By Lindy Brophy

The International Atomic Energy Agency has put its trust in UWA to help keep the world safe from nuclear attack.

We have become the first university in the world to join the United Nations’ international nuclear verification program, to help monitor global nuclear safeguards.

Winthrop Professor David Sampson, Director of the Centre for Microscopy, Characterisation and Analysis, says the data produced in his Centre from environmental dust particles containing minute amounts of uranium will create an isotopic fingerprint full of information.

“The particle analysis that we will do can tell the Agency (IAEA) how enriched the uranium is, and in some cases identify a source of the uranium,” he said. The process will help police the UN nuclear non-proliferation treaty and monitor global nuclear capabilities, potentially identifying illicit enrichment facilities and weapons programs.

“The samples we receive are cotton swipes that have been wiped over surfaces in nuclear installations around the world by IAEA inspectors. We extract the dust from the cotton swipe, put it onto a holder and then use our IMS 1280 ion microprobe to analyse the samples. The IMS 1280 has amazing particle analysis capabilities. The difficulty is finding the few uranium-containing particles against a background of millions of ordinary dust particles.” Each sample takes between one and two days to analyse.

Professor Sampson emphasised that there was absolutely no hazard or health issue with analysing the samples on the Crawley campus. “The particles are as small as 300 nanometres (300 billionths of a metre) and are not classified as nuclear material. We need no special shielding and the samples will be screened for radiation by the IAEA. UWA will not receive any radioactive samples.”

Our technology keeps the world in safe hands

continued on page 2
Our technology keeps the world in safe hands

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He said the UWA scientists’ job was not to interpret the samples, merely to obtain and relay the data.

“Including our University in the monitoring process has been a great show of faith by the Agency. And we are taking our responsibilities very seriously,” he said. And confirming that faith, Deputy Director General Herman Nackaerts travelled from Vienna to participate in a signing ceremony held at UWA. He was joined by Dr Robert Floyd, Director General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO).

“Only a few people will actually do the analyses, chosen from members of the SIMS team, including Assistant Professor John Cliff, Associate Professor Matt Kilburn, Assistant Professor Laure Martin and Dr Rong Liu. Only those people will be allowed into the room while samples are being tested.”

He said about 500 samples were collected world-wide each year. UWA could be testing up to 40 of them.

Emeritus Professor Craig Atkins, the former director of the CMCA, and Professor Cliff both have previous links with the IAEA. “The Agency was very impressed with our quality manual, 164 pages on our processes and the quality of our systems, which we had to provide. By exceeding their expectations with our quality processes and our results on blind test samples, we gave them the confidence that we could deliver.”

Australia will soon take up a temporary seat on the UN Security Council and it has a semi-permanent seat on the governing board of the IAEA. “This partnership makes a big and tangible contribution to Australia’s efforts towards world security,” Professor Sampson said.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Johnson, said UWA was committed to serving the local, Australian and global community for the greater good, and helping society to create a better future.

New-fangled faculty

The new Faculty of Science is a classic case of ‘less is more’.

The two Science faculties, Life and Physical Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences, have merged to form one Faculty of Science under the leadership of the Dean, Winthrop Professor Tony O’Donnell.

The single integrated entity was created with a view to greater cross-disciplinary collaboration and research.

“It’s an exciting move that provides significant scope to pool academic resources and expertise, creating richer undergraduate experiences, new postgraduate programs and a host of new collaborative research opportunities,” Professor O’Donnell said.

Staff gathered for a faculty launch celebration last month, representing nine schools, nine research centres, the UWA Institute of Agriculture and the WA Marine Science Institution.

The super faculty has two centres of excellence – the ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Energy Biology and the Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management – and a Co-operative Research Centre, Future Farm Industries.

(The UWA Oceans Institute is an independent research centre, under the banner of the Vice-Chancellor.)
A group of Computer Science students has spent the semester creating an iPad game, Alien Invaders.

But it wasn’t just for fun. The iPad app is already being used for psychological testing of children with neurodevelopmental difficulties.

The students are one of 15 groups who have invented or developed original software for specific needs of academics at UWA.

The practical unit, run by Professor Michael Wise from the School of Computer Science and Software Engineering and the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, throws its students into the real world with real clients who need a system designed for their purposes.

“This year, we sourced projects from UWA academics because there is a such a great need among them,” Professor Wise said.

Among the 15 projects, the students, mostly third years, created a virtual microscope (to help new microbiology students to identify parts of a microscope and their functions); a system to measure children’s physical activity while playing interactive computer games; and updated and added functionality to a histology learning and teaching resource.

Professor Wise said he was pleased with the results of the projects, in which the students had to manage budgets and communications as well as solve problems and please their clients, all within a strict time framework.

Alien Invaders is an easy-to-use game for children who have motor co-ordination problems and can’t use a mouse. The School of Psychology’s Project KIDS has been using computer-based games for 18 years to test, measure and record children’s abilities. Dr Corrine Reid was the group’s client.

“We have worked with more than 2,500 children and have now extended our work to include children with a range of complex health, mental health and learning challenges,” said Dr Reid from the School’s Neurocognitive Development Unit. “This study, funded by Telethon, will help us understand how things go wrong for children with many life challenges.”

She said the unit was now also working with children in remote Indigenous communities in a study funded by the State Government and partnered with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation. “For both of these projects we needed to design new assessment ‘games’ that are appealing to a broader range of children with a range of needs and abilities.

“So we worked with the computer group to develop the app to help engage the kids and to make it less reliant on English verbal language skills. The students have been terrific, working with us to design even more child-friendly ways of creating challenging assessment tasks.”

Even as the student team was presenting its project to their peers, the Project KIDS team was working with four schools in remote parts of Australia to help them understand some of the learning and literacy challenges of the children.

“The app was evaluated with these children – the first in the country – in the world – to try out this game,” Dr Reid said.

The students agreed that, although they faced problems and difficulties, it was a satisfying challenge and they felt proud that their invention was already being used for a worthwhile purpose.
A University for city and country

In the past fortnight we officially opened the $6.2 million UWA Albany Science Building, built with State and federal Government support. The Great Southern region now has a world-class hub for rural medicine and natural resource management.

This is a significant milestone in the advancement of world-class teaching and scientific research in regional Western Australia. We are very excited about the new Albany Building and the possibilities it opens for teaching and researching rural health and medicine, as well as scientific research in one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots.

Another of UWA’s contributions to regional WA, and one that continues to generate much excitement, is our role in the Square Kilometre Array project to be built in the Murchison by 2020. This big science, big business project has raised Australia’s international profile scientifically and technically while opening possibilities for new global collaborations.

While the SKA points skywards, our University also provides vital on-the-ground support to health workers throughout the State and is dedicated to training doctors, dentists and health workers through the School of Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care, the Rural Clinical School, the Centre for Rural and Remote Oral Health and the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health.

We have a proud record of recruiting and retaining young people from the regions, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and enabling them to return to practise in the health sector throughout the State.

From the Great Southern students and researchers at the UWA Albany Sciences building to the Murchison-based SKA research to the medical students in the Kimberley, our research and teaching is making an impact right across this State.

During our Centenary year, we will recognise and reinforce these Statewide connections with visits to the regions and events that will bring UWA students and staff from Crawley into the remote, rural and regional areas of WA.

Our students and our researchers, wherever they are, represent the State’s most valuable resource: intellectual capital.

Win for space explosions expert

A UWA astrophysicist who delves into some of the most violent events in the universe has won a prestigious scholarship to Israel.

The School of Physics’ Research Associate Professor David Coward is the 2012 nab Australian Friends of the Hebrew University Yachad Scholar and flies to Israel this month to work with leading Israeli scientists.

Director of the Zadko Telescope and an ARC Future Fellow, Research Associate Professor Coward is an expert in gamma ray bursts, gravitational waves and tracking space junk.

Gamma ray bursts are explosions that emit extremely bright flashes of gamma radiation: the most powerful in the universe since the Big Bang. Gravitational waves are ripples in space generated by colliding stars, black holes and supernova explosions. They carry vast amounts of energy at the speed of light.

“My scholarship is a unique opportunity to meet and work with leading Israeli astronomers and astrophysicists, which will be the foundation for joint projects and future exchanges,” he said.

In Israel, Research Associate Professor Coward will also present three seminars on his research into gamma ray bursts.
The path to David Sherwood’s Rhodes Scholarship began with an earlier award, the UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarship.

WA's 2013 Rhodes Scholar took time out from putting the final touches to his Honours thesis to pay tribute to the scholarship that paid his way through UWA and its leader, Annie Fogarty, who mentored him as he set up his not-for-profit education group, Teach Learn Grow.

“The Fogarty Scholarship meant that I was pretty much financially independent during my undergraduate years,” David said.

“Not having to work meant I could devote time to my organisation to help struggling schoolchildren in remote and regional areas.”

Teach Learn Grow has tutored and mentored about 1,000 schoolchildren since it began in May last year. His establishment and leadership of the group would have been a major contributor to his winning the Rhodes Scholarship.

One of his team of university student volunteers was Rachel Paterson, last year’s Rhodes Scholar. She and David are both Bunbury-raised and educated.

“I didn’t know Rachel when I was growing up in Bunbury because we went to different schools,” said David, who was dux of Bunbury Senior High School. “But I met her through the Fogarty Scholars’ Association and she is one of the students who joined with me to make Teach Learn Grow such a success.”

David said he had not had any committee experience before he put his hand up to be secretary of the Fogarty Scholars. “I learned a lot from that and it helped me to set up Teach Learn Grow. Annie Fogarty’s mentoring was vital, as was the Fogarty Foundation’s grant to my group – it was our first, and meant that I could actually forge ahead to realise a dream.”

David has an elite Bachelor of Science (Advanced) from UWA and his Honours thesis in Chemistry is on the application of nanotechnology to sexual reproduction in honeybees.

“But, much as I love science, I see my future in management and hands-on strategy for not-for-profit organisations,” he said. To that end, he has chosen to study politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University.

He will spend some time putting into place a succession plan for Teach Learn Grow before leaving for the UK in the middle of next year. “We have $80,000 now and the program is going brilliantly,” he said. Despite his interests in helping children with literacy and maths skills, David does not see himself as a teacher – yet.

“Maybe when I’m older. But I’m more interested in education reform right now,” he said.

On top of his academic achievements and his volunteer organisation, David has been involved in university soccer and netball, soccer and badminton organisations in Bunbury, volunteer tutoring at Homework Centres and volunteering with Fire and Emergency Services and Scitech.

Annie Fogarty said David and Rachel were both wonderful examples of the young people the Fogarty Foundation wished to support through the UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarships.

“Through the Scholarships and the Leadership Program, the UWA Fogarty Scholars are given the opportunity of learning from today’s leaders and are given a broader insight into major challenges in the community and how they can contribute, as well as a network of other of like-minded future leaders,” she said.

“I am sure that both Rachel and David will make the most of all the opportunities that the Rhodes Scholarships offer.”
State support for science down south

The Great Southern has a new world-class science facility.

It will support the research and teaching and learning programs of UWA Albany, including the Centre for Excellence in Natural Resource Management (CENRM) and the Rural Clinical School of WA.

The new $6.2 million Albany Science Building was opened last month, expanding the opportunities for research in the region and undergraduate and post-graduate teaching and learning programs.

The University is ranked 26th in the world for life and agricultural sciences studies and also highly for clinical medicine and pharmacy, and the new state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities will further boost our programs and centres in the region.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Robyn Owens said the opening marked a significant milestone in the advancement of world-class teaching and scientific research in regional Western Australia.

“The Great Southern is a biodiversity hotspot – a natural laboratory for advanced science to provide sustainable environmental solutions that will benefit industry, government agencies and the entire regional community,” Professor Owens said.

“It’s also a natural place to teach and research rural medicine in the context of local health needs and regional community expectations.”

Opening the centre, Brendon Grylls, Minister for Regional Development and Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development, said the State Government had invested $1.5 million of WA Royalties for Regions funds for science research and teaching in Albany to help reinforce UWA’s strong contribution and potential in the Great Southern.

In addition to Royalties for Regions funding, the project is supported by a further $1.5 million in State Government funding, $2.24 million from the Federal Government and $1m from UWA.

Albany’s new science facility will be used to teach medical students from UWA and the University of Notre Dame Australia in a program designed specifically to attract more doctors to regional, rural and remote communities, including the Great Southern.

It will also expand the CENRM’s leadership role – in partnership with Federal, State and local government agencies – in solving natural resource management issues through advanced research in areas such as water management, salt-tolerant tree crops, commercial horticulture, dairy farm ecology, abalone farming, nitrogen-induced algal blooms and fish kills, and the environmental impact of mining on wetlands.

Peter Collier, WA’s Minister for Education, and internationally renowned plant conservation biologist Professor Stephen Hopper, who is UWA’s new Chair in Biodiversity, attended the opening. Professor Hopper will be conducting some of his research in the region, based in the new science centre.

Jennifer O’Neil, UWA Albany Centre Director, said the new science facilities provided an excellent base for research in the nearby Fitzgerald National Park and the Stirling Ranges. “We also have the Great Southern Ocean on our doorstep and, from next year, we will be offering a marine science major,” she said. “The Oceans Institute will be closely aligned with the Albany program.”

Students have been using laboratories throughout the town of Albany for their practical work. From the beginning of 2013, undergraduate, postgraduate, summer school and international students will able to work together under the one roof.

The local community was invited to inspect the building before the official opening, with UWA staff and students demonstrating chemistry, biology and other laboratory activities.
What makes the perfect pharmacist?

It seems it’s a combination between an astute scientist and a genial talk show host.

Louise Gabrovsek has just been named National Pharmacy Student of the Year, after competing against the best students from 22 pharmacy programs around Australia. The final eight young professionals had to work on stage with trained actors, dealing with the sorts of situations that face pharmacists every day in the suburbs.

Her teachers, Professor Alan Everett, Associate Professor Rhonda Clifford and Assistant Professor Liza Seubert, all agree that you have to have the right personality to be a good pharmacist. Communication skills, empathy and warmth are essential qualities. But of course they must be coupled with scientific knowledge and skills. Louise was in the top 10 of her class in the Masters of Pharmacy course, so, according to Professor Clifford: “We knew we had a star.”

After winning the State finals, Louise went to Melbourne to compete against the six other State finalists and a wildcard entry, in front of pharmacists at a national pharmacy conference. Each of the competitors was faced with a ‘patient’ from whom they had to elicit information before recommending the correct medication and outcome.

The first scenario was a young woman wanting pills to help her sleep. Louise’s careful questioning revealed it was the patient’s nicotine patches that were keeping her awake.

The second scene involved another woman asking for tablets for motion sickness. Upon questioning, Louise found out that the pills were for the customer’s mother, who was elderly and on other medications, which would have created a dangerous cocktail with motion sickness tablets.

“Louise won the day by picking up on that potentially dangerous interaction,” Professor Everett said. “None of the other finalists got to that point.”

Part of the two-year Masters course is weekly sessions on counselling, with tutors acting as patients while the students develop their communication skills. “Louise has a lovely manner with patients,” said Professor Seubert, who co-ordinates these sessions with Professor Clifford. “She easily develops a great rapport with people.”

UWA’s Masters of Pharmacy has just produced its sixth cohort of graduates. There are, on average, 35 students in the course each year, and Professor Clifford says they are all quickly employed.

“We keep our program small so we can deliver personalised teaching,” she said.

“You can only really effectively train people in health care in small groups,” Professor Everett said. “We interview prospective students before accepting them into the course. Communication skills are so important. Without them, there is no real health care.”

Louise won both the People’s Choice (judged by a couple of hundred pharmacists at the conference) and the judges’ award. She also presented a poster of her research to the conference, along with three other UWA students. Louise will probably use her $9,000 travel prize to attend a conference of international pharmacists in Dublin next year.

Meanwhile, she is completing her 12-month internship at the Mosman Drive-In Pharmacy in Stirling Highway Mosman Park.

A casual staff member in the Division of Pharmacy, Deirdre Criddle, was named the Pharmacist of the Year at the Melbourne conference. “It’s a very prestigious award; Deirdre inspires us all,” Professor Clifford said.

Professor Everett retires at the end of the year and said Louise’s outstanding success provided a high note on which to go out.
A sense of the Swan

A United Nations initiative is introducing Perth teenagers to historical, cultural, scientific and artistic perspectives of the Swan River.

Through the Sense of Place Network (RCE WA), UWA is collaborating with the State Department of Environment and Conservation, Millennium Kids, the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group and the Swan River Trust to promote sustainability through education.

Last month during the school holidays a group of 20 Year 9 students took part in a three-day pilot project, called the Sense of Place Explorers. Academic enrichment and leadership were targeted through practical and stimulating workshops on the many facets and values of the Swan Canning River System.

On the first day, the students learned about the river from a historical perspective. They were taken on two journeys through the river’s past, first with Dr Sue Graham-Taylor who described its history. From the top of the Fremantle Port Authority building they could see the Swan in its landscape and better understand the development of the river over the course of European settlement.

Professor Noel Nannup then immersed participants in the Dreaming of the Noongar; and, at Tjuntalup (Point Walter), they left their footprints along the tresses of Tjunta’s lost strand of hair. They learned about habitat restoration, vegetation identification and estuary management.

At the Canning River Eco Centre, guided by Joselyn Fissioli, they examined the health of the river system by conducting an extensive vegetation survey, testing water quality, collecting and examining macro-invertebrates and sharing their findings.

Kayaking the waters and walking the shores of the river at Bayswater enabled the students to explore sanctuaries where water-birds gathered and foraged in the shallows. Then, inspired by local artist Angela Rossen, they reflected the colours of the river in sketches they made of flora and fauna.

The project culminated with an exhibition and presentation evening at the Bayliss Building. There, Peter Ciemitis said: “The program we’re celebrating today goes much further than building education in ecology. It is rare to see such effective cross-curricular programs, which extend learning to reflect principles of developing A Sense of Place.”

Peter Ciemitis, whose portrait of George Seddon hangs in the National Gallery, and Winthrop Professor Carmen Lawrence are on the advisory board supporting the initiative.

The global project hopes to get children as young as kindergarten age understanding sustainability so it will become part of their consciousness.
Desert wetland inspires project

The work of UWA scientists, Indigenous artists and benevolent alumni will come together in exhibitions in Alice Springs and Nevada over the next few years.

*Desert Lake* is a project centred on a remarkable desert wetland in the southeast Kimberley region. To Indigenous people, including its traditional owners, it is known as Paruku; non-Indigenous Australians know it as Lake Gregory.

The project, which includes the Waterways Education Program (WEP) for the Kimberley developed by UWA's Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRAck) program, has explored the aesthetic, scientific and traditional values of Paruku, injected funds into the local Indigenous art centre and incorporated education for local children.

Research Assistant Professor Rebecca Dobbs from UWA's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management has been involved in the WEP program, with the WA Department of Water, since 2009. Artist Mandy Martin was keen to work with the traditional owners and bring the Dreaming, the science and the art of the area together. She enlisted the help of social enterprise entrepreneur David Rickards and his friend, UWA graduate Basil McIlgarra and others, including the Macquarie Foundation, who supported the project, underwriting it for $100,000.

It incorporated UWA's development of a waterway monitoring plan. Led by Professor Dobbs, it will put in place a long-term program to monitor and manage the Paruku waterway, an arid-zone wetland of international significance.

The entire community of Paruku was involved. Even the Paruku Rangers started creating art, which was a first in their community. Their paintings explain the science of the wetland, and the venture linked satellite imagery used for mapping, introduced school children to the concept of mapping and combined the satellite imagery with Dreaming stories and dot painting techniques.

The rich cross-cultural collaborative project has resulted in a book, *Desert Lake: Art Science and Stories from Paruku*, published by CSIRO Publishing, a DVD, website www.parukuproject.wordpress.com as well as the exhibition in Alice Springs from March next year.

The entire Paruku art collection has been bought by donors for the Nevada Museum of Art and supplemented with artworks donated by the visiting artists and the project DVD and archive where it will be installed in the Center for Art + Environment in 2015.
The University is providing free parking and free fuel for up to 16 staff or students ... as long as you ride an electric bike.

A new bike shed, near the tennis courts at the northern end of the Crawley campus, is powered by 12 solar panels, enough to recharge 22 e-bikes for a 40 kilometre trip home.

At the moment, the shed has racks with recharge connections for 16 bikes, and lockers for 16 riders. But if there is more demand, more racks and lockers will be installed. The new facility is a UWA Sustainable Development Project, in collaboration with Unipark.

David Tyrrell-Clark, Manager Parking and Transport, said four e-bikes were regularly parked in the shed and, until others registered for the service, University commuters with non-electric bikes could use the secure parking.

“With a 2.3kW photovoltaic system, we can easily support 16 bikes and more,” he said. “All you need to do is to call us at Unipark and get access to the shed added to your staff or student card. We are in the process of getting locks fitted to the lockers inside the shed and when that’s done, it will be a $50 refundable key deposit and a $50 a year charge to use one.

“I’m so delighted with this new facility. It’s something we’ve been wanting to do for a long time.”

The solar-powered charging shed has the potential to solve problems of parking, traffic, health and fossil fuel consumption. Electric bikes are ideal for commuters in Perth with its heat, wind and some hilly terrain. Most e-cyclists use their electric motors to assist them with hills and riding into the wind, rather than powering the whole ride.

Next on the agenda for Unipark and Sustainable Development Projects is more end-of-ride facilities.

David said there were more than 1,000 bike racks on the Crawley campus. “They are always full, with more bikes chained to posts and taken into offices. So I estimate there are about 1,200 bikes on campus on any given day,” he said.

Call David on 6488 3554 or drop into the Unipark office, in the Hackett Foundation Building, in car park 1, to register to use the new facility.

Nano-materials for human health

Two PhD candidates’ research is being enriched by fellowships from the Australian Nanotechnology Network.

Vipul Agarwal and Dominic Ho, both supervised by Dr Swaminatha Iyer in the Bionano Research Group in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, have been funded by the network to travel and extend their collaborations.

Vipul spent two months in the research and development laboratory at Pharmaxis P/L in Sydney, using human cells to test scarring agents. He is developing a new scaffold system for burns healing, to promote healing and reduce scarring. His co-supervisor is Winthrop Professor Fiona Wood.

Dominic will travel to the US to spend a few months in the laboratory of Professor Giles Plant at Stanford University. Professor Plant was formerly at UWA, running the Spinal Cord Repair Laboratory. He is continuing the same work at Stanford and is one of Dominic’s co-supervisors. The others are Winthrop Professor Alan Harvey (Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology) and Dr Stuart Hodgetts, who is now director of the Spinal Cord Repair Lab.

“I am trying to create nano-materials that will help control the direction of growth of cells,” Dominic said. “I will be able to tap into Stanford’s huge range of stem cells to help me.”

The aim of scientists in the area of spinal cord repair research is to regrow the nervous system so victims of spinal injury can walk again.

Vipul Agarwal and Dominic Ho with their supervisor Swaminatha Iyer
It was a weekend for inspiration, not just perspiration.

WA’s inaugural Sunsuper Ride to Conquer Cancer raised just over $4.6 million for the WA Institute for Medical Research, and its director, Professor Peter Klinken, has vowed that “we will engage in our pursuit of integrated cancer care and research with the same passion and commitment that characterised all in The Ride.”

Professor Klinken was one of 30 WAIMR staff members and 1,219 riders who did the two-day 200km round trip between Perth and Pinjarra a few weeks ago.

Each rider raised a minimum of $2,500 for cancer research and each of the hundreds of support crew raised at least $500 each.

One of the major sponsors, Mining and Civil Australia (Maca) raised more than $500,000 and flew in workers from South Australia to take part in the ride.

Cancer survivors could, if they chose, be identified with a yellow flag flying from their bikes. WAIMR’s Carolyn Monaghan said it was inspirational to see the bright yellow pennants fluttering among the riders.

“It was a fantastic atmosphere,” she said. “Even before we left, everybody was excited and the music was pumping. Along the way the support crew and hundreds of other people waved and clapped and shouted their encouragement. The crew staffed three pit stops along the way, as well as a great lunch. They provided sunscreen, water and energy food.

“Everybody had their names printed on the back and side of their bikes, so people could call out riders’ names to urge them on, even though they didn’t know them. It also made it easy to ride up to another cyclist and start chatting.”

The first riders made it to Pinjarra in just over two hours, but the organisers emphasised it was not a race, but a ride to be enjoyed. The campsite was a sea of bright blue two-man tents and sponsors also provided communal tents with bean bags and big television screens.

“The crew served us up a brilliant dinner and a great buffet breakfast as they pumped our tyres and fixed our bikes,” Carolyn said. “Sunsuper’s coffee was the best!”

The cyclists rode to Pinjarra along an inland route and returned along the coast.

“We were united in a powerful community movement of hope,” Professor Klinken said. “It was much more than a two-day trip for me. What moved me most were the stories of how The Ride impacted on people personally, how meaningful and enduring it was.”

Registrations are already open for next year’s ride.

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African students and their friends and families have raised $9,500 for schools in Malawi.

Last month, they hosted a day of sports and fun on Riley Oval with volleyball, soccer, petanque, novelty games, a sausage sizzle, face painting, robot activities and a stall selling African crafts and curios.

The day was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Crawley, the African Students Union and the Community of Malawians in Perth, with the support of the Vice-Chancellery.

Funds were raised for two schools in Malawi and will go towards science education at Nhomboli Community Day Secondary School in Rumphi, and youth leadership at Mzuzu Academy.

Uranium miners Paladin Energy with headquarters in Subiaco and a mine in Malawi, contributed $5,000 towards the project. Other donors were Globe Metals and Mining, soon to operate a niobium plant in Malawi, Aurecon Group and McRae Investments.

Rotary of Crawley meets every Thursday morning at the University Club. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Johnson, is the Patron. It is a progressive branch with many young people and women among its members. Its president, UWA graduate Holly Ransom, is the 2012 Western Australian Youth of the Year.
Children, cadavers and chemicals may not seem related but they all have associated risks.

These risks, and the policies and practices in place at UWA to deal with them, were some of the reasons behind the awarding of the annual UWA Safety Awards.

The Individual Safety Award was won by Olivia Harper, Director of the Early Learning Centre, part of UWA Child Care Services. The School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology was awarded the Group Safety Award. Professor Melinda Hodkiewicz from the School of Mechanical and Chemical Engineering took out the Safety Leadership Award. And the Safety Recognition Award went to Michael Smirk in the School of Earth and Environment.

Introducing the 14th annual awards, the Chair of the University Safety Committee, Professor Allan McKinley, said typically nominees preferred to simply get on with the job and did not seek to bring attention to themselves.

“However their efforts make a real difference to the safety, health and wellbeing of others,” he said. “They are always good role models and they contribute greatly to an actively caring workplace culture.

“These awards acknowledge, share and celebrate their efforts.”

Olivia Harper was involved in the design and creation of the new UWA Early Learning Centre on the Nedlands campus and initiated and developed health and safety-related systems during and after construction of the building.

She has arranged exercise rehabilitation for child care staff, recognising the risks and creating management plans for the manual handling tasks that are part of caring for and working with children.

The children’s health and safety is also a priority with child protection, anaphylaxis, asthma management and first aid training courses for staff.

The Group Safety Award in the recently-amalgamated Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology acknowledged many people from the Head of School, Professor Linc Schmitt, to staff and student safety representatives.

An active School Safety Committee set significant targets for 2012 in areas of chemical safety, radiation safety and electrical compliance.

Redundant equipment and unwanted and hazardous chemicals were disposed of, with more than $35,000 being spent on chemical disposal.

The School is currently reviewing the handling of cadavers, used by medical students, looking at new lifting implements and racking systems to help eliminate injuries from the manual handling. Air monitoring for formaldehyde was also done in the mortuary dissection rooms over many months and is ongoing, to ensure the health of students and staff.

Significant changes in Mechanical and Chemical Engineering over the past two years depleted the School’s safety committee at a time when new directions in research made safety issues paramount.

Professor Hodkiewicz took on the role of Chair of the committee in July 2010 and has been proactive in developing new safety management policies, procedures and guidelines. Activities in the School embrace areas such as fuels and alternative energy, gas processing and CO2 sequestration, nanomaterials, laser technologies, biological materials and chemical engineering. New directions have created a more complex and challenging health and safety situation than exist in a traditional School of Mechanical Engineering.

Professor Hodkiewicz has excelled in overseeing new health and safety procedures and in instilling a new culture of safety awareness in the School, winning for her the Safety Leadership Award.

Hazardous chemicals were also of concern to Michael Smirk, the winner of the Safety Recognition Award.

As a safety and health representative, Mr Smirk has taken the front foot in identifying hazardous procedures and reviewing control measures. He has introduced safety files for individual research groups in the soil science discipline. These have become a significant safety resource and reference for laboratory users and managers, with valuable information such as the latest codes on chemical labelling requirements and advice on chemical disposal.

As a senior research officer in Earth and Environment, Mr Smirk has extensive laboratory experience, often requiring the safe handling of corrosive and hazardous chemicals, which made him the perfect person to take on responsibility for the safety of the School.

Other finalists in the awards, Alexis Baratsas (Human Resources manager at the University Club), Alan Luk (School Manager, Plant Biology) and Carmel McLeod (Senior Technician, Biomedical Research Facility) were awarded certificates to recognise their contributions.

The winners received book vouchers from the University Co-Operative Bookshop.
Fat Man’s story of fit men and women

Like most teenagers, a long-legged teenager from Northam High School enjoyed the O-Week activities in 1943.

But in those days, instead of dancing to loud music, the freshers took part in a sports carnival. The 17-year-old science student made her debut for the UWA Athletic Club that week, equalling and setting new records in the 75 and 100 yard sprints.

Shirley Strickland (later Shirley de la Hunty) went on to become one of Australia’s most famous and best-loved Olympic champions.

And she, along with thousands of champions, hopefuls and amateur runners, hurdlers, jumpers and throwers are the heroes of a new book, The Fat Man’s Odyssey, A History of the University of Western Australia Athletic Club.

It is 90 years since sport was first organised and played on campus. It is 84 years since the UWA club became a founding member of the managing body of athletics in WA – and it is the only one of the founding clubs that still exists.

Jim Wieland, a competitor in the 1960s, has put together a big fat book, branded by a little fat man, where famous names leap off the pages. It turns reading into a team sport, as you continuously stop to call out to anybody within earshot interesting facts such as: “Hey did you realise that John Steffenson was a long jumper first?”

The fat man of the title is a character from Greek mythology, Boreas, one of the few images of Greeks running. “It had to be Greek because of Marathon (because) that’s what athletics is all about,” explained Lyn Barry, widow of Kevin (always known as Sam) Barry, who was responsible for the original design in the 1960s.

Boreas, the God of the North Wind, was depicted on club T-shirts and stationery gripping a trident and running over the Aegean Sea on two wine skins, poking fun at the Greeks’ love of wine.

The Fat Man emblem became synonymous with UWA athletics, with a version of the Greek word trekor added at the bottom, loosely meaning, ‘i run’.

Olympic, World and Commonwealth champions had their first outings and honed their skills at UWA, including Kylie Wheeler, Alison Inverarity, Renae Poetschka and Vicki Parnov.

John Steffenson, the 400m sensation first leapt to prominence as a long jumper. Len Vlahov, who took out state and national discus titles, is a life member. Griff Richards, the club’s first president, and the first editor of Pelican, also has that honour.

And 17 Rhodes Scholars have competed for UWA, wearing the University’s bottle green and deep blue, with a slash of gold.

The book maps the development of sports facilities from Irwin Street to the Crawley campus and the Sports Park at McGillivray.

The Fat Man’s Odyssey blends history, statistics and a lot of fun (the cover boasts ‘a story full of a lot of hot air’) as did Jim’s earlier book on the history of the University Football Club.

It is published by the Friends of the UWA Athletic Club and is available for $60 from Eric Isaachsen: elpc@iinet.net.au or 63 Holland Street, Wembley or by phone, 9387 4357.
Thinking about schools for your child?

Moerlina is an independent primary school providing a nurturing educational environment for pre-kindergarten (three year olds) to Year 7. Centrally located in Mount Claremont, Moerlina is close to public transport and nearby to a shuttle bus servicing the QEII/UWA precinct.

A partner school to UWA's Faculty of Education, Moerlina provides an academic program of excellence. Moerlina's point of difference is providing a child-centred, inquiry style of teaching and learning. Our programs foster curiosity, exploration and critical thinking skills to enable our students to emerge resourceful and independent thinkers. Our goal is to support the development of creative and higher order thinking skills – skills for success.

"Moerlina is an ideal learning environment and an excellent partnership school for our pre-service teachers" (Professor Val Faulkner, UWA Faculty of Education).

Discover how Moerlina brings education alive.

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RESEARCH GRANTS

Grants awarded between 15/10/2012 and 28/10/2012

AUSTRALIAN SYNCHROTRON PROTECTION COMPANY LIMITED

Associate Professor Klaus Gessner, Earth and Environment (School of), Exploration Targeting CET (Centre for): "3D Imaging and Structural Analysis of Fault Rocks from Recent and Ancient Earthquakes" – $10,100 (2012)

CLIVE AND VERA RAMACIOTTO FOUNDATION

Dr Tobias Strunk, Paediatrics and Child Health (School of): "Exploring the Ontogeny of Antimicrobial Proteins and Peptides in Preterm Infants and their Potential Application to Prevent Neonatal Sepsis" – $74,945 (2013)

CURTIN UNIVERSITY EX AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL LOW EMISSIONS COAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Winthrop Professor David Lumley, Dr Jeffrey Shragge, Earth and Environment (School of): "Advanced Geophysical Data Analysis for the South West Hub Harvey 1 Well Site" – $69,486 (2012)

Professor Michael Johns, Winthrop Professor Eric May, Mechanical and Chemical Engineering (School of): "Alternatives and Fundamentals Program – Pore and Core Scale Investigation of CO2 Wettability" – $236,857 (2012-15)

GRAINS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Assistant Professor Kenneth Flower, Dr David Minkey, Plant Biology (School of): "Long Term No Till Farming Systems" – $250,070 (2012)

HERMON SLADE FOUNDATION

Dr Bradley Pusey, Winthrop Professor Peter Davies, Natural Resource Management (Centre of Excellence in): "Protecting the Biodiversity of Mound Springs of the Dampier Peninsula Kimberley Region" – $45,000 (2013-15)

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK


JULUWARLU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION (JAC)

Dr Joseph Dortch, Anneliese Carson, Social Sciences (School of): "Site Identification (s.18) Survey of Priority Area 1 Bungaroo Integration Project Area Pilbara" – $15,210 (2012)

MERCK, SHARP AND DOHME AUSTRALIA

Professor Thomas Ledowski, Medicine and Pharmacology (School of): "Muscle Relaxation in Anaesthesia" – $60,000 (2012-14)

OPHTHALMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

Dr Fred Chen, Optometry and Visual Science (Centre for): "Comparative Study of Two Automated Micropipettes" – $42,000 (2013)

UWA RESEARCH COLLABORATION AWARDS

Dr Tobias Westmeier, Dr Attila Poppeng, Physics (School of), University of Cape Town, University of Bonn: "Source finding and parametrisation for SKA precursor science" – $6,000 (2013)

Dr Patrick Clarke, Psychology (School of), University of Oxford, University of Cambridge: "Cognitive and Neurological Approaches to Enhancing the Modification of Information Processing Biases in Emotional Vulnerability" – $18,443 (2013)

Assistant Professor Richard Dodson, Professor Andreas Wicenc, Dr J Wang, Physics (School of), University of Oxford, University of Southampton, University of California, Berkeley: "A Coherent Transient Detection System for SKA Pathfinders" – $10,000 (2013)

Dr Kristen Nowak, Dr Gianina Ravenscroft, Medical Research (UWA Centre for), Upssala University: "Determining how mutant genes lead to neuromuscular diseases, and evaluating potential therapies" – $6,280 (2013)

Dr Tom Letessier, Dr Mark Meekan, Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), Marine Futures (Centre for), University of Victoria (Canada), Institut de Recherche pour le Dévelopement, Zoological Society of London, Piew Environment Group, Nature Conservancy: "Status of Indo-Pacific Open Ocean Predators" – $10,000 (2013)

Dr Jean-Michel Le Floch, Winthrop Professor Michael Tobar, Paul Stanwix, Physics (School of), Macquarie University: "Next generation hybrid sapphire–diamond spin-frequency transducers: towards all diamond frequency resonators" – $10,000 (2013)

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY EX NHMRC PROJECT GRANTS

Winthrop Professor John Newnham, Winthrop Professor Karen Simmer, Women’s and Infants’ Health (School of): "Should Very Premature Babies Receive a Placental Transfusion at Birth – A Randomised Controlled Trial" – $115,000 (2012)

VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Professor Miranda Grounds, Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology (School of): "In Vivo Analysis of the Effect of Dairy Bioactive Proteins in Young Mice" – $10,000 (2012)

WA PERTH MINT

Winthrop Professor Colin Raston, Dr Killugudi Swaminatha Iyer, Chemistry and Biochemistry (School of): "Application of microfluidics in engineering functional noble metal nano–materials" – $75,000 (2013-15)

PROMOTION BRIEFS

WINTHROP PROFESSOR

Professor Gary Kendrick

(Marine Biology, School of Plant Biology)

Professor Gary Kendrick joined the University in 1996. The Marine Ecology research group he leads at UWA has an internationally recognised profile in benthic marine ecological research and a capacity for mapping areas of seafloor, near-shore benthic habitats using a combination of hydro-acoustic and video methodologies. His research program into seagrass and seaweed ecology has resulted in collaborative research in most states of Australia and with collaborations in Denmark, Malaysia, Spain, South Africa, USA and Brazil.
He played a significant role in the University’s Oceans Institute as Acting Institute Director between 2009 and mid-2011, and also held the position of Deputy Head of the School of Plant Biology from 2006 – 2009.

WINTHROP PROFESSOR
Professor Andrew Page (School of Psychology)
Professor Andrew Page joined the University in 1993. The focus of his research is anxiety disorders and on monitoring clinical outcomes in routine care as a means of enhancing mental health services. His work has been highly cited and he has had an impactive influence in the field for many years. He has been involved in both School and Committee service and held senior positions of responsibility including PhD Co-ordinator, and Deputy Head of School. He has been active in conference organisation and has served as National President of the Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy.

PROFESSOR
Professor Colleen Fisher
(School of Population Health)
Professor Fisher joined UWA in 2008. Her research interests lie in the sociology of health and illness and the psychological aspects of women’s health – particularly family and domestic violence.

Her other area of research is palliative care. Her work is recognised by the International Institute of Qualitative Methodology and displays an exemplary record of funded research as well as reports for government and non-government agencies.

She has contributed to the University through the integration of Social Work and Social Policy into the School of Population Health and through her membership of numerous University Committees and University wide activities.

RESEARCH PROFESSOR
Research Professor Marco Fiorentini
(Centre for Exploration Targeting, School of Earth and Environment) Professor Fiorentini joined the University in 2005. He has established an international reputation in the field of research on komatiites, ancient lava flows that provide crucial information on the thermal regime of the early Earth more than 2.5 billion years ago. His research interests include investigations of the magmatic and geochemical processes that occurred at the very early stages of the development of our planet. Outcomes from his research provide the first ever reliable information on the rate of mixing and homogenisation of the mantle and address the highly controversial role of volatiles, such as water and carbon dioxide, in the petrogenesis of komatiites and magmatic mineral systems.

Leadership roles undertaken within the Centre for Exploration Targeting and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Core to Crust Fluid Systems have enhanced the development of his international reputation within the minerals industry and have helped to expand the impact of geosciences both overseas, within UWA and Australia.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
Assistant Professor Ishita Chatterjee
(Economics, UWA Business School) Assistant Professor Chatterjee joined UWA in 2010. She has published papers in internationally recognised journals and more working papers and projects are in the pipeline, some involving her national and international academic network.

Assistant Professor Chatterjee was selected for the UWA Business School’s Teaching Excellence Scheme in 2012 and 2013. She is currently working on a project concerned with R&D expenditure. Her research interests include development of the theory of innovation and outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

INITIATIVES should also aim to increase the participation, retention and success of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

New projects that enhance educational and employment access, participation and outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds should be transformative and not merely meet students’ needs. Initiatives should provide innovative solutions to support students, often staff and students can best identify an initiative to meet a particular need or achieve outcomes and assurance of quality.

The Diversity Initiatives Fund has been going for 16 years and has helped many initiatives that were creative, local and break new ground.

WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED TO SUPPORT UWA’S WIDENING PARTICIPATION AGENDA?

IS THERE AN EQUITY AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED TO SUPPORT UWA’S WIDENING PARTICIPATION AGENDA?

The purpose of the 2013 Diversity Initiatives Fund is to provide financial help to new projects that enhance educational and employment access, participation and outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and demonstrate clear and achievable outcomes and assurance of quality.

The Diversity Initiatives Fund has been going for 16 years and has helped kick-start many UWA projects.

Often staff and students can best identify an initiative to meet a particular need or fill a gap and frequently initiatives have relevance to the wider campus.

Applications close on Monday 3 December and applicants will be notified by mid-December.

An application form can be downloaded from the Equity and Diversity website at equity.uwa.edu.au/page/8535 or by contacting Robyn Barblett on 6488 3873. Applications should be sent to EDF Applications, Equity and Diversity, M350.

NOTICES

Grants to fill the gaps

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WELL VERSED

Our next poetry reading will be at the Dolphin Theatre

2PM SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER

Join Faith Clayton, Joan Pope, David Goodall, Colinn O’Brien, Pat Stroud and others for an hour of passion and pleasure as we restore memories of poems we have all learned and loved.

Tickets $5 at the door and you can reserve seats at bookings@grads.org.au

Sponsored by the Graduate Dramatic Society and Bendigo Bank Seniors’ Week Festival.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

BRIDGETOWN: Best town block, 16 Ewing Place, Bridgetown. Residential land, $169,000.

Excellent town location, quiet cul-de-sac. Huge 2,671 sqm block – nearly 3/4 of an acre. Amazing 180 degree panoramic views over town and to rolling hills. Two street frontages, with each frontage having a width of over 35 metres. Located in an area of quality homes, the block is fully serviced and ready, when you are, to build on. Just a stroll to shops and services. Contact: Christine Lamery – 0417 617 678 – Blackwood Valley Real Estate, Bridgetown.

HOME EXCHANGE

HOUSE SWAP: North Sydney cottage, small garden, sleeps 4. Close to harbour, CBD, restaurants, markets, good public transport. Sydney Festival time 8 to 30 January 2013. Swap for house, sleeps 3-4, Claremont – Fremantle. Contact: cynthia.hunter@sydney.edu.au Tel: (02) 9036 5045

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HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION: New to Australia’s South West, Tren Creek Chalets provides luxury accommodation in a Mediterranean setting. It features, a natural tranquil environment amongst fruit trees, vineyard, beautiful Tren Creek, and an organic olive grove boasting some top oil awards. Family owned and operated, it displays sustainable living in tune with nature. For further information contact: (08) 9727 1279. Email: info@trecreekchalets.com.au – or visit our website: www.trecreekchalets.com.au

QUINDALUP: A charming, recently renovated, fully self-contained redbrick cottage only 400m from beautiful Geographe Bay and 2km from Dunsborough township. Located at the end of a private road, this cottage offers privacy and security, a lovely natural vista out over Toby Inlet Reserve, and is a great cottage for all seasons. Please go to www.quindalup.net.au for further information.

LONDON: Newly converted fully equipped London accommodation (can sleep four) with panoramic views and excellent transport to Central London available in nice area of Peckham from one week to three months at very reasonable price from $400. Cleaning fee of $100 and 50% deposit required at time of booking with $500 damage deposit and remainder of rental due before arrival. Contact: melhon@optusnet.com.au

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What price humanities research?

By Winthrop Professor Philippa Maddern
Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for History of Emotions

I have been a humanities researcher now for 38 years.

For most of them, the costs of research and the distribution of research funding have been regular items of public discussion; and humanities research – literature, languages, philosophy, gender theory, history – has been subjected to particularly stringent and suspicious queries.

Tellingly, a recent article in Quadrant suggested that the current system of funding through ARC grants breeds an academic culture of mendicancy and waste, and that research – particularly humanities research – should be ‘self-funded’ – paid for by individual academics rather than through public money.

Commendably, UWA’s leadership has supported and sustained many humanities research initiatives, not least the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions (CHE). But Australian Arts Faculties generally are often seen as lagging behind the research successes of other disciplines.

Let’s be clear; an ideal research funding scheme is almost certainly unattainable, primarily because good research (as anyone who does it knows) can take almost infinite amounts of time, and hence money.

No one supposes the ARC is a magical utopian body, able to give all good researchers exactly the funds they need. But over the past two decades ARC-distributed grants have enabled many humanities researchers to do the field trips and archival research required, to build up research resources, to moderate the crushing teaching loads that prevent so many young researchers from producing their best research. Why should this seem so wrong to some critics?

Probably for two main ‘reasons’; first, our research is seen as too expensive in comparison with other, allegedly more laudable, government spending programs, such as pensions, or mental health. (These charges have actually been levied against CHE). This belief in turn apparently stems from the conviction that humanities research has no public benefit; that it consists merely of individual researchers following idiosyncratic fancies, of no wider interest or use.

Research, to some critics, apparently has only two justifications. Either it must produce quick financial return (for some!) through invention of salable widgets; or, through medical research, it must produce health.

At first sight, humanities might seem to fail both criteria. Actually, that’s not true. Money can be made out of many things besides gadgets. I once checked what tourism contributed to the economy of York, UK, to be told that to the best of their calculations, tourism added around £8 million pounds annually to York’s economy. Let’s face it. Tourists don’t visit northern England for sunny beaches or silicon valleys. They go to York to see the Jorvik Viking Museum, the Early Music Festival, or the nearby Bronte country. All these would either not exist or would make dull spectacles without pre-existing humanities research. Even in Australia, cultural and heritage tourism bring in big dollars.

But do we want to justify humanities research purely in dollar terms? Surely there are other, maybe even greater, benefits. Just as medical research (which, as a cancer survivor twice over, I support unstintingly!) enhances physical well-being, humanities research sustains our cultural and social well-being.

Would we really be healthier, richer, more culturally sustained, if we knew nothing about Shakespeare, and never turned his plays into popular films? How can performing music help old and young to strengthen community ties, build self-confidence, and maintain mental alertness, if we know nothing about it? How are we to relate properly to our Asian neighbours if we don’t research and understand not just their languages, but their cultures? Can any society really function well, understand its identity, and make good decisions for its future, without a knowledge of its own past? Surely not.

These are only some of the benefits of humanities research. They may be financially incalculable, but they are not less real, or less powerful for the public good. What price humanities research? Whatever it is, it’s lower than the price of going without it.