

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

MAY 2006

INFORMATION BULLETIN No 7.

WELCOME

to Information Bulletin No 7 for the University of Wollongong's Graduate School of Medicine (GSM). This bulletin contains details of the continuing accreditation process with the Australian Medical Council's accreditation committee, tremendous news about an extraordinarily generous monetary contribution that will fund our Professorial Chair of Medicine (General Practice), and an interview with the doctor who will head the Shoalhaven arm of the GSM.

ACCREDITATION

The past few months have been an extremely demanding time at the GSM, as we prepared and submitted our Stage 2 accreditation document to the Australian Medical Council. We are now preparing to host the AMC's assessment team, who will conduct site visits to our Wollongong and Shoalhaven campuses and hospitals starting on 17 July.

The 320-page Stage 2 document contains detailed information on the proposed GSM curriculum, and is intended to serve as a blueprint for the course structure.

We received a great deal of support, co-operation and flexibility from the University's hierarchy in preparing the curriculum. Obviously UOW has its own strict procedures and assessment requirements for the establishment of new courses, but it was prepared to adopt a different approach for the GSM.

Establishing a Medical School has been very much a case of breaking new ground for UOW. The curriculum is very different from anything UOW has offered previously, and the nature of a medical degree requires a different approach to minimum rates of progress, competency-based assessment, exclusion and awarding degrees with distinction.

UOW is very much a "can do" environment, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Operations) Professor John Patterson led a process to establish a high level Medical School Education Accreditation Committee (MSEAC) to ensure the new course conforms to UOW's standards while meeting the AMC's rigorous accreditation and reporting process.

The MSEAC is chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Rob Castle,

and its members include Chair of Senate Professor David Griffiths and his deputy Associate Professor Damien Considine, Dean of Students Yvonne Kerr, Health and Behavioural Sciences Faculty Education Committee Chair Isla Bowen, GSM Division of Teaching Director Professor John Bushnell, Academic Registrar Dr David Christie, Health and Behavioural Sciences Interim Dean Professor Patrick Crookes, Dr Raghu Murthy representing the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service, Science Faculty representative Associate Professor Ted Bryant, Academic Senate elected representative Dr Pauline Lysaght and myself.

My thanks to the GSM staff for their contribution to the Stage 2 Accreditation document for a fabulous team effort. Everybody made significant contributions, but I'd particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of Professor Bushnell, Associate Professor Nicky Hudson and Jan James.

We are now undertaking a series of "mock" site visits from eminent Australian and international medical educators to help us prepare for the AMC accreditation committee's site visits to Wollongong and the Shoalhaven in July. They will provide valuable external assessment of our progress, and

raise issues that may need attention before the AMC visit.

We aim to leave no stone unturned in our efforts to ensure that we are fully prepared for our first intake of students.

Professor John Hogg
Foundation Dean
Graduate School of Medicine

Ph: (02) 42214803
 Email: jhogg@uow.edu.au

ROBERTA WILLIAMS CHAIR OF MEDICINE

The Roberta Williams Chair of Medicine (General Practice) is destined to be a hugely significant part of the Graduate School of Medicine for three key reasons.

Firstly, it is being established with an extraordinarily generous \$3 million contribution from Marsden (Mick) Williams, founder of the Allied Group of Companies - a highly successful diversified Wollongong-based group providing industrial services and equipment to Australia's mining, manufacturing and shipping sectors.

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GSM Foundation Dean Professor John Hogg (left) with Allied Group General Manager Geoff O'Donnell outside the GSM Building being constructed at UOW's Wollongong campus, after the announcement of Allied's \$3 million contribution.

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Mr Williams made the contribution to honour his late wife Roberta. It is the largest private contribution in the University's history, and we at the GSM are obviously delighted that Mr Williams has seen fit to honour his late wife and support our work in this way.

This really gets the Medical School off to a flying start and naturally we hope it will inspire other individuals and corporations to offer financial support to enhance the Medical School.

Secondly, it is a dramatic example of the community support that has been such an integral part of the establishment of the GSM. The backing we have received from medical practitioners in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven and the wider community has been an important element in our accreditation process with the Australian Medical Council, as well as reinforcing our belief in the value of what we are seeking to achieve.

And thirdly the Chair of Medicine (General Practice) epitomises the value we place on the role of General Practitioners in the overall delivery of health services.

International figures suggest each additional GP in a community makes a dramatic impact on the health and well-being of the people in that community.

As medical practitioners you will be only too well aware of the declining numbers of GPs in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven and other regional and rural areas of NSW, and of the difficulties of recruiting new doctors.

Our curriculum will have a strong focus on GP work, and this position will be critical to our goal of encouraging a large proportion of our graduates to make general practice their career choice.

We will soon be advertising the position as part of a wider recruiting program to prepare for the arrival of the first students in January 2007.

LYNDAL'S PASSIONATE ABOUT KEEPING IN PRACTICE

It isn't hard to see that Associate Professor Lyndal Parker-Newlyn has a passion for General Practice medicine.

Along with her official positions as Associate Director, Division of Teaching, and Shoalhaven Campus Head of the UOW Graduate School of Medicine, Chair of the Shoalhaven Division of General Practice, board member of the NSW Rural Doctors Network and NSW Director of the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group, she still finds time to work as a General Practitioner one day a week.

In fact, Professor Parker-Newlyn sees that day

"at the coalface" each week at Nowra's Worrige Street Medical Centre as a key element of her new role at the GSM.

"I love rural General Practice, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it and encouraging others to do it," she said. "And I feel it is very important from a teaching point of view to continue to work as a GP, to stay abreast of the latest developments. It's good for students to be taught by people who are still working as doctors."



Associate Professor Lyndal Parker-Newlyn.

In her role with the NSW Rural Doctors Network Professor Parker-Newlyn is acutely conscious of the need to address the shortage of doctors in regional, rural and remote communities. She is confident the GSM's focus on selecting students with rural and regional connections, and then fostering those links throughout their training, will have long-term benefits.

"We need more doctors with an interest in working in rural areas, so I hope the GSM's approach will help address the problem across the board – not just in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven," she said.

"We need to make our students feel comfortable in rural practices and rural hospitals, and comfortable in the community," she said. "It is likely people will start encountering our students in hospitals and clinics in the coming years. I hope they make

the students feel welcome – and encourage them to stay on and practice medicine here."

Professor Parker-Newlyn chairs the GSM admissions committee and is excited by the quality of people interested in studying at the medical school.

"I can't wait until the students start. We already have some serious contenders (for places) who I know are going to make great doctors," she said.

Strong support from Illawarra and Shoalhaven doctors had been crucial to establishment of the GSM, Professor Parker-Newlyn said. "Doctors in this area have a very strong interest in the medical school because they see that it will train the people who will eventually replace them as doctors in this community. They want to know that they will be replaced with quality doctors, and ones who will love this community as much as they do."

Of the GSM's 80 students in each year, 56 will be based at UOW's Wollongong Campus and 24 in the Shoalhaven.

Professor Parker-Newlyn believes the smaller group at the Shoalhaven Campus will have certain advantages.

"We have a strong commitment to ensuring that the students based in the Shoalhaven have equity with the Wollongong-based students, but I believe they will actually benefit from being part of a smaller, nurturing cohort of students," she said. "And the students will get to live in the Shoalhaven, which is such a beautiful part of the world."

She also believes the arrival of medical students will help lift the profile of UOW's Shoalhaven Campus in the region.

"Shoalhaven Campus provides a great level of education, although it hasn't received the kudos it deserves in the past," she said. "It has been turning out very good graduates for years but people don't necessarily know that. Everyone gets sick, so when we start producing doctors there will be a wider appreciation of what the Shoalhaven Campus offers."

APPOINTMENTS

Welcome to Associate Professor Gary Butler and Dr Ian Hoult, who have joined the GSM team.

Professor Butler will be the Director of Phase 1 of the GSM curriculum. He is a very experienced medical educator who will join us in July from the University of Sheffield Medical School.

Dr Hoult is a widely respected Shoalhaven gynecologist, and has been appointed Associate Director of Clinical Education at Shoalhaven Campus. He took up his position with the GSM in April.