidance before they fell too far behind.

When we could invite students back onto campus, we looked for ways we could provide high-quality, in-person experiences that were engaging and fun. We developed interactive, skill-building workshops students enjoyed attending, and leveraged them to showcase the creativity of our students and our philosophy of teaching and learning engineering at the ANU.

Transitioning a large and highly interactive course during COVID required creative thinking and dedication from the teaching team, but the changes have strengthened and improved the course and resulted in high engagement in on-campus activities and feedback that shows students feel supported and inspired to keep on learning.

"It was good fun, very focused, and allowed for a lot of practical learning very quickly."

Student comment, SELT, 2021





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Aaron Bruhn, Ms Lucy Yunxi Hu

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

Synopsis: Aaron Bruhn is a senior lecturer in Actuarial Studies within the Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics (RSFAS), College of Business and Economics (CBE). With prior experience as an actuary and principal adviser, and a current actuarial role within Government, he brings a depth of experience to his teaching role. Lucy Hu is an Associate Lecturer and PhD candidate within RSFAS, CBE. She has taught a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses whilst at ANU, using innovative and interactive educational experiences.

The subject of *Actuarial Control Cycle 1* is one of two subjects making up the 'flagship' professional actuarial course for the seven Australian universities who offer actuarial studies. For various reasons, this course provides a genuine challenge to many high-achieving students. Its emphasis on real-world context, the adaption of technical tools to applied problems, and the need for a high standard of performance (distinction grade) to attain professional recognition from the Actuaries Institute, gives it a reputation as a difficult subject. Despite this, and despite the challenges of offering the course outside of a physical classroom which the course had previously been built around due to the range of interactive in-person activities, student feedback has continued to be remarkably strong and favourable.

A notable feature of the course since 2014 is its relatively high hours of class contact time (5 hours each week, pre-COVID), with lectures, in-class activities, a swathe of guest speakers from industry, and applied

workshops more recently added into the mix as an additional enhancement. Lucy Hu has assisted significantly with the course as a deliberate teaching enhancement since 2018, where she began to produce and present workshops. In response to COVID and the anticipated benefit of even more applied problems to prompt thinking and interaction as part of virtual or distance learning, the quantum of workshops was deliberately increased in 2021 to eight, and then to nine in 2022. The workshops are not standard tutorials, but generally consist of 1) a series of short questions to supplement key learning outcomes that require a deep knowledge of how the financial services industry works, and 2) a descriptive scenario for which students need to understand, then construct, a range of possible approaches to address the problem presented in the scenario, and then discuss, defend and adapt their approach in line with feedback.

"Your students' contribution during their internship was very helpful to us and greatly appreciated. You're obviously preparing an excellent crop of actuaries of the future!"

Student comment

"The workshop... made the class engaging and fun. The workshop convenor knew the content well and added valuable discussion to the topics covered which helped to stimulate our learning."

Student comment



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Professor Jolyon Ford

Law School, ANU College of Law

Synopsis: Jolyon Ford has tried to revitalise traditional large-group compulsory law subjects sometimes perceived as boring 'must-do' subjects. He has done this by introducing innovations that foster more active and interactive learning among first-year students. These have included appealing online pre-lecture materials that help guide learning and free up in-lecture time, in-lecture polling exercises, and new assessed group-work – still very rare in core subjects in Australian law schools.

Overall, passion for teaching is no substitute for preparation and considered design. For me this includes the design of assessment and formative feedback. My course is the first one that most law students do. The vast majority of those studying for ANU professional degrees are undergraduate students in their first year out of high school. My aim has been to promote – right at the start of students' law studies – the habit of students taking responsibility for their own learning. I have done this by drawing readily on educational design expertise so as to introduce activities, resources and assessments that support more motivated, engaged self-learning.

At the same time, I have sought to change the lecture delivery model heavily used in law schools by experimenting with opportunities for more interactive as well as peer-to-peer co-learning. The latter includes both in-class non-assessed activities (e.g. 'live' polling where students, from their own devices, input a choice on an issue or scenario, typically after discussing with those nearby) and out-of-

class assessed group work. Group work for marks is very uncommon in early-year undergraduate law, which is typically characterised by expectations that law school is or should be competitive and individualistic. I draw on studies showing that group work enhances learning outcomes (both content and skills), noting that employer surveys value such exposure. During COVID, built-in group work may have helped students feel less isolated.

I privilege active student self-construction of key threshold concepts instead of the conventional content-heavy or caselaw-heavy approach of law school compulsory subjects. Our main role as educators of law is to develop legal problem-solving skills. But I see my role as moving students from seeing law as a set of given statements or 'series of rules' in force at any one time to understanding its more critical perspectives using key concepts: helping students to synthesise knowledge and apply it to new contexts, to distinguish situations, to reason by analogy, to seek patterns and to find golden threads in high-volume materials. Overall my approach is to encourage contextual awareness, being comfortable with uncertainty or complexity, and reflection on the societal needs to which law ought to respond.

"... a master of planning, anticipation, responsiveness, experimentation and reflection ... in a creative and inspirational manner..."

SFHEA Assessor



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Katrina Grant, Dr Terhi Nurmikko-Fuller

Centre for Digital Humanities Research, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Synopsis: As a team, Katrina Grant and Terhi Nurmikko-Fuller have developed an interdisciplinary education program in Digital Humanities (DH) that is student-focused, research-led and publicly engaged. They teach students to develop expertise in computational methods and critical evaluation of the digital world from a humanities perspective. Students are encouraged to engage with each other, and to see themselves as experts and future leaders in new fields across academia and industry.

Our primary goals as educators are to promote diversity and break down barriers for all students pursuing expertise in digital methods. Students are actively encouraged to see themselves as researchers, co-creators and project developers. They work in diverse teams (cultural and linguistic backgrounds, degree programs, gender). This approach instils individual confidence and creates diverse cohorts of generous and collaborative peer-to-peer learners who value diverse skills, learn through practice and project-building as well as theory, and engage with the broader public.

DH is a new field that is constantly changing and evolving. Our approach to teaching is flexible and responsive to the industries in which we work: it is inspired by the successful co-creation approaches GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) community partnerships and Library Labs utilise. Rather than being assigned tasks or specifications, students pitch wholly new project ideas; by doing so, we expose students to core DH teaching values of experimentation, play and risk-

taking. In our courses, students work on real-world collections data to develop new skills, manage project delivery, and ultimately present a proof-of-concept of a digital project (game, podcast, app, etc) to the external cultural heritage sector partner institution. Since 2019 we have successfully run courses in collaboration with the National Museum of Australia, the British Library (UK) and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.

We apply project-focused methods backed up by pedagogical research. This reflects our observation that students need a rich context to apply digital skills and to understand the value of teamwork. For us, teaching forms part of research practice and enables us to build an active new community of research. Our pedagogy is 'student-led': we learn from our students too.

Our students have opportunities to directly experience the challenges and creativity required to conceptualise, develop and present digital projects for cultural institutions. In short, we equip them with skills (both soft and hard) that will prepare them for careers and futures beyond graduation.

"To have developed something that is seen as valuable for the National Museum of Australia is a testament to the quality of teacher/mentorship provided by Katrina and Terhi in the Digital Humanities department at ANU."

Alumni comment

RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING – EARLY CAREER

Dr Xuan Liang

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

Synopsis: Aiming to educate and foster future data scientists, Dr Liang focuses on raising students' awareness of data, developing their statistical thinking and analytical ability, and preparing them for future careers in the big data era. Dr Liang employs an array of tailored teaching methods, including motivating students' interest and contextualising statistical concepts within browser-based apps, illustrating data analytical techniques via modern software, and communicating with students in an engaging learning environment.

To embrace the world of big data, the demands of data scientists and data analytical skills are increasing all over the world. Proper implementation of statistical analysis first requires a solid understanding of statistical concepts and methodologies. To help students better understand complex statistical concepts and theories via increasing their hands-on experience of numerical experiments and visualisation, I developed interactive browser-based apps by Shiny. The R package, Shiny, is used to build interactive web apps straight from R and has been employed to facilitate research-informed learning and teaching in statistics. The advantage of Shiny apps is that students can visually and interactively conduct numerical experiments with simple clicks or by moving sliders for different settings; students can then explore the results interactively. Related exercises are also designed in the app following my lecture demonstrations, so students can have more self-practice after class.

Another important aspect for data analysis is to master a statistical programming language. However, students expressed concerns about using programming due to their lack of training. To make it easier for students to understand the statistical techniques and R programming, I wrote my lecture notes in R Markdown—an R package which can embed R programming in high-quality documents. The use of R Markdown allows mathematical formulae, R commands, coding comments and output, to all be shown in the same slide, which leads to more organised lecture slides. Since the statistical output is automatically embedded in my lecture notes, it immediately gives students a sense of what certain R programming commands are for and how they can be connected to data analysis. In my course, students gained a lot of confidence and had a lot of joy in statistical analysis with R programming. Students also acknowledged the unique feature of R Markdown, as introduced in my course, and attempted to use R Markdown to conduct data analysis in their assignments, even for their other courses.

“Xuan teaches us useful skills like R Markdown. This is a skill that goes beyond the scope of the course. The ability to generate an automatic report from a calculation will be extremely useful in real life. I can see myself using this skill to produce a report such as Monthly Official Statistics News quickly and accurately in my work as a statistician at the office.”

Student comment, 2021



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Lillian Smyth, Associate Professor Diana Perriman, Associate Professor Krisztina Valter

ANU Medical School, ANU College of Health & Medicine

Synopsis: The Advanced Research Project (ARP) team has designed and delivered an innovative research-training course that uses a combination of skills training, peer collaboration and mentoring from active researchers.

The *Advanced Research Project* is a course offered to students undertaking the Doctor of Medicine and Surgery (MChD). The ARP is project-based and students complete the course in parallel with their core medical studies. The course has two core innovative practices:

- A focus on peer review, peer mentoring and collaborative engagement with fellow students.
- A mentorship model, wherein the students have access to advice, support and facilitation from researchers in medical science, clinical science and social science.

The ARP is led by a team of active researchers experienced in undergraduate and higher degree research supervision as well as a range of methods and work in different research disciplines. The course leverages this combined knowledge and experience to deliver research-led education. This cross-disciplinary, mixed-methods team also serves to prepare students for the interdisciplinary nature of both medical practice and clinical research.

The team co-teach this course, as a way of ensuring students have access to a mentor with expertise in their type of research, if not in their exact topic. The three of us provide formal teaching, as well as act as a touch point for questions, concerns and

advice. We provide mentorship on a range of issues including: discipline expectations, writing strategies, communication strategies, research question development, research design and research methods. We advise students on how to choose a journal or conference, how to manage relationships with supervisors and research teams, how to salvage a floundering project and what to do when the study doesn't work. We also provide pastoral support and advice on how students can develop professional and collaborative skills. The students really appreciate the availability of this mentoring, on top of both the traditional teaching and peer collaboration available in the course.

In addition, the students themselves bring a rich array of experience; many have prior research experience including PhDs. Therefore, the peer-to-peer experience is crucial in promoting energy, enquiry and adaptation. Alongside incidental peer feedback and mentoring, we also explicitly facilitate peer collaboration through formative assessment items that students complete. Each of their submissions receive feedback from both staff and students in a collaborative workshop environment.

"[Through] a collaborative environment, we have all been supported to produce creative and high-quality research. It also fostered an environment where students, passionate about research, could come together to collaborate, share ideas and support each other through the trials and tribulations of biomedical research."

Student comment, 2020





RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Anna von Reibnitz and Associate Professor Geoff Warren

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

Synopsis: Anna von Reibnitz and Geoff Warren designed and deliver the ANU *Student Managed Fund (SMF)*—a year-long course in which students manage endowment funds of around \$0.7million supporting the RSFAS Student Managed Fund Equity Scholarship. The SMF is structured as a complete investment organisation with students taking responsibility for all facets of the operations. The experience prepares students to be effective employees and ultimately leaders in the business world.

The SMF is a project-based learning initiative designed to build a scaffold of experiences mirroring the real world of finance, enabling students to emerge job-ready. By empowering students to take responsibility for managing actual money for a philanthropic purpose, the Fund provides much more than practical experience and an opportunity to hone technical skills. Involvement in the Fund also cultivates vital relationship skills such as team collaboration and communication.

Activities occur under four sub-teams led by a student Chief Investment Officer and team heads. Students join as junior analysts, gaining hands-on investment experience. They then advance to senior positions where they take responsibility for the Fund and help train the juniors, thus developing leadership and mentoring skills. Tasks include investment research and risk management; Students also gain experience in pitching recommendations, producing reports and communicating with external parties. Most output is publicly released on the SMF website, Facebook

and LinkedIn. Students engage in ongoing self-and peer-reflection that feeds into assessment, and interact with an Investment Advisory Committee of industry experts who provide valuable business insights and linkages.

As conveners, we act as mentors who give guidance and advice. We each bring unique skills. Geoff brings extensive investment experience as a researcher and professional who has worked for over two decades in the markets, holding senior roles in investment banking and fund management. Anna is an accomplished educator who has received national recognition for fostering active and authentic learning, culminating in a 2017 Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) Award for Teaching Excellence.

The SMF is having profound impacts on student learning, careers and personal development. The impact is reflected in teaching and course evaluations: the SMF has received 100% student agreement ratings in all categories of every evaluation since its creation in 2017.

“Students participating in the Fund will not only come out with a better understanding of how real-life investment works through managing a slice of the ANU endowment funds, but they will also be well-equipped for the challenges of our modern workforce.”

ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Schmidt

CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Dr Wei Zeng

Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business and Economics

Synopsis: Wei Zeng's mission is to equip students with accounting knowledge and practices that build on accounting as the language of business. Her research and work experience are sources for her lasting enthusiasm and approaches to teaching management accounting. Wei desires to adapt course design to dynamic learning environments to align with the practice-oriented nature of management accounting knowledge, the need of students to prepare for their careers, and the transition to a hybrid teaching mode.

My teaching philosophy is based on three pillars: focusing on the nature of accounting knowledge; involving students in the process of sharing accounting knowledge; and, preparing students for careers in which they can transform society for a better future.

Management accounting, by nature, is a language of business operation and involves practices for internal users of an organisation to facilitate their decision-making and shape employees' efforts in pursuit of organisational goals. Such management accounting knowledge is a base for adopting a combination of contextual learning, learner-centered and learning-as-becoming approaches in teaching. The three approaches enable me to engage students in sharing knowledge and to prepare students for their careers.

The contextual learning approach encourages teachers to bring the real world into the classroom so students can learn in context and apply the knowledge to real-world scenarios. For example, I use real-life examples to make elusive

topics less challenging for students. The learner-centered approach places students at the center of the learning process and encourages self-directed learning. For instance, my enthusiasm for the subject transfers to students, and my passion for student learning motivates students to learn. Finally, the learning-as-becoming approach encourages teachers to consider students as "evolving professionals". For example, using case studies engages students in tackling real-life tasks where they see themselves as "evolving professionals".

The three pillars of my teaching philosophy have shaped my teaching persona and course development. At the core of my teaching persona is my enthusiasm for student learning and aim to create an empathetic learning environment, which supports my mission to equip students with accounting knowledge and practices. The core of the course development involves an array of teaching strategies for effective student engagement in emerging circumstances, which supports my desire to adapt course design to dynamic learning environments.

“Wei brings high energy and enthusiasm for the subject to the class...Wei loves management accounting, and her teaching style is very passionate and encouraging.”

Student comment, SELT, 2019



CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPERVISION

Ms Anne McNaughton

Law School, ANU College of Law

Synopsis: Anne McNaughton's approach to supervision goes beyond the traditional supervision of a thesis to encompass activities that develop skills of critical thinking and independent research suitable to a variety of careers including that of an academic. Her approach recognises that professional life in the 21st century requires the ability to adjust the depth and detail of research and analysis according to the task at hand.

Anne McNaughton's philosophy of supervision derives from her recognition that supervision occupies a unique and privileged space within academia. It is based on three central pillars: respect for the individual; an abiding concern for academic integrity and rigour; and, trust in students' willingness to challenge themselves in their learning trajectories. She tailors her interactive strategies to each individual student, stimulating their intellectual curiosity while generating a courageous environment within which each student feels safe to experiment with ideas and to make honourable mistakes and learn from them.

Common to all such work is rigorous attention to detail; correct use and acknowledgement of sources and authorities; an ability to work across disciplines as well as within them; and, increasingly, an ability to work with academics and non-academic experts in a transdisciplinary environment. In the university of the 21st century, students taking the traditional academic pathway represent a minority of the overall student cohort as the majority of students engage

with research projects of varying sizes and for diverse purposes. Anne McNaughton recognises this reality by adapting her strategies and approach to supervision to the idiosyncratic needs of each student thus facilitating the student's maximum development as an independent, resilient and critical thinker who is able to adapt to multiple professional and academic environments.

The supervisory relationship is (or should be) a transformative one for both student and supervisor. Ideally, the student will not only morph from a subject matter novice to a specialist, but will also develop confidence and maturity as well as humility with respect to their own abilities, judgement and prowess. With multitudinous information and data freely available it is critical that students develop, hone and have confidence in their capacity to recognise and use authoritative sources; to think critically about their research project, however small or large; and, to develop the written and oral skills to make complex ideas accessible to an educated, yet non-expert audience. Inculcating such skills in students whose future pathways lie beyond the academy is, arguably, at least if not more important than for those seeking an academic career.

"Ms McNaughton has the ability to ask stimulating questions and actively creates an open and safe environment in which students are able to explore their own ideas and phrase their own answers to their research questions."

Jasper Verstappen, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Transboundary Legal Studies, University of Groningen, the Netherlands.



RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPERVISION

Professor Hrvoje Tkalčić

Research School of Earth Sciences, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Hrvoje Tkalčić is a dedicated educator and a follower of “the research-driven education” that has epitomised the essence of the Australian National University’s existence in the past years. Hrvoje’s record in supervising students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds is outstanding. His students have been consistently contributing new discoveries that advance the field of Earth and Planetary sciences. The experiences the students have in his research group last for a lifetime.

Working with students is at the core of my academic research life, and if approached with thoughtfulness and care, it is a path that leads to scientific discovery. Without that component, my life call to contribute to humankind as an innovative scientist making breakthrough discoveries would not be completed to its full potential, and, consequently, I would not be fulfilled as a person.

From my early days at the ANU, I adopted a simple philosophy in conjunction with the supervision: the students were never “my” students in the possessive sense of that word, but early career colleagues who came from distant corners of the world, with different mentalities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, genders and beliefs, often from the developing countries, to work with me on what are truly fascinating research topics. In my eyes, they have always been here to share the excitement of research and progress in understanding what the Earth is made of and how it works. I observe them like a parent observes a child, recognising their strengths and weaknesses and trying to

nurture future well-rounded scientists. I try to lead by example: encourage them, and be their support in the times in which they need it. I am the most critical voice when I feel it is necessary, but I am also the first to slice through the celebratory cake when they are successful.

I spend considerable time observing students—I never hire them for a project. Being fully aware of the relatively short duration of the Australian PhD, I still give students the time to discover the problem they genuinely want to work on. In other words, I find a way to bring projects to them. Taking a high-risk project presents a more difficult road to success, but it often yields more significant outcomes.

“As a teacher, Hrvoje exudes the kind of enthusiasm bred from the excitement of making new discoveries in research. Successfully communicating this excitement to students in a classroom is important, but is only one of the necessary ingredients that makes an excellent educator. Most of my experience with Hrvoje as an educator is observing the way he works with his graduate students. He interacts with them constantly, ensures that they work together as a team, and puts in considerable effort to achieve social cohesion. As a result, they perform at a very high level, and are well placed to find good employment when they are finished.”

Professor Nicholas Rawlinson, University of Cambridge



HIGHLY COMMENDED

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Ms Shalom Chalson

School of Philosophy, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Synopsis: Shalom Chalson's approach is centred on building respectful relationships and facilitating a non-hierarchical, collaborative learning environment. Her tutorials are designed to scaffold on retrieved information and consolidate insights from collaboration. Her teaching reflects a commitment to inclusiveness and equality. She incorporates these values into her teaching by supporting diversity, both in identity and opinion; encouraging participation in a safe environment; communicating clearly; and, promoting autonomy.

Students face obstacles that can make learning difficult; they're often juggling multiple roles at university and in their personal lives. Classes that celebrate diversity and promote autonomy can provide support. Support matters, especially when returning from long periods of isolation.

Fostering a welcoming learning environment encourages students to communicate their needs when they arise and to take risks along their way in the journey of education. I believe that teaching effectively requires taking the needs and ideas of each student seriously. In my approach, I encourage students to see themselves as active participants in learning, and work to flatten the relationship between tutor and student.

Inclusive teaching involves tearing down the boundaries that prevent learning. These boundaries may be very robust. Stereotype threat and imposter syndrome can impede learning, and are predominantly experienced by those underrepresented in higher education. As

a first-generation university student, I can empathise with not feeling entirely comfortable at university, but opening multiple lines of participation can alleviate pressure.

It is also important that students feel in control of their learning. Learning philosophy effectively is not just about the transfer of information from teacher to student. Rather, it primarily involves developing tools to critically assess abstract ideas on one's own. To promote autonomy, I show students they have what it takes to handle challenging material. Scaffolding draws out what students know and helps them to build on that knowledge. We often begin classes with descriptive questions that encourage recall of assigned readings and work our way to more complex questions that require students to synthesise ideas. These challenging questions are coupled with group discussions, so students can build on one another's ideas. Collaboration, rather than competition, develops confidence equitably.

Sometimes empowering others requires showing that it is perfectly acceptable to make mistakes. University can be difficult, so it is important to know that you can fail sometimes, and perhaps other people will help raise you up.

"... she has put so much effort into helping us understand difficult concepts, make our essay writing and persuasive skills better and to challenge our thinking. She has been invested in our personal and academic growth."

Student comment, SELT





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Ms Rosemary Clifford

Research School of Psychology, ANU College of Health & Medicine

Synopsis: Rose Clifford, a passionate psychology teacher, is driven to empower students to take charge of their own learning, building confidence in their own capacity and ability. Valuing the diverse minds and perspectives contained in each classroom, she helps students to grow and to explore course topics and content in a way that not only promotes understanding but also enables students to apply their learning to the real world.

I am dedicated to motivating students to reach their academic goals. By undertaking additional training offered by the ANU I was able to adapt and apply relevant theories of pedagogy. My form of teaching and tutorial design and development is based on the constructive alignment approach, which attempts to optimise learning through a congruence between teaching and learning activities and assessment and learning outcomes. This is an outcomes-based approach and is student-centered in its nature. As lectures often focus on a receiving not doing form of learning, I ensure that my tutorials enable students to think critically and generate new thoughts and ideas about the lecture content. The constructive alignment approach has helped me to guide the way I design tutorials and learning activities. This approach allows students to be the directors of their own learning, with the teaching staff providing guidance and facilitation.

I am not only dedicated to ensuring my students get the most out of their tutorials and classes, I am also passionate about ensuring that the tutors and teaching staff

are appropriately trained to deliver course content consistently while developing supportive relationships with students. I do this through conducting coaching sessions to equip tutors with the skills and knowledge to apply the constructive alignment methodology to the delivery of tutorials. In this way I ensure tutorials: focus more on discussion-based activities and activities which promote critical and deep thinking; incorporate case studies and real-world activities, to better connect the concepts learned to the real world and make them more relatable; and, include activities that prompt students to develop solutions to real-world concerns in the area of study, to help them connect to the topic and contextualise theory in a practical way.

During the pandemic, when students were struggling with the demands of their coursework, it was my priority to ensure the quality of their education was not diminished despite the online learning context. By reviewing education techniques best suited to online learning and adjusting the course communication and tutorial content based on this, students continued to get the most out of the course while feeling connected and engaged.

“Rose is a highly engaging and knowledgeable tutor. I find myself thinking critically and learning more when I am in her classes.”

Student comment, SELT 2021

CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Ms Rachael Gross

Fenner School of Environment & Society, ANU College of Science

Synopsis: Rachael gross's approach to teaching brings a holistic, inclusive and sincere perspective to students. She understands that teaching and learning is not a monolith. Each student learns differently. Bespoke teaching approaches are necessary if students are to do well in their course, and importantly, enjoy what they study. Rachael is an approachable and empathetic teacher—she finds genuine joy in getting to know her students and in ensuring student wellbeing is central to her education approach.

As environmental science becomes more critical in a world facing climate change and biodiversity loss, teaching the subject well and pragmatically is an absolute priority. My approach to teaching is to be flexible and sincere and to cater to each student's ability to learn and to their personal circumstances, with the priority of ensuring their health and wellbeing and progress in the course material. I understand a teacher can make or break a student's experience and passion for learning, so strive to provide students with the best experience.

While cliché, I have found the best way to teach is to be myself and to actively extend my openness to students so they feel comfortable doing the same. A sincere approach is critical to building relationships with the students. Being genuine provides a safe atmosphere in which students can learn and explore their inspirations and motivations and understand how they learn best so they can succeed and grow. I recognise the need to provide a safe space to explore more sensitive but relevant subjects like

decolonial ecology, and in that sense strive to encourage students to think critically about the future of environmental science.

In my commitment to improving teaching practices, I provide a flexible and progressive learning environment to break down the monolithic appearance of university teaching. Every student is different. As each student learns differently and approaches their learning with different strengths, weaknesses and backgrounds, they should not be inhibited from learning by a strict teaching approach.

My strengths in teaching come from being honest and open with students, openly recognising when content is difficult and happily acknowledging when I do not know something or need extra help. Being honest about my limitations helps soften how students see their university teachers and makes us better educators. Being imperfect shows that educators are also scientists that share the same passion as students and are still always learning too. For me, teaching is about sharing my passion with those eager to learn about environmental and social sciences—and that is truly a privilege, one which drives me towards a commitment to providing students with the best education possible.

“Rachael was super respectful, kind, fun, sweet, very approachable and understanding. Relating on a personable level was so indescribably helpful. She was the perfect balance of professional and emotional.”

Student comment, SELT





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Mr Edmund Handby

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

Synopsis: Ed Handby's approach to tutoring revolves around ensuring that students are motivated and engaged with often dense and dry course materials. Pedagogically, Ed's approach has two main focuses: first, to encourage students to enjoy course materials, and second, to emphasise how abstract concepts can tie into real-world scenarios. To do so, Ed draws on, and contributes to, literature on active learning and classroom games.

My approach to learning emphasises two key elements. The first element is an emphasis on collaboration. While I recognise and value the role that independent learning has, my approach to teaching is premised on the belief that both teaching and learning are most effective, enjoyable and rewarding when done as a group, rather than individually. The second element of my approach to teaching is a commitment to active learning. I believe that active learning is an approach that ensures students are motivated and inspired to learn in a collaborative way.

I draw extensively on principles and activities from the active learning approach. Active learning has proven to be beneficial for student engagement and learning outcomes, especially in political theory. I have, in this respect, been inspired by colleagues who have previously published articles on their use of simulations and activities in teaching international relations. I was inspired by their approach to develop tutorial activities that motivate the students, but to also ensure they enjoy their time in the course.

The benefits of active learning complement my emphasis on learning as a collaborative process. Active learning lends itself to games and activities that encourage or require either group work or whole-of-class activities. As such, in each of the various active learning games I have designed, I have ensured that there is a group work component to benefit the students. From my own experience as an undergraduate student, I recall various times where much of the class time was spent on activities or lessons conducted individually. Not only did I not learn as well from these activities, but I found them less enjoyable than activities with my classmates.

“Edmund is a passionate and highly effective teacher who uses extremely innovative classroom techniques to make political philosophy interesting, relevant and timely for students...”

Colleague

“What makes his tutorials stand apart is his use of dynamic games and activities to demonstrate the ideas in practice. This is unique for tutoring Politics, Philosophy and Economics and particularly for tutoring the history of political thought.”

Colleague

RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Ms Marina Hirose

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

Synopsis: Marina Hirose is an educator in Japanese language. She is passionate about teaching the language and culture and getting to know more about her students. Her student-oriented, interactive teaching style is the product of teaching more than 1400 first-year students at ANU since 2018. Marina's research on teaching methods of Japanese spoken grammar creates a rich, research-led teaching environment. She received the 2021 CAP Award for Excellence in Tutoring.

The goal of the course *Japanese 1 and 2: Spoken* is to develop Japanese communication skills in interpersonal relationships. As the course targets the development of speaking and listening practices, students' active engagement in class is essential. Therefore, my approach aligns with two aspects of learning: the creation of a student-centred and safe learning environment.

I endeavour to make students feel comfortable in their attempts at speaking Japanese or at articulating their confusion of the meaning of words or sentences. Two essential components of this process of creating a safe and welcoming environment are active learner engagement and peer learning. This is especially true in 'spoken' courses where we aim to help students develop communication skills. For example, in pair or group practice, I shuffle students when pairing or grouping students to enable them to extend beyond their friendship groups and create a sense of shared community throughout the class. Once students interact with each other, they feel safer speaking up, asking

questions, and sharing their thoughts in class. This approach promotes co-learning amongst students outside of class. In doing so, students become further accustomed to sharing and discussing difficulties, confusion, and problems related to Japanese while learning or preparing for assignments. Whilst these may constitute small gestures, when applied consistently, they have an outsized impact on the way a student approaches the learning process.

My student-centred approach highlights critical and independent thinking. Generally, language learning consumes a great deal of time memorising words and conjugation rules. However, my teaching emphasises the 'why' and 'how'. By linking language to the larger real-life and cultural contexts, students understand they are not only learning grammatical rules, but they are also mastering communication tools that enable them to receive or deliver their messages in a conversation. Ultimately, students are learning foreign languages so that they can use them – therefore, the tools they use need to be tailored to the speakers' ideas or interests.

"Hirose-Sensei is one of the best language teachers I have had; she is extremely encouraging and gives constructive criticism so that her students are able to improve in their Japanese."

Student comment, SELT, 2021





CANDIDATE

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Mr Vishal-Rai Sidhu

ANU Medical School, ANU College of Health & Medicine

Synopsis: Vishal has been teaching postgraduate medical students and undergraduate health science students since 2018. He believes education is question-driven and aims to cultivate an engaging, fun and safe learning culture among students. He implements this ideology through skilful use of hand-drawn animated slides and Kahoot! and PollEv tools to help students learn complex medical concepts. He was awarded the College of Health and Medicine tutoring award in 2021.

My approach to teaching incorporates current clinical practice to emphasise medical concepts. Having an appealing narrative to deliver information in small doses allows the student to engage throughout and provides an opportunity for active participation to reinforce learning.

The engaging narrative is achieved through interactive presentations that sequentially build upon foundational concepts taught earlier in the semester. My method embraces the student-directed retrieval practice to consolidate students' prior learning. Consequently, my students learn more efficiently and establish their foundation of the spiral learning model in post-graduate medicine.

Anatomy demonstrating involves identification of important structures and their functions in the context of medical and surgical practice. Therefore, I would break down a lesson into sub-sections, utilising the best teaching method for each individual section. For example, I would start a lesson with a plastic model of a healthy heart and invite students to identify key features. Next, I would

transition to a cadaveric specimen with macroscopic evidence of a heart attack for students to recognise physiological versus pathological anatomy through a cause-and-effect model. Finally, I conclude with a mnemonic to consolidate the complications of a heart attack and invite student questions.

I regularly reflect on three key domains – knowledge, technical competency and professionalism. I am comfortable acknowledging the limits of my knowledge to answer inquisitive questions raised by my students. I then research the answers and post my findings in their Wattle forum. I revise my tutorial lessons annually, reflecting updates to clinical practice guidelines. To improve technical competency I have undertaken formal professional development training in Wattle, Echo360, Turnitin as well as the Principles of Tutoring and Demonstrating course. Informal training through YouTube has provided inspiration for me to deliver medical science content in fun ways through Zoom.

I aim to be professional and approachable, and to continually improve these aforementioned attributes. I also engage regularly with the student representatives to organise opportunities for students to seek help, such as drop-in Q&A and semester revision sessions.

“Vishal was so wonderful. He simplified concepts in a way that made them easy to understand, and he really took the time to do it. I liked how he would actively engage with us throughout.”

Student comment

RECIPIENT

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Mr Zhi Yang Tho

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

Synopsis: Zhi Yang Tho is a tutor in Statistics and a PhD candidate at the ANU College of Business and Economics (CBE). He has tutored undergraduate and postgraduate Statistics courses for over three years and was recognised as a Highly Commended candidate for the ANU Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating in 2021. Zhi Yang is committed to inspiring students to learn statistics using interesting real-world problems.

The biggest challenge in teaching a first-year Statistics course is that students without a statistical background often find themselves getting lost amidst the abstract statistical concepts introduced.

To address this gap in student learning, I have always used contemporary real-life issues to motivate students to think critically about the concept being taught. For instance, I used the example of COVID-19 testing to introduce the idea of false positive and false negative in hypothesis testing, which enables students to establish a close connection between the course material and real-life applications.

Inspired by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, students are encouraged to analyse datasets in class using statistical software. This process facilitates the development of research skills and motivates students to reflect and to consciously link these practical experiences to the concepts learnt in the lecture.

To promote an inclusive learning experience and encourage students' participation in tutorials, students are told that 'There's no such thing as a stupid question' in the first tutorial of every semester. I take students' questions seriously and frame my response in understandable ways to create positive feedback loops as this makes me more approachable, and students are more willing to take part in discussions with me.

Drawing from my experience as an undergraduate student in Statistics courses at ANU, I noticed that students can be easily overwhelmed by the huge amount of information taught in lectures every week. To ensure a smooth learning experience, I always start my tutorials with a recap of each week's core concepts with the use of graphical displays. For example, most students in *Quantitative Research Methods* are confused with a large number of different hypothesis tests, so I use a tree diagram that can summarise all the tests in a simple and concise way. Such visualisation allows students to interpret and integrate information with minimum cognitive processing and motivates them to think critically about the underlying assumptions of those tests before deciding which test should be implemented during the tutorial.

"The real-world statistical examples that Zhi Yang gave are interesting, and they sparked my interest in learning Stat(istics)."

Student comment, 2019





HIGHLY COMMENDED

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

Mr Dixin Wu

Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business and Economics

Synopsis: Dixin Wu is a PhD candidate at the Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business and Economics (CBE). He has abundant experience in tutoring accounting, statistics and econometrics courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. His sustained excellence in teaching was recognised with the 2020 CBE Teaching Commendation for Outstanding Tutoring and the 2021 CBE Teaching Award for Excellence in Tutoring.

My teaching is inspired by a proverb saying that "Give a man a fish, he eats for a day. Teach him to fish, he will never go hungry." My tutorial classes aim not only to help students better understand accounting information (the narrow goal), but also to equip them with a technique to efficiently mine, process and analyse the information ('new knowledge') they may encounter in other courses (the broad goal), as well as in their future careers (the ultimate goal).

To achieve my teaching goals, I have developed my distinctive teaching style with three characteristics:

(i) Students enjoy delicious 'fish dishes' cooked by me. The course I teach – *Financial Statements and Reporting* – is a foundation course in financial accounting, in which some students have little or no accounting background. My tutorials are designed to help students discover the best and simplest way to understand accounting jargon (making 'fish dishes'), rather than simply regurgitating textbook or lecture contents (feeding on 'raw fishes'). Students truly enjoy the Feynman technique that I adopted (a mental model used to convey

information using concise thoughts and simple language, created by the Nobel Prize winner Professor Richard Feynman) and my usage of plain language, real-life examples and fun games to explain abstract accounting concepts and journal entries.

(ii) Students chew, digest, and convert 'fish' into 'energy'. Through the inquiry-based approach, I always start a topic by asking questions instead of providing answers or conclusions. In this way, instead of mere memorising, students will explore what they want to know and gain a deeper understanding of accounting concepts and journal entries.

(iii) Students learn how to 'fish'. After several weeks of training, many students understand how to acquire and analyse relevant information to study a new topic. Guest tutors are then invited to lead the class discussion or share their novel problem-solving methods with the remaining class. By doing so, students' learning capacity is upgraded from 'mere input' to 'output'.

"It has been such a pleasure to be in the same teaching team as Dixin. Having a responsible member like Dixin in the team gives me the peace of mind that students are well looked after, and everything is on the right track."

Dr Stanley Choi, course convener

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