Welcome

I remember the lyrics of a popular Vietnamese song with the tender Zen flavour which touches almost every Vietnamese soul: “Đu đến rồi đi, tôi cũng xin tạ ơn người” (If you come here, then go, I am deeply grateful). The passer-by could be metaphorically a train, a friend, morning dew, spring blossom or a fresh summer breeze. The essence lies deeply in the shared experience of co-existence, not in the stream of passing time.

Similarly, our Graduate Research News has this beautiful connection: After a few months of absence, now it arrives at the UDRH graduate research doorstep, bringing along some fragrance of our students’ stories of achievements and shared experiences. Please fill your early spring with this fresh fragrance from the Graduate Research News.

Our new candidates

The UDRH has been further enriched by the arrival of new students. Warmest welcome goes to our new PhD students: Alexandra King and Peter Mulholland.

Congratulations to Alexandra King who was awarded the Elite Research Scholarship in 2011. Alexandra’s research will examine the food security challenges faced by economically, geographically and socially marginalised older people in Tasmania. Peter Mulholland was a recipient of the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals Tasmania bursary in 2006. After completing his Masters degree with the UDRH, Peter continues his study passion into PhD research in interprofessional education.

Good news from students

I would like to share with you the success stories of our students. Please join me in our congratulations to the
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following students:

• Sharon Hetherington, Maria Yue and Chona Hannah (PhD candidates) have expressed their intention to submit theses in August and September 2011. Congratulations to Sharon, Maria and their supervisors. Sharon’s supervisors are Drs Peter Orpin (UDRH), Cecilia Shing and James Fella (Human Life Science). Maria is supervised by Drs Quynh Le and Rosa McManamey. Chona is supervised by Dr Quynh Le and Professor Sue Kilpatrick.

• Frances Fan (PhD candidate) co-supervised by the UDRH, Computing and Education has passed her thesis examination. The good news does not stop there as Frances was successful in securing an academic position both in the Launceston Clinical School and the Faculty of Education immediately after graduation. She also has a joint paper entitled “Developing a valid and reliable instrument to evaluate users’ perception of web-based learning in an Australian university context” accepted for publication in the International Journal of Online Learning and Teaching. Congratulations to Frances and her supervisors.

• Chona Hannah (PhD candidate) has had one book chapter “Health and Wellbeing Issues Facing Intermarried Filipino Women in Rural Tasmania” published in book “Health and wellbeing: a social and cultural perspective” edited by Q Le, NOVA Science Publishers Inc, New York, USA.

• Ha Hoang (PhD candidate) has had two book chapters “Social Impacts of Closure of Maternity Services in Rural Areas” and “Maternity Care Experiences of Asia Ethnic Minorities in Rural Tasmania, Australia: A Mixed Methods Study” published in book “Health and wellbeing: a social and cultural perspective” edited by Q Le, NOVA Science Publishers Inc, New York, USA.

• Alexandra King (PhD candidate) has had her joint abstract accepted for presentation at an upcoming conference of the Public Health Association of Australia held in Hobart from 22 – 23 November 2011. Karen and Alexandra will present on the topic of “The Experience of Food Insecurity for Elderly Tasmanians”.


• Thuy Thanh Le (Masters candidate) has had her conference abstract entitled “Nail-biting and mineral deficiency in children” accepted for presentation at the International Conference on Innovative Research in a Changing and Challenging World in Phuket, Thailand, 16-18 May 2011.

• Maria Yue (PhD candidate) has had her refereed paper entitled “Social support to International Tertiary Students in an Australian Regional Area” accepted for presentation at the 2011 International Conference on Social Sciences and Society (ICSSS 2011), Shanghai, China, October 14-15, 2011. She also has one book chapter “International Students: Their Health and Education Journey” published in book “Health and wellbeing: a social and cultural perspective” edited by Q Le, NOVA Science Publishers Inc, New York, USA.

Greetings from new students

Rowena MacKeana

Rowena’s PhD research aims to investigate to what degree participation in a community organisation run by and for older people influences the perceived health and wellbeing of its members. It is designed to complement and build on her M.Ed (Research) thesis, completed in 2010, which explored older people’s views on their participation and the benefits derived from belonging. The issues of self-assessed health and wellbeing, which emerged from the previous study, are the focus of the present study.

The proposed research method is in-depth semi-structured interviews with current and former members, older people who have never belonged to a community group, and with relevant service providers.

Since leaving paid work twenty years ago, Rowena has been involved as a member and organiser of older people’s voluntary self-help groups, as an advocate for learning opportunities for older people, and as a member of State and local committees promoting Positive Ageing. In 2007 she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to adult and community education. Rowena sees her research as a complement to and further development of her strong interest in older people’s leisure and learning activities and the empowerment of older people.

Alexandra King

I am Alexandra King. I would like to say ‘hello’ to staff and research students in the UDRH and take this
opportunity to introduce myself as a new member of the UDRH Graduate Research family. My work has focused on the social, economic and public health issues faced by disadvantaged populations in developing countries as well as in outer suburban areas of Melbourne and Hobart. I have worked in a variety of roles for non-government organisations, University institutes, state and local governments, the World Bank and AusAID. My areas of interest have included food security, child labour, youth health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and prisoner health and wellbeing. Cutting across these areas, I have maintained a particular interest in effective program design and evidence-based policy making.

My PhD research project will examine the food security challenges faced by economically, geographically and socially marginalised older people in Tasmania. It will focus primarily on the access determinants of food security, such as the knowledge, skills, resources and social supports of individuals and communities. I intend to conduct a series of in-depth case studies of older Tasmanians in order to capture individual experiences of ageing and explore the commonality of factors which impact on people's food security and nutritional outcomes as they age. Comparisons will be made across gender, ethnic background, socioeconomic situation, degree of social connectedness and geographic location. The case studies will also explore patterns of obtaining food, social connectedness and the effectiveness of any food security interventions.

“How do I begin!” Words from Peter Mulholland

Yes, when we mention about ambulance, images of sickness and injuries tend to flash back to our vivid imagination. But the story I love to share with you has happy beginning and a lovely promising end.

I have been involved with ambulance since 1986 following a 6 year career in nursing. My ambulance training was initially in Melbourne where I worked for 6 years before moving to Wonthaggi station in East Gippsland. Moving to Tasmania in 1994 I began working for Ambulance Tasmania where I trained to Intensive Care level. I have worked in Launceston to the present time and currently hold the position of Regional Education Coordinator.

The beginning of 2006 in my life was like a kite flying up in blue sky. I received the Pre-hospital emergency care bursary to undertake the Master of Medical Science working on the thesis entitled. A comparison of the practice of rural and urban paramedics – Bridging the gap between education, training, and practice

My happy bond with the UDRH did not stop there. In July 2011, I embarked on the PhD investing how and under the supervision of A/Prof Tony Barnett and Dr Jess Woodroffe which the conditions inter-professional learning occurs in paramedic practice.

Yes I am now a happy member of the UDRH Graduate Research family.

Daniel Terry: seasons of time and life

As I sit in my office looking out the window at the city, I reflect on the past couple of months. The view hasn’t changed much, yet something is different. I note the spring flowers are commencing their bloom and like the seasons, I too am finding changes within. As I reflect, I am reminded of Nelson Mandela who said: ‘There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered’

I commenced my studies with UDRH just over eight weeks ago. Although I have just started my PhD journey, I am somewhat calm, not confused or anxious as the literature articulated the initial experience may be. This is a little unnerving, yet what I have achieved in the past few weeks has assisted my composure.

I am at the point where my literature review is at saturation. I am finding nothing new, written so much and need to stop, refine and cultivate. I have recently
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had a manuscript accepted for publication with the Australian Journal of Rural Health; I have another I am waiting for a response and another which is in the process of being prepared for submission. In addition I have also been accepted to present at the ‘innovative research in a changing and challenging world’ conference in Phuket, Thailand next May, which I feel is a great privilege and honour. Lastly, I have recently presented at the Cradle Coast Postgraduate Research Conference, which was a great opportunity to network and a thrill to see other post graduates hard work. This opportunity has assisted me to prepare for September’s Graduate Research Conference, Sharing Excellence in Research (SEiR) and the FHS Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium, later in the month.

I look forward to the next few months and to observe the ways in which I have further altered.

Conference presentation

Karen Herne (Research Fellow) and Alexandra King (PhD student) will present a paper co-authored with Kim Boyer and Dr Peter Orpin at an upcoming conference of the Public Health Association of Australia. The Food Futures: Safe and Healthier Food for All Australians Conference will be held in Hobart from 22 -23 November 2011. Karen and Alexandra will present on the topic of “The Experience of Food Insecurity for Elderly Tasmanians”. This paper will report on a new research program being conducted by the University of Tasmania to explore the factors underlying food insecurity in older people in order to inform more appropriate policy and service approaches to this issue. A review of the literature will examine food security research methodologies and frameworks applied to elderly people in recent studies, and will highlight the importance of a range of social and personal factors, including past life experiences. We will then preview new PhD research which intends to use a series of in-depth case studies of older Tasmanians to capture individual experiences of ageing but also examine the commonality of factors which impact on elderly people’s food security.

Postcard from Ljubljana, Slovenia – Deb Carnes

I write this on my last night in Ljubljana, Slovenia, having just undertaken an intensive two week course at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) Summer School in Methods and Techniques. The course was titled QCA and Fuzzy Sets and it was taught by two of the leaders in the field of Qualitative Comparative Analysis – Carsten Schneider and Claudius Wagemann.

The course has been extremely useful for my PhD thesis, not only because it has given me intensive training in the methodology but because Schneider and Wagemann have a forthcoming publication which students of the course were given access to. Hence I have been fortunate enough to have access to leading theories in this field prior to their publication. Of course, I was also able to discuss my PhD topic with the course instructors and have come away with some advice and guidance as well as encouragement.

Deb Carnes (PhD Candidate) presented a poster at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Anyone interested in more information about what I have learned is welcome to come along to the upcoming FHS Graduate Research Symposium and watch my presentation.

My thanks as always to my supervisors Erica Bell and Sue Kilpatrick for their ongoing support and to the UDRH and FHS for enabling me to use most of my thesis allowance to attend this training. It has certainly been a worthwhile experience in adding to my knowledge in the field as well as giving me the opportunity of developing a global network of other PhD students with an interest in the QCA method.

Seeding grant for seeding research - Ha Hoang

Another day comes with one more piece of good news: Final year PhD candidate Ha Hoang under the supervision of Drs Kathryn Ogden (School of Medicine) and Quynh Le (UDRH) has been awarded FHS Strategic grant of $9,962 to systematically review women’s needs in maternity care and related sustainable service models in rural areas.

In the last few decades, rural communities in developed countries such as England, Canada and Australia have experienced the closure of obstetric services, forcing thousands of pregnant women to travel long distances to regional centres in order to access maternal care. The decision to close small maternity units was due to shortages of health care professionals, and safety, quality and cost considerations.

The closure of rural obstetric services has had many
impacts on rural women, families and communities. Firstly, being forced to travel away from communities to give birth women and families encounter a significant financial burden, travel difficulties and the risks of labour and birthing en route on unsafe roads. Secondly, losing obstetric services in rural communities cause significant psychosocial consequences for parturient women such as stress, fear and anxiety. Furthermore, the closure of maternity services in rural areas has been associated with adverse outcomes for mothers and babies. Lastly, the loss of local maternity services affects the sustainability of rural communities.

In dealing with the issues discussed above, those countries have developed maternity service models in rural areas such as midwifery-led care, collaborative model of care and planned homebirth model of care. However, are these models meeting the needs of women in maternal care? By reviewing the literature systematically, the project will provide an evidence-based answer to this question. The project commenced in June 2011 and will conclude on 31 December 2012.

For further information about the project please contact Ha Hoang, PhD candidate, Email: Thi.Hoang@utas.edu.au

A small grant for a big cause - Annette Loudon

“I am absolutely delighted to accept the offer…”

The wording of acceptance of my first grant success is still embedded in my memory. My Masters by research project “The effect of yoga on women with lymphoedema from breast cancer treatment. A Pilot Trial” is expensive in terms of hiring of equipment for the various measurements and travel, as it is located in both Hobart and Launceston.

Recently, I was successful in a grant application to the Swan Research Institute (SRI), an organisation that offers one small research grant per year “to encourage research into the field of Yoga, to develop further understanding of its practices and the implications for physical and mental health, healthy lifestyle, mental and spiritual development”. (Swan Research Institute SRI Research Grant Information to applicants 2011)

The grant of $1,008 has paid for the hiring of a vital piece of equipment for recording small changes in fluid volume in the affected and non-affected arm of the women in the trial. The bio-impedance machine, hired from Impedimed Queensland, has been the first use of this machine in a research trial in Tasmania. It is recommended as the gold standard for its ability to detect small fluid changes, such as expected in an 8-week trial.

In addition, the lymphoedema physiotherapists involved in this trial have gained invaluable experience in the use of this state-of-the-art technology.

Although a small grant, its impact is nonetheless great in terms of the hiring of the bio-impedance machine and providing an incentive for me to try for further research grants. As Lao Tzu says: “A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.”

Annette Loudon May 2011

...Leading to a larger grant

When I wrote the above words I didn’t realize that my small step grant would in fact lead to a larger grant. My main supervisor, Associate Professor Tony Barnett, felt that my research project fitted very well into the Faculty of Health Sciences seeding grants, i.e.

Output focussed research activity

The FHS Research committee in 2011 will make available funding to support discrete research
activities critical to national competitive grant applications or publications. The intention of this fund is to enable researchers to generate critical data or support collaborative activity which will lead to future funding and publishing success. (Faculty of Health Sciences Research Committee. Strategic Activities Seed Funding 2011)

My research is a randomised controlled trial involving collaboration between UTAS Rural Health, UTAS Human Life Science, Flinders University Lymphoedema Clinic and University of South Australia Human Movement. Further, it covers an area in which there is currently no published research.

One of the aims of the project is to develop a protocol that can be used for larger trials in the future, so that the research data will be added to. In these ways the research matched the grant criteria very well.

In successfully receiving funding from the Faculty of Health Sciences I learned my second lesson in applying for grants, namely to apply for grants whose criteria match the design and aims of the research.

Finally, in preparing the application for the funding, I received essential critical feedback from two of my supervisors, Associate Professor Tony Barnett and Dr Andrew Williams, as well from as another academic involved in my research, Dr Denis Visentin. I believe, as an early career researcher, this feedback is crucial in producing a sound and succinct application — another helpful lesson in applying for grants.

These grants are, as we know, a great support, financially and mentally, in bringing our “cherished” research to fruition. Annette Loudon, June 2011.

It’s a wonderful world after all: Frances Fan

For some graduate research students, the time of submitting their thesis is a mixture of various emotional seasons: excitement, happiness, anxiety, and sometimes worry. But for Frances, the sun doesn’t seem to go to sleep, flowers are fond of eternity, and life is endlessly magnificent! Yes it is crazy to think the world in this idealistic way, but Frances can be excused for being in this mood.

After only a couple of weeks of learning about the excellent result of her thesis examination, Frances had three jobs waiting for her all at the same time: continuing with her work in a childcare centre which she has enjoyed dearly; an offer to lecture part-time in a postgraduate course in the Faculty of Education; and an offer from the Launceston Clinical School to work as a researcher involving GPs and other health professionals. She finally decided to say goodbye to the childcare centre and is now working in the other two jobs.

Choices are not always easy to make, but for Frances who was supervised by Drs Quynh Le and Daniel Rolf, these three offers are the best seasons of the year.

Congratulations to Frances and we wish you well.

Elite scholarship opportunity in Rural Health

The University of Tasmania’s Department of Rural Health and Rural Clinical School are offering a number of Elite Research Scholarships to undertake full-time PhD research in the areas of: interprofessional learning, healthy ageing, healthy communities, health policy, workforce, and food security.

Each Elite Research Scholarship is valued at $30,000 tax free per annum for three years, with a possible six-month extension. PhD candidates are provided with laptops, cloud data storage, generic skilling, and supportive candidature management to help them navigate their own research path.

The successful candidates will join a strong team of experienced researchers and evaluators drawn from a wide range of disciplines and professional practice areas. They will undertake research with opportunities to influence policy and improve health outcomes for people in rural and remote areas.

For more details about the scholarships, visit: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth or www.rcs.utas.edu.au or contact Dr Quynh Le at Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au, Ph: (03) 6324 4053, Fax: (03) 6324 4040.

Write up scholarships in rural health

The UDRH is thinking of providing a number of Write-up Scholarships which aims to support:

- Timely completion of domestic and international
graduate research by funding candidates who have submitted theses for examination, or during the writing up of revisions, prior to the submission of their final bound theses to a Higher Research Degrees (HRD) Committee.

- Preparation and submission of refereed publications (minimum of 2 outputs) by domestic and international postgraduate research students after the submission of their thesis for external examination.

The funding will support up to a three month period of full-time writing. These scholarships may be tax exempted for full time enrolled students. International candidates would need to be able to demonstrate that appropriate visa arrangements had been approved by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for the term of the scholarship. Application and guidelines for this scholarship will be available at: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth/gr/

The 2011 FHS Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium

We are pleased to let you know that the Faculty of Health Science Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium this year will be held in the University Centre, Sandy Bay Campus, Hobart on 22 September, 2011. The Symposium is co-organised by University Department of Rural Health, Rural Clinical School, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Human Life Sciences, School of Medicine and the Launceston Clinical School to provide opportunities for research in progress sharing, professional and interpersonal networking, and a chance to reflect individually and collectively on our research journey. It includes a keynote address, public lecture, supervisor training session, thesis writing workshop, and presentations from PhD and research Masters students from the above Schools. There will be a Public Lecture on 21 September prior to the Symposium.

The Symposium is an indication of a dynamic research and collaborative spirit and your participation will definitely enhance the quality of research interaction and social networking.


We are earnestly looking forwards to your participation in this symposium. Please register early. We are eagerly waiting for you at our email doorsteps.

UTAS Graduate Research Conference (SEiR) 2011

The UTAS Graduate Research Conference (SEiR) is being jointly organised by the Graduate Research Office and the Postgraduate Council on Thursday 01 – Friday 02 September 2011 at UTAS School of Art, Hunter Street, Hobart.

Attendance at and participation in the Postgraduate Conference is compulsory in the first two years of candidature. Presenting and defending a poster as part of this event is also the final assessment exercise for XGR502, Communicating Research.

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition will also take place within the framework of the Conference. The 3MT is an opportunity for more advanced candidates to develop their media and research communication skills.

Our fellow students Robyn Collins, Thanh Thuy Le, Annette Loudon, and Daniel Terry are going to defend their posters at the SEiR conference. Please come along to support them. We wish Robyn, Thuy, Annette and Daniel success at the 3MT competition.

Event calendar

We would specially like to thank all supervisors and guest speakers for conducting workshop series in February to August 2011. Below is the list of graduate research workshops for the rest of 2011.

- Conference sharing/research journey reflection, Wed 23 March, 12 noon – 2pm, Venue: Room 315, AOB, Launceston, presenters: Ha Hoang, Maria Yue and Rosa Mcmanamey, facilitated by Dr Quynh Lê.

- PebblePad for graduate research students, Wed 7 September, 12 noon – 2pm, Venue: TBA, Presenter: TBA.

- UTAS Graduate Research Conference (SEiR) 2011, Thu 01 – Fri 02 September 2011 at UTAS School of Art, Hunter Street, Hobart.

- Introduction to PASW/SPSS – Part 1, Wed 21 September, 12 noon – 2pm, Venue: AOB, Launceston, conducted by Dr Penny Allen / Dr Quynh Lê.

- Public Lecture: Natural sources of medicines with an emphasis on gut problems, Wed 21 September, 6.30 - 7.15pm, Venue: MS1 Lecture Theatre, School of Medicine, Hobart, presented by Prof Raymond Playford.

- Faculty of Health Science Graduate research Symposium, Thu 22 September, Venue: University Centre, Sandy Bay Campus, Hobart.

- Supervisor: The thesis is dead, Supervisors’ Lunchtime Colloquium series, Date: TBA, venue: TBA, conducted by the Graduate Research Office.

- Introduction to PASW/SPSS – Part 2, Wed 19 October, 12 noon – 2pm, Venue: TBA, conducted by Dr Penny Allen / Dr Quynh Lê.

- Conference sharing/research journey reflection, Wed 9 November, 12 noon – 2pm,
Every story has an ending and every calendar has its last page. But somehow our Graduate Research News is slightly and tenderly different. Yes, it ends with our last warmest words of greetings and congratulations, but we hope its fragrance is still there for us to revisit and cherish, yes and more importantly, to show our deep appreciation of the wonderful news it has instilled in our UDRH Graduate Research garden.

Quynh Lê and Kim Izard

Rural Health Graduate

The University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, where Deb Carnes attended the Summer School for her study in August 2011

Good morning Launceston!

Students happily celebrating at the book launch for chapter authors - New Gallery, Newnham Campus, Launceston, 19 August 2011

Research Photo Gallery