LONDON CALLING
Core students head north to explore human dignity

THE SCIENCE OF SPORT
Dr Craig Duncan is on a winning streak

WHEN COMEDY TURNS TRAGIC
Do the funniest comedians really die first?

ACU students create outdoor artwork that brightens, and enlightens
Welcome to 2015 and this year’s first edition of Insight, our dedicated staff and student magazine. I hope you had a wonderful Christmas with your loved ones and are rested and ready to tackle the new year.

In our last issue I shared news of the launch of our new research institutes, which have been hard at work securing impressive funding, attracting the best and the brightest in the academic world, and producing research to better our communities. This issue you can read about some of their individual work - from testing the assumption that the funniest comedians really do die first, to finding out that ‘healthy’ Coca-Cola isn’t all it’s cracked up to be.

We also take a closer look at the teaching industry, see the inspiring results of helping those experiencing disadvantage access tertiary education, and congratulate Dr Craig Duncan on being awarded the coveted Sport Scientist of the Year award.

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This will be ACU’s first overseas centre, and it is fitting that we can celebrate such an achievement in the same year that we reach a very special milestone – 25 years of people, achievement in the same year that we reach it is fitting that we can celebrate such an anniversary set to improve the lives of tens of thousands of Australians. Ninety-year-old Betty Snowden is one of them.

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Professor Simon Stewart and his SAFETY Intervention are set to im-
prove the lives of tens of thousands of Australians discharged from
hospital with a common heart problem. Ninety-year-old
Betty Snowden is one of them, and is now looking to cross
South America off her bucket list.

They say the brightest stars burn out the
fastest, but Betty Snowden is an exception to
that cosmic phenomena. I admire her tenacity
and her positive outlook. She is a stellar example
to all of us that even at age 90 life is far from over.

As we get older and survive the dings and
arrows of life we are more likely to develop
develop chronic diseases. Betty Snowden's cross to
bear is atrial fibrillation – an often silent but
potentially deadly condition that causes the
heart to beat in a rapid and irregular manner.

Atrial fibrillation is a modern epidemic. We
predicted it more than 25 years ago and now it
has hit, big time. One in five Australians
over the age of 80 are affected – and without
appropriate management, atrial fibrillation is
often linked to deadly strokes, a high risk
of further readmissions. She responded
extremely well to the treatment, to the
management, and to the intervention. The
proof – she is alive, she is well, and she is out
of hospital. This is the best-case scenario from
both a humanitarian and a hospital economics
perspective.

Betty Snowden is a success story and a shining
evidence of how the SAFETY Intervention can
improve the quality of life for patients with atrial fibrillation.
With her condition now in
check, she is well enough to have dreams for
the future. I believe her bucket list includes
travel plans to South America – and all I can
say is, watch out South America.*

*Be my guest, take your pick: Sydney for 15 days, Christchurch for 21 days, or
Sydney, Christchurch, and Melbourne for 42 days.

Betty Snowden
SAFETY INTERVENTION
PARTICIPANT

I have travel goals but my bank says don’t
do them. We'll see. I like the sound of South
America. My main goal is to be able to live
independently and to keep my marbles –
so far, so good.

I have had a lot of ups and downs in my life,
mostly ups. I migrated to Australia in 1961
from the UK, so I'm a transplanted Pom – and
I believe Professor Simon Stewart is too, so
we have that in common. He is driven to
help others and so am I, so we have a similar
outlook in that respect too.

Really! I have had a blessed life. I was a local
village policeman’s daughter and an only child,
which meant that I didn’t need to go and earn
money and could train to become a nurse. I
was very lucky. My husband was a wonderful
man – we quarrelled a lot but that kept the
relationship healthy. We travelled, danced
and dreamed together for many years too.

I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation 17 years
ago and have been in and out of hospital with
the condition – but the SAFETY Intervention
put a stop to all that. I haven’t been to hospital
for three years now so that speaks for itself.

I initially volunteered to take part in the
SAFETY trial because I believed in its higher
purpose, which was to assist people with atrial
fibrillation to manage their condition at home,
stay out of hospital, and get on with their
lives. What a wonderful objective. I believed
SAFETY was a program that could help others.
I wouldn’t have gotten involved otherwise.

Professor Stewart realises that we’ve got
to have ongoing research to cater for the
increasing number of people with atrial
fibrillation. He is passionate about his work,
which is important. It’s no good having
someone who is half hearted. He believes the
intervention can improve the quality of life of
tens of thousands of people so I wanted to support
his endeavours. He just seemed like such a
young man to me – but of course everyone
seems young when you’re my age.

Being a former nurse, I already had a good
grasp of my condition. Atrial fibrillation causes
a disturbance in the heart’s electrical system,
which causes the chambers of the heart to
quiver rather than beat normally. Even with
the knowledge and understanding, it can still
be tricky to manage the condition on your
own as the symptoms are not always obvious.

I found SAFETY beneficial as the nurse
would come to my home and check my blood
pressure, which helped me get to know when
to rest and when to be active.

I like to stay active as I have a rich and full life.
I have three daughters, six grand children and
eight great grandchildren so they keep me
busy. I try to get out and walk daily and I live
in a residential community so my social life
is second to none. I play cards (Mahjong and
500), enjoy painting watercolours, and I even
borrow my friends’ husbands for a dance or
two at the local jazz club. I love my politics and
staying on top of current affairs but all of these
things are difficult to manage from a hospital
bed. Lucky I’m not in one.
Coca-Cola has announced it will launch its newest soft drink in the Australian market in April 2015. Strongly promoted as healthy, Coke elsewhere, Coca-Cola Life may do more to improve the company’s finances than the health of its consumers.

The product was piloted in parts of South America, and launched in the United Kingdom and the United States in September. An analysis of social media conversations in the UK reported the jury is out on whether consumers like the taste of the new product.

GREEN GOODNESS

Like its forthcoming competitor Pepsi True, Coca-Cola Life is packaged in a green can. Both adults and children are known to perceive food with green packaging, or green nutrition labels, as being healthier than identical food packaged in other colours.

While many are surprised by The Coca-Cola Company’s move away from its iconic red labelling, there may be an even more subtle reason for it than the (marketing) goodness of green. A recent European study found people drink less soft drink from a red-labelled cup than a blue-labelled cup. At a subconscious level, the colour red operates as a stop signal. The new product is said to contain considerably less sugar than regular Coke (because it’s sweetened with a plant extract), but doesn’t compare favourably with the two existing products in the company’s line-up. A can of Coca-Cola Life contains 22 grams of sugar – compared to 35 grams in regular Coke and none in the two “diet” offerings.

Sugar (g) Coke Zero Diet Coke Coca-Cola Life Regular Coke

All sugar & calories amounts are taken from 375ml cans.

It has 89 calories per can – compared to 139 for regular Coke – but substantially more than either of the low-calorie offerings. Diet Coke, introduced in Australia in 1983, contains a calorie and a half. Coke Zero, introduced in Australia in 2006, contains only 1.1 calories per can.

SWEET STUFF

Diet Coke and Coke Zero are sweetened with a combination of acesulfame potassium (food code 950), a calorie-free sweetener that’s 200 times sweeter than sugar, and aspartame (food code 951), also calorie free and 200 times sweeter than sugar.

While Coca-Cola’s website assures consumers these sugar alternatives are both completely safe to consume, and existing dietary standards support these claims, the company is clearly responding to consumer concerns about the use of artificial sweeteners. Coca-Cola Life is sweetened with a combination of sugar and stevia – a natural sweetener from the plant species Stevia rebaudiana. The shrub is native to Paraguay and South American tribes have used it as a sweetener for centuries. It has been used in Japan since the 1970s, when a method for producing the commercial product stevioside – and is clearly targeted at people with concerns about the effects of artificial sweeteners.

Coca-Cola Life still contains colouring, caffeine, phosphoric acid and 19 per cent of our recommended daily calorie and a half. Coke Zero, introduced in Australia in 1983, contains a calorie and a half. Coke Zero, introduced in Australia in 2006, contains only 1.1 calories per can.

While stevia is safe to consume, nutritionists have noted that simply removing some sugar and replacing it with stevia doesn’t make a drink (or food) healthy. Coca-Cola Life still contains colouring, caffeine, phosphoric acid and 19 per cent of our recommended daily sugar intake.

In fact, a cola drink with a few less calories may be part of the problem rather than the answer to reducing our waistlines. People tend to consume greater quantities of foods they believe to be healthy, and seeing a food promoted as healthy can lead people to eat more calories.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

This latest move by The Coca Cola Company follows its introduction of ‘portion control’ options – smaller cans of their full sugar beverages – and reflects a commitment made by a group of American companies to reduce calories from soft drinks by introducing and promoting lower-calorie beverages.

But, ultimately, many of these decisions are likely being made to increase the health of the companies’ profits rather than the health of their customers. A look at The Coca Cola Company’s 2013 financial results shows profits from regular soft drinks are declining and sales of ‘healthier’ options are increasing.

The two existing diet colas combined account for 32 per cent of cola sales, and sales of meri- cans grew 70 per cent in 2013. Reflecting the increasing health consciousness of consumers, in the same period sales of Mount Franklin mineral water grew by nine per cent and Pump water by 19 per cent.

Perhaps the most genuine option for this and other such companies would be to cut back on the production and marketing of sweetened soft drinks and focus on selling products that are actually good for consumers.

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ACU TO OPEN STUDY CENTRE IN ROME

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CU and The Catholic University of America (CUA) are set to open a new study centre in Rome in September this year.

The two universities recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the new centre, within a short distance of the Vatican. Bringing together students and academics from both universities, the new centre will offer opportunities for study and research that are grounded in a commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Situated on Janiculum Hill, just above the ancient Roman neighbourhood of Trastevere, the new centre will offer living quarters for undergraduates, a wing for postgraduate students, apartments for visiting faculty, a chapel, garden and other amenities.

As ACU’s first overseas centre, it also marks a significant milestone in the University’s 25-year history.

The joint operation of the Rome Centre will be the second collaborative venture between the two universities. Since 2009 the CUA School of Nursing has had a reciprocal student exchange with ACU’s School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine in Melbourne.

THEOLOGY ACADEMIC NAMED HUMANITIES ACADEMY FELLOW

A

ssociate Professor David Sim from the Faculty of Theology has been elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities – one of the highest honours available for scholars of the humanities in Australia.

Professor Wayne McKenna, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) congratulated Associate Professor Sim on his achievement.

“This award recognises both the quality of his research and the high regard in which he is held by his peers, both in Australia and overseas,” he said.

Associate Professor Sim works in the area of early Christian history and Jewish-Christian relations in the first century, and is a leading international authority on the Gospel of Matthew.

“The sole criterion for election to the Academy is acknowledged excellence in research, so I am very honoured that the Academy has chosen to recognise the quality of my research at the international level,” he said.

REVIEWING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN TONGA

A

ssociate Professor Charles Burford and Dr Anne Benjamin, from ACU’s Faculty of Education and Arts, have led a review of the Catholic school system in Tonga.

The review focused on the mission and mandate of Catholic schools and systems, their future direction, the needs of teachers and parents, and financial sustainability.

“We found much to celebrate in Catholic education in Tonga,” said Associate Professor Burford. “We found a comprehensive system of schools who hold a place of esteem and respect within the country. The faith and commitment of staff was truly inspiring.

“But it isn’t easy, with schools attempting the best for their students with very few of the resources that we would take for granted.”

Dr Benjamin said the generous commitment of teachers and their leaders was moving. One of the schools she visited was St Joseph’s Community College on the island of Hapai. The school runs a strong vocational education strand, despite their technical workshop being without a roof, due to the force of Tropical Cyclone Ian in January 2014. Nearly a year later, many families still live in UN tents, the presbytery has rooms without roofs and water is provided through Caritas.

LAW STUDENTS HIT THE MOOT COURT

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he Thomas More Academy of Law and MacKillop Law Students Society converged on the North Sydney Campus moot court recently for the inaugural grand final mooting competition.

A moot is a mock legal hearing where students play the role of counsel and deliver arguments before a judge.

In this particular scenario the students acted for a shopping centre and commercial tenant involved in a dispute over lease terms. In a moot of this nature there are no witnesses or evidence and the advocates for each side argue on the established facts and on the law and remedies applicable to them.

Eight teams, involving 20 students, participated in the first round of the moot competition and four teams in the final round. The moot court bench comprised of Judge Ken Raphael, formerly of the Federal Circuit Court, Talitha Fishburn, of the Sydney Bar, and Professor Brian Fitzgerald, Dean of the Thomas More Academy of Law.

The winning advocates were Alessandro Alonso, Foday Sesay and Lee McDermott, who were awarded the inaugural mooting trophy.

GRADUATE REUNITED WITH FAMILY

C

anberran refugee and ACU graduate Felix Machiridza was reunited with his children recently after more than four years apart.

Mr Machiridza stayed on in Australia as a refugee in 2010 after his work as a journalist, political activist and vocal opponent of the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe made it too dangerous for him to return.

He studied social work at ACU’s Canberra Campus, and then worked in migration support with the Australian Red Cross before securing his current role at Barnardo’s.

Just before Christmas, thanks to Canberra Refugee Support and money raised through the local community, he was reunited with his three children aged 14, 13 and 8.

“I have never cried like I did on seeing them at the airport” he said. “I had to wait anxiously for nearly 30 minutes after the plane had landed, before they emerged. I just could not hold back.

“I was so amazed at how much they had grown. When I left the youngest was three and half years old and seeing her as an eight-year-old was beyond words.

“Missed watching them grow and all the music that we played together. But they like Australia and they have already made friends. They like their schools and I think here they will be able to pursue and realise their goals without any impediments”

STRATHFIELD CAMPUS GETS THE GO-AHEAD

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he Land and Environment Court has ruled in favour of ACU’s proposed upgrade to the Strathfield Campus. Improvements will include additional on-campus parking, new library and learning spaces, and landscape upgrades.

Professor Maria Nicholson, Associate Vice-Chancellor (Sydney), thanked all those involved in the hearing process.

“As a member of the local community, ACU has an ongoing commitment to working with Strathfield Council and the local residents to provide a place of learning that reflects the history of the site and embraces the future of education in the Catholic intellectual tradition.”
A new research conducted by ACU's Institute for Positive Psychology and Education reveals that Australian school principals are facing increasing burnout, abuse and bullying.

According to the 2014 Teachers Health Fund Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey Report, Australian principals and assistant principals severely lack the support to face the growing pressure of increased workloads, public accountability, aggressive parents and violent students.

The survey found that:
- Growing job complexity and lack of support means sheer quantity of work is the greatest source of stress facing Australian principals.
- Parents are the worst offenders when it comes to increasing threats of violence and bullying.
- The increasing rate of physical violence from students is seven times the rate of the general population.

Report author Associate Professor Philip Riley said the survey clearly showed that these highly dedicated school leaders were committed to running schools as effectively possible but the personal cost was increasingly high.

“Our project will focus on the provision of tips and ‘tools’ to children under the age of 15 years; that is the age group in which parents are likely to introduce their children to alcohol. We need to target these parents before they face the decision of whether to allow their children to ‘try alcohol’ ever,” he said.

The project will involve the development and implementation of a comprehensive, community-based intervention that is founded on the evidence-based principles of community marketing.

The study is funded by a prestigious West Australian Government Healthway grant and will be carried out in collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology. Curtin University and the University of Wollongong.

The Melbourne-based team is recruiting more than 100 families as part of this 18-month project which will teach parents to take control of what they serve at the dinner table.

The study, involving children aged two to five, will test a US-developed approach to eating. Parents have responsibility for what and when their child eats and, in turn, the child decides if they eat and how much.

BEWT leader, Associate Professor Leah Brennan, said while fussy or picky eating was a natural part of children’s development, it can still be a very stressful experience for parents and problems arise when it becomes established.

“It can be a shock to parents because often they will have a child that feeds quite well and is happy to eat a variety of food and then all of a sudden they are resistant,” she said. “Part of this process is about having a variety of foods available at mealtimes and allowing children to have as little or as much as they like. “Children can take up to 20 exposures to a new food before they are happy to eat it. Often parents give up well before.”

Parents will also be taught how to deal with bad mealtime behaviour like nagging and tantrums, plus ways to encourage good habits.
It’s 39 metres long, and took 30 ACU students more than 500 hours to paint. And the kids at Homebush Public School love it.

When the students at Homebush Public School run out to have their lunch, they’re not just sitting in a concrete playground. They are huddled around a cozy campfire, running through a cow-filled pasture, picking mushrooms in the forest, or on the lookout for wild animals.

The colourful mural, which spans a 39-metre playground wall at the Sydney primary school, was the creation of three ACU visual arts and design students – Montana O’Neill, Sophie Toukalas and Rebecca Malin. They put their ideas to Acting Principal Alex Moussawer and Assistant Principal Brian Lambert, and Adventure story became a reality. Montana, Sophie and Rebecca sketched their scenes, and 30 ACU students from various courses volunteered their time. Painting took more than 500 hours and nearly three months. Not only does the mural contain a variety of settings, animals and plants, but letters, colours and numbers are hidden among the scenes, encouraging the children to learn and interact with the artwork.

“The mural is a stunning addition to our playground. We are thankful to the university students and coordinators for their time and effort in accomplishing this wonderful project, which students at Homebush Public School will enjoy for years to come,” Mr Moussawer said. The mural was made possible thanks to the generous financial support of ACU, Strathfield Council, and Bunnings Lidcombe.
With an international following for his successful musical lessons, it comes as some surprise that the YouTube star known as Rocking Dan Teaching Man had a learning disorder and struggled in the classroom as a child.

Dan Colquhoun said he would hate for primary school children to have the same problems he did processing numbers and letters, which was one of his motivations for writing songs to help the children in his classes learn basic numeracy and literacy skills.

“I struggled at school because I’m mildly dyslexic, which meant I had trouble processing sounds and symbols,” Dan said. Writing songs to provide a different approach to those sounds and symbols seemed an obvious way to find an alternative for those kids who are challenged when learning to read.

“Being able to share my songs through my YouTube channel and the Google + network is a wonderful way to help children with their learning from around the world,” he said.

Most of the hits for the 30 songs he has written and recorded come from Australia, Britain and the United States. The YouTube channel has had more than 490,000 hits and when he did his first animation, it was seen in more than 100 countries.

It was also seen by his peers and employers. “Everyone at school has been really positive, and my principal Maria Ross is very supportive. The Director of Teaching and Learning for the CEO Sydney, Michael Bizzana, wrote to me congratulating me for being awarded ACU’s Frater Scholarship,” he said.

While completing a postgraduate certificate in education, early childhood lecturer Dr Cathie Harrison encouraged Dan to research the benefits of integrating music across the curriculum, an activity that ultimately led to the Rocking Dan Teaching Man YouTube channel.

Putting his classroom to music was a successful exercise and songs like What makes a good friend, Come on and meet the shapes, and The friends of 10 (a maths song for first graders) have taken off and are regularly used in his classes, and are also available as downloadable classroom materials for others to use.

Dan was an outstanding student with a distinction average when studying for his Bachelor of Education (Primary) and postgraduate certificate at ACU’s Strathfield Campus. Both his strong academic results and his efforts to carve a distinctive swathe in his career made him a prime candidate for the Bob and Margaret Frater Travel Scholarship, worth $10,000, which he won in late 2013.

Established by Bob and Margaret Frater, the scholarship recognises and rewards teachers within Catholic primary schools who display leadership qualities and commitment and who will contribute to the continuing development and enhancement of the school system through participation in an international experience.

Dan used his prize to attend an international conference for kindergarten teachers in Las Vegas in 2014. The conference exceeded his expectations and he had the chance to meet some of the educators he had been following and exchange tips. One of the speakers even used an image of Dan in his presentation, much to his delight.

“It was such a great opportunity to be there with some of the big names of primary education, like Harry Kindergarten – a guy called Peter Harry. Peter had asked me if he could use my picture in his presentation but it was still a bit of a shock to see it up there on the big screen. He showed a big picture of me and talked about my YouTube channel in his workshop called ‘Teaching with YouTube’. Deanna Jump showed The big bad wolf description song in her workshop about early literacy and said it was a great way to help children with their development of descriptive language.”

Dan said he was keen to pay tribute to those who had invested in him and his work.

“I’d particularly like to thank Bob and Margaret Frater for making that possible. If it wasn’t for the scholarship I wouldn’t have had made it to the conference. I learned so much and it has just given me so many ideas and so much material to work with. What an incredible experience.”

Read more about Dan Colquhoun on his blog at www.rockingdan.blogspot.com.au

Primary school teacher Dan Colquhoun’s songs are inspiring a generation of children to embrace learning through music, writes Jen Rosenberg.
Alisse Grafitti caught up with the group at 400-year-old Heythrop College in Kensington. To sites such as the London Catholic Worker Centre, the students had plenty of time to explore the city. Understanding Self and Society – on the dignity of the human person. Along with lectures and visits the first ever Core Curriculum program in London. The group spent two weeks completing the unit UNCC300: BACHELOR OF NURSING

In January this year, 14 ACU students and two lecturers headed to a frosty northern hemisphere for the first ever Core Curriculum program in London. The group spent two weeks completing the unit UNCC300: Understanding Self and Society – on the dignity of the human person. Along with lectures and visits to sites such as the London Catholic Worker Centre, the students had plenty of time to explore the city. Alisse Grafitti caught up with the group at 400-year-old Heythrop College in Kensington.

LAUREN TIMMINS
BACHELOR OF TEACHING/BACHELOR OF ARTS
HUMANITIES

“As a future teacher, an understanding of human dignity is essential in order to ensure the welfare of your students. Completing this unit intensively allows you to really focus on and engage in the unit. This, coupled with relevant site visits made the unit more enjoyable than studying it at home in a regular semester.”

STEPHANIE O’CONNOR
BACHELOR OF NURSING (PRACTICE LEADERSHIP)

“Human dignity is essential as a nurse as people are vulnerable when they are in hospital and ensuring they can maintain their own dignity is very important. By completing this unit overseas you can visit all these amazing attractions that you would never be able to see from home. It is an intensive program so it’s very valuable being able to refresh your memory often, and be able to contribute in class as you understand it.”

DR SEAN MCKENNA
CAMPUS LEADER CORE CURRICULUM
MELBOURNE

“It was a privilege to work with such a committed and focused group of students. The class discussions, following site visits or guest speakers, were always lively and full of insightful observations. The message that I think came through most strongly was that if we fail to see the full humanity of those we encounter, we do them, and ourselves, a great disservice. People are complex and should never be reduced to a single label or be defined by one aspect of their life. Completing the Core overseas brings the content to life in a tremendously powerful way. Our differences and our similarities are highlighted by travel, and so the ideas encountered in Core units match perfectly with the travel mindset; being away from home and focused on just the one unit is an ideal environment in which to encounter such important concepts and ideas. Students had the chance to see real life examples of how some public policy or social situation can pose a challenge to human dignity. The unit itself was tailored to a UK context so students were able to learn more about the issues in Britain and see a side of London that the average tourist would not experience. To be able to go to centres which work with the homeless or with migrant domestic workers and hear firsthand some of the issues they face gave an added dimension to the overseas experience. This is a wonderful experience that ACU students are privileged to have available to them. To be able to combine travel with a deep experience of learning in another culture and context is an opportunity too good to miss. The International Core is a great chance – take it!”

MICHELLE GORDON
BACHELOR OF NURSING

“I lived in London for 12 years, so it’s great to be back. It’s been excellent doing the unit intensively, being able to get out in London and think about what you’re learning, as you’re learning. This course is directly relevant to us as nurses. We have to take into account the person that we’re looking after, and how to make them feel better about themselves at a vulnerable time. It’s exciting to get out into a different culture and a different part of the world. It’s been great to meet people from different courses and campuses, and the debate has been really dynamic.”

STEPHANIE O’CONNOR
BACHELOR OF NURSING (PRACTICE LEADERSHIP)

“We have to take into account the person that we’re looking after, and how to make them feel better about themselves at a vulnerable time. As a future teacher, an understanding of human dignity is essential in order to ensure the welfare of your students. Completing this unit intensively allows you to really focus on and engage in the unit. This, coupled with relevant site visits made the unit more enjoyable than studying it at home in a regular semester.”

KATHRYN BOYLE
CORE CURRICULUM MANAGER

“The site visits and guest speakers really help to make concrete the things we studied in the classroom. The students were able to see real life examples of how some public policy or social situation can pose a challenge to human dignity. The unit itself was tailored to a UK context so students were able to learn more about the issues in Britain and see a side of London that the average tourist would not experience. To be able to go to centres which work with the homeless or with migrant domestic workers and hear firsthand some of the issues they face gave an added dimension to the overseas experience. This is a wonderful experience that ACU students are privileged to have available to them. To be able to combine travel with a deep experience of learning in another culture and context is an opportunity too good to miss. The International Core is a great chance – take it!”

AMANDA PEAGRAM
BACHELOR OF MIDWIFERY

“When I first saw that we had to do core units I wasn’t impressed, but I’ve really enjoyed it. I’m more aware of people, of their humanity and dignity. For me the intensive unit has been great, it’s a learning style that works for me, and I get to do fewer units next semester. The course is thought-provoking, and I came out of each class with even more questions. The site visits were confronting, but really good. It was great seeing how these people have dedicated themselves to helping others.”

TYNNILE HARRIS
BACHELOR OF PARAMEDICINE

“It was a privilege to work with such a committed and focused group of students. The class discussions, following site visits or guest speakers, were always lively and full of insightful observations. The message that I think came through most strongly was that if we fail to see the full humanity of those we encounter, we do them, and ourselves, a great disservice. People are complex and should never be reduced to a single label or be defined by one aspect of their life. Completing the Core overseas brings the content to life in a tremendously powerful way. Our differences and our similarities are highlighted by travel, and so the ideas encountered in Core units match perfectly with the travel mindset; being away from home and focused on just the one unit is an ideal environment in which to encounter such important concepts and ideas. Students had the chance to see real life examples of how some public policy or social situation can pose a challenge to human dignity. The unit itself was tailored to a UK context so students were able to learn more about the issues in Britain and see a side of London that the average tourist would not experience. To be able to go to centres which work with the homeless or with migrant domestic workers and hear firsthand some of the issues they face gave an added dimension to the overseas experience. This is a wonderful experience that ACU students are privileged to have available to them. To be able to combine travel with a deep experience of learning in another culture and context is an opportunity too good to miss. The International Core is a great chance – take it!”

For more information on applying for the International Core Curriculum visit www.acu.edu.au/thecore
As well as Islam, Professor Turner said he is interested in researching all religions, particularly in areas such as globalisation, religious conflict and the modern state, religious authority and electronic information, religious consumerism and youth cultures, and human rights and religion.

“All religions are now in the public domain and are creating new political climates that can be threatening but they also create new opportunities for the development of civil society,” he said.

The IRPS brings together world-renowned scholars — including Professor Jose Casanova, Professor Oscar Salemink and Associate Professor Irfan Ahmed — and emerging researchers.

“International scholarly authorities on religion also sit on our advisory board, providing global insight and a strong network for the institute,” said Professor Turner.

The institute has five main research streams: Religion and Law, Cities and Successful Societies, Asian Societies and their Religions, Global Catholicism, and Religion and Medicine.

Led by Dr Joshua Roose, Religion and Law studies the intersection of law and society, including issues of legal pluralism.

Led by Professor Turner and Dr Roose, Cities and Successful Societies examines how social and economic changes make an impact on people’s happiness and well-being.

Led by Associate Professor Ahmad, Asian Societies and their Religions considers the relation of religion to resources, scarcity and economic development in Asian societies.

Led by Professor Casanova, Global Catholicism explores the historical role of Jesuits in developing the Catholic Church as a global religious movement. It will examine the development of a ‘global consciousness’ through these endeavours and their lasting consequences for the Church and for secular society.

Professor Turner will also lead the Religion and Medicine stream which is currently being developed.

Prior to joining ACU, Professor Turner was Director of the Religion and Society Research Centre and Presidential Professor of Sociology at The Graduate Center at the City University of New York, USA.

He also taught at the University of Aberdeen, Flinders University, University of Utrecht, Deakin University, Cambridge University and the National University of Singapore.

“With our growing network with American Universities (Harvard, Wayne State and City University of New York), in Latin America (Diego Portales University in Chile), Germany (Potsdam University), Denmark (University of Copenhagen) and British Universities (University of Cambridge), we can offer students a cosmopolitan environment and opportunities to work and study abroad,” he said.

We find that our Australian teachers are highly sought after as they can transition to the UK curriculum seamlessly, have a positive work ethic, and come so well regarded by the schools we work with.”

Katherine Gibson from Teaching Jobs London said her agency pays to fly selected Australian teachers to England so they can interview face-to-face with a range of schools.

“UK schools are now much more open to taking Australian teachers who need sponsorship than they have previously been, which shows the shortage in their local market, and the lengths they are going to in order to staff their schools,” she said.

Victoria Galvin, 24, and Evonne Smith, 31, are teaching graduates from ACU’s Canberra Campus, who live and work in London. Both are on a two year working visa but have started the process of being sponsored by their schools.

“Australian teachers are very sought after in London, nearly everyone I have met secured a position straight away,” Victoria said. “They have a good work ethic and can relate to both students and staff. The curriculum in London is similar to ours at home, but I think Australian teachers give a fresh and fun spin with their down-to-earth teaching style.

“There is never a dull weekend in London, with a great music scene and various quirky events. Not to mention the close vicinity and easy access for traveling through Europe. “Teaching in London has helped me develop confidence in my ability. The differences in the classrooms, teaching styles, assessments and the children - many of whom are from all over the world – make the experience a huge learning curve.”

Evonne said she had also found it easy to secure a job after arriving in London.

“Australian teachers are generally a very easy-going, pleasant and well-trained group who understand that while working hard is the basis of the job, a sense of humour is essential,” she said.

“History is my passion and living in England has been like a playground in that regard. It has everything from Roman, Medieval, Tudor, and Victorian history to Edwardian and beyond.

“I have always thought that teaching is the most demanding and rewarding job. Immersing yourself in another education system inevitably means you learn so many new things that you can use daily in your teaching practice.”
**THE SCIENCE OF SPORT**

When the Socceroos won their first ever Asian Cup title in January this year, Football Federation Australia (FFA) chief executive David Gallop reserved special praise for an overhaul of the team’s sports science – and the addition of Dr Craig Duncan.

The sport scientist and ACU exercise science lecturer had been working with the Socceroos since November, to maximise the performance of each and every player. When the team clashed with Korea in the final, in front of more than 70,000 supporters at Stadium Australia – he was right there on the sideline watching weeks of careful planning come to fruition.

It’s not the first time Dr Duncan has been on the winning side. He was with Sydney FC when they took out the A-League Championship, with the Western Sydney Wanderers when they became the first Australian side to win the Asian Champions League, and with the NSW State of Origin team for their drought-breaking series win last year.

He was also named ‘Sport Scientist of the Year’ by Exercise and Sport Science Australia in 2014. “I was an athlete myself and I think that’s how a lot of us started out, but I always had an interest in coaching, and I started coaching my first soccer team when I was 12 or 13.”

“Getting into the performance side of things became an interest, and while it wasn’t always a linear path to get to where I am now, it’s certainly been a most enjoyable one.”

Dr Duncan’s role can involve overseeing the sports science, the rehabilitation, the sports medicine, the strength and conditioning, and even the game analysis for the team.

“My priority is to maximise the performance of every player we work with,” he said. “Effective management involves careful monitoring of training loads and markers of fatigue to ensure athletes are adequately prepared for competition.”

“We need to balance fitness and fatigue in order to prevent injury. Preventing problems before they arise is much easier than solving them after they’ve happened.”

A strong advocate of athlete monitoring, Dr Duncan said there was an increasing avalanche of new technology in the industry, but keeping it simple and understanding the human body got the best results.

“Part of my work usually involves implementing a player monitoring system, where we gather an extensive amount of data even before training starts. So from right after waking up the players would be entering data such as how they slept, their muscle soreness, their psychological wellbeing as well as objective measurements like heart rate variability. I can watch that data come in and see if there are any red flags that might show a player is struggling.”

“I’ve been using GPS for a number of years now and it’s a very valuable tool to really know what’s happening to the player in training. It shows the players acceleration, deceleration, total distance they run, distance at high speed etc. Over the years I’ve been able to work out which ones are important to performance and to decreasing the risk of injury.”

“But it’s not rocket science, it’s the basic fundamentals such as sleep and nutrition which are the most important for our players.”

While sports science is playing an increasingly important role in professional sport, Dr Duncan said communicating its benefits to coaches who are not quite convinced can be frustrating.

“We need to have the sound technical knowledge but that’s only step one. If we can’t get the coaches to listen to what we’re doing and we haven’t established that rapport then we have no chance of being able to do our job correctly. While we might think we have the answer to a lot of the problems that a team is having, the facts that is the coach is the boss, and if they don’t want to adopt our strategies then we’re in strife.”

“Just as important is our relationship with the athletes. Players are not interested in how much you know unless they know how much you care.”

In the high profile world of professional sport, the pressure to perform, the huge amounts of money at stake, and the intense media scrutiny can take a heavy toll – and not just on the players. When Dr Duncan suffered a heart attack four years ago, he realised something had to give.

“I had no risk factors, my cholesterol was normal, my blood pressure normal, I was active and exercised most days of the week. I’m a vegetarian and I had no family history – I couldn’t believe it.”

“But in professional sport there is significant pressure, and the days are long and can sometimes be difficult. I was under enormous stress and had been for a long, long time. A lot of it was self-imposed and just rushing around at a million miles an hour.”

“When I actually did realise that my health was at risk, I thought about my family and the chance of not seeing my kids grow up, and that was very, very frightening.”

The 47-year-old made a few changes. He began to consult to sports clubs rather than bear the brunt of season-long pressure, he took up meditation, and he realised that it was impossible to control the results of every game.

“To be successful you have to learn to manage yourself effectively otherwise burnout is a real possibility. If you don’t have your mind in some sort of balance, it doesn’t matter how healthy your body is.”
Social marketing has the power to have a positive impact on the world – and ACU’s Professor Sandra Jones is heavily invested in the cause, Sara Coen writes.

Coke has been convincing people to buy brown fizz since 1888, so it’s no secret that commercial marketing can heavily influence consumer behaviour – but whether or not it has a positive impact on society is highly debatable. Social marketing has a different story to tell.

Drawing upon commercial marketing tools, technologies and approaches, social marketing aims to entice people to embrace new ways to live happier, healthier and more productive lives. Social marketing also borrows theoretical frameworks from psychology, health promotion and education.

“Social marketing is not to be confused with social media – they are not the same thing,” said Professor Sandra Jones, Director of the Centre for Health and Social Research – part of ACU’s new Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research.

“Yes, we do use Facebook and Twitter as communication tools, but that’s not actually what we do. There’s a lot more to it,” she said.

Professor Jones is an internationally recognised expert in the area of social marketing. Her career research funding exceeds $8 million and she is a member of numerous policy and advisory committees, including those of cancer organisations in Australia and overseas. Her strong research background centres on the impact of commercial marketing on health and wellbeing.

“Social marketers look at what commercial marketers do well, and adopt their strategies to bring about voluntary behavioural change at a community level. We’re less manipulative than commercial marketers – and we’re not trying to make a profit. The aim is to get people to make independent choices that will impact their lives for the better.”

“Telling people they need to change, and presenting them with valid reasons for the change is not enough. Although social marketing has its roots in health education, it goes beyond just education to inspiration.”

Professor Jones and her team are looking at new ways to bring about desired behavioural changes in various community groups. Over the past few years, they have been involved in community-based social marketing interventions related to underage drinking, asthma and skin cancer awareness. These projects have been in partnership with health services and NGOs, to improve the uptake of health promoting and risk reducing behaviours.

“For a social marketing intervention to be effective, it needs to be tailor made to meet the needs of the community and the different people in it. It’s virtually impossible to design an intervention that will motivate behaviour change in everyone. We need different messages for different life stages and demographics within a community.”

The aim was to address social norms around underage drinking

“Looking at the very early physical activity interventions such as the ‘Life. Be in it’ campaign, Australia has come a long way. This was a very generic advertising campaign, with the assumption that whether you were 12 years old or 85 years old, you would be motivated to get off the couch and get fit. It was a one-size-fits-all model, which is problematic.

“We are much more sophisticated in our approach these days and recognise the effectiveness of segmentation – a marketing strategy that involves dividing a broad target market into subsets of consumers, who have common needs and priorities, and then designing and implementing strategies to target them.”

The best way to get to know a person is to move in with them – and essentially this is what Professor Jones and her research team are doing to better understand the needs of their target groups.

“We go into the community we are targeting and become a part of its fabric. For instance, as part of the ‘Stop Underage Drinking Project’ in Kiama, NSW, we literally set up shop in the town,” she said.

The aim was to address social norms around underage drinking, including the supply of alcohol to teenagers in Kiama. Professor Jones and her team undertook formative research in collaboration with the community, taking into account all the relevant barriers. They have since made important strides in challenging social perceptions of underage drinking.

They successfully engaged more than 1,000 students, parents and members of the local community to develop a robust intervention, which includes workshops, seminars at local schools, social media campaigns and competitions to encourage teenagers to actively engage and design their own messages about underage drinking.

“We conducted extensive community consultations to ensure that we really understood the issues at stake and developed a series of initiatives aimed at parents, teens and the broader community,” said Professor Jones.

“The focus has very much been on ensuring that the community has a sense of ownership over the project and its messages. We have established a community consultative committee that meets regularly in Kiama to inform the project activities and to ensure the work we are doing resonates with the community.”

Community-specific initiatives also included social marketing strategies such as bus and poster campaigns, information booths at public events and placement of news stories and advertisements about the project in the local media.

The ‘Get Your Life Back’ campaign is another successful project, designed by Professor Jones and her team to improve asthma awareness amongst older people. They developed an evidence-based social marketing campaign, including an online asthma management program, which got results.

“Tackled the overall aim was to significantly improve asthma self-management in an under-prioritised group with high levels of asthma mortality and other co-morbid conditions to manage.”

‘Get Your Life Back’ resulted in changing behaviour and knowledge in the target audience and a good recall of campaign messages. The campaign also resulted in greater numbers of calls to an asthma information line and encouraged older adults with respiratory problems to visit their doctors.

Professor Jones has also worked on collaborative research to address health and social issues among disadvantaged groups, such as young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and individuals living with disability – specifically, people with autism.

In the future she hopes to expand her work in this area and develop new programs and approaches to further engage and empower these vulnerable groups of people.
I realised just how lucky I am, and also how "Before that trip I knew the definition of year and traveled to Africa."

"Poverty is a game of roulette, and by any 23-year-old said. "It's all a game of chance. No born into a brothel in India, a slum in the other spin of the wheel, I could have been." poverty is not natural. It is man-made and 'Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, 'Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is man-made and so spending 24 hours a day with people could be hard."

"The main highlight for me was the two "I learnt so much about good and bad homestays we did – the first in Dili and experiences in East Timor. Hooked on development work, she the second in Atabae. The families were so completed an immersion madeleine whitby knows exactly how lucky was generous, kind and loving, it was extremely years' experience in their area. There is also hard to say goodbye, and I shed more than five years' experience in their area. There is also compulsory pre-departure training for all volunteers which covers topics such as living and working cross-culturally, the importance of engaging respectfully with local partners and working in solidarity with all those involved.

"Good development needs local voices. We as outsiders do not know the real needs, desires, issues or problems of a community. Engaging with that community is pivotal in creating just, sustainable development".

"When I make up my mind to do something, I just put my head down and do it. There's no reason why I can't apply this principle to every area of my life, including my future career," said madeleine whitby knows exactly how lucky she is.

"Poverty is a game of roulette, and by any other spin of the wheel, I could have been born into a brothel in India, a slum in the Philippines, or a refugee camp in Somalia," the 23-year-old said. "It's all a game of chance. No one deserves to be born into a life of poverty." After finishing Year 12 Madeleine took a gap year and traveled to Africa. "Before that trip I knew the definition of poverty, but I had never really seen or felt it. I realised just how lucky I am, and also how unfair the global economic system is.

experience in East Timor with Palms Australia – an organisation which recruits, prepares, sends and supports skilled volunteers to reduce global poverty.

"Palms is a volunteer sending agency, working in numerous countries, across a number of professions. For example, there are teachers in South Africa, medical officers in Zambia, nurses in Ethiopia and accountants in Timor-Leste," she said. "They also offer encounter trips, which is what I did. Participants travel around East Timor, visiting Palms volunteers, cultural sites, museums and local development organisations. I was very excited but nervous about the encounter... I have travelled to places similar to Timor before, such as Ghana, Kenya, Indonesia and Thailand, but never to a country with such a recent and raw violent past."

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"The main highlight for me was the two homestays we did – the first in Dili and the second in Atabae. The families were so generous, kind and loving, it was extremely hard to say goodbye, and I shed more than a few tears."

"I really believe in what Palms does. Every volunteer commits to between one and three years in their placement, and they all have qualifications and at least five years’ experience in their area. There is also compulsory pre-departure training for all volunteers which covers topics such as living and working cross-culturally, the importance of engaging respectfully with local partners and working in solidarity with all those involved."

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"The fact is I inherited my economic standing. I was born into a middle-class family in a wealthy county with a stable government. I didn’t deserve it more than any other child around the world – I was simply lucky."

"I really believe in what Nelson Mandela said. ‘Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity. It is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.’"

madeleine whitby enrolled in ACU’s Bachelor of International Development Studies. As part of the degree she completed an immersion experience in East Timor with Palms Australia – an organisation which recruits, prepares, sends and supports skilled volunteers to reduce global poverty.

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madeleine whitby spent a month in East Timor and said it was one of the best experiences of her life.

"I learnt so much about good and bad development during that month. I also learnt a lot about myself. The main challenge I had was constantly being around people I had never met before. I like my privacy, so spending 24 hours a day with people could be hard."

"The main highlight for me was the two homestays we did – the first in Dili and the second in Atabae. The families were so generous, kind and loving, it was extremely hard to say goodbye, and I shed more than a few tears."

"I have since been interning in the office for one to three days a week in a variety of areas. I manage the Facebook and Instagram pages, write content for the website and blog posts, and work on the logistics for future encounters," she said.

"It’s an amazing place to work. The vibe is always: one of positivity, fun and hard work. Everyone in the office is friendly and ready for a laugh, or cake, or an abundance of coffee. I hope to be able to continue volunteering here for many years."

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"Good development needs local voices. We as outsiders do not know the real needs, desires, issues or problems of a community. Engaging with that community is pivotal in creating just, sustainable development."
An ACU study has found that the funniest comedians really do die first, Alisses Graffiti and Amy Ripley write.

WHEN COMEDY TURNS TRAGIC

It's no secret that some of the funniest people are also the saddest. Robin Williams was just one of the many comedians who made us laugh while at the same time struggling with addiction and despair. As he once said himself, “comedy is acting out optimism.” Researchers from ACU’s Mary MacKillop Institute of Health Research set out to test the assumption, and discovered that the funniest comedians are indeed more at risk of premature death and reduced longevity than their less funny counterparts.

Researchers Professor Simon Stewart and Professor David Thompson examined 53 male British and Irish comedians born between 1900 and 1954 – both individuals and those in comedy partnerships such as Morecambe and Wise or Monty Python. They concentrated their research on the “funniest” comedians of the 23, found that 78 per cent had suffered a premature death compared to a more favourable survival profile in their less funny counterparts. The average age of death for these “funniest” comedians was 63 years old.

“It’s an intriguing issue, but there does seem to be a strong link between being extremely funny, the type of personalities that drive that humour, and the impact on mental and physical health,” said Professor Stewart. “There needs to be a balance in life and it’s difficult to have those incredible highs without the lows.”

Early death is a common phenomenon among well-known comedians – from Peter Sallis, to Rik Mayall and Tony Hancock. Others, Professor Stewart pointed out, have publicly admitted to struggling with despair, addiction, or both. “This is the tension of comedy,” he said. “We may see the best of these comedians in their public façade but in private many of them are battling things like depression, psychosis, and a host of other mental health issues.”

Comedians working in duos were also designated for the research as either the “funny” or “straight” man of the team – with results showing the “funny” man was three times more likely to die prematurely than his partner.

“Comedy duos are especially important for this research as they were generally from the same background and of the same age,” said Professor Stewart.

“Take for example the 1970s British team of Morecambe and Wise, the ‘straight’ guy Ernie Wise lived to 73, while his funny partner, Eric Morecambe, died aged 58. The gap in longevity between the funny guy and the stooge is quite amazing.”

Professor Stewart said the research team had been surprised by the strength of their findings, which were published in the International Journal of Cardiology late last year.

“It’s sobering to think that many of the people who make us laugh the most are vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress that leaves them at risk of a premature death.”

“Mental health issues such as mania and depression, and distinct personality traits that help shape the talents of these elite comedians may well also explain their reduced longevity.”

“Theyre fate reminds us of the importance of achieving a balance between our mental and physical wellbeing. Many of the people we think of as most vibrant and strong in their public persona may be struggling at a personal level.”

Professor Stewart said that the study’s findings could help identify the risk factors for early death and help alleviate the likelihood of premature death for comedians.

“This striking data might also have relevance to other fields, or could help other groups identify the risk factors that leave them vulnerable to early death.”

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Gabrielle Colman is passionate about human rights. So when she had the opportunity to attend the G20 Youth Summit in Germany – refugees, migration and accessible education were top on her list of priorities.

Initially put forward for the summit by one of her ACU law lecturers, Gabrielle applied and was shocked when she was selected to participate as Australia’s Minister for Social Affairs on the Committee for Accessibility of Education and Human Rights.

“I was incredibly excited when I found out that I had been selected. I felt so grateful,” she said. “I was both nervous and excited about attending. I wanted to be well prepared so that I could make a good contribution to the discussions, and I was excited to be doing something so challenging and interesting.”

The G20 Youth Summit, held in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany, was part of the wider G20 Youth Forum. Each year, approximately 150 – 200 exceptional students and young experts are selected to become head of state or ministers in the national youth delegations to the summit.

The summit gives students the opportunity to discuss world global problems and build valuable partnerships with leading politicians, eminent academics and successful businesses.

“Attending the summit was an amazing experience. I met so many fantastic, inspiring and incredibly intelligent people. It was fascinating hearing perspectives from people all over the world on how we can approach global problems affecting access to education and human rights. It was held in a beautiful town in the German Alps – a stunning backdrop for the summit.”

As Australia’s Minister for Social Affairs on the Committee for Accessibility of Education and Human Rights, Gabrielle helped create recommendations which were sent to various multinational organisations, private companies and heads of state.

“I thought it was important to talk about refugees and migration, as well as capacity building in countries to make education more accessible. To be honest, I chose to study law because I have always been passionate about human rights and international law. I love the power it has to achieve social justice and do good when put to the right use.

“I loved Germany, it is a very beautiful country, and the Alps are absolutely stunning. I am so lucky to have been a part of it.”

“The trip also gave me more experience in applying legal ideas in an international context, and looking at genuine reform that could bring about practical and sustainable change.”

Gabrielle was able to put the experience into practice at a recent internship with the Walk Free Foundation in Perth.

“I worked on potential reforms that could help fight human trafficking and forced labour in the Middle East,” she said. “I also worked on Australia’s compliance with International Labour Organisation conventions. I have absolutely loved my time with Walk Free and am really grateful for the experience.

“Feel so lucky to have had the opportunities I have. Interning with Social Security Rights Victoria and the Walk Free Foundation, being involved with our Law Student Society, and being able to attend the G20 Youth Summit have all been a direct result of studying at ACU. Having a really supportive faculty and great social environment makes a big difference.”

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Initially put forward for the summit by one of her ACU law lecturers, Gabrielle applied and was shocked when she was selected to participate as Australia’s Minister for Social Affairs on the Committee for Accessibility of Education and Human Rights.

“I was incredibly excited when I found out that I had been selected. I felt so grateful,” she said. “I was both nervous and excited about attending. I wanted to be well prepared so that I could make a good contribution to the discussions, and I was excited to be doing something so challenging and interesting.”

The G20 Youth Summit, held in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany, was part of the wider G20 Youth Forum. Each year, approximately 150 – 200 exceptional students and young experts are selected to become head of state or ministers in the national youth delegations to the summit.

The summit gives students the opportunity to discuss world global problems and build valuable partnerships with leading politicians, eminent academics and successful businesses.

“Attending the summit was an amazing experience. I met so many fantastic, inspiring and incredibly intelligent people. It was fascinating hearing perspectives from people all over the world on how we can approach global problems affecting access to education and human rights. It was held in a beautiful town in the German Alps – a stunning backdrop for the summit.”

As Australia’s Minister for Social Affairs on the Committee for Accessibility of Education and Human Rights, Gabrielle helped create recommendations which were sent to various multinational organisations, private companies and heads of state.

“I thought it was important to talk about refugees and migration, as well as capacity building in countries to make education more accessible. To be honest, I chose to study law because I have always been passionate about human rights and international law. I love the power it has to achieve social justice and do good when put to the right use.

“I loved Germany, it is a very beautiful country, and the Alps are absolutely stunning. I am so lucky to have been a part of it.”

“The trip also gave me more experience in applying legal ideas in an international context, and looking at genuine reform that could bring about practical and sustainable change.”

Gabrielle was able to put the experience into practice at a recent internship with the Walk Free Foundation in Perth.

“I worked on potential reforms that could help fight human trafficking and forced labour in the Middle East,” she said. “I also worked on Australia’s compliance with International Labour Organisation conventions. I have absolutely loved my time with Walk Free and am really grateful for the experience.

“Feel so lucky to have had the opportunities I have. Interning with Social Security Rights Victoria and the Walk Free Foundation, being involved with our Law Student Society, and being able to attend the G20 Youth Summit have all been a direct result of studying at ACU. Having a really supportive faculty and great social environment makes a big difference.”
THE LOWDOWN on teacher education

The ups and downs of the teaching profession have sustained public policy discussion and a good deal of politicians and journalists’ careers over the last few years. We took a look at some of the stats on teacher education, the industry, and job prospects, and found that the future is bright.

THE INDUSTRY

01 FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT
Full-time employment is the most common type of employment for both primary (73%) and secondary teachers (80.5%).

02 MALES IN DEMAND
81% of primary teachers and 58% of secondary teachers are female.

03 FILL A NEED
In secondary schools, there are relatively low proportions of males teaching in English, LOTE, Special Needs, and History.

04 RETIREMENT LOOMING
Close to one in five Australian teachers are 56 years of age or older.

05 JOB SATISFACTION
89% of primary teachers and 85% of secondary teachers report that they are, overall, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their job.

06 YOUNG BLOOD NEEDED
The average age for primary teachers is 43.8 years and secondary teachers 45 years.

07 HIGH EMPLOYMENT
Employment for primary and secondary school teachers is above average.

ACU AND TEACHING

A LONG HISTORY
ACU was founded from Catholic tertiary institutions that have been training teachers and nurses since the mid-19th century.

THE PLACE TO BE
ACU is the largest provider of education graduates in Australia.

GET HIRED
96% of our teaching graduates secure a job within four months of graduating.

THE FUTURE

96%

96% of our teaching graduates secure a job within four months of graduating.

STRONG GROWTH
The Education and Training industry is projected to increase by 118,800 (or 13.3%) over the five years to November 2018, the second largest projected increase of any industry.

JOB OPENINGS
Over the five years to November 2018, the number of job openings for primary and secondary school teachers is expected to be high (greater than 50,000 for each sector).

OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES
Australian teachers are in demand in the UK to help cope with a looming teacher recruitment crisis. Reports suggest that there could be a deficit of almost 27,000 teachers by 2017.
One of the other key aspects of Clemente that has become evident in the program’s ongoing research agenda is the importance of hope. Through learning, through education, through a connectedness with people, students come to build a future. It’s a future of possibilities based on hope, as opposed to surviving for the now. That’s the very big difference with Clemente Australia.

The program is taught in a community setting, as many of the students don’t really feel that they belong in a university environment. The age range is from 18 and the oldest student has been 74. Sometimes it’s just taking a breath of Clemente and in that time identifying possibilities. One young man only completed a semester in Sydney. Then he moved to Brisbane, completed a social work degree, and is now working supporting children with autism. He said that Clemente was the door that he could walk through to achieve.

Or there are students like David. When we first met he had been living in a disabled toilet at Blacktown Station. Now he’s just about to complete his bachelor degree, has been offered honours, and is on the Dean’s List.

Then there is the ripple influence of Clemente. The students re-connect with family, make new friends, and begin to socialise in different ways. One person has said to me it’s really hard doing Clemente when I live in a building where everyone is on the go. But now I can walk down the street and meet people I know from class and talk about other things.

The other question you have to ask is what the students’ presence offers the University. These students come from such a diverse range of ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. They have a voice and a view and are willing to share their knowledge.

There is also a real necessity for Australian universities to become much better aware of the different worlds that people live in. Whether it be people of Indigenous or refugee background, or people with mental health issues. I’m often struck at how under-prepared many universities are to be able to engage purposefully and sincerely and sustainably with those communities.

Yarrie came to Australia as a young child from the conflict in Sierra Leone. She still has flashbacks of what she experienced. She found out about Clemente and asked if there was any way she could take a step forward. This was a person willing to take a risk. After she completed two units she said

“Peter, I want to do it quicker, and she did. Now her sister wants to consider university because of what Yarrie has achieved. When she comes onto campus, Yarrie is a significant impact. ACU is a much better place with her as a student here.

I feel privileged rather than proud of my involvement in Clemente. Privileged to be at a university like ACU that enabled this program to happen. Privileged to work with people who share a common value base of justice and getting things done. I certainly feel privileged to have met so many gifted people as Clemente students. They’ve taught me much about life in Australia, life in challenging times, and life at the hard edges.”

YARRIE BANGURA
CLEMENTE GRADUATE

“We left Sierra Leone because of the war. I lived in Guinea for a long time. It was not good. Not enough to eat, life was hard and we were struggling. In Guinea you are on your own. We were hurt, we were wounded, we were scared, but we had to try and carry on.

My uncle sponsored us to come to Australia. I came with my family. I have two brothers and three sisters. I loved it even before I arrived. I knew this was a place I would be reborn after being dead inside. I knew my hopes and dreams would finally come to life. When I was in Guinea there was no hope. You feel worthless, and what’s the point of living. Here there was hope for me as a woman to become something in life.

I came here feeling very happy, thinking that the storm was over. I was so happy I thought I would forget everything that had happened in the past. But the past started attacking me, the flashbacks of war, every night and every day, even though I am safe.

I am from a culture where we don’t usually talk about what has happened, or what is bothering us. I kept it all inside and every day I am being hunted by my past.

I tried therapy, and different things, but it didn’t seem to hold my heart or stop the pain. People in my country believe very much in religion. ‘If we believe in God, and have good faith, then you can change your fate.’ But I was scared because I was doubting myself, I thought it would be so difficult.

Peter went through it with me, and all the teachers and mentors were so supportive. I started to write and describe what I see, hear, and feel. I didn’t know it was poetry until I let some people read it and they told me. I was just describing what I see. When I came to Australia I couldn’t read and I couldn’t write. Now writing is like food for my soul.

I am also part of the Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe. We tell our stories of survival on stage. The stories are very painful but we want to share them to help other people with their own past. I want them to think if she can do it, I can too.

I want people like me who are reading or listening to my story to feel emotion. African people don’t cry much, but here people get quite emotional. I can’t change what happened to me, but I can help others realise they are ready to fight and move on. Because you can’t run away from your past. It follows you. I want to give people courage to move forward with their life. That’s my dream.

This year I will be at ACU’s Strathfield Campus studying a Bachelor of International Development Studies. Back home there are few women who are educated, so expectations are little. If I had dreamed my dreams there people would have thought I’m crazy. But when I came here I knew everything was possible in this country if you work hard”
ACU lecturer Rachael Jacobs’ simple offer to walk with a Muslim woman in the wake of the Martin Place siege sparked a social media campaign under the hashtag #illridewithyou. The hashtag trended globally on Twitter as people took a stand against anti-Muslim sentiment.

As news of the siege unfolded, I scrolled through updates on my phone, searching for the latest information. My brother works in the city of Sydney. My husband’s office is a government information. My brother works in the city of Sydney. I knew all were Sydney. My brother works in the city of Sydney. I was in shock and loudly stand up for a decent and humane world. It was a pre-emptive strike against racism and bigotry. We know what fear can do to a society, and rather than fall victim to the traction of fear, I pledged to be part of the force that fights for tolerance and compassion.

There’s no better time to ride with each other, walk with each other, listen to each other or just silently be there for someone else. The #illridewithyou hashtag reminded us that we can overcome fear and ignorance with a pledge to treat each other with respect. It’s a reminder that decent Australians don’t hold an entire group of people responsible for the actions of one man.

Some claim the movement was patronising, forcing misplaced support upon those who need space, rather than spotlight. They may have a point. But there’s no doubting its good intentions. And perhaps we needed it more for ourselves as a reminder that there are reasoned and tolerant people that walk among us, publicly disempowering the trolls.

One of the most common questions I’ve been asked is “Do you have a message for the Muslim community?”

In truth, I don’t. They are a strong community with their own articulate leaders, able to speak for themselves if they choose to do so.

I am, however, the daughter of Indian migrants, and having lived all of my 37 years in Australia, I feel I’ve seen the best and the worst this country has to offer. I’d rather deliver a message to racists, bigots and anyone who dares to derive a message of hate from this tragedy – it is you who are unwelcome here. Your values have no place in civilised society, and if you spread intolerance, there’s an avalanche of kindness ready to take you down.”

Rachael Jacobs is a lecturer in education at ACU’s Brisbane Campus. This story first appeared in the Brisbane Times.
Ten days of journeying through the streets of Manila and into the province of Pangasinan and I feel I am beginning to understand the inextricable nature of Filipino land, culture and faith. I’ve walked among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Smokey Mountain and worshipped alongside some of the wealthiest in the country in a grand church. I’ve visited a school with an unbelievable lack of resources, with smoke from their own burning rubbish wafting through the classrooms, and visited other schools offering a state-of-the-art education in pristine facilities. The Philippines is a land of contrasts, with the most striking of these being the astronomical gap between the rich and the poor.

A visit to the Manila North Cemetery is one I will never forget. Thousands of people are buried there but thousands of the living have also made it their home. I don’t know if I would truly have believed it if I didn’t see it with my own eyes. Filipinos here look after the graves of either their own or others’ family members in exchange for a place to live. There are people lying on tombs, kids playing cards on them, and mothers feeding their babies. Most people were friendly enough, smiling and waving at us as we walked through their home, but for me it was a very strange experience, and I felt like I was trespassing.

In comparison to the cemetery, our experience at Tuloy sa Don Bosco school for street children was uplifting and refreshing – the facilities, the children who proudly showed us around their home and school, and the dreams that they spoke of for their future. Staff at the school teach the students that God is hope, so even a child from the most disadvantaged background can accept and own this idea. This school, like so many others in the Philippines working for justice and the common good, was a symbol of hope amid the grim poverty.

Smiling faces are everywhere in the Philippines, in both poverty and affluence. The hospitality we received was second to none – we were always greeted warmly, children stood up every time we entered their classroom, and teachers invited us to their homes to share a meal. We were pilgrims most of the time but we also had the opportunity to just be tourists, with a ride in a Filipino jeepney being a must!

The Philippines study trip heightened our awareness of those who are disadvantaged in a way that we could never have understood so well through regular study. It challenged us personally (and for many of us as school teachers as well) to put our faith into action for the benefit of others in new ways. We learnt so much that will help us complete our degree, that will benefit our workplaces, and that will contribute to our own personal growth. The friendships we made and the wonderful memories were just the icing on the cake.

The Philippines study trip will be offered again in 2016. For more information contact Gemma Cruz at Gemma.Cruz@acu.edu.au.
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