A new wave of investors is looking for social impact as well as a financial return on investments.

And researchers at UWA’s Centre for Social Impact are providing the platform for investors to ride that wave.

Private investors and corporations around the world are rapidly expanding their role in financing social initiatives and programs and there is a greater awareness by governments of the need to work in partnership with them. In the UK, investors can put their money into social support initiatives developed by community organisations and, if those programs achieve good results, the government will pay the investors a return on their money.

“The logic of such programs is that governments may save a lot of money in health and other support funding when social initiatives are successful but rather than design and manage the programs themselves they leave it to innovators to come up with new ideas and programs,” explained Winthrop Professor Paul Flatau, Director of the Centre for Social Impact in the Business School.

It’s not a new idea – the rich helping the poor – but now there could be more advantages for the benefactors.

Make a difference while you make a dollar

By Lindy Brophy

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It can be cheaper for a government to pay social investors (interested in both some financial return and some social return) a dividend than to develop and run programs. The State saves, investors who may wish to receive some but not necessarily full market return are happy, and the people who would otherwise not receive social services can have their lives changed.

“In the UK they are called ‘social impact bonds’. The State government in NSW is starting to offer the same program and they are calling them ‘social benefit bonds’. In the US, the government has made $100 million available in the current budget for ‘success bonds’, with the same purpose of investors funding social programs.

“It’s a new world,” he said. “I hope it will continue to grow, to create great interest, innovation and success in social support systems. Philanthropists and business may be interested in also stepping in to help fund outcomes-based programs and support governments.”

But for investors to be interested, there must be evidence that the programs succeed.

Professor Flatau recently presented the Centre’s three-year research program for Mission Australia recently in Sydney which evaluated the impact and effectiveness of the Michael Project, for homeless men.

“It was a program to provide integrated services for homeless men in Sydney which covered basic health (we found that dental and podiatry needs were a serious issue); haircuts (it’s surprising how many more doors open to a man with a decent haircut); drug and alcohol counselling; and a range of recreational programs to get the men reconnected with their communities.”

The Centre’s research found that Government costs had been reduced significantly by the project. The program had cost-offsets larger than the cost of the program itself.

Professor Flatau has a background in economics. “Up until now there has been no work in Australia on the economics of homelessness intervention and its impact,” he said. But this is the sort of work needed to attract investors who, distinct from straight philanthropists, want both a financial return and a social impact hit for their money.

“The look at social problems with a business lens. We evaluate programs, look at how they developed, their financing and their leadership. We’re particularly interested in the social innovation behind programs.”

“He said investors are interested in social enterprises such as Mission Australia’s Soft Landing project in Sydney.

“It’s a mattress recycling business that employs Mission Australia’s clients. They take mattresses that are thrown out all over the city, pull them apart and sell the reusable parts, such as foam, metal and timber. The business makes money, it is good for the environment that these mattresses don’t go in to landfill, and it gives the people who work there some skills and confidence and a work history, so they can go out and find another job.”

Similarly, the Michael Project would have been a good two-way investment (although it was a purely philanthropically-funded project).

Health and justice are two issues for homeless people that cost governments dearly.

“Nights spent in hospital by homeless men is a really significant driver of the health costs of homelessness to the community,” Professor Flatau said. “There is a huge difference in that area between homeless people and the rest of the population.” But the Michael Project improved the health of homeless men, reduced their social isolation and their quality of life and reduced calls on hospitals and rehabilitation.

“Although the project wasn’t about accommodation, the project had a big impact on these men’s accommodation too with a significant move away from supported accommodation or the streets, and into public housing or rental accommodation. Some of them got jobs, earned money, started to feel good about themselves and no longer needed government support.”
An invention that tells European farmers when their olive groves and wheat crops need water is being used for the first time to find out how Australian trees cope with drought and climate change.

Dr Martin Bader from the School of Plant Biology said water was the ‘blue gold’ of the future and likely to become an increasingly limited resource, and the instrument, the Zim probe, could revolutionise botanists’ knowledge of water use and drought stress on native trees.

Trees are an excellent indicator of climate change, and the probe sends continuous data from their leaves to researchers.

Each probe has two round magnets smaller than a five-cent piece. Scientists recently used a cherry picker to attach about 90 clamps to leaves from jarrah, tuart and banksia trees in Kings Park.

The bottom magnet holds a sensor that records clamp pressure and sends data to the internet. The magnetic force is weakened when the leaf holds a lot of water. “It’s similar to measuring blood pressure in humans,” Dr Bader said.

“Plants feel subtle changes in humidity, light, wind and water availability. This is the first big ecological project using the probe to enable us to record the effects of climate change.”

Dr Bader said 2010 was the driest year on record in southwest WA, followed by one of the state’s hottest summers.

“These extreme events have caused severe crown decline in jarrah and other important woody species of the jarrah forest,” Dr Bader said.

The Zim probe was released a little over a year ago by Zim Plant Technology in Germany and is already used across Europe on crops such as olives, wheat and wine grapes.

“It is also used in Australia mainly on wheat and other grains,” Dr Bader said. “However, the use on eucalypts in our research project is its first major application in the field of plant ecology, which is a pioneering role for Australia.

“We are also testing a prototype Zim probe for needle-like leaves on Allocasuarina which seems to work extremely well so far.

“Until Professor Ulrich Zimmermann in Germany invented the probe, the only way we could measure leaf water in relation to the environment was destructive. We had to pick leaves and put them in a pressurised vessel to measure plant moisture stress. It was very time-consuming and gave us information only for one particular point in time,” he said.

“Transpiration measurements using a different device revealed that on a 40-degree day, jarrah mostly closes its leaf pores (stomata) during the late morning to save water. This is bad for photosynthesis, which uses the sun’s energy to convert carbon dioxide into compounds including sugars.

“From about 10.30am, the leaves closed their pores to save water but it meant the tree did not get the benefits of photosynthesis. Jarrah trees can send their roots down 60 metres to get water but depletion of Perth’s groundwater means there is often no longer any water there or roots can’t keep pace with the drawdown.”

Professor Zimmermann is one of Dr Bader’s collaborators, and Dr Bader’s UWA supervisor is Professor Erik Veneklaas, from the Centre of Excellence for Climate Change, Woodland and Forest Health. The project is a collaboration with Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, which also co-finances it.

The research will help the management of young trees on mine rehabilitation sites and allow predictions of tree responses to climate change.
Aligning resources and priorities for the future

It is that time in the annual political and financial cycle when we are reminded of the importance of remaining actively involved in trying to influence Government policy on higher education.

Federal and State Budgets are a time too when we look for political signals that there is an understanding of our sector beyond the short-term political cycle.

And it is a long-term view that is driving our own financial agenda to ensure that our University remains in the strongest position to argue for additional resources to pursue our ambitious goal of being counted among the top 50 universities in the world by 2050.

Every so often, it is vitally important that we look at our own activities to confirm that our substantial expenditures are properly aligned with our priorities.

Beyond our significant core activities of teaching, learning and research, the University has a major program of strategic capital works, such as the new medical research centres at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and the new Fiona Stanley Hospital, as well as the development of the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre on campus.

These are big investments for the future of the University and the State. And while we make these investments in the knowledge of the benefits they will bring, we must also ensure our operations are supported by a strong financial foundation which provides capacity to support all our strategic and priority activities.

As has been noted in the University’s annual report for 2011, the University’s operating result has been impacted by global economic conditions with investment portfolio performance below anticipated returns for the year. The annual report also notes reduced growth rates in international student enrolments and the impact of State economic conditions on mature-age student enrolments.

Were the University to continue on its current spending trajectory – with commitments including major capital works – we risk making more permanent an underlying negative operating margin that will eventually be unsustainable.

A strong focus on budget management in the short to medium-term will allow growth in the University’s financial capacity in the long-term which will allow us to deliver an improved operating margin, increased funding for capital and strategic commitments and improved levels of “unrestricted” funds required to provide financial flexibility for future needs and initiatives.

Building a strong financial foundation based on continuing prudent and responsible financial management is imperative to the future growth and the overall strategic objectives of the University.

From our firm financial position, we can continue to highlight the importance and value of the university sector to politicians and bureaucrats at both State and Federal levels.

We must be sure that we continue to build our position of financial strength to deliver the performance – at international standards of excellence – that justifies continued broad support from the government, the private sector and the community.

Global miner Rio Tinto and UWA have signed a multi-million dollar partnership that will focus on creating a sustainable supply of graduates and expertise for the mining industry.

Rio Tinto named UWA as the first partner in its Global Education Partnerships Programme. The company will invest $3 million with the University as part of a long-term objective to foster skills for the future and build education capability.

The program will establish a worldwide network of leading universities to generate and foster an appropriate expertise base for the resources industries.

The UWA partnership will be built around a series of education-related initiatives including a strong scholarship framework that will provide support and access to mining-related education for more than 40 students. Supporting Rio Tinto and UWA’s focus on building a supply of diverse talent, the scholarship framework also aims to encourage more female, international and Indigenous students into these study areas.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson said the new Education Partnerships agreement would extend a long and productive relationship with Rio Tinto.

“Working with Rio Tinto has provided enormous benefits to the University and the Western Australian community,” he said.

“This partnership will provide a diverse group of scholars with access to real-life work environments and work experience, and increase the University’s attractiveness to potential students.

“Increasing the number of scholarships will take UWA closer to being counted among the top 50 universities in the world by 2050.”

Executive Director Rio Tinto, Sam Walsh, said he looked forward to strengthening the relationship with UWA to further enable young people to reach their true potential.

Last month, the company established a Chair in Rock Art Studies at UWA and signed a $1.08 million agreement with the University to work towards researching and preserving the Indigenous art of the Pilbara.
Who would have thought a Learning Management System developed during a PhD would be such a world-wide success?

UWA has moved from WebCT as its LMS to a new system using Moodle software. The open source system was developed in WA by Martin Dougiamas while a postgraduate student. Integated with the LMS is a new lecture capture system, EchoSystem, in place of Lectopia.

Mr Dougiamas was at the launch of the new eLearning systems LMS last month, at which staff from the university, including the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) and Information Services celebrated the smooth adoption of the new system.

Dr Shannon Johnston, UWA project manager for eLearning implementation and the Moodle implementation at CATL, said that, although there had been some teething problems, not unexpected in implementing a new system for more than 30,000 users and in a very tight time-frame, it was a huge success.

“The overall feedback from staff has been very good and we are able to add improved functionality, as we have monthly updates and upgrades,” she said.

When the company that supported WebCT indicated that support would be withdrawn, Dr Johnston chaired a review of learning management system options that included an environmental scan, staff survey, staff and student testing and other methods.

“We chose Moodle for a few reasons,” she said. “It is the most flexible. We can add to it or change things as needed, which is a vital attribute as we work towards a place in the top 50 universities. We can have greater control over how it feels, what it looks like, and how it works.

“We can develop the system into whatever we want over time. It is our learning system.”

UWA has engaged NetSpot to create the LMS environment and to continue hosting and developing the system.

“Staff can use it to reflect their own teaching methods and needs, and they can propose changes and developments,” Dr Johnston said.

The new system has been in place since the end of February. “It was a huge job to create the environments and get it up and running, fully integrated with UWA information systems, in just nine months. It would normally take 18 months for this sort of project but it was a brilliant job by many different people at UWA and the NetSpot staff.

“We have integrated it into nine different system at UWAs. For example, the students enrol in Callista, and they are automatically put into their units in LMS. They can also access course reading materials, captured lectures, and their Webmail.”

She said the new lecture capture system replaced Lectopia when, like WebCT, the company that supported it withdrew its support. “Lectopia was developed at UWA and bought by Echo360 but we can’t use a system for which there is no support. EchoSystem is fully integrated into the LMS and it is now even easier for students to access lectures.

“It is also easier for staff, as lectures in centrally-timetabled venues are automatically recorded, and captured lectures are made available to students.”

EchoSystem is now in 75 venues at UWA.

“We have provided more than 130 training opportunities, both formal and ad hoc, from September 2011 to the start of semester one, 2012. For the first time, we also offered student training in week one of semester, and SISO staff were trained to be prepared to support students,” Dr Johnston said. There are extensive online resources and guides for both staff and students on how to use the eLearning systems through the staff and student help units: lms.uwa.edu.au

Staff can get help with using the LMS, solve problems, ask questions and organise training through CATL at help-elearning@uwa.edu.au
The latest research on myopia, or shortsightedness, shows a direct link between time spent outdoors as a child and the condition that has hundreds of millions of people around the world wearing spectacles.

Professor Mackey has recently been part of the first international review of all the literature over the past five years. While still considered ‘new’ research, nearly 10,000 children and young adults up to the age of 22 have been involved in studies by academics including Dr Kathy Rose and Dr Paul Mitchell from the University of Sydney.

The review found a wide variation in the prevalence of myopia worldwide. It exceeds 80 per cent in some populations in east Asia. “Myopia carries major social, educational and economic consequences and impacts adversely on quality of life,” reads the review. “High myopia is associated with an increased risk of degenerative retinal conditions and retinal detachment, glaucoma and early-onset cataracts, all of which pose a substantial lifetime risk of visual impairment and blindness.

“Overall findings indicate that increasing time spent outdoors may be a simple strategy by which to reduce the risk of developing myopia and its progression in children and adolescents.”

Professor Mackey says it is, of course, not the whole story. “Some people are genetically predisposed to myopia, so we need to work out who’s at risk and formulate personalised health messages, rather than just tell everybody to go outside more.

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**Short sight or sun damage: looking for a happy medium**

*By Lindy Brophy*

As little girls, my sister was always pleading with me to come out and play tennis or ride bikes with her. But all I wanted to do was to stay inside and read.

“And that’s why you have such thick lenses in your glasses today,” said Winthrop Professor David Mackey, Managing Director of the Centre for Ophthalmology and Visual Science (incorporating the Lions Eye Institute).

Children who stay inside rather than playing outdoors are more likely to end up wearing glasses.

The Vice-Chancellor’s shortsighted eyes showed no sign of UV damage.
“It’s the Goldilocks porridge story: not enough time outside will mean you’re more likely to be shortsighted and at risk of all the associated problems; too much sun can result in eye damage, leading to pterygium.”

The research puts medical practitioners in a position similar to the sunshine debate over Vitamin D (to prevent osteoporosis) versus skin cancer from too much exposure.

After several studies had demonstrated the inverse association between outdoor activity and myopia, Professor Mackey and his colleagues began using conjunctival ultraviolet autofluorescence (UVAF) photography, a reliable method of assessing ocular sun exposure, to investigate the relationship. This system was developed by Professor Minas Coroneo from the University of New South Wales.

They studied 1,231 young adults, aged 19 to 22 from WA’s Raine Cohort. Parental history of myopia, time spent outdoors and educational activity were assessed from a questionnaire.

The group has also used subjects from the Norfolk Island Eye Study and the national Twin Study, comparing sets of twins in Tasmania and Queensland.

The Raine and Twin studies are the largest studies of UVAF in Australia. “Nobody else in the world is doing this,” Professor Mackey said.

The UVAF photography showed more evidence of sun damage to the participants’ eyes was inversely proportional to incidence of myopia. The subjects identified as shortsighted generally had less sun damage to their eyes.

“People used to think that ‘nerdy’ kids, spending their time indoors reading, instead of being active outside, became myopic. But it’s not the reading, it’s the lack of time spent outdoors that is at the root of the problem,” he said.

The Vice-Chancellor Winthrop Professor Paul Johnson, who spent his childhood in England, had his eyes photographed recently during a visit to the Lions Eye Institute. Professor Johnson is shortsighted and, as expected, showed no sign of UV damage.

“In many Asian cities, the children are all inside studying. When they do go outdoors, the pollution blocks a lot of the UV rays, so those populations in Asia have an enormous proportion of shortsighted people. In Singapore and Guangzhou in China, schools are now sending their children outside for an hour a day, to help prevent them developing myopia. But there are no results yet from this initiative.”

Professor Mackey and his colleagues’ research is of particular importance given the increasing prevalence of myopia worldwide.

What makes these fish lose their sight?

Sight and how it changes is also a focus for PhD candidate Audrey Appudurai – but her subjects are fish rather than humans.

Audrey is studying lungfish, which lose their ability to see in the ultra violet spectrum, and she wants to find out why.

Part of her thesis will be a work of art, representing the way lungfish perceive their environment. This section of her research is supervised by Assistant Professor Ionat Zurr, Academic Coordinator of UWA’s Centre of Excellence in Biological Arts, SymbioticA.

Lungfish lose their sight as they mature, so Audrey will be observing six juvenile lungfish in an aquarium on campus, hoping to record the moment when the fish’s sight fails.

Her work is also being supervised by a world leader in comparative neurobiology and vision, Winthrop Professor Shaun Collin, and his UWA colleague Associate Professor Nathan Hart. They are members of UWA’s Neuroecology Group, Oceans Institute and School of Animal Biology. Professor Hart’s research aims to understand what natural selection pressures drive adaptation in and evolution of the visual system.

Australian lungfish, an endangered species, are unique among the world’s six species of lungfish because, as juveniles, they can see in UV.

They are the closest living relatives to the animals that first walked out of the water onto land in the Devonian period about 400 million years ago.

“By studying them, we can find out about the evolution of the visual and sensory systems of today’s vertebrates, including humans,” Audrey said.
The cliché about silver linings is more than just a metaphor at the University glasshouses.

Now that the 19 glass houses have all been repaired and restored following the 2010 hail storm, many of them are sporting a new lease of life with new thermal screens – or silver linings – which makes them useable all year round.

“So it’s a literal case of the cloud that brought the hail storm having a silver lining,” said Rob Creasy, Plant Growth Facility Manager in the School of Plant Biology.

The hailstones smashed the roofs and walls of every one of the glasshouses at the southern end of the Crawley campus destroying all but the two newest houses which, with 5mm toughened glass, fared best, with only three of the almost 1,000 sheets of glass in their walls and roofs being smashed.

“We could use these two, and a couple with wire-reinforced glass, for restricted use immediately after the storm,” Mr Creasy said. “But even then, we had to wear extensive safety equipment, hard hats, glasses and gloves inside the houses with wire-reinforced glass because shards kept dropping. We tried to get glasshouse space from the Department of Agriculture and the CSIRO but it was premium planting time, the end of summer, and space was very tight.

“It was a traumatic time. There were plant breeding programs that had been going for five or ten years that were destroyed, with huge commercial consequences. And while insurance can cover loss of salaries and plants and equipment and infrastructure, there are some things it can’t replace.

“Our first job was to get the PhD and post-docs’ research back up and running. Avoiding gaps in teaching, research and publication outputs are something we were hoping to avoid for both the University and individuals.

“There was so much destruction, so much lost, that even I choked back a tear from time to time. For some, careers were threatened.”

International students, who make up more than half the postgraduate numbers in Plant Biology, had to extend their stays, their visas, their living allowances and scholarships. Even though insurance helped with that, it was a difficult time for many of them too, being far from home and their family support networks, with some of them losing up to a year’s work.

“Our first job was to salvage and consolidate what could be saved into the four useable houses,” Mr Creasy said. “Then we...
had to get rid of all the glass and ruined experiments and wrap the houses with horticultural plastic.

"During repairs, Len Zuks, a welder and artist from the Facilities Management workshop, cheered us all up with the funny little patterns and smiley faces he drew in glue on some of the walls. ‘It sounds silly, but they really provided us with some light in those dark days,’ he said.

It took a couple of months for the clean-up to be complete and for the plant experiments to be started up again. Then came the decisions about long-term repairs. ‘You can’t buy wire-reinforced glass any more and the Australian standard for glasshouses like these is 6mm grade A toughened glass,’ Mr Creasy said. ‘But some of the houses are quite old, built in the 1960s, with 2mm glass panels. We were unsure whether the structure would be able to take a 200 per cent increase in weight, with the 6mm glass.’

Inspecting the structure of the houses revealed rusted rivets (which were replaced by stainless steel bolts) and houses that were not properly anchored to the ground. ‘We could see a lot of room for improvement and realised that this was the most opportune time to make these improvements as it would be much cheaper and, with the glass gone, far more convenient to do it now, while the storm repairs were under way,’ he said.

The insured repairs came to about $800,000. Additionally, the University, the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and the School contributed, in total, about another $300,000 which was used to improve this facility and now the glasshouses are all robust, durable and working much more effectively.

The renaissance of the glasshouses took two years and two weeks.

There are new extraction fans, new versions of double glazing, using twin wall acrylic panels, the new thermal screens (some under the roofs and some over the roofs of the lower houses) and a computerised system that opens and closes vents and screen, according to weather conditions. All of these have resulted in a significant improvement to the operations, through improved environmental control systems.

“There is a real vibrancy and buzz around the glasshouses now. Students are running experiments they never would have been able to do before, with the improved facilities. We have a lot of overseas visitors and they are all most impressed and taking home some of our ideas.”

So what was truly devastating for some people, shocking and difficult for others, has turned out to have enormous benefits for the students, the School and the University.

As Alan Luks, School Manager, put it: “We managed to turn our lemons into lemonade.”
In the build-up to the US presidential elections, two UWA students have been walking the corridors of power in Washington.

Niall O’Shea and Chris Colalillo, both Law/Arts students, were chosen from more than 60 applicants from Australian universities for 12 places in the 2012 Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme (UCWiP).

The students spent two months working in different offices of the US Congress.

“It was a fantastic experience,” said Niall. “We got to work within the heart of the government of the most powerful nation on the planet.”

Dr Chantal Bourgault du Coudray, Arts Practicum co-ordinator in the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, said the interns gained a very privileged insight into the political environment of Washington, as well as an understanding of political participation in the US context.

“Because they undertake the internship as part of their degree, they are required to complete assessments that emphasise their role as ambassadors and their capacity for leadership, as well as exercises that require them to reflect on the ways in which the internship might shape and enhance their career prospects,” she said.

The UCWiP provides participants with a chance to observe the legislative process in America and to be a participant in the process.

Niall worked with Congressman Joe Courtney in the House of Representatives.

“My specific tasks would vary: we were really dependent upon external political events. Sometimes my tasks would be basic and administrative in nature: answering calls, sorting through emails and faxes and responding to constituent mail. The office received more than 1,000 calls in opposition to the Stop Online Piracy Act after Wikipedia and Google blacked out their webpages in opposition to the legislation,” Niall said.

“The Office would often send me to briefings and Committee Hearings that they were interested in. I would have to take notes on matters that may be relevant to the Congressman. These would be on a variety of different issues including trade deals, veterans’ affairs and environmental affairs. They allowed me to learn about American policy on these issues. As time progressed, I was able to request to go to briefings that were of interest to me.

The French Embassy in Australia would like to make contact with any French researchers working at UWA.

The Embassy wishes to make contact with French postgraduate research candidates, postdoctoral and early career researchers, lecturers and visiting professors working at UWA.

Majella Christensen from the Embassy’s scientific section said she hoped to invite French researchers working at UWA to meet with the French Ambassador at an event in Canberra later in the year. Topics of discussion will include bilateral scientific cooperation and research collaboration.

Any French nationals who would like to make contact with the Embassy can do so through Mark David at Human Resources (mark.david@uwa.edu.au) or direct through Majella Christensen, Scientific Section, Embassy of France in Australia, 6 Perth Avenue, Yarralumla, ACT 2600 or at majella.christensen@diplomatie.gouv.fr
It’s Fair-ly easy to make the switch

Sometimes a morning tea break can be a fair trade for coming in to the office early and working hard for a couple of hours.

But a reviving cuppa at work can also be Fairtrade.

Facilities Management’s Office of Sustainable Development has been promoting Fairtrade and urging UWA staff to choose Fairtrade tea and coffee for their tea rooms and kitchenettes.

Now, a third of the money spent by UWA staff on tea and coffee from the officer suppliers Corporate Express is on Fairtrade products.

Trish Howard, Sustainable Development’s project officer, said 32 per cent of UWA staffrooms had ‘made the switch’.

“All Guild cafes now serve Fairtrade and organic certified coffee,” she said. “Up until this year, it was only available at the Science Café, but it has now been rolled out across all the venues. And it is deliciously good.”

In March, the UWA Student Council supported the principle of Fairtrade and resolved to ‘create a Fairtrade policy to facilitate meeting the minimum requirements for Fair Trade Universities.’

“Now we want more staff to sign up,” said Ms Howard.

Ten tearooms including the Vice Chancellery and the Co-Op Bookshop use only Fairtrade tea and coffee.

If you go to the Fairtrade page on the UWA website, you can see who else has ‘made the switch’ and also pledge your support to make UWA completely Fairtrade.

Go to: sd.fm.uwa.edu.au/programs/procurement/fair-trade

Note to tea drinkers: Corporate Express can supply Fairtrade teabags but not loose tea. If you want to ‘make the switch’ and prefer loose tea, you will have to buy your Fairtrade tea elsewhere.

Enjoy the best of both worlds

Exchange students can immerse themselves in a multi-cultural experience while still studying in the comfort zone of the English language.

UWA’s newest student exchange partner, HEC Montreal, offers units in English as part of a tri-lingual business course. And Maastricht University in the Netherlands teaches in English while offering the full European experience.

They were two of 10 partners touting their courses at the Student Exchange Fair earlier this month.

Jacqueline Lernay, program manager for student exchange at HEC, said the tri-lingual business course attracted students from all over the world. “They might be learning finance in French, then accounting in English, followed by human resources in Spanish,” she said. “We attract a lot of students from South America, Asia and Europe but Australia is a new market for us.

“We had always thought there wouldn’t be room for another university in Montreal to take Australian students, and McGill already had a partnership with Australia,” Ms Lernay said. “But the numbers have been growing and we’re delighted to welcome Australian students to Quebec.”

She likened Montreal to Melbourne, “with great food and a European feel, while still being close enough to the US for the students to go to New York or Boston for a weekend.”

University College Maastricht is part of Maastricht University and teaches liberal arts. UWA student Katherine McKinnon studied there in second semester last year, majoring in political science.

“I wanted to be able to study in English while living in Europe and it worked brilliantly,” Katherine said. “Student life was so well-organised and the College was in a beautiful old building. The tutorial groups were small and I made some great friends from places like Canada, Brazil and Scotland.”

Gideon Sacks, a psychology student, studied at Maastricht at the same time as Katherine.

Ina Engelen, international relations officer from Maastricht, said the college had just 650 students and had a cosy family atmosphere, while welcoming students across 14 different nationalities.

Jacqueline Lernay and Geneviève Benoît encourage a student to come to HEC Montreal

Gideon Sacks, Ina Engelen and Katherine McKinnon enthuse about Maastricht University
Some of us remember our days at university as the best time of our lives. But Health Sciences students say university students are three times more stressed than people in general.

“The typical university student must find a balance between part-time work, family commitments, a social life, work experience placements and, of course, their university studies,” said Sophie Greer, who is studying Health Promotion. “Many undergraduates struggle to find this balance, and place themselves at an increased risk of developing unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and even mental illness.”

Sophie is one of a group of about 30 final year Health Sciences students who promoted health messages to their fellow students on the Oak Lawn last week during UWA’s annual Health Day.

Health Day supports students by providing information on issues facing young people including risks, rights and available services.

The Health Promotion class analysed the stress levels of 200 undergraduate students on the Crawley campus and found that, despite being stressed, they were not using the available services.

Another student, Jessica Marmoy, said they promoted ways to reduce stress by offering fun non-competitive sports, playing music and helping students to organise their time.

A second group from the class targeted sexual harassment. They raised students’ awareness of drink spiking and binge drinking, both of which can lead to unwanted sexual attention and activity.

Fiona Chambers, a student in this group, said they hoped to increase young people’s awareness of what constituted sexual harassment and that it should not be tolerated.

Aspiring doctors and dentists need your help

Would you like the chance to help choose your future doctor or dentist?

You will have the opportunity in September if you can help out with interviews for prospective graduate students.

The Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences has to conduct more than 200 interviews for the graduate courses.

More interviewers mean more hopeful students have the chance to be interviewed.

“December used to be our busiest time of the year,” said Ginny Allan, Faculty Manager, Admissions. “But now, with the new courses, September has become our focus. We have 209 graduate places for the Doctor of Medicine to fill for 2014, and we hope to fill half of those from this year’s round of interviews.”

About 105 places for potential doctors and 25 for prospective dentists will be decided on from these interviews.

They will take place during the non-teaching week, from 22 to 29 September.

“We have to do the interviews in that week, while there are no classes, because we need so many rooms,” Ms Allan said.

“We will have to do about 36 interviews each day.”

Each interview takes less than an hour and is conducted by two people.

“To volunteer to be an interviewer, all you need is enthusiasm,” Ms Allan said. “We have so many interviewers who return again and again every year because they enjoy it so much. We just need more this year because of the extra load created by the new course structure.”

Volunteers will attend a training session towards the end of August, with a choice of sessions in the day or in the evening.

They will then be able to observe an interview. For their first few interviews, they will be partnered with experienced volunteers.

“We can’t accept anybody who has a relative or friend who is applying for a place or any high school teacher,” Ms Allan said.

The Faculty will conduct more interviews in December for school leavers who are applying for an assured pathway into Medicine or Dentistry after their initial Bachelor’s degree.

For more information please contact the Faculty on 6488 4646 or at meddentadmissions@uwa.edu.au
May 24 is shaping up to be UWA's unofficial Wellbeing Day.

It is the first day of the 16-week Global Corporate Challenge; it is the day of the annual UWA Biggest Morning Tea to raise funds for cancer research; and it is the first time staff will meet to plan the UWA Staff Sports Fun Day in November.

More than 300 staff have registered to take part in the GCC, a world-wide bid to get office workers up off their chairs and walking 10,000 steps a day. This is more than twice the number who participated last year and UWA's Health and Wellbeing officer, Sarina Radici, said she was thrilled with the response.

"I'm also very happy with the number of staff who responded to our online survey about health and wellbeing. We had more than 1,200 staff complete the survey and we're analysing the information now," she said.

About 60 staff including some at the Albany, Claremont and Shenton Park campuses, have put up their hands to be wellbeing advocates for their colleagues and they will be involved in making decisions about initiatives that will be put in place once the survey is analysed.

The Biggest Morning Tea to raise money for cancer research will be on the terrace at the University Club from 10am to 11.30. Tickets are $5 and the home-made goodies, including lots of healthy choices, will be supplemented this year by tea, coffee and small cakes generously supplied by the University Club.

Research funding by the Cancer Council WA is important to our medical researchers, so you are directly helping diagnosis and treatment of cancer by coming along to the morning tea.

Tickets are $5 and are available from Cindi Dunjey, Centre for Exploration Targeting, Robert Street building; Lindy Brophy, Public Affairs, Hackett Foundation building; Greg Madson, CLIMA reception, Agriculture building; Deb Bolton, UniPrint campus shop, first floor, Guild Village; Fiona Maley, Population Health, Nedlands campus; Jacqui Prosser, reception at FNAS; and Doreen Pensio, reception at Human Resources, Ken and Julie Michael building. Please have the correct money when buying a ticket.

After you have walked off your cake during your lunch hour (and counted your steps with your GCC pedometer), it’s time for the first get-together of people who are interested in being involved with the annual Staff Sports Fun Day in November.

Preparations are starting early this year, to ensure everybody knows about the event and there are alternative games and sports to suit everybody.

Fiona Taylor from the Centre for English Language Teaching has set up a meeting from 2.15 to 3pm in Social Sciences South Room 1237 for staff who would like to be part of the action.

Attending the meeting will not tie you down to any specific role. Please come along to hear other people’s ideas and to add your own.

If you can fit a long walk, a morning tea and a meeting into your busy day, give it a go, and contribute to UWA’s wellbeing.
Meet the founders of our university

Their names are familiar, but how much do you know about these Foundation Professors?

Professor AD Ross, Professor HE Whitfeld, Professor EOG Shann and Professor WJ Dakin were leaders in their fields at UWA in the days when gentlemen were known by their initials, because nobody used their first names. They were simply called Professor.

The UWA Historical Society (UWAHS) presents *Four Foundation Professors*, a look at the early days of the University’s Irwin Street campus.

Eight professorial staff were appointed during 1912, ready to start classes in March 1913. Four of these pioneers will be reintroduced by the UWAHS in the original Irwin Street building, now relocated to the western side of James Oval.

The presentation is at 2.30pm on Saturday 19 May. Dr John Robins will talk about Professor Ross; Winthrop Professor John Melville-Jones will share his thoughts on Professor Whitfeld; Dr Pamela Statham Drew’s work on Professor Shann will be read by Dr Joan Pope; and Dr Brenton Knott will finish up with Professor Dakin.

The talks will take about an hour and you are invited to bring a picnic afternoon tea to enjoy in the grounds or on the verandah. The Reid Library Café is open until 4pm and the University Club Café is open until 5pm.

RSVP as soon as possible to 9384 6166. UWAHS members are free, non-members $5.

The Society can be found at: development.uwa.edu.au/friends/historical-society
PROFESSOR
Professor Melinda Hodkiewicz
Asset Management School of Mechanical and Chemical Engineering
Professor Hodkiewicz joined the University in 1998 to start a PhD. Asset management as a professional discipline emerged in the mid 2000s and Professor Hodkiewicz was involved in setting up the WA Asset Management Initiative in 2004. She is Australia’s nominated representative on the ISO TC251 Asset Management System Standards Committee and is the recognised leader in education in Asset Management through the postgraduate program established at UWA in 2007, and for executive and in-house education programs. Both her national and international achievements are widely acknowledged as she is a strong industry contact, teaching applications of scientific methods, and excellent teaching and service.

Professor Hong Yang
School of Mechanical and Chemical Engineering
Professor Hong Yang joined the University in 1991 in a research role and was appointed to a teaching and research academic role in 1995. Her area of research focuses on functional materials for energy storage, catalysis, gas sensing and UV absorption, chemical synthesis of nano particulate materials and thermodynamics of phase transformations. She has actively engaged in international research collaboration with countries including China, Korea and France and, her research has gained international recognition. She is currently an Associate Editor of Reviews in Advanced Sciences and Engineering. Professor Yang is also a dedicated teacher who has received numerous nominations for teaching excellence awards from her students. She was the winner of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award for Honours Supervision in 2009.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR
Dr Yinghui Tian
Geotechnical Engineering, Centre for Offshore Foundation Systems
Dr Tian’s research interests focus on fluid-pipeline-soil interaction, bearing capacity of various offshore foundations, and advanced numerical modeling techniques. His work has been published in a range of international journals and at conferences. Dr Tian is a team member of the major Australia-China Natural Gas Technology Partnerships-funded research project on deep water gas fields. He was involved in formulating the collaboration between the Centre for Offshore Foundation Systems and China. He helped organise the successful International Symposium on the Frontiers in Offshore Geomechanics (ISFOG) and a three day workshop for the CSIRO Flagship Cluster on subsea pipelines. He was recently awarded a UWA Research Development Award and is developing his teaching role within the School of Civil Engineering.

RESEARCH GRANTS
Grants awarded between 16/04/2012 and 27/04/2012

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (AFANZ)

BISHOP MUSEUM
A/Professor Joe Dortch, Dr Emilie Dotte, Social and Cultural Studies
School of: ‘Wood Charcoal Identification from Archaeological Fieldwork in French Polynesia by Bishop Museum’—$16,568 (2012)

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
EX NHMRC
Professor George Yeh, Chemistry and Biochemistry
School of: ‘Tissue Engineering Functional Liver Tissue’—$45,000 (2012-14)

WEST COAST EAGLES
Winthrop Professor Brian Dawson, Sport Science, Exercise and Health
School of: ‘Climate Altitude Chamber’—$33,000 (2012)

CLASSIFIEDS

TO LET
ALFRED CREEVE: Lovely home, fully-furnished, available for lease from December 2012 through to July 2013. Three bedroom, one bathroom (separate w/c), two separate living areas, modern, open-plan extension to kitchen, family, dining area.

Polished boards and reverse-cycle air-conditioning/heat throughout. Easy-care gardens and swimming pool (will be managed). Great location, walking distance to Canning Hwy for transport to Perth (15 min), Fremantle (10 min) or UWA (25 min). Cafes and restaurants at the end of the road (Alfred Cove and Attadale). Photos available or inspection welcome. Please contact Renee Arnold renee.arnold@uwa.edu.au or 0448 807 414.

MOUNT HAWTHORN: Fully furnished and equipped accommodation available immediately. A beautiful one bedroom church conversion with new kitchen and bathroom. Huge living room (90m²) with 4.5m ceilings. Close to the Mount Hawthorn café strip and five minutes in the car to Leederville. Short and long term stay available. Please contact David on 0437 803 853 or email david.van.mill@uwa.edu.au

SOUTH FREMANTLE: Charming, fully renovated and fully furnished family home in South Fremantle. Available for rent from early July 2012 to mid-January 2013. Three bedrooms, two living areas, office, studio, modern kitchen and bathroom, alfresco dining, wireless broadband. Five minutes walk from cafes and beaches.

If you are interested, please contact Carolyn Oldham, carolyn.oldham@uwa.edu.au

FRANCE – DORDOGNE: Holiday accommodation. Self-contained apartment in one of the most beautiful Medieval Villages of the Périgord Noir, Belvès. Train and all amenities. For more details see website www.belves.info or contact Susana Melo de Howard on 9246 5042 or 0438 876 425. Email: susana@belves.info

ACCOMMODATION

HOUSE WANTED: Two bedroom unfurnished house wanted for twelve months from the end of June in Subiaco, Jolimont, Leederville and surrounding area. Will pay up to $600 a week. Please contact Sarah Simpson: sarah.simpson@uwa.edu.au

Classified advertisements are FREE for all UWA staff.

Send your ad to: classifieds@admin.uwa.edu.au before each fortnightly deadline.

UWANews deadlines for 2012

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Mid year break

June 13 – August 12

September 10 – December 12

December 13 – February 14
Does technology mean just skipping lectures?

By David Enright

I’m coming back from what I believe was a successful lecture, when I run straight into one of my students whom I know was supposed to be in the class.

I ask the student: “Why were you not there in my riveting calculus class?” The response ... “I no longer bother to attend lectures; it is a better use of my time to watch the recorded lecture that is posted later online for free viewing ...”

Is this going to be the future of our University? Is the act of attending lectures now considered to be ‘old school’ in our time-deficient lifestyles? Has technology created what is now being observed as a growing trend across the country of students choosing not to attend lectures and making use of the recorded versions?

UWA has been recently moved from the Lecture Capture System of Lectopia to the new ECHO system. What interests me is why the students are opting for this?

It is no secret that before the technology was available, lectures were not enjoying a 100 per cent attendance rate.

In fact lecture attendance for most courses tended to follow a standard curve: Close to 100 per cent at the start of semester, dropping off over subsequent weeks, brief surges in attendance when assessment was due and then dropping off again until the final surge at the end of term.

Generally, there was strong correlation between attendance rates in lectures and results achieved, but one thing really concerns me. Systems like Lectopia and ECHO record the lecture only. Students aren’t able to interact with the recording, and I cannot help wondering how many of the recorded lectures actually include activities that require interaction? Would a lecture that involves useful interaction, and other activities that help students to learn, suffer the same drop in attendance?

I shouldn’t generalise: all lectures are not the same and I would like to make the point that recorded lectures are not necessarily passive and perhaps this technology has resulted in unit coordinators evaluating their current practices and discovering interesting and beneficial changes to the lecture approach that improve it greatly.

But it appears there is a lack of research evidence that the technology has led to an improvement in student performance. There seems to be only anecdotal evidence to suggest that the students who miss face-to-face lectures are actually missing out on something.

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council funded a project a year or so ago that looked at the impact of web-based lecture technologies on current and future practice in learning and teaching. This is the best source I know of with some reasonable research into this issue.

My observations are that students are quite strategic about the choices they make, basing decisions on lecture attendance around three factors: educational value; convenience and flexibility; and social opportunities to meet other students, exchange ideas and make new friends.

Students evaluate lectures and make pragmatic decisions about whether they’ll attend. Let me put it to you in this way. What would happen if you were faced with the following?

You find the lecturer boring, it’s the only lecture scheduled for the day, it takes you an hour to get to campus, you have assignments due, and the lecture will be available electronically. Would you go to the lecture?

I use lectures to inspire and motivate students, establish connections with them and build conceptual frameworks. I use multimedia content, provide structured experiences for students, impart information and make announcements.

I believe my lectures ‘value add’. However, the current situation raises the question of whether there are more effective ways of achieving these.

I think it is good to question the role of lectures. But I find it disappointing that institutions still seem not to question the role of lectures or their mythic attributes.

It strikes me that lecture recording sessions are horseless carriage versions of the lecture. Same idea, just slightly different technology. As the ALTc report says, there must be more effective ways of using technology to achieve the educational goals. Mustn’t there?