Welcome from the eGSA Director

Well here we are at the end of another year. Where did it go?

Highlights of the year include provision of an overseas training program for supervisors at Durban University of Technology; a review of the Learning Employment Aptitudes Program (LEAP) which saw the moderated version of LEAP reduced to 5 weeks in response to student feedback; and input into a review of the Commercialisation Training Scheme scholarships which provide students with tuition fees to participate in the Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation.

In the pipeline is the development of a workbook which, on completion, will grant credit into the Master of R&D Management program, for students who successfully complete the Australian Institute for Commercialisation’s Bootcamp program. This will be of particular interest to CRC researchers, many of whom participate in the AIC program.

I hope you enjoy reading our publication and encourage you to send us an email (egsacoordinator@qut.edu.au) if you have any questions or news that may be of interest to our readers.

Best wishes over the Christmas/New Year season – we will be in touch again in 2011.

Rod Wissler

Graduate Profile – Dr Brent Ward – Graduated 1/2010

Q: What led you to do the Graduate Certificate?
A: My motivation for firstly undertaking the Graduate Certificate, and then ultimately the Masters, came from having a personal interest in updating and extending my qualifications as I have been progressing more into research/lab management and away from the lab bench. Also I was fortunate enough to receive financial support from the CRC for Oral Health Science for whom I conduct and manage research projects.

On completion of the GC course I decided to continue my studies on the Masters course as I had found the GC course really stimulating and informative and was really interested in undertaking the core units of the Masters course. My decision was also made easier by the fact that the GC units I had already completed counted towards the Masters, and that I was able to apply for and gain additional credits by having previous qualifications and some relevant work experience.

Q: What are you doing at the moment (i.e. working? Study - PhD?)
A: I am employed by the Melbourne Dental School of the University of Melbourne (http://www.dent.unimelb.edu.au/dsweb/research/index.htm) working on research projects within the Oral Health CRC (formerly known as the CRC for Oral Health Science; http://www.crcoralhealthscience.org.au/). In this role I am combining my duties as a researcher and manager of specific research projects for the CRC with being the lab manager for our research laboratories within the Bio21 Institute at the University of Melbourne.

Q: What did you expect from the GCRC?
A: Even though I had some experience in regards to management in relation to research, a major motivation for undertaking the GC and then the Masters was to substantially develop and broaden my skills, along with my understanding and knowledge of various aspects related to the management and commercialisation of research.

Q: How was the fit between your expectations of the GCRC and what was delivered?
A: Before commencing the GCRC I was a little uncertain about how I would find and respond to the on-line nature of the course. Not only did I find the course units well laid out and with really knowledgeable and professional moderators, but found the interactions with fellow students from a range of different disciplines and who were located throughout Australia and overseas was really enjoyable and thought provoking. It was great to hear a wide range of different experiences and viewpoints from both students and moderators in these discussions on-line.

I found that the core units within the Masters course really completed and fitted well with those of the GC course, and certainly expanded upon many of the key points and lessons of these GC units. While these core units were generally more challenging than the GC units both conceptually and in the amount of work required, they definitely were valuable to me in what I was able to learn and skills I was able to acquire and develop. For instance, the Project unit in the MRDM called on many of the key skills examined in the previous GC unit but this time was focused on the execution and handover of a project which in my case was for research I was actually undertaking as part of my job. The Strategic Issues and Context units also provided a greater understanding of the origin and impact that forces such as globalisation and economic rationalism have had and are continuing to have on all aspects of the management and funding of research in universities and research organisations today.

Meet Your Moderator – Dr Paige Maguire – Principles and Practice in R&D Management

Paige has an extensive background in medical research and the biotech sector spanning 15 years. After completing her PhD with Ian
Frazer, inventor of the Gardasil vaccine, at the University of Queensland, she was awarded a joint fellowship at Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston in neurogenetics. From there she was head hunted to join Ciphergen Biosystems, a proteomics company based in Silicon Valley where she was responsible for scientific applications and development throughout Australasia and SE Asia.

In 2002 she joined UniQuest, the award winning commercialisation company at UQ and in 2007 was appointed General Manager of qutbluebox, commercialisation company for Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Her responsibilities have included the assessment and valuation of new technologies, devising IP protection strategies, managing out-licensing/partnering activities, managing large R&D programs, developing and delivering award & non-award training courses in research management and raising equity funding. Paige has been responsible for attracting investment into numerous new start-up companies, has managed existing companies and has held 2 company directorships. She has been involved in the development of pharmaceuticals, biologics, vaccines, diagnostics, devices and research tools and has held board positions on professional advisory groups and industry associations. Paige was awarded the QCTN Biotech Rising star award in 2007 is a Principal Academic Consultant at QUT.

Paige holds a BSc (Hons) and PhD from the University of Queensland and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Commercialisation Training Scheme Review
As mentioned previously, the CTS is being evaluated by the federal government and funding from that source will cease in 2011. A submission by eGSA outlining the success of the GCRC was forwarded to the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) in October.

Graduates of the GCRC were interviewed to obtain important qualitative feedback on their experiences and this together with data from the longitudinal study were included in the submission. The submission confirmed “the crucial role of the Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation in developing doctoral graduates with the confidence and understanding of capabilities vital for a commercially responsive Australian research workforce.”

We will advise you of the outcome of the review in due course.

(Submission to the Review of the Commercialisation Training Scheme - 12 October 2010 e-Grad School Australia (http://www.egradschool.edu.au/)

Did you know.......?

- If you have completed the GCRC and would like to do the Masters, you’re half way there, taking into account your four-year undergraduate degree!
- eGSA can provide customised face-to-face or online programs, workshops and seminars (or a combination of both), to plug into existing industry and corporate professional development training programs. For more information contact egscacoordinator@qut.edu.au
- The e-Grad School is the Cooperative Research Centre Association’s preferred provider for delivery of the Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation to CRC researchers.

Conference presentation
eGSA moderator, Annaliza Jackson and Professor Graeme Wright from Curtin University, presented a paper on eGSA’s Learning Employment Aptitude Program (LEAP) at the third annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation Conference in Madrid in November. The title of the paper was e-Learning and Postgraduate Research: LEAP an Australian Experience.

Win a $40 gift voucher - name the eGSA resources!!
eGSA offers all ATN (ie Curtin, RMIT, QUT, UniSA and UTS) higher degree research students free access to our suite of non-award courses including the Learning Employment Aptitudes Program (LEAP), the Modules On Research Education (MORE) and the other freestanding modules (Maximising your Career, Teaching@University and InfoScholar).

We are seeking suggestions for a name for these resources – if you have any innovative ideas for a catchy name under which we can promote them we’d love to hear from you. The best idea will win a $40 gift voucher. Email suggestions to egscacoordinator@qut.edu.au

Interesting websites/publications

- http://thethesiswhisperer.wordpress.com/ - A ‘newspaper’ dedicated to the topic of doing a thesis. Published by eGSA moderator, Dr Inger Mewburn. Other pages which may be of interest are:
- Hyder, A et al. (2010). National policy-makers speak out: are researchers giving them what they need? Health Policy and Planning. Published online June 14, 2010.

Looking ahead to 2011

- We welcome CTS students from the University of Tasmania into the GCRC.
- eGSA has teamed with the Association for Tertiary Education Management to deliver 4x1day workshops aimed at middle managers from any administrative field wishing to gain an understanding of the key foundational principles and practices which are part of university research.