CELEBRATING UTS ALUMNI AROUND THE GLOBE

ASIA PERSPECTIVE
How UTS is poised for growth in the Asian Century

TRUE LEADER
Zimbabwe activist and 2012 Sydney Peace Prize winner Sekai Holland

TOWERING 10
Meet the 2013 Alumni Excellence Award winners
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GLOBAL VISION AND CREATIVE INSIGHT

As part of UTS’s vision to be a world-leading university of technology, we are developing a truly internationalised academic institution with broad and deep relationships across the globe. Since taking the reins at UTS, one of my key goals has been to champion the vision to be a world-leading university of technology. That really puts the spotlight on our education, our research and, importantly, our people. We want our students to see themselves as global citizens with intercultural capabilities in language and culture. We want them to promote the idea of an almost seamless world, particularly between Australia and Asia. As part of this big picture, UTS aims to develop a truly international academic institution with broad and deep relationships across the globe. Our Internationalisation Strategy is a key part of fulfilling these ambitions and refining our focus. This agenda has many elements, one one component being our Key Technology Partnership Program. It allows us to build high-quality research ties with overseas institutions.

That is clearly where Asia comes into the picture. We recognise there is a growing capacity in the region to hand and conduct research, so we must leverage our research capabilities and find ways to collaborate. UTS has already created four joint research centres: the Xiong Research Centre for Data Mining and Service Technology with Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications; the Joint Research Centre for Smart Cities with Shanghai University; the International Centre for Communication in Health Care with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; and the Joint Research Centre for Cyber Physical Authentication with Huaqiao University. These are great alliances and they complement our desire to ensure our students engage with the rest of the world as much as possible.

Other wonderful programs also play a part. Since 2010, for example, UTS’s international leadership programs BUILDe (UTS International Leadership Development) has seen UTS students develop their global knowledge and leadership skills through offshore experiences, such as orphanage volunteering to micro-finance study tours. About one in four of our students has an international experience as part of their studies, well above the sector average of 10 per cent. We want to lift that figure higher because we see it as an important symbol of the UTS education model.

As we travel to six countries in Asia recently for the annual UTs international events, I was struck by the positivity surrounding BUILDe and our international partnerships. Many offshore alumni are clearly keen to align with UTS to help our students gain work experience and integrate culturally. It has been a privilege to celebrate UTS’s 25th birthday this year with these alumni.

Many of them have asked what they can do to assist UTS - and my response has been clear: be champions and representatives of the University, sell the brand name UTS in the market place. A university is judged by the quality of its graduates.

Creative intelligence

Creativity is another UTS strength. As I see it, creative intelligence involves an ability to think outside your own area of discipline and multidisciplinary disciplines. This enables you to contemplate visionary ideas or new ideas to help revolutionise the way things are done - from concept development to marketing and finally commercialisation.

The UTS Creative Intelligence Strategy means we are contributing to this evolution. We have great digital and creative capabilities on campus, while the University’s location gives us an edge, courtesy of proximity to about 240 tech start-ups in our part of Sydney. That figure is set to quadruple in the next few years. The upshot is that creative intelligence must always be front and centre of thinking can improve their organisations. We are also fortunate to behost the Creative Industries Innovation Centre and to co-lead the Creative Digital Innovation Partnership. Part of this focus on creativity will be our data mining project looking at how we use our internal data to inform and improve our own processes, and working with businesses to help them to promote power of their data.

Looking ahead to 2014, we will welcome the opening of three new buildings as part of our City Campus Master Plan, each of which will make dramatic architectural, educational and research statements. Such change and growth underpins the remarkable evolution of UTS as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. It is wonderful to see how the University has grown and become more outwardly focused and confident. We are really on the move, and people around the world are recognising our dynamism.

I thank our alumni for playing a vital role in enabling UTS to remain on such a positive trajectory. It’s your University to cherish and grow.

Ross Milbourne

Professor Ross Milbourne, Vice-Chancellor

Stay in Touch

As valued UTS alumni, you are part of a global network of professionals. To stay connected with all the latest alumni news, and to ensure your details are up-to-date, visit www.alumni.uts.edu.au

You can also view TOWER online at www.utstower.com.au. Simply enter your details at www.alumni.uts.edu.au to request the print edition, which will be mailed to your address.
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UTS LAUNCHES NEW CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE DEGREE

With the University’s 25th anniversary celebrations underway, the concern is abuzz with news of a new multi-disciplinary combined degree, which was introduced to prospective students on Open Day.

Commissioned in 2014, the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation is an Australian first and a clear indication that UTS at the forefront of creative and innovation-led thinking, alongside a small group of leading international institutions.

“With the new degree has excited so many – they want to know what is, how it’s different,” and what job will lead to, “says Dr Tanja Golja (Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Building’s (DAB) Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) Louise McWhinnie. “My role is to ascertain that what this degree will lead to is the wrong question.”

McWhinnie and her colleagues who will teach into the program expect graduates to “go out and define the jobs of the future.” The course encompasses high-level critical thinking, invention, complexity innovation, future scenario building and entrepreneurship, leading edge capabilities that are highly valued in the globalised world.

Several key components differentiate this degree: First, it is a combined degree, so students can take up to one discipline, with one of 18 core professional degrees on offer at UTS. This means that students’ work spans both the creative arts and disciplines like computing and creative intelligence and innovation, which not only informs, but also develops and applies new methodologies and ways of thinking.

The Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation is designed specifically as an accelerated double degree, it can also be completed full time in only one year longer than the core degree with which it combines.

The real goal is to try and make sure the faculty is geared towards the new learning environment, and that’s what we’re doing.”

By Penny Pryor

A FACULTY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By Penny Pryor

Four months into her new role as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Mary Spongberg is enjoying the roller-coaster that the job has brought.

“It’s challenging, but interesting. I think it’s a challenging time to think beyond education generally and especially being in a faculty of arts, there are a lot of challenges facing the arts,” she says.

Professor Spongberg joined UTS from Macquarie University, where she was Professor of Modern History and Associate Dean of Research. She started her career as an academic at Sydney University, where her post-doctoral studies focused on HV Arts, before moving to Macquarie University. “When I moved to Macquarie in 1996 as a history lecturer, I had to retrain myself. I developed an interest in history,” she says.

Another key component of this degree is a focus on trans-disciplinarity – designed to build students’ ability to work in not only their own, but also across and between other disciplines, and enabling graduates with creative intelligence competences to navigate across the rapidly accelerating world of change that they will enter upon graduation.

By Penny Pryor

UTS Alumni have again featured on the Queen’s Birthday Honours list, with nine former students receiving honours.

One of the more recent graduates to receive an award is Chief Superintendent Chris Lewis, Assistant Director Community Safety and Research at Fire and Rescue NSW.

The award goes to only a handful of fire fighters who have gone the extra mile when it comes to service, performance and initiative during the course of their careers.

“I was very pleased but I think it was more a reflection of the work done by the ‘team I’ve led’,” he says.

Dr Lewis completed a Graduate Certificate in Adult Education at UTS last year but he calls himself a “study junky” as he has an MBA (Deakin University) and a Master in Applied Science (Fire Safety Design) from University of Western Sydney in addition to a Doctorate in Public Policy (Charles Sturt University) and at least three other graduate certificates.

He undertook the Graduate Certificate in Adult Education last year to equip himself with the training requirements of his role.

“I realised that my aim is to engage with firefighters and with the community to change how people behave then I need to understand how adults learn – it’s about changing people’s behaviours,” he says.

Dr Lewis previously managed the Fire Investigation and Research Unit at UTS. He has conducted research projects with the School of Chemistry and Forensic Science at UTS. Students assisted in a study in accelerant detection canines, or sniffer dogs. They were ‘used’ to detect when an accelerant is being used. That helps us to quickly rule whether the fire is accidental or not.”

Another research project which involved UTS, explored whether the introduction of Reduced Fire Risk cigarettes had actually reduced the incidence of discarded cigarettes causing fires. That project found that while it was less likely that someone would throw a cigarette into a fire when it was branded as a ‘non-lighter’, it was still possible.

Dr Lewis also led the investigation and research with the Ku-ring-gai Nursing Home fire, the outcome of which was a change in smoker legislation for nursing homes in NSW. All nursing homes now require smoker-free areas, regardless of age.

Other UTS alumni to receive honours were John Berryman (UWS) Andrew Dowenerative (QUT), Eileen Henderson (QAM), Margaret Hunter (QAM), Bruce Irvine (QAM), Patricia Kelly (QAM), Shirley Phelps (UWS) and Chief Superintendent Anthony Trainor (AFMF).

Full details can be found at www.alumni.uts.edu.au/page.aspx?id=811

LONDON CALLING

Calling all UK-based alumni! UTS is hosting an inaugural alumni event in London to celebrate 25 years of UTS. UTS Vice-Chancellor Professor Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University in the UK, UTS Vice-Chancellor Professor Ross Milbourne and Professor Martin Bean, formerly Vice-Chancellor of The Open University in the UK, will be joined by UTS Alumni and UTS staff for a special evening of networking and celebration.

Event details:

Date: Tuesday 25 March 2014
Venue: Australian High, Strand, London, WC2R 4JLA
YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

By Penny Pyror

UTS alumna Samantha Dybå was one of 22 young entrepreneurs selected to represent Australia at the G20 Young Entrepreneurs’ Alliance (G20 YEA) Summit in Russia this year.

Dybå (pictured, top right) graduated with a Bachelor of Business from UTS in 2002 and founded a Skype competitor in 2003. With a corporate background, she was selected to go but was unable to attend due to work commitments.

“Attendance at the summit was not an option for us this year,” she says.

From 17-18 June, the summit will bring together business leaders and entrepreneurs from around the world to discuss the potential of innovation, growth and jobs in the digital economy.

Dybå represents the G20 YEA in representing the Australian accretion, and is the co-founder of WiseTech Global, a global transport software company.

Matthew Klintfält, Director of Sweden, an engineering company specialising in siphonic roof drainage, did studies in Engineering followed by a Business degree at UTS. Klintfält is proud that his company was responsible for designing the siphonic stormwater system on the new UTS Yura Muniga student residences in Harris Street.

Klintfält believes his role is to attract interns to the industry.

One of the benefits of a smaller firm is the contribution to a design project saving the company $100,000 per annum. Casey went on to develop Centrimal, an SME specialising in mineral size reduction for the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Casey regularly accepts only “UTS” engineering or business students who work in Cowra, country NSW. He values the freshness, enthusiasm and the new perspective that students bring.

UTS FLYES THE FLAG FOR DIGITAL INDUSTRIES

A proposal, co-led by UTS and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, to establish Australia’s own Silicon Valley, has been chosen by a pre-eminent national panel of business and research leaders, from 500 initially.

The new organisations will lead almost 60 partners across NSW, Tasmania, Queensland, the ACT and Victoria in the Creative Digital Innovation Partnership (CDIP).

The initiative, part of the former Federal Government’s $3 billion Plan for Australian Jobs, aims to drive growth and jobs in creative digital industries.

The CDIP will not only grow jobs in the new and emerging creative digital industries space, but also help define career pathways for students and job seekers that may not yet exist, says UTS Vice-Chancellor Professor Ross Mountain.

“A unique, national collaboration of start-ups, SMEs, global firms, government and researchers, the CDIP will accelerate new digital technologies and services, innovation, and creative content across all sectors of the Australian economy,” he says.

For this we need a well-educated, agile and future-focused workforce and growing stream of inspired university graduates. UTS is certainly well-placed to meet this challenge.

The CDIP is perfectly timed for UTS. Recently we became a board member of Cumulus, an exclusive international confederation of design schools fostering a revolution in creative innovation education and entrepreneurship. And we can also announce an Australian first – our new undergraduate degree in Creative Digital Industries commencing 2014 – the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been agreed that will pass the way for both organisations to provide access to online lectures, resources and grow the exchange of ideas between academic and business leaders in the two countries.

UTS and the CCS has approved a small grant for Australian education initiatives we undertake with the Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education in Afghanistan.

The MOU is a reflection of the University’s commitment to increasing academic and social justice.

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Professor Ross Mountain says UTS has a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to the Australian education sector.

UTS FLIES THE FLAG FOR DIGITAL INDUSTRIES

UTS ALUMNI: SUPPORTING INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS

As UTS celebrates its 25th anniversary, it is exciting to see alumni engaging with UTS by providing practical experience in professional disciplines for undergraduates.

A number now successfully run small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and professional practices. These alumni recognise that it is not only the student who gains from the engagement, but the businesses are rewarded too.

Several SME partners and directors were keen to share their positive experience with interns and graduates. A number of common themes emerge. UTS alumni in SMEs are keen to offer the practical support that they themselves experienced at UTS, knowing how important this is for professional development.

The value that young aspiring professionals bring to an SME employer in terms of their enthusiasm and commitment is frequently mentioned. The chance to take on an intern for a fixed term at a reasonable rate, or in some cases at no cost, is available for SMEs. As such it also presents a low-risk business opportunity.

Ben Casey (pictured, bottom middle) studied mechanical engineering studies in the 1990s, and was inspired in his own internship, where he was able to work with an SME and enthusiasm is frequently mentioned. The chance to take on an intern for a fixed term at a reasonable rate, or in some cases at no cost, is available for SMEs. As such it also presents a low-risk business opportunity.

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The majority of companies addressed these health and safety were well-covered topics. Reporting expectations lifted reporting important areas. On companies, while overlooking other highlighting achievements that reflect well time, discretionary reporting can lead to transparency and disclosure. At the same attributed to the tendency to concentrate environmental activities. Great variation in reporting on social and environmental reports. A 2012 report found that 83 per cent of 32 companies across six topics and found by Australian companies. It analysed claimed levels of reporting and information shown that significant gaps exist between framework. However, previous research has highlighted discrepancies not sustainable disclosure of sustainability issues and the need for clearer reporting guidance.

Sustainability reporting Many companies are increasingly reporting on sustainability alongside financial matters. A 2012 report found that 40 per cent of companies listed on the ASX 200 to some extent reported on sustainability matters. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) provides the best known reporting framework. However, previous research has shown that significant gaps exist between claimed levels of reporting and information found in reports.

Catalyst Australia developed a corporate social responsibility (CSR) dashboard to gauge the quality of sustainability reporting by Australian companies. It analysed 32 companies across six topics and found great variation in reporting on social and environmental activities.

Some of these differences can be attributed to the tendency to concentrate on areas that affect company performance, while meeting stakeholder demands for transparency and disclosure. At the same time, discretionary reporting can lead to highlighting achievements that reflect well on companies, while overlooking other important areas.

Clear expectations Catalyst also found that clearly defined reporting expectations lifted reporting and performance. Gender equality carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and worker health and safety were well-covered topics. The majority of companies addressed these topics, even when disclosures revealed negative performance outcomes.

It is significant that these areas have strong external reporting guidance. Disclosures around gender diversity have benefited from increased guidance by the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) Corporate Governance Principles. Doubtless, the diversity reporting results reflect the clear guidance provided, along with a more adversarial approach by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Environmental reporting also reflects today’s focus on workplace safety is also critical, as seen in the crisis surrounding asbestos in the National Roadside Network (NRSN) roll out.

Overlooked areas Catalyst found that supply chains and labour standards were the most under-reported topics, with the majority of companies providing no or very limited information about their policy management and approach. This lack of focus confirms other research findings about Australian firms’ comparatively poor standard of reporting about human rights issues.

There is evidence that companies will embrace common standards when mandatory guidelines exist or when expectations are well defined and understood. In short, clear guidance contributes to greater transparency, and it encourages improved monitoring and performance.

Regulatory agencies, investors, and industry bodies should consider minimum content guidelines for sustainability reporting. The ASX can play a pivotal role by ensuring that regulatory guidelines exist or when expectations are well defined and understood.

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Disclosure Statement: Martijn Boersma works for Catalyst Australia.

Martijn Boersma is a Researcher in Corporate Governance at UTS Centre for Corporate Governance.

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A Principal Lawyer at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Theodora Ahilas has spent the past 22 years representing asbestos victims – assisting to create better futures for their often terminally ill clients. Helping families to achieve compensation is no small task, but Ahilas says it is an honour even though some days she feels like she’s ‘going into the trenches’.

‘Part of the excitement of this job is that nearly every day is different. Things are unpredictable and ever changing.’

The best part of her role, she says, is meeting her clients, sharing their journey and helping their families. The most challenging aspect is finishing cases in the lifetime of her clients, due to the unpredictable nature of the disease and the lack of a cure. However, Ahilas sees firsthand on almost a daily basis how resilient the human spirit is.

“If you’ve watched a man or woman take their last breath giving a bedside testimony to receive an outcome for their family and to know that their family will forever humbled.”

Ahilas graduated with a Law degree from UTS in 1991. It has been a stellar year on the awards front, with UTS Alumni Award for Excellence 2013 in Faculty of Law. “If you’ve watched a man or woman take their last breath giving a bedside testimony to receive an outcome for their family and to know that their family will forever humbled.”

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giving form to a beautiful aesthetic. "As much as he loves his role, it’s not without challenges. ‘With billions of dollars riding on a vehicle’s success or failure, the biggest challenge is being able to see the future, and being confident that what future holds,’ he says. ‘There’s also the ongoing challenge of competing against the world’s numerous car companies.’

Hyundai completed his Masters in Automotive Design at Coventry University in the UK after graduating from UTS in 1996 with a Bachelor of Industrial Design. However, he regards his UTS qualifications as the most valuable recognition in terms of academic achievement. ‘There’s a certain feel about UTS and I have a great appreciation and a great satisfaction of belonging,’ he says. A story in a US university publication about a couple who donated an amount of money to a university to establish a small scholarship inspired Hyun to set up the Casey Hyun Industrial Design Award at UTS. He hopes this award will inspire others to express appreciation towards the University in a similar way.

‘We see philanthropy as the province of the very rich, but that’s not really the case,’ Hyun says. "It’s fantastic to hear people comment about a car’s design. However when cars become part of their lifestyle, remarks such as, ‘My family grew up with that car, I have such great memories, you give additional satisfaction and help maintain your passion.’"

"There was such a great positive energy" recalls Hyun, who is Creative Design Manager at the Seoul-based Hyundai Design Centre. "I was working five or six days a week designing, sketching, making models. I wouldn’t go home for weeks at a time. However, I wasn’t too tough because I wanted to see the success; and I say I was part of that success."

Hyundai’s team is now the world’s fifth largest car manufacturer with international sales of almost seven million cars annually. In addition to being a designer, Hyun is also a strong advocate of building the brand’s design strategy and vision. “We go through a design process to ensure our cars are competitive in future, but will be even more competitive in the very rich, but that’s not really the case. It’s fantastic to hear people comment about a car’s design. However when cars become part of their lifestyle, remarks such as, ‘My family grew up with that car, I have such great memories, you give additional satisfaction and help maintain your passion.’"

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**The greatest view**

Drawing buildings in New York is a source of unbridled pleasure for James Gulliver Hancock. And not just any building in the city – every building.

**WORDS CAMERON COOPER**

An acclaimed illustrator and UTS alumnus, James Hancock started his ambitious project, *All the Buildings in New York*, in 2009 to get a better feel for his new home and make personal through artistic expression the many, many buildings of the iconic American city. His tally to date exceeds 500 illustrations and includes landmarks such as the Empire State Building through to historic Brooklyn brownstones.

“I’ve always been interested in obsession kind of things like collecting stuff and doing projects that are based on the idea of concentrating on one thing and collecting them together,” says Sydney-born Hancock, whose illustrations also include *All the Bicycles in Beijing* and *All the Cars in Los Angeles*.

While his other *All the...* projects were transparent completions as Hancock passed through cities or countries, the stunning buildings project is now an obsession from which he cannot escape given that he spends a lot of time in the Big Apple with his wife, singer-songwriter Lenka, and their 18-month-old son, Quinn. The boy’s arrival saw the family return to Australia to live, but they continue to spend chunks of time in New York for work.

“Ben has always been a sense of romanticism around New York for Hancock, stemming from his childhood watching Alfred Hitchcock movie settings. “This romanticism builds and builds – it’s hard when you get here to get over that, so a project like this was good for me to become more efficient because it is a local.”

Working out of the Pencil Factory in Brooklyn while he is in the US, Hancock’s buildings project has brought him to the point where people can now commission him to draw specific sites in the city.

“It’s fuelled by other people’s interests and obsessions, which is nice. It’s not just my own project now – it’s a public project.”

Hancock, 35, has harboured what he describes as “a need to make things” since childhood. “It’s always felt natural to me to have a pencil in hand; whether you’re at a restaurant drawing on a napkin or a beautiful piece of watercolour paper.”

A UTS Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication graduate, Hancock has fond memories of the ‘great time’ he had at university in the early 1990s.

“The first year was amazing because we did all this cross-media stuff and we were thrown in with other disciplines like fashion and industrial design,” he says. “So that was really exciting for me to see all these people with different minds creatively working together.”

This perfectly fitted his desire to pick up as many skills as possible.

“When I did step out of the studio I could do a bit of animation to pick up some work, or I could do a bit of web design or something. I wasn’t just studying illustration and only able to make pictures. That was what was great about that course.”

Hancock remains in contact with university friends: some have helped him find jobs; others he has assisted to get gigs. After attending UTS he initially worked in web design and was employed at an interactive company, but over time he has narrowed down his areas of work to the point where he is a full-time illustrator.

“I’ve built up a big enough portfolio and enough of a style that people just ask me to do what I do for them, which is really great.”

Aside from *All the Buildings in New York*, which Hancock views as a playful side project, he works as a commercial illustrator for a variety of clients such as Coca-Cola, Businessweek magazine, *The New York Times* and Herman Miller. “The combination keeps him ‘obsessively working, which I like’.”

Hancock’s prolific output has seen him create an enormous portfolio. “This has helped attract other client projects, and he also ensures he stays in touch with people to foster his networks and keep his name out there. “That ability to chase people up and wear a lot of hats is essential when you’re your own business,” he says. “And you’ve got to put on the accountant hat and chase up the invoices and all that sort of stuff. I quite enjoy that – it’s just part of my personality that likes doing all those different things.”

“What really keeps him enthused, however, is a passion for drawing. With the *New York*’s buildings project, Hancock cannot select the buildings he enjoys sketching most – he is always gobsmacked by the juxtaposition of old and new buildings in the city, the beautiful and the rundown.

“You get that in a lot of cities, but here it seems to be so extreme because it is so dense and everything is so packed together – it’s like Tetris,” he says. “Amazing things need to really boring things and those boring things become amazing.”

The beauty of the path he has chosen, according to Hancock, is that the nature of drawing changes the way you look at things.

“When I stop and draw stuff, I really see it much better so I don’t think that’s ever going to stop.”

**JAMES GULLIVER HANCOCK**

Visit [www.jamesgulliverhancock.com](http://www.jamesgulliverhancock.com) and [www.allthebuildingsinnewyork.com](http://www.allthebuildingsinnewyork.com)
Think back to 1998 when Animal Logic launched a modest visual effects operation in Sydney using a credit card for funding. No commercial internet. No email. No 3D computer graphics.

“The most advanced form of communication was a fax machine,” recalls co-founder and Chief Executive Zareh Nalbandian. “When you consider building an international client base and business with a fax machine and put it into the context of what we do today, that demonstrates the rate of change that has occurred in the sector.”

Now regarded as one of the world’s leading design, visual effects and animation studios servicing the film, television and advertising industries, Animal Logic is renowned for its technical standards and the development of revolutionary software products. For Nalbandian and co-founder Chris Godfrey, it is a far cry from the early days when a silicon graphics computer worked stations cost anything from $100,000 and $1 million and his team had a company party to celebrate an 8MB upgrade for one of its computers.

On the back of The Matrix with an Academy Award for its groundbreaking visual effects, another Academy Award in 2007 for its animation work on Happy Feet and its input into a string of other box-office hits, Animal Logic has put Australia on the global scale, while maintaining a strong connection with UTS.

Nobody is passionate about what they do.”

In tandem with great work is a requirement for great people and to that end, Animal Logic has benefited from a flow of UTS graduates who have joined Animal Logic. “It’s a very steep learning curve for anyone walking into Animal Logic,” he says. “You can’t help but have some favourite children. The Matrix trilogy holds a special place given the world-wide upsurge and take notice of the company, while Mortal Kombat, The Great Gatsby (a home-grown Aussie film) and Happy Feet (Definitely a game-changer) get a mention. He also nominates Chinese movies Hero and House of Flying Daggers as important developments for the business – for their creative credentials and the scene it put in place in the fast-growing China market working with director Zhang Yimou.

Nalbandian, whose role spans producing films to negotiating the big business deals with clients to secure major film projects, is pivotal of the role. Animal Logic has played in developing proprietary software tools and techniques that have helped revolutionise the animation and visual effects industry.

“We’ve helped create popular culture with those,” he says. While he puts some of the company’s success down to being in the right place at the right time, he credits Godfrey with many of the breakthroughs.

“Good talent pool

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In tandem with great work is a requirement for great people and to that end, Animal Logic has benefited from a flow of outstanding UTS graduates. The list includes Austen Marshall (software development), Steve Agland (technical director) and Aidan Sandfield (computer graphics supervisor). Sandfield has a Bachelor in Industrial Design from UTS and is on the Executive Council Advisory Board of the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building.

Renowned for his work as character supervisor on Happy Feet, Sandfield enjoys his complex role in animated features that can involve 80 lighters, 40 animators and 3D visual effects artists working on a project at one time. “You have to be able to work with those people and not be limited by your ability to build a model or your ability to sketch it.”

Strong UTS links

Nalbandian also has UTS connections through his role on the Vice-Chancellor’s UTS Business Advisory Board. He welcomes the position because “over the years we’ve had a great intake of graduates from UTS.”

“Not only is there great training within the University, but there is a great training for industry that we really appreciate,” Nalbandian says. Animal Logic seeks to support the careers of undergraduates with workshops on animation, while it is also eager to engage in research projects with postgraduate students. He believes there should be more partnerships between industry and universities.

“UTS just seems to be a little more open than most in terms of being able to embrace that collaboration,” Nalbandian says. Sandfield also acknowledges the strength of UTS graduates who have joined Animal Logic. “It’s a very steep learning curve for anyone walking into Animal Logic,” he says. “The UTS grounding and the education you get is an incredibly good starting point. Probably the most important thing in any of our teams is the ability to collaborate –

IMAGE
“I think we feel a lot more secure about our ability to hold our own against anyone in the world. That helps our confidence.”

ZAREH NALBANDIAN

and that is one of the things that we see most from graduates at UTSS.”

His own stint at UTSS is the early to mid 1990s helping found the studio, who recalls a “melting pot of people and ideas” as students from a range of faculties combined to explore and improve their design and creative skills. “That was really beneficial and enjoyable at the time.”

Sandfield says an advantage of UTSS’s strength of UTSS courses is that they educate students about how to make creative decisions and solve problems within a minimum timescale and with a budgetary restrictions — a skill that is highly relevant today in the animation and visual effects industry.

In his role on the Executive Council Advisory Board, Sandfield says he appreciates the chance to give something back to the University and contribute to decisions that will shape the learning experiences of students into the future.

Focus on the future

As Animal Logic puts the finishing touches to The Lego Movie, which is expected to be another big hit for the company, Nalbandian is conscious of staying ahead of market trends and creating great intellectual property. The company has set up a division, Animal Logic Entertainment, allowing it to expand from producing work for others to developing its own projects.

Nalbandian admits that picking market and technology trends is an industry that is hard to pin down, and that we need to be up-to-date with the latest work being done by other big players in the field.

He welcomes UTSS’s pledge to the animation industry. “One of the main things that appealed to me about coming here was that I was impressed they were running the Master of Animation program,” he says.

Gascogne and his colleague Deborah Szapiro, a fellow Lecturer in the School of Design, are excited at the opportunity to develop UTSS’s undergraduate course in Animation. “I see a new role for the Master of Animation program. It’s not often you get the chance in education to start something entirely from scratch. You can’t help but be impressed by the resources and how up-to-date the program is in terms of industry and academia.”

Gascogne sees his role as one of preparing students for the rigours of one day working for a company such as Animal Logic. “It is important for students to expect to work at a level of intensity which mirrors what the industry will expect.”

He believes there has never been a more exciting time to be engaged in animation. “It’s an absolute golden age for animation at the moment and it’s brilliant to be part of it.”

Zareh Nalbandian in his office at Animal Logic.

Animation festival takes centre stage

The University’s commitment to the animation sector is perhaps best demonstrated through hosting of the UTS Sydney International Animation Festival. The 9th annual event was held in October and showcased the latest highlights of local animation, the festival program included sessions featuring John Andrews, former Vice-President of Animation at MTV and the producer of the cult animation series Beavis and Butthead.

“Beavis and Butthead is an absolute golden age of animation,” says Associate Professor Doram Gascogne, a festival committee member and Course Director of the Master of Animation in Design at Animation at UTS. Previously a senior lecturer in animation at Kingston University in London, Gascogne’s career as an animation director and illustrator spans more than two decades and his work has exhibited internationally and in galleries and animation festivals around the world.

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BY FRASER TORPY

SICK BUILDING SYNDROME: how indoor plants can help clear the air

Air pollution levels indoors are almost always higher than outside, even in busy city centres. However, indoor plants have the ability to mitigate high levels of airborne contaminants.

Natural air cleaners

The ability of plants to improve indoor air quality was recognised in the 1980s, when NASA researched growing plants on space stations. Results indicated the surprising removal of previously high volatile organic compound concentrations in their model spacecraft. Then, around the year 2000, Australian researchers determined that virtually all of the volatile organic compound-removing ability of potted plants resides in the pot. It was the normal bacteria of the potting mix that took up the volatile organic compounds.

But the plants are not superfluous: experiments where the plants were removed leaving only the potting mix showed a gradual loss of performance over a few weeks. The plants supply the soil bacteria with key nutrients that sustain their viability and health. More recent experimentation has monitored the background concentrations of volatile-organic compounds in offices with and without plants over some weeks. These findings indicate that even three potted plants in an average size office will reduce airborne volatile organic compounds to an extremely low level.

Plant-mediated CO2 removal has received less research attention, primarily because this pollutant is well controlled by modern air conditioning systems. But field trials have shown that between three and six medium-sized plants in a non-air-conditioned building can reduce CO2 concentrations by a quarter.

The question now is whether we should be using air conditioning for ventilation purposes at all when indoor plants can do some of the work for us at a greatly reduced cost. But a lot more work is needed before we get the complete picture of the potential of plants to deal with indoor CO2.

The growing push for more sustainable buildings should give this field impetus.

Environmental psychologists have long proposed that indoor plants can improve workplace performance and satisfaction.

Having a plant in the office has positive outcomes, including an improved emotional state, reduced negative mood states, reduced distraction increased creativity and improved task performance.

Many studies have related these effects to the idea of biophilia, which suggests being near a plant returns us, in some small way, to our evolutionary beginnings in the prehistoric forest.

Far from being just another form of interior decoration, plants are important for maintaining the habitability of the indoor environment, where most of us spend the great majority of our lives. We know plants have always maintained air quality and kept us happy and productive. Dramatically rising energy costs and a growing emphasis on sustainability should make us consider the role plants will play in the indoors of the future.

Acknowledgement: Peter Ina and Professor Margaret Buchanan, the original authors of this article. Disclosure Statement: Much of the research this article is based on has been funded by various Australian and Dutch agencies and organisations.

Fraser Torpy is a Lecturer in the School of the Environment at UTS.
The image of the writer sitting in a garret, waiting for inspiration, is a potent one. Ever since UTS started offering creative writing programs 30 years ago, the subsequent degree, doctorate and diploma courses have produced many published and award-winning writers.

WORDS MARK ABERNETHY

UTS’s creative writing courses have demonstrated that with a dedicated faculty and ambitious students, writing skills and techniques can be taught within an academic context. From its beginnings as a creative writing course offered as part of a Bachelor of Arts, the Creative Practice Group now runs four layers of writing education, from short courses on writing practice and an undergraduate sub-major for a BA in Communications (creative writing) to a Masters of Writing (creative writing) to a post-graduate course and a research based Doctor of Creative Arts (DCCA) program.

Professor John Dale, head of the UTS Creative Practices academic group and Director of the Centre for New Writing, says the University’s writing programs have become the best and most sought after in Australia because the specialty has been built over many years. “UTS was one of the first Australian universities to have a writing program, in the early 1980s,” says Dale, himself a successful author of novels such as The Dogs are Barking. “A strong track record means we have high demand for the programs and we put a lot of effort into retaining quality teachers and upgrading our curricula.”

Dale says the creative writing programs at UTS now take in poetry, novel, novella, short stories, screenwriting and creative non-fiction, as well as academic and theory work. “The undergraduate element of the programs – the most popular and over-subscribed – has evolved so that in 2014 the BA in Communications will change, from our Comms (writing and cultural studies) to BA Comms (writing and cultural studies) to BA Comms (creative writing). The dropping of the more theoretical cultural studies for a pure creative writing sub-major to a majors and one driven by student demand. “Our undergraduate students are looking for a licensing and creative experience,” says Dale. “A major like this is not for everyone, but it’s what UTS has become known for and the students come here for these courses.” He points to the practitioner base within the Faculty that includes himself, Debra Adelaide, Robert Adamson the Copyright Agency Limited Chair of Poetry, Gabrielle Carey, Delia Falconer, Sue Joseph, Anthony Macris and Leah Purcell, as one of the reasons the courses have been so popular. He says the Faculty spent many years fine-tuning its creative writing programs, weighing technique and craft against analysis, critique and theory. The Faculty also perfected a grading system so that coursework would be properly assessed rather than relying on pass/fail marks.

“The creative writing programs at this University have enjoyed so much success because they emphasise both the practical elements of writing and academic rigour. Creative people come here to work on their writing, but they still want a quality BA.”

Creative thought processes

An example of how the UTS creative writing programs affect a person’s life can be found in novelist and UTS graduate, Bernard Cohen. Originally studying arts-law and science at university, Cohen was drawn to an alternative life doing a BA in Communications (writing and film production) at UTS.

“I was living in an inner city share flat with struggling artists and musicians and that awakened my long held desire to be a writer,” says Cohen, who won the Vogel Award in 1996 with his novel, The Blindman’s Hat. In the UTS writing programs Cohen found a core of fellow creative writers who were passionate. “UTS takes young people who are creative and driven,” says Cohen. “And then they turn you up, you have to read, you have to discuss and analyse and you have to produce. Your brain is constantly turned up. You learn that creativity is something you can improve by doing the work.”

Cohen specialised in short stories during his undergraduate studies and would later have some of them published in a collection called, Snowdown. He went on to teach at UTS and then completed an MA (writing) at the University which produced the book Tourism, published by Picador. In 2012 he completed his Doctor of Creative Arts, and the project for that doctorate – The Autobiography of Robert F. Menzies – was published in October.

He credits UTS with giving him a writing career – Tourism was picked by one of his MA markers, Don Anderson, and shown to a publisher at Picador. However, he says the biggest lesson he took from UTS’s writing programs is that creativity can be taught. It only helps young people that creativity is a mental habit and putting ideas on a page is not really risky.

“It’s a lesson he imparts to the kids who come through his Writing Workshop (www.writingworkshop.com.au). Creativity is a value taught at the dinner table,” says Cohen. “It only develops if you think it’s important. We tell the kids who come through here that creativity is something you can improve by doing the work.”

Gervay, who now has 15 books to her name and a play based on one of her titles, “Trying to become published was agony for me and I made it very hard on my kids. When I realised that unsolicited manuscripts go straight to the slush pile, I started sending several manuscripts at once, so they could sit in all the publishers’ slush piles. That was actually my strategy – be in all the slush piles.”

Gervay’s career, which now includes the Jack series on school bullying – which has been turned into a play and also a film in 2015 starring Deborah Lee Furness – and the internationally published Butterfly, has developed to the point she has an agent in New York, as well as one in Sydney. But she remembers the pain of getting started.

“I once received a three page rejection letter from a publisher,” says Gervay. “I still find it incredible. It was three pages of hatred – I mean, why would you bother!”

She entered the UTS Master of Writing program after she had published two titles in

Novelist Susanne Gervay

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order to polish her skills. “Doing my Masters in writing at UTS was wonderful, not just for all the insights into my craft and the input from some very smart people, but because I got to meet all these other writers who were on the same journey. Some of the most important parts of being a writer are the things you don’t know about until you are one,” she says. “I wish I’d done that course first, because I would have learned a better way to go about things.”

Creativity abounds
Another award-winning writer, Associate Professor Debra Adelaide, is now the undergraduate coordinator of the UTS creative writing programs. She says in 2014 the undergraduate writing programs will change from sharing a major with cultural studies, to becoming a non-subject major simply called creative writing. The subjects are: Fictional Forms; Imagining the Real; Narrative Theory; Writing Through Genre; Writing Laboratory and Creative Writing Project, which will produce a portfolio of the students' creative work.

The change shifts creative writing into its own academic discipline and no longer ties it to cultural studies. Adelaide says a university cannot teach a person to write but a well-taught course can show developing writers how to construct plots, develop characters and move the narrative along.

“You can’t nurture creativity. There are shortcuts that can be taught, that show a new writer how to do better,” says Adelaide, whose latest book is a collection of short stories, Letters to George Clooney.

Adelaide says the interesting aspect of the undergraduate writing program is the academic quality of the applicants to the undergraduate writing program and how realistic and mature the students are. “In awe of these young students. They don’t come in asking for a publishing contract – they ask how many drafts they should write, how can they make their drafts better. They show a lot of patience and hard work.”

Adelaide says that some of the brightest graduates in UTS creative writing go on to pursue successful careers in publishing, not necessarily writing. “Two at a publisher’s meeting for my latest book recently and two people representing the publisher were graduates of our undergraduate program.”

She says the writing programs have always sought a balance between theory and practice, and analysing and re-writing. “Writing is about thinking,” says Adelaide, “but it’s also about doing. The UTS writing programs have succeeded because we’ve found a balance.”

UTS alumni published authors

A snapshot of UTS alumni authors and their work:

Deborah Abela
Bachelor of Arts in Communication
http://deborahabela.com
Ghost Club (three-book series); Maxx Perry Superhero (book series); Super Samurai (Gloucester (three-book series); The Remarkable Secret of Aurele Bonifant; Grinnion
Dr Manisha Amin
Doctor of Philosophy
http://manishajolieamin.com
Dancing to the Flute

Jesus Blackadder
Masters in Creative Writing
www.jesusbblackadder.com
Chasing the Light; The Beating Heart; After the Party; Stay; The Last Dog in Antarctica; Parakula; The Desert Brunydi; Rings; The Last Flying Fox

Christopher Cheng
Diploma in Teaching
www.christophercheng.com
Sounds: Spooky; One Child; Python; Water; New Gold Mountains; The Melting Pot; Zoo You Later; Soami of Gold; Williams Backyard

Dr Bernard Cohen
Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing
The Blindnail Hat; The Anthropology of Robert F. Mearses; Hardy, Beach Writer; Thronton, Snowdonia

Julie Chevalier
Masters in Arts in Writing (Research)
http://juliechevaillerfiction.com
Permissa to Lie

Katerina Coagrove
Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing; Doctor of Creative Arts
www.katerinacoagrove.com
Juno; Ash Sky; The Glass Heart; Southern Sun; Augment; Self Poetry of Second Generation Greek Austalians, Intimate Distance

John Dale
Masters in Arts in Writing; Doctor of Creative Arts
www.voiddale.net
Leaving Suite Pyre; Hackcloth; A Dangerous Life; WILDLIFE; The Dogs Are Barking. Dark Angel

Arti Do
Bachelor of Business
www.artido.com
The Happiest Refugee

Dr Suzanne Falkiner
Doctor of Creative Arts
www.suzannefalkiner.com/author
Museum; The Macleays, Their Champions; The Secret; The Strange Marriage; Adelaide’s Wicked & Lord Byron

Nikki Gemmell
Master of Arts in Writing (Thesis)
www.nikkigemmell.com
All That I Am; Stasiland.

Dr Pamela Freeman
Doctor of Creative Arts; Master of Arts in Writing; Bachelor of Arts in Communication; www.pamelafreemanbooks.com
Ember and Ash; The Murderers’ Apprentice; The Black Deer; The Willow Tree Daughter; Windrush; The Nine O’Clock Star of the Skeleton; Storm of the Early, Track of the Light; Shipboy; Victor’s Quest; The Wonder Dog; Make Me the Player; Marooned: Maelstrom; and the Golden Bear; Priestley Writing and the Unseen; Ladybug: The Castings; Trilogy (Blood Ties, Deep Water, Full Circle)

Susanna Fregmark
Master of Creative Writing
www.susannafregmark.com
Loosing February

Dr Anna Funder
Doctor of Creative Arts
http://anna-funder.com/author
All That Amy Shafted

Dr Peter Minster
Master of Arts in Writing (Research)
http://peterminster.com
Overland

Pip Newton
Doctor of Professional Writing
http://pipnewting.com/about/ Knockabout Girl

Dr Andy Kissane
Doctor of Creative Arts
http://andykissane.com
Dark Bright Doors; Broken/Open; Struggle & Radiation; The Mask and the Jagged Star

Almeen Said
Bachelor of Arts in Communication
www.almeen.sa.edu.au/education/literature/onlinejournalism.html Little Sitter; Finding Fidaa Lockhart

Susanne Gervay
Master of Arts in Writing (Thesis)
www.susannegervay.com
I am Jack; Super Jack; Always Jack; Butterflies; Daisy; Wilderness; The Writer’s Landscape: Wilderness; The Writer’s Landscape: Settlement; After; A Love Story; Eugenia; A Man; After the Great Northern Train in the Distance; Room to Move

John Dale

Dr Kate Grenville
Doctor of Creative Arts
http://kategrenville.com/home
Return: Judith’s Lie; Goldwoman; Dreamhouse; Joan Makes History; Dark Places; The Idea of Perfection; The Secret River; The Lieutenant; Sarah Thornhill

Barton Walters
Master of Arts in Creative Writing
http://journeyontheinkroad.com/ Journeys on the Silk Road (with Joyce Morgan)

Eleanor Lampeprecht
Master of Arts in Creative Writing
www.lampeprecht.com
What Was Left
Two years ago, Clary Castrission and his wife Lucinda set up the 40K Foundation in a rented space near the University of Sydney. They launched the foundation in 2005, in order to help educate some of the 180 million children in India who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. It consumed my life, but I wasn't able to make enough difference for what was next after building the school,” says Castrission, who set up the Sydney-based foundation in 2005, to help educate some of the 180 million children in India who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. It consumed my life, but I wasn't able to make enough difference for what was next after building the school.

Castrission calculated that, at most, he would be able to build another 30 schools, for about 6000 students, and he wanted to make a much bigger difference than that. In hindsight, the crusis was a blessing. It forced two major changes to 40K, which have been implemented over the past 18 months. Rather than building new schools, the foundation now provides after-school lessons in existing village buildings, through its 40K Plus program. And it has set up two for-profit businesses to support the work of the foundation and eventually make it financially self-sustainable.

Castrission, who travels to India four or five times a year, describes himself as an accidental social entrepreneur. He came from a private school background, is Greek, not Indian, but he says the understanding was that students would become professionals and “make a truckload of money then and at some point give something back.”

His attitude changed under the guidance of Professor Sam Blay in his UTS law course, who urged students not to wait to make a difference, but to go to the developing world and get their hands dirty.

Dreams become a reality

During the 2008 Commonwealth holidays, Castrission and his then girlfriend threw their backpacks and headed to India. His family had been in India for generations, but he says India “seemed like a cool place to go.” After seeing the devastating impact of extreme poverty first-hand, Castrission realised that the best way to change lives, he established the 40K Foundation to raise $40,000 to build a school for the children of impoverished stone quarry workers near Bangalore.

“I was very na ïve and thought we only needed $40,000,” says Castrission of the project that eventually cost $440,000. “I had no business plan and no idea how to raise funds or register an overseas company.”

While 40K focused on building the infrastructure, it teamed up with a local partner for day-to-day operations. But the partnership was difficult to manage. Creating tensions that eventually saw 40K leave the project after the school opened in October 2010.

“I tended on a bad note, we got divorced and they got the kid,” he explains, adding that the relationship is now good and the school has 300 children aged between six and 12. “We learnt a lot about the complex relationship of donor and recipient, and that any kind of welfare arrangement creates that dependency.”

After much soul searching through 2011, 40K came up with a new strategy. Rather than build more schools to compete with the government schools, its 40K Plus program uses Android-based computer tablets to give children two hours extra training after school. The tablets include literacy and numeracy and life skills.

Castrission describes it as a “gamified learning program,” where children work in groups of three to progress through various levels and earn badges to pin to their shirts.

Now, 11 villages have “pods” of about 30 children each. Castrission’s vision is to have 40,000 children learning in 1250 pods within five years, and to eventually have thousands of pods in many countries.

“Riding the highs and the lows

Understanding the 40K Plus program are two for-profit businesses that build on 40K’s expertise in addressing social problems in developing countries. 40K Globe is a social entrepreneurship program for university students, who pay $1800 for four weeks in India developing business plans to help villagers. In 2013, 100 students completed the summer program, about half of them from UTS. For 2014 190 were enrolled.

40K Consulting is a for-service advisory business that helps building social entrepreneurs in big companies develop projects within their company to help a social problem. The goal is to offer a young, emerging leaders a meaningful project that goes beyond charitable fundraising. For example, its first client, an Australian construction company, is developing a $5 million project to provide ultra-low cost, high quality dormitory accommodation for Singapore’s many foreign workers.

Eventually, Castrission hopes the consulting and Globe divisions will substantially fund the 40K Plus program. At present, parent pays $15 a month, but the cost per child is $5.

The shortfall is met by donations and fundraising events such as 40K’s Big Night Out in Sydney. But Castrission says the personal cost of trying to raise philanthropic dollars is high. “You still essentially burn out every contact I got to the point where I just couldn’t pick up the phone and ask for more donations - I was burnt out.”

Castrission has somehow found time to run marathons and two ultra marathons, including a 10Km run through the Blue Mountains. Piano playing is another way he relaxes, teaching himself Beatles tunes from YouTube. And he keeps a toe in the legal world by delivering a lecture on Friday nights at the University of Sydney.

If 2013 was the hardest year, Castrission says the past two years have highlighted how business can be the most powerful tool to change the world. “I still like the idea of being a bit naive and having a crack, but I’ve learnt that you don’t commit to a massive five-year project when you’re just being born.”

40K Globe – a student’s experience

UTS student Janek Gonsalkorale, who is studying a combined Bachelor in Communication (Media Production) and International Studies, shares his insights on participating in the 40K Globe program in 2013.

“I was signed up to the BUiLD program of UTS (Beyond UTS International Leadership Development Program) which offered many diverse overseas opportunities in microfinance, social entrepreneurship, and other projects involving our educational backgrounds. 40K stood out as it was involved with education on a massive scale, it was ambitious, new, and seemed ready to tackle problems with an energetic, ambitious and nononsense attitude.

The first time I went I was learning how to get your hands dirty,” Clary likes to say in the problems of the villages in Bangalore. We worked on social impact projects during the day and businesses and projects that would be self-sustaining and subsidise the education of the kids such as renting android tablets, making necklaces, or building a tour guide for a school in basic literacy, numeracy and life skills. Castrission describes it as a “gameified learning program,” where children work in groups of three to progress through various levels and earn badges to pin to their shirts.

Now, 11 villages have “pods” of about 30 children each. Castrission’s vision is to have 40,000 children learning in 1250 pods within five years, and to eventually have thousands of pods in many countries.

“I’ve learnt that you don’t commit to a massive five-year project when you’re just being born.”

CLARY CASTRISSION

Self-described ‘accidental social entrepreneur’ Clary Castrission has played a vital role in improving the lives of impoverished students in India – a journey of many highs and lows.

WORDS LUCINDA SCHMIDT PHOTOGRAPHY STEVE BROWN
Brickwork has begun on the Dr Chau Chak Wing Building, the Frank Gehry designed landmark that will be the new home of UTS Business School. It’s a key milestone, and naturally there will be much focus on the exterior as the distinctive, undulating brick façade emerges on the east side of the building.

The next most visible step will be the shaping of the western façade, with its angular glass shards.

The brick façade will be an earthy reminder of the sandstone that once formed the warehouses, factories and market buildings of the local economy in Ultimo, on the edge of Sydney’s Darling Harbour; the large, angled sheets of glass will reflect fragmented images of today’s city buildings.

But, as distinctive as it is, Gehry’s design is more about what will happen on the inside of this building than what we see on the outside.

“Brickwork has begun on the Dr Chau Chak Wing Building; will it be not only a great thing for UTS as part of the $1 billion City Campus Master Plan, but a great building for the City of Sydney and a great building for Australia,” says UTS Vice-Chancellor Ross Milbourne.

That’s what we hope for.”

UTS Business School prepares students for a world that demands more than specialist expertise in a particular field. The next most visible step will be the shaping of the western façade, with its angular glass shards.

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The green mile

WORDS STEVE MEACHAM

The gigantic hole in the heart of UTS, so huge that it took six months to dig and can contain the equivalent of a five-storey building, is more. Four of the six extraordinary robots built in Salt Lake City have arrived on site and are being installed in the vast subterranean cavity designed to house only the second underground Library Retrieval System (LRS) ever built in Australia, capable of storing up to 900,000 books and locating each one within minutes.

Alumni Green and the Library Retrieval System

Above the LRS, the bone structure of the new look, greatly expanded Alumni Green will soon take shape, flanked to the north by the elegant, roof-gardened Thomas Street Building and Alumni Green expansion, complete with world-class research tools.

An entrance off The Goods Line will enable public access to the Dr Chau Chak Wing Building, further enhancing the "porosity" of the building and its connections to the city.

The Dr Chau Chak Wing Buildings is part of the $8 billion redevelopment of the UTS City Campus. It is named for Australian Chinese businessman and philanthropist Dr Chau Chak Wing, who donated $20 million to the project, along with $5 million for Australia-China scholarships. Dr Chau’s son, Eric, studied at UTS.

Alumni Green is being targeted at flexible, flat-floor spaces with mobile furniture. It will also be a destination on Sydney’s business events network, the university while delivering one of the most complex science buildings in Australia.

Originally the LRS, Thomas Street Building and Alumni Green expansion were conceived as three separate projects. Three different architectural groups won the individual design competitions and a different construction company would have been working on each project, side-by-side.

It was only then that the decision was made to combine all three, not only to significantly reduce construction costs and maximise efficiency, but to integrate the individual elements into a dynamic whole. The rethink, with its design working parties, took six months and put even greater pressure on Richard Crookes Construction, the contractor that won the right to build all three, to deliver on time.

The LRS is the largest, fully underground retrieval system of its kind in Australia. The revamped Alumni Green, with its barbecues, table tennis areas and quiet contemplative pods, will be a space to chill out, to meet people, a space we haven’t had before, says Treble, comparing it to similar recreation areas at Harvard or Stanford.

The green mile

Health and science in the Thomas Street Building

As for the Thomas Street Building, designed by Sydney architects Durbach Block Jaggers in association with BVN Architecture, it comes complete with world-class research tools. Among them are forensic science labs, MRI and CT scan imaging suites, a vacuum fume-extraction system, clean units and two physical containment laboratories for dealing with hazardous materials such as human blood and primary cell lines.

The facilities will be ideal for a broad range of medical science research, will enable biomedical engineers to develop new and innovative medical devices and help prepare students for clinical placements.

How will the three-in-one project managing the UTS campus enhance the lives of students and staff? The vastly improved library service and Alumni Green relaxation space bring obvious benefits.

As for the Thomas Street Building, Treble says: "The research facilities will attract world-leading researchers and scholars engaged in a range of medical science research, in particular cardio-vascular and cancer research which in itself will attract high quality students."
A HEROINE A HEALER

Zimbabwean Senator Sekai Holland has repeatedly put her life on the line to improve the lot of underprivileged people.

WORDS PETER SWITZER
PHOTOGRAPHY NICK CUBBIN

In a colourful life, Sekai Holland has been shot at, almost beaten to death and in the subject of constant harassment. Yet, however, has been tempted to give up on a career in law to become a judge in a better life for people, especially her compatriots in strife torn Zimbabwe.

Holland is the former Zimbabwean Co-Minister of State for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration in the government of President Robert Mugabe and former prime minister Morgan Tsvangirai, which was formed as part of a power-sharing deal following elections in 2008.

Holland was awarded the 2012 Sydney Peace Prize, in a ceremony hosted by the Australian Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe. Holland travelled to Australia last November to give the City of Sydney Peace Prize Lecture at the Sydney Town Hall, and to accept the Peace Prize at the awards ceremony. The award puts her in the company of earlier winners such as Noam Chomsky and John Pilger, who was awarded an Honorary Doctorate: (images courtesy of GFP Studios).

Holland believes the ideas and input she receives from the Luminaries program will make a big difference to what she can bring to her role in healing Zimbabwe’s challenged political system.

In a further nod to the profound impact and commitment Holland has on human rights, democracy, leadership and the empowerment of women, in 2003 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate, Doctor of Letters Honoris causa from UTS, further deepening her close and ongoing connection to the University.

Australian story

Before looking to the future, however, let us profile the remarkable woman herself. Holland’s first taste of Australia was via a Commonwealth scholarship she won when Sir Robert Menzies was Prime Minister in the 1960s. Unluckily, when she arrived in the country, it was Australia Day.

“Nothing was open and so I sat outside the Embassy and lucky some students from my country came looking for their mail and so I went home with them,” Holland recalls. She quickly found her feet in Australia and married engineer Jim Holland in 1965 and together they have two children.

Along the way she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Communication at the NSW Institute of Technology, UTS’s predecessor institution, before returning with her family to Zimbabwe in 1980 to part of the post-liberation native building movement.

Ultimately, history tells us that Holland would become a champion for the rights of others. She cut her teeth at these endeavours in Australia as a member of the National Council of Women, a key force behind the creation of Redfern’s Murrawina Child Care Centre, a facility catering for Indigenous children.

Born to fight

Holland had once been the most senior woman in Robert Mugabe’s guerrilla organisation during the 1970s struggle against the Rhodesian government of Ian Smith. However, on the back of her outspoken call for democracy, she was expelled from the organisation, listed as a dissident, shot at and beaten up by soldiers before joining Morgan Tsvangirai in his bid to establish the opposition Movement for Democratic Change to provide an alternative to one-party rule in Zimbabwe.

Listening to her life story, it is clear that it was inevitable Holland would take an active role in the human rights struggle.

“People power

I shudder for Australians to grasp what drives a woman like Holland, but then few of us have put our life on the line for a better future for our fellow countrymen and women.

Life is all about the big picture for her and the challenges are so huge that the normal human being might have difficulty appreciating their enormity and significance. Holland puts the issue into perspective, saying the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration ministry has a chance to promote genuine peace.

“Which I think will be a program from the people — the policies are based on what the people have told us. I will then say yes, the Zimbabwean people did that and it took it out of the pot into the new Zimbabwe.

“The Organ’s mandate was to produce an infrastructure for peace and to advise the leader on what they should do to administer transitional justice to Zimbabweans for the political damage done before independence and after independence.

And we’ve produced the infrastructure for peace and the methodology we used was to have a group of nations based national inclusive consultative process where we asked the Zimbabweans what it would take for them to have peace in Zimbabwe.”

True leader

After spending time with Holland, a question naturally surfaces — what qualities are required for someone to truly be a leader?

“You have to live the kind of life which ensures that you encourage rather than demoralise people. You ensure that the programs, the policies, all the things you’re coming up with, really improve the lives of the population,” she counsels. “And you have to lead the kind of life that is exemplary so that people know that they are not out there on their own, that you’re in it together.”

Listening to Holland, you cannot help but admire her courage. She’s taken on this important characteristic of leadership in insightful ways. “Courage, I think, is a word which humans don’t understand. Because you only understand courage when you are put to the test. And I think all humans are endowed with that quality but they do not know they have it until they are put to the test.”

Watch Sekai’s video interview on the TOWER app (iPad and Android) and online at www.alumni.uts.edu.au

Sekai Holland receiving her Honorary Doctorate from UTS (Images courtesy of GFP Studios).

“I didn’t decide” she insists. “I was born into a family where that was the trajectory to go from one family of politicians. My father and mother, my grandfather, my grandmother were people who were always in their society ahead of their time.”

As a former minister, Holland faced some horrendous pressures.

“Working with people that you know that if your back is turned they would probably just stab you to death!” she says. “And really knowing that they’d do that, it’s not just talk, but knowing that politically we cannot follow the normal Western way of waiting for elections to then take office.”

Reconciliation and Integration ministry has the chance to promote genuine peace.

“When I think it will be a program from the people — the policies are based on what the people have told us. I will then say yes, the Zimbabwean people did that and it took it out of the pot into the new Zimbabwe.”

“The Organ’s mandate was to produce an infrastructure for peace and to advise the leader on what they should do to administer transitional justice to Zimbabweans for the political damage done before independence and after independence.”
**GLOBAL NETWORKS**

UTS’ Internationalisation Strategy not only supports student mobility, international and cultural engagement, but is helping further deepen the University’s global networks.

WORDS ROGER BALCH

It’s the challenges and opportunities of the Asian Century that inspire UTS’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (International and Development) Professor Paul Purcell to keep pushing forward in his tireless drive to take UTS into the region. “We are hearing a lot more talk about UTS and the amount of students who are going to Asia,” he says. “UTS is an ambitious university and we have a lot of potential to move forward.”

Purcell is convinced that the new initiatives being created in Asia will require not only UTS graduates to be “Asia-skilled”. “UTS will be able to provide the type of graduates that will be needed in the region and this is why it is so important that we engage with Asia,” he says.

He believes that this focus will benefit not just the University but Sydney as a whole. “UTS will have an important role to play in building an Asia-literate and language-capable nation that will be able to effectively take up the opportunities provided by the Asian Century,” he says.

“UTS is a progressive educational institution. That’s why I’m proud to be UTS’s representative in the Asia region,” Prof. Paul Purcell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, International and Development

**INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI REUNION TOURS 2013**

The International Alumni Reunion tours are integral to nurturing those special bonds that develop between UTS and its students. This year’s took place in June and July and were especially memorable as UTS celebrated its 25th anniversary. The gatherings were held in prestigious hotel settings in a range of Asian cities – Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai – and featured distinguished guest speakers, including Australian ambassadors, such as the Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, Philip Green, and outstanding alumni, such as Kai Chen, founder and General Manager of Aucksun Metal Co., Ltd., and a leading businessman in China.

One of the attendees at the Singapore event was Gregory Cornelius (pictured above, top right), the Managing Director of a small digital marketing company, who undertook a Graduate Diploma in Design at UTS in 1999. “I hope to keep in touch with current staff like Bill Purcell, and the Singapore alumni is important because the people are the livelihood of the institution,” he says.

For Dr. Kai Chen (Master of Engineering Management 2004, by research – pictured above, bottom right), the Beijing alumni network is essential because China is a society where relationships mean everything. “To whatever your career is – people need to network. To be connected with UTS opens a window open to see what is happening to China – especially in the fields where UTS has great achievements and plays a leading role in research and industry.”

Meet Kai Chen: Shanghai reunion guest speaker

UTS Alumnus Kai Chen was recently the guest speaker at the UTS/Shanghai alumni reunion event. Chen graduated with two degrees from UTS: a Master of Engineering Management and an MBA. Chen was recently announced as a finalist for two 2013 Australia China Alumni Awards: the Australia China Alumni of the Year Award and the Australia China Alumni Award for Entrepreneurship.

Chen reveals the challenges of writing papers in his early days at UTS, when he adopted a fixed structure that is encouraged throughout the education system in China. “We should state our views first, then analyse and argue and finally come up with a conclusion,” Chen explains. “But each time, I failed to get a high score. At first, I thought I was some kind of Asian millionaire! However, he soon came to realise that his paper was always followed a set pattern. ‘UTS needs you to be creative and having strong points. This creative thinking has had a strong influence on my later work. Now, I always ask my subordinates, ‘What’s your opinion? Any new ideas?’”

After graduating from UTS, Chen joined a subsidiary of VSC Group – a distributor of construction and industrial materials in Hong Kong and China – as a Quality Manager and was put in charge of customs laws. “We were in a really bad situation. Then, I went to Hong Kong to report my work. Hold the Group CEO that the company had serious problems. The CEO replied, ‘That’s why I employed you. A professional manager pays attention to limited things. He might think that running a business is just his specialty. He can’t see and may quit after running the business for 10 years. But an entrepreneur needs to think about all kinds of things, have a long-term goal and treat his business like his child.’ That approach has certainly paid off in Chen’s career. After five years as General Manager at VSC Group, he started up a business – Aucksun Metal Co., Ltd., headquartered in Shanghai, China – where he is General Manager and Director. Aucksun is engaged in three areas – metal logistics, new energy and finance. “A professional manager pays attention to limited things. He might think that running a business is just his specialty. He can’t see and may quit after running the business for 10 years. But an entrepreneur needs to think about all kinds of things, have a long-term goal and treat his business like his child. That approach has certainly paid off in Chen’s career.”

“UTS is a new world university – it’s a forward thinking and progressive educational institution. That’s why I’m proud to be associated with it,” Chen concludes.
A grit-blasting robot that can help strip lead-based paint from the Sydney Harbour Bridge; a robotic hoist used by carers in aged care facilities – discover the new generation of robots being developed by UTS’s Centre for Autonomous Systems.

**WORDS BINA BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY TREVOR KING**

Hard workers, including actor Paul Hogan, may have painted the Sydney Harbour Bridge over many years but UTS-designed robots are being used to strip the iconic of the harmful lead-based signature grey.

The UTS Centre for Autonomous Systems (CAS) has successfully commercialised the first grit blasting robot to strip paint and rust from steel structures, minimising a range of occupational health and safety risks for maintenance staff.

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) of New South Wales has been working with UTS for six years on the development of the grit blasting robot, the first autonomous robotic solution for harsh working environments to be developed by the recently established UTS robotics startup, SABRE Autonomous Solutions.

“Hard workers have to spend inside a hostile environment, says Lloyd explains that even dressed in fully protective clothing to stop the grit cutting through their skin and using essential special breathing apparatus, operating a machine which essentially strips out the surface of rust, pressure sufficient to strip paint is physically risky and extremely tiring.

“If they dropped the hose it would cut through their clothing and at all times they were exposed to hazardous materials,” he adds.

Then there are the awkward positions and confined spaces associated with the complex steel structure of a bridge and vibrations from the traffic. “The focus of our research has been on producing robots to address the critical problem of grit blasting while minimising the setup time and user intervention required,” says Dr Gavin Paul, the Chancellor’s Post Doctoral Research Fellow working on the project. “What makes the robot unique is its ability to autonomously sense and map a steel structure, and then plan a suitable collision-free grit blasting pathway from 20 metres away. This means human workers can operate safely outside the blasting zone.”

“It is difficult and time consuming to get the required scaffolding up onto the bridge and then for humans to get to the difficult spots and operate a high pressure cleaner to strip paint by grit blasting. The situation counts for a large range of occupational health and safety risks for maintenance staff.”

Paul’s significance of this research is not so much the human interaction as the ability of the robot to determine its surroundings and make independent decisions about how to move safely within its complex environment to complete the grit blasting task. After the blasting process is completed, workers vacuum, and clean up the area,” says Paul.

**Artificial intelligence**

With its 50 staff and research students, the CAS is focusing on two key problems in robotics: robots in unknown and complex environments such as bridges and confined spaces and “human robot interaction” which includes its “assistive” robots used in aged care facilities.

Dr Jaime Valls Miro, an Associate Professor at CAS, says intelligent autonomy and the ability of robots to collaborate with humans are key aspects of the robotics research at CAS.

Imagine a wheelchair that follows people or a walker that senses when its user suddenly stands and so can apply the brakes: “Our assistive robots can cooperate and collaborate with human beings. We are working with an organisation on robots that can safe the operator of certain equipment as well as the user,” explains Valls Miro.

For example, an intelligent wheelchair that follows a human can allow a carer to take more than one person out on excursions, a project currently being carried out in collaboration with Greystanes Disability Services. The project has been short-listed for the 2013 NSW Disability Industry Innovation Awards, highlighting the collaboration between industry and research in national disability services.

**Shared control**

What is unique about this type of robotics is “shared control” where the reaction between a human and a robot are modelled so they can work together.

Unlike an industrial robot in a factory setting, which might be programmed to do a repetitive task continuously, these robots are trying to second guess what a human might do.

“We as human beings are naturally unpredictable. We do things very well but sometimes we don’t know how we do them. There is a lot of uncertainty in what we might do next,” says Dr Alen Alempijevic, a Lecturer at CAS.

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“Wait our research is trying to achieve is to model and anticipate some of what we might do and take advantage of that to provide timely assistance. We take cues from the environment, such as what a user is trying to do and then develop something that will help them out. It is very challenging,” says Alempijevic.

With funding from the Wollongong-based IRT Research Foundation, CAS researchers are currently trialling a robotic hoist used by carers in aged care facilities.

Fitted with sensors the hoist is able to do things such as anticipate that the carer might be taking the patient through a doorway and will start to head in that direction. “We are not trying to replace the carer but help make things easier for them,” says Dr Rain Ranimahinga, a Senior Research Fellow at CAS working on the IRT project.

With an elderly person using a walker, a sensor might recognise when a person has stood up out of a chair and is about to use the walker and so apply the brakes until the person is steady. It then might recognise that the person wants to go to a certain room and then help them make that trip easier – such as a person with dementia who readily forgets what they may have been going to do.

“We see robots as collaborators with a human operator gives a lot of flexibility for a range of different tasks,” Valls Miro says. “Embodifying this intelligence in robots in the field could change the way a lot of things are done in manufacturing, in health care, in a whole range of innovative aspects.”

**From top to bottom:** Dr Jaime Valls Miro, Associate Professor; Dr Gavin Paul, Chancellor’s Post Doctoral Research Fellow, the grit blasting robot in action. (Images courtesy of SABRE Autonomous Solutions).

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**DR ALEN ALEMPIJEVIC, LECTURER AT THE CENTRE FOR AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS**
In the sports administration field, Todd Greenberg is a game changer – meet the former chief executive of the Canterbury Bulldogs, who helped turn the ailing club’s fortunes and culture around, and is now at the helm of football for the NRL.

WORDS STEVE MEACHAM PHOTOGRAPHY NICK CUBBIN

At 42, Todd Greenberg is one of Australia’s leading sports administrators. He’s been the award-winning chief executive of arguably our most controversial professional footy club, held a lynchpin executive role at Sydney’s Olympic stadium dealing with everything from The Rolling Stones to the Bledisloe Cup; and he now oversees all aspects of the game in Australia, from development programs for children to State of Origin and internationals. “Good governance is the most underrated commodity in sport,” Greenberg insists. “That is why rugby league is yet to achieve its full potential: the governance models haven’t been good.”

Hard dog pays off
In 2012, Greenberg was approached about becoming Chief Executive of Cricket NSW, where he began his career in 1993 after graduating from the University of New South Wales with a degree in Sports Science. It was during the early years at Cricket NSW that he decided that if he was going to fulfil his leadership ambitions he needed to take his Masters degree at UTAS. For three years, he held every Tuesday at UTAS’s Kuring-gai campus to study from 2pm to 10pm. Newly-married to Liza, who held most of his expenses, and being called one of Sydney’s top 100 most influential people by a glossy magazine.

Yet Greenberg’s meteoric rise has involved massive out-of-the-box thinking. He’s been the award-winning chief executive of the scandal-ridden Bulldogs rugby league club. Back then, the Bulldogs were in a dire state. In 2002, the club – then on top of the NRL table – had been exposed as a salary cap cheats. The club’s board had also declared the club in administration. Why did Greenberg take the job?

“I had some sleepless nights beforehand,” admits the life-long Bulldogs supporter at his new office in the NRL’s headquarters in Moore Park. “The Bulldogs were in a big hole. Untold issues off the field with players, with fan behaviour, with corporate governance.

“But adversity usually provides opportunity. Having worked there for four years (as operations and events manager, from 1998-2001), I knew a lot of the people and understood the culture. I went in with eyes open, knowing there would be difficult moments.”

And so there were. “In that first year, we terminated a lot of players’ contracts; players whose values didn’t align with what I thought the club should stand for in the city. Willy Mason and Reni Maitua. We also kept losing games, so we finished last that season. Our best player, Sonny Bill Williams, walked out on his contract in the middle of the night to play rugby in France.”

Our crowds went down. We lost $1 million in that first year. All our sponsors told us they wouldn’t renew in 2009. Then the GFH hit.”

Riding the highs and the lows
Still, the severity of the crisis didn’t hit Greenberg until he offered a leading charity the chance to put its logo on the Bulldogs jersey for the 2009 season for free – and the charity Camp Quality which helps children with cancer, turned him down.

Greenberg had gone to meet Camp Quality’s Chief Executive, Simon Rountree, thinking it was a million dollar offer that couldn’t be refused. Free TV exposure. A fee on jersey sales worth $100,000 cash. Plus a pledge that the top 25 Bulldogs players would make repeat visits to Camp Quality’s sick children. Greenberg recalls Rountree saying, “I wouldn’t touch you lot with a barge pole. There’s no way we’d do it.”

Eventually he won the chance to pitch to the Camp Quality board, which agreed to a year’s trial, but told him associating with the Bulldogs was “the biggest risk we’ll ever undertake.”

Greenberg immediately gathered all the Bulldogs players. “I told them, these guys are dealing with kids who’ve got cancer and they think we’re the risk. Every decision, every action you make, on or off the field, will impact not only us but also on Camp Quality. We have an obligation to do what’s right.”

That anecdote speaks volumes for Greenberg’s style. By the time he left the club earlier this year (2023), people would have admitted he was the best rugby league club had returned to the field. Membership numbers were up; the club was in the black. It had reached a Grand Final. And newly recruited players discovered they needed to demonstrate not only that they had the skills but they also shared Bulldogs values.

Commercial operations for seven years to grasp what was then the most promising challenge in Australian sport – chief executive of the scandal-ridden Bulldogs rugby league club. Back then, the Bulldogs were in a dire state. In 2002, the club – then on top of the NRL table – had been exposed as salary cap cheats. The club’s board had also declared the club in administration. Why did Greenberg take the job?

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Having carved an impressive corporate career in a range of global companies, for Singapore-based Petrina Coventry, good leadership is all about giving back.

WORDS LUCINDA SCHMIDT
PHOTOGRAPHY EMMA SQUIRES-MCCARTHY

After more than 20 years working in senior executive roles for some of the world’s biggest companies, Petrina Coventry says her first university degree—a Bachelor of Education from UTS—still helps her every day. The psychology component in particular, has been invaluable in helping Coventry manage Asian expansion projects for Coca-Cola, General Electric and Procter & Gamble.

“Understanding psychology and argument—in a positive sense, not a negative sense” says Coventry, adding that good ethics equals good business.


drive harder than perhaps those from an establishment, urban upbringing. “UTS has the feel that’s all about the desire to succeed, to be recognised and to be there on the map despite its humble origins.”

Driven to succeed

Coventry’s first job, while she was studying part-time at university, was at Coles Myer, which offered a broad management trainee program. The retail gig was rolling out SuperKmart—12 in 18 months—and Coventry relished the opportunity to learn about retail, industrial relations, scheduling, balance sheets, cash flow and driving centre dynamics.

“It was fabulous, I was thrown in at the deep end,” says Coventry, who ended up running the Human Resources and Management processes and systems.

Making a social impact

At Santos, Coventry manages teams responsible for people, communities and corporate ethos. She also spearheads the company’s volunteering efforts, which include fund raising, research and sponsoring various arts, education and sports initiatives. The week-long Santos Tour Down Under, for example, is the biggest cycling race in the southern hemisphere, drawing professional cyclists from around the world to Adelaide and regional South Australia each January.

“Education is the ticket out of poverty—if I can help buy that ticket for someone worthy, it’s worth buying.”

Petrina Coventry

In the mid 1990s, Coventry enrolled in one of the first ethics degree programs with a business and philosophical focus, at the University of New South Wales. Coventry emerged with a Masters of Ethics, adding breadth to her undergraduate education and psychology studies.

Now, after completing an MBA, Coventry is continuing her further education, undertaking a PhD with the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Ethics and Leadership. Her focus is on gender equality, and what factors influence female senior executives at large corporations and organisations and to rise to leadership roles.

Although Coventry works long hours in her “day job” at Santos, on her university research and as a board member of the Australian Human Resource Institute—leaving very little time for another passion, yoga—she says she’s very content with her balance.

“Work/life balance is what you make of it. I figure I’ve got the perfect work/life balance, but it may not suit other people.”

As to why she herself has been able to rise to senior leadership positions in the corporate world, Coventry says her main drive and inspiration comes from within—helped by a “great husband.”

“I’m constantly wanting to do better, be better, do more,” she says. “I have a determination to be seen as credible and successful, despite my background. If you come from nowhere, come from nothing, you have to prove yourself.”

Then and now

Coventry’s career has been forged across companies in vastly different industries—retail, financial services, energy, education, and FMCG—she says her “main tilt” has always been human resources. That tilt has fostered a strong interest in business ethics, not corporate governance in a narrow sense, but a broader passion for the philosophically based notion of what is the right thing to do?

Coventry also donates to UTS’ Students Facing Financial Hardship Scholarships Fund. She says she gives, and will continue to give, to education because “I’m only here because others helped me in my case, my parents. Education is the ticket out of poverty—if I can help buy that ticket for someone worthy, it’s worth buying.”

Lead and achieve

In her various roles advising senior executives at large corporations, Coventry believes it is important for her to be able to guide their rational and critical thinking, with a moral perspective. “In those senior executive roles, it is about storytelling and argument—in a positive sense, not a negative sense,” she says, adding that good ethics equals good business.

“Education is the ticket out of poverty—if I can help buy that ticket for someone worthy, it’s worth buying.”

Petrina Coventry
Burmesse refugee Sher Mu La Wee overcame unimaginable adversity to positively transform her life through education, with the invaluable support of a UTS scholarship.

**WORLD ROSEMARY ANN OGILVIE**

During her interment, Sher grabbed every opportunity to learn. She was able to complete her education to year 10, the highest level available in the camp. She learnt English from an Australian teacher, Helen Hall, and also mastered Thai. With her native Burmese and Karen dialect, she was proficient in five languages, and these skills enabled her to become an interpreter in the camp. In 2007, Sher was granted a humanitarian visa.

"I felt so excited, I couldn't believe it had finally happened," she recalls. "I could now study hard and have a successful life." Sher wasted no time setting up the list that would enable her to qualify for university. At the same time, she worked with the Refugee Health Service as a bilingual community educator, and with NSW Health as an interpreter.

"All my teachers and employers supported me with the documentation, and we were given the opportunity to sit the interview with the Director of the Medical and Nursing at UTS," says Sher. "She was offered a place in 2010 – the only Karen to study at UTS to date. While she's excited at the prospect of graduating in May, she stresses it would have been impossible without the Diversity Access Scholarship, one of the many in the UTS scholarship portfolio, which is a focus of this year’s Annual Appeal. Every year UTS gives around $14m of scholarships to students, rewarding achievement and supporting students in need.

"The scholarship helped me in many ways, freeing me from financial worries to allow me to focus on my studies," she says. "It helped with childcare fees – I'm a single mother with two young children – and it allowed me to have an internet connection, which means I can study at night after the kids go to sleep. "So to all the donors, and everyone who has helped me with this scholarship, I would like to say thank you so much. Without your support, I wouldn't have achieved this."

Studying at UTS has been a joy. Sher likens it to winning the lottery. "Not only has UTS equipped me to become a great nurse in the future; it also provides great support services. All my teachers are really supportive and understanding, when I sometimes experience difficulties. UTS is like my family, my second home. I have the best life here. I am so lucky." Sher's goals for the future are impressive: after an initial stint in general nursing, she plans to study for her Graduate Certificate of Nursing Clinical Care. Once she's gained sufficient clinical experience, she will work on her Masters degree, and when her children are older, she'll start her PhD.

"Sher Mu La, we are proud to say will bring positive change to the lives of all she touches through her experience of study and support from UTS," comments Jane Westbrook, Director of External Relations. "Equity of opportunity is central to UTS policy and culture, and the aim is always to do more for more students like Sher Mu La.

"In this celebratory 25th Anniversary year, we are particularly keen to support the UTS principle of enabling potential through education," Westbrook continues. "The UTS Annual Appeal is a large-scale fundraising campaign with the aim of supporting a key priority area of activity. While a healthy community of staff members regularly donate to UTS, the majority of people contacted are UTS alumni, who are asked to make a tax-deductible donation in response to a compelling case for support.

"This year, we are piloting a campaign of contacting alumni by phone. While we cannot hope to call all our wonderful alumni as part of this campaign, everybody can help us reach our goal."

To make a donation, please visit www.giving.uts.edu.au/appeal2013 or contact the External Relations Office on (02) 9514 9625.
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