

Promoting Excellence  
Centre for Learning & Teaching

# RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE



Australian  
National  
University

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION 2021



# 2021 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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This year's Recognising Excellence booklet is a digital publication available online and includes hyperlinks to videos of the candidates. <https://bit.ly/3DsatsMo>

## RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

The 2021 Vice Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education are a significant moment in the academic calendar. The announcement of this year's recipients is accompanied by a genuine appreciation of everyone who engaged with the selection process – managed by the Centre for Learning & Teaching's Promoting Excellence Team. That engagement begins with all the Vice Chancellor's Award applicants who, regardless of the outcome, can be very proud of the fact that they were nominated by their college colleagues and supported by referees who attested to the outstanding nature of their teaching.

As the process moves towards selection, the panellists are drawn from previous rounds of the Vice Chancellor's Awards and include some of our Distinguished Educators and esteemed Fellows of the Higher Education Academy here at ANU. Once the selection process has concluded, it's time to turn our attention to recognition. In this respect, those who lead the Education & Digital portfolio take great interest in understanding what potential this year's 'teaching stories' have to offer in respect of uniting our community around the central narrative associated with these awards: learning and teaching excellence.

Promoting Excellence Team

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CONGRATULATIONS

The Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education are an opportunity for the University to celebrate the exceptional contributions of teachers and educational innovators at ANU.

As part of being home to excellent research and teaching, we support, reward and celebrate our teaching staff who support a transformational educational experience for our students. A great education is built on the foundation of great teaching.

After an exceptionally difficult two years, our educators have continued to demonstrate extraordinary creativity and dedication to our students to keep teaching engaging—even remotely. They are at the frontier of new educational practises and provide their expertise, time and exceptional support to students. This is what contributes to an ANU experience that sets the standard for the University and the nation.

Teaching has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my own career. Even as Vice-Chancellor, I still teach and enjoy discussing with my fellow academics on the new approaches we can use to provide one of the best teaching environments. One that fosters the creation of new ideas and adapts pedagogy guided by experience from my peers and students.

This year, we have received 34 inspiring nominations for the 2021 Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Education—recognising a diverse field of outstanding teachers, supervisors and educators. I congratulate all of the 2021 nominees, and I look forward to celebrating your achievements in the new year.

**Professor Brian Schmidt AC**

Vice-Chancellor and President





## AUSTRALIAN AWARD FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING 2020

### CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Professor Samantha Bennett

School of Music, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Professor Samantha Bennett demonstrates outstanding pedagogical leadership within contemporary music and music technology education that has resulted in transformative experiences for students at ANU and beyond.

Over the last five years, Samantha has evolved from an academic specialising in sound recording, sound archiving, music technology and popular music teaching and research to a globally recognised pedagogue in her disciplines.

This is evidenced through her wide-ranging achievements: far-reaching research publications on the pedagogical aspects of music technology and popular music; multiple international conference panels, papers and keynotes on pedagogical topics; regular participation in University-level and international teaching and learning events and activities; impact on

undergraduate and graduate students at School level and internationally; and, national and international peer recognition of pedagogical leadership in her disciplines.

Her significant contribution to teaching has been recognised over the past eight years with a Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (2014), a Vice Chancellor's Teaching Fellowship Award (University of Westminster, 2012), and an ANU Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence (2019).



Click to view the videos

<https://bit.ly/3DsAtMo>



## AUSTRALIAN AWARD FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING 2020

### CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Dr Gemma King

School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Dr Gemma King created the French-language field school *Global Paris: History, Culture and Identity in the French Capital* and the culture-centred Intermediate French course that inspired it.

Through her experiences in developing and teaching diverse French courses, ranging from an intermediate course with up to 100 students each semester to a 20-student, advanced learning immersive Paris field school, Gemma has found that the one doing the talking is the one doing the learning.

Whether in a classroom in Canberra or a museum in Paris, her classes are centred on bringing the French language to life for students by sparking their curiosity in the diverse cultures and identities of the francophone world, and supporting them to express their opinions on sociocultural issues in authentic and creative ways.

Her courses have attracted international media attention and invitations for transnational co-teaching at the leading French university, Ecole Normale Supérieure.

Her teaching has been recognised with an ANU Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Education (2018–Early Career Category), a nomination for the Australian Awards for University Teaching in the Teaching Excellence category (2018–Early career), a High Commendation for the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences Teaching Excellence Award (2017) and a Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA -2019).

In 2020, Gemma received a CASS Dean's Commendation for Teaching Excellence together with her colleague Dr Leslie Barnes and a CASS Dean's Commendation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning.



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## AUSTRALIAN AWARD FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING 2020

### CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### **Dr Sofia Samper Carro**

School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Dr Sofia Samper Carro develops courses that immerse students into archaeological science, providing them with a realistic and inspired insight into the discipline.

Dr Sofia Samper Carro is passionate about understanding human-animal and human-environment interactions throughout history.

Since commencing her role as an archaeology lecturer at ANU in 2016, she has used this passion to engage and motivate students of zooarchaeology and environmental archaeology.

Through integrating research-led and lab-based approaches, Sofia has used her research expertise to improve student learning in the six courses she has redesigned and convened.

She has been recognised through an ANU Teaching Enhancement Grant for the implementation of her Skullbook project (2017) and an ANU Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning (2018).

In 2019 she was awarded the ANU Vice-Chancellor Award for an Early Career Academic, which identified her as one of the University's leading early-career academics.



Click to view the videos

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## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Leslie Barnes

School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Dr Leslie Barnes (SFHEA) is a Senior Lecturer in French studies. Leslie is committed to fostering collaborative dialogue across national and disciplinary boundaries. In her courses, she creates an inclusive atmosphere where students take risks, cultivate solidarity and connect the material to their own culture(s), experiences and research interests in meaningful ways.

**M**y pedagogy is rooted in the communicative approach, which enables students to develop French language skills through interactions with each other and authentic materials from global francophone cultures. In my courses, I encourage students to relate these materials to their own experiences. In first-year French, for example, I show a French-Guinean autobiographical film that examines the relationship between education and the often-painful transition from childhood to adulthood. I ask students to think about the trajectories that have brought them to ANU and to discuss the norms, opportunities and challenges they have encountered along the way.

A commitment to reciprocal peer learning motivates much of what I do, both inside and outside the classroom. In 2019, I spearheaded the Peer Observation program, which encourages collaborative, collegial discussion within and across disciplines. I support participants through the two-part process – observations and feedback sessions – with materials I've researched and designed, and I make myself available throughout for questions and assistance. To date, 44 participants from the ANU Colleges of Arts and

Social Sciences, Asia and the Pacific and Law have come together for productive pedagogical exchanges.

When COVID-19 pushed our courses online, I returned to the scholarship on peer learning in search of a way to reproduce the interactive, equitable and supportive environment of my classroom, while also minimising the mental disconnect, fatigue and anxiety of learning on a screen. The peer-to-peer learning model I developed asks students to assume the roles of teacher and learner, encouraging individual reflection and cultivating a sense of mutual accountability; it also helps combat the mental health problems resulting from isolation. Working with another colleague, I have shared the model via the Languages Teaching Forum, the ANU-Indiana Language Education summit, the ANU Centre for Learning and Teaching blog and a piece in *Inside Higher Ed*. These efforts led to a CASS Dean's Commendation for Teaching Excellence in 2020. Scaffolded with clear resources and guidance, peer-to-peer learning has allowed me to reimagine my courses under COVID and beyond, without sacrificing the qualities of a dynamic classroom.

**"Dr Barnes' response to the onset of the pandemic in 2020, and the need to rapidly reimagine our teaching, showcases her key traits as an educator: she is creative, student-focused, reflective, and committed to education leadership."**

Associate Professor Kate Mitchell





## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr David Cheng

Research School of Management, ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dr David Cheng has helped thousands of students build their leadership skills through his passion for teaching and seeing students thrive. David draws upon research on servant leadership as he invests in his students to model his motto that teachers are good learners that always serve others. He has also created a suite of teaching tools that move learning from written text to audio, visual and kinaesthetic formats that engage students.

My passion for teaching and seeing those around me grow and develop as leaders began five years prior, when I worked with teenagers and troubled youth amongst church related organisations. There, I learnt about servant leadership; a style of leadership that prioritises the needs of those in the care of the leader over the needs of the leader i.e. my student's needs over my own. When I moved on to teaching, I took this approach and soon found it to be effective in my classes. My confidence in using this approach strengthened several years later when I found that educational research into teachers who took a servant leadership approach revealed that it improved student engagement, motivation and learning.

Combining this approach with the belief that teachers should continuously be learning and improving themselves, my teaching practices have been influenced in three ways: 1) by presenting materials in a creative, exciting and enthusiastic manner using innovative teaching methodologies that mimics how things may happen in real life; 2) by always being approachable, enthusiastic and model what is taught,

because the relationship between student and teacher, and how the students see the teacher, is of great importance; and, 3) by sharing my educational tools and practices with other educators so that they and their students can benefit from them.

**"You take a very personal approach, which makes it a way more comfortable environment especially in the big seminar hall, but also online. You seem to honestly care about us and our progress, which is a great motivator to keep up with the course and commit to making progress ourselves too."**

Student comment, 2020



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<https://bit.ly/3DsatsMo>



## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE EARLY CAREER

#### Dr Christina Clarke

School of Art and Design, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Dr Christina Clarke is a Lecturer in Art History. She is a passionate educator whose teaching practice can be characterised as a testing ground for research-led innovations in teaching and learning. With a primary focus on student engagement and interactive learning experiences, she applies technology-enhanced learning to inspire and motivate students. In 2020, Christina received the CASS Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Teaching.

**T**hrough my experience as a teacher of art history, I have found that active learning promoted by students' reflection on and application of taught ideas is at the core of a quality education. My primary tool for enhancing student engagement is the passion and enthusiasm with which I approach teaching and course material. For me, every class is an opportunity to share information and ideas I find exciting or compelling, and seeing how students take these on board and formulate their own ideas provides immense satisfaction.

While my own passion for art history and the enthusiasm with which I teach it can inspire students in the classroom, it is only when learners draw on the teacher's expertise to formulate their own ideas that deep and sustained learning occurs. It is with this teaching philosophy that I have sought out state-of-the-art pedagogical tools and techniques to develop a suite of strategies for enhancing student interaction in the classroom and sparking authentic interest beyond the classroom.

One of the strategies I have developed is a dynamic, technology-enhanced 'activated

lecture' model to replace the two-hour unidirectional lecture and animate classes using student-centred learning techniques. An activated lecture typically consists of several mini-lectures interspersed with activities that prompt students to discuss and reflect on delivered content, enabling them to consolidate new information in class. These sessions are supported by structured tutorial activities that harness group work to build student confidence, as well as skill, and promote a sense of community, which is so valuable for both student wellbeing and future career opportunities.

Novel assessment that connects course content to extra-academic and professional contexts is another important element of my courses. Traditional essays may be replaced with creative exercises such as an architectural tour, an exhibition design or the collaborative creation of an online exhibition catalogue. These not only provide the opportunity for students to understand the connection between course content and professional practice in the arts sector, but they also prompt them to harness their creative as well as intellectual abilities in their learning.

**"Dr Clarke is a clear leader within the Centre; an advocate for informed, planned, contemporary teaching."**

Professor Chris McAuliffe, Sir William Dobell Chair, Head, ANU Centre for Art History and Art Theory.



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<https://bit.ly/3DcatMo>





## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Professor Alex Maier

Research School of Biology, ANU College of Science

**Synopsis:** Parasites are fascinating creatures that threaten human health, but also keep ecosystems in balance. In his teaching, Professor Alex Maier explores this 'yin and yang' of parasites. Using authentic tasks, role play and popular culture, Alex makes biological principles accessible through hands-on experiences. The results are engaged and passionate students who have both the subject-specific know-how and the general skills to tackle complex problems – and who would consider keeping parasites as pets!

**M**y goal as a teacher is to empower and to inspire: empower my students to apply their particular talents, expertise and enthusiasm and inspire them to overcome perceived hurdles. My aim is to train competent team players firmly grounded in their discipline-based knowledge, who meet other disciplines with respect, openness and appreciation. In order to do so, my teaching illuminates a subject from different angles. Applying the power of perspectives, students realise that different viewpoints are not about being right or wrong, but that they enrich and expand each other's ideas on a particular subject.

The digitalisation of knowledge has shifted learning goals and work place requirements from information retention to finding and connecting information. Conceptual learning approaches facilitate the acquisition of these skills. My teaching style pairs clearly structured concepts with authentic tasks and experiential learning – I try to make 'thinking visible' and de- and reconstruct complex systems. Often it becomes clear that the perceived

complications come from looking at it from only a single perspective and that a more holistic view opens the door for new solutions.

My teaching follows J. H. Pestalozzi's motto "learning by head, hand and heart". Hands-on, sensory experiences in higher education are often neglected, but experiential learning provides several advantages including improved content retention and effective connection between theory and practice. Most importantly, mistakes are seen as valuable experiences, not as failures. Hence, hands-on experiences feature prominently in my teaching. Authentic and outcome driven assessment tasks provide additional motivation and help the student to develop a 'professional' voice.

Obviously, course content is only valuable, if it is relevant to the learner. I try to tap into experiences of the learner, to connect material to items they can relate to and most importantly create opportunities for students to apply their particular talents. That way their learning becomes not only an experience for themselves, but also inspires the journey of others.

**"I think the course was fantastic in showing students what the true nature of being in a lab and working with parasites feels like as we were allowed so much freedom to explore techniques of dissection as well as investigating parasite functions ourselves."**

Student email, 2021



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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Stephen Dann

Research School of Management, ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Now, this is a story all about that time, my teaching got flipped and turned online, and I'd like to take a minute, if you'd just sit right there, to tell you about the way we went full virtual School of the Air. Dr Stephen Dann brings the technology to life, and life to the technologies in his eMarketing virtual class spaces, places and interactive online interfaces.

I have embraced our marketing philosophies and theories to bring the theory to life in the classroom. My teaching philosophy is underpinned by the idea that nothing is as practical as a good theory, and a good theory is nothing without being put into practice.

As a marketer, applying marketing orientation enables me to strike the balance between the needs of my customers (students) and the demands of our stakeholders (employers), within the constraints of what we are willing to offer to the market (course content and pedagogical expertise). Marketing is not about the customer always being right, but it is driven by offering something that the customer can value and can help them make into something meaningful.

As an educator, I try to remain curious about the world, the opportunities and the options for further learning. Being someone who is genuinely relentlessly cheerful and enthusiastic, I try to embody my enthusiasm for the course and new learning experiences. Being authentically excited about life-long learning opportunities presented by learning from students in their questions, assessments

and experiences goes a long way in the classroom

As a technologist, I believe in the power of computer-mediated communication to make genuine connections between people from keyboard to keyboard. I've pushed hard and had to push back, to create a space in the lives of the students where they can be safe in exploring a sense of online community, and they can try out a whole range of experiences together. Building community, whether it be overtly through named seminar teams – my daylight class (Daywalkers), my evening class (Nightstalkers), and my remote access self service crew (Shadowhawkers) – or by giving students space to embrace a sense of community, shared bonds and shared identity through my classes, has been a profoundly more powerful experience in our COVID-19 interrupted times (and it was pretty intense before that).

Above all, I do what I do because I get to make a difference, and that is something that I cherish about this role. As an educator, we get a chance to do something day in day out that most people only dream about – having an impact that makes a change for the better.

**"This course has changed me. It made me realise the importance of networks and the strength of a community. I never felt so close to my classmates, in my four years at university."**

Student comment



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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Richard W. Frank

School of Politics and International Relations, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Dr Richard W. Frank is a Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations. His teaching and research focus is on international relations, comparative politics and political methodology. Students in his classes ask important, fundamental questions about politics, power and political violence, then develop their own answers by studying (and producing) cutting-edge research. His goal is to produce students who think clearly, systematically and deeply about the important issues of their day.

**M**y teaching philosophy is based on four basic principles. One, the study of politics is fundamentally the study of power – who has it, who wants it and which institutions are channelling (or blocking) it. Two, as a relatively new field, political science is changing quickly, and research and teaching need to keep up with best practice, without dogma or prejudice. Three, students learn best when they are interested in the material, and when they see that it matters in the real world and that the teacher is passionate about the topic. Four, students are more likely to engage and learn if they are having fun and are active participants in the learning process.

How do I teach? Primarily, by following a similar path to the one I take in my research: by showing students how to ask important questions, by helping students to find and understand others' answers to these questions and by encouraging students to develop their own answers. Lectures, workshops and discussion are geared towards lighting students' fire of

curiosity and channelling their efforts. Assessments are varied and geared towards ensuring student engagement, providing consistent and useful lecturer feedback, and developing students' critical thinking and research skills.

Life in the time of coronavirus has required students and instructors to rapidly develop and adapt to a new teaching paradigm. I leveraged my Los Angeles upbringing to make some creative (and occasionally silly) lecture video content; I adapted tutorials and workshops to live, online and asynchronous learning; and, I approached students' education with empathy, flexibility and energy. The learning outcomes remained the same, but the way students and I got there was new.

**"Richard is good at explaining the concepts, he uses case studies which link the concepts learnt from the readings and lecture to real life political situations around the world. Which helps me, a student, to see these cases in real life rather than something that is required of me to learn for a test or quiz."**

Student comment



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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Dana Hanna

Research School of Economics, ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dr Dana Hanna has a desire to journey with her students to assist them develop a deeper understanding and passion for economics, see the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and recognise both the usefulness and limitations of current theory. She brings real passion and practice into the classroom and turns economics from a technical, challenging, monotonous discipline to one that is practical, dynamic, engaging and fun—developing a next generation of economists with real economics skill and a passion for the discipline.

I think what really makes a great teacher revolves around caring for and respecting students, and being willing to 'walk beside' them. For me, this has been about putting myself in their shoes: how can I design a course and present material to them so that they can relate, and so that it's engaging and accessible to them with all the different activities they've got happening in their lives? How can I help them to reach their potential in the course and achieve the learning outcomes?

I want to see our students achieve great things and become world changers. As such, keeping all those points above in mind, my teaching is centred around partnering with students to achieve their academic goals, to enable the development of skills needed to pursue their chosen careers, and to inspire in them a passion for economics. Partnering with and engaging students needs to be supported by student-focused delivery and implementation of class material

with topics that are both challenging and inspiring.

Sometimes economics can be seen as a dry and boring subject, and sometimes it can be hard to see the forest for the trees (or the outcome for the math!). As such, I think it is important that students get to see the big picture—get to see how economics is used in all aspects of our lives. My course delivery provides opportunities to see how economics can play a major role in bettering the lives of individuals, economies and the world. Students can see the elegance and usefulness of economic theory, but also the limitations of that same theory. The interplay between economics and other disciplines is also emphasised.

In my quest to partner with the students to achieve their best, I am constantly seeking and trialling better ways to deliver my courses, to increase student engagement and deepen understanding. Each different course and cohort of students presents a new and invigorating challenge and opportunity, one for which I hope to bring my best efforts to inspire and encourage the next group of world changers.

**"Dr Dana Hanna just delivered the funnest 1st year micro lecture I've ever been to. Paper planes to demonstrate the need for economic models to at least have the fundamentals, auctioning chocolate bars to show willingness to pay."**

Beck Cassells, Independent observer 2020





## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Alexander Hunter

School of Music, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** As a Lecturer in the School of Music, Dr Alexander Hunter works to bring his own practice navigating spaces between traditions and world views to undergraduate curricula through a continuous process of consultation, reflection and redesign. Alexander received the 2020 CASS Dean's Commendation for Teaching Excellence.

**A**s a practicing musician myself, I love the material I have the opportunity to share with my students. I am also exceedingly enthusiastic about their work breaking through many of the barriers I encountered as a student in canon-based jazz and classical music programs. Seeing them put just as much thought and enthusiasm into analysing Thelma Plum songs as they do Mongolian speed metal and Beethoven, is always a pleasure.

Students in my composition and music theory courses collaborate, create and reflect on the musics they encounter in their own and other cultural contexts. Students from a range of ANU degrees work alongside their colleagues from our jazz/contemporary and classical music programs to create new musical works and learn more about why they love the music they encounter in their daily lives. In these courses, they learn how to develop a range of tools based on deep listening – both to the music itself, as well as to the context of its production and participation – so students come away with the confidence to actively pursue reflective musicking in their own context.

Investigating musical practitioners themselves as resources, rather than

a series of textbooks or other one dimensional educational tools, helps composition students focus on the relationships they have to each other, the music, society and the spaces and conditions under which their music is composed and performed. They write music for people, rather than an imaginary ideal of instrumentalists – and the students learn a lot and make lasting friendships as a result.

My friendly and approachable manner is an extension of the nêhiyaw/Métis understanding of young people as future Elders (we use the same word for great-grandparent and great-grandchild). I treat my students as equals and colleagues who happen to be a few years behind me in their musical training, but who have a great deal to teach myself and others. My courses work to build spaces not just to teach and facilitate learning, but to encourage students to acknowledge, unpack and contextualise all of the things they already know.

**"His enthusiasm, and love of the subject, together with his genuine care for the students he is teaching. This meant that he made himself available constantly for feedback or questions, and constantly tried to find new ways of teaching the topics, and interesting the students."**

Student comment, SELT 2020



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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Dean Katselas

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dr Dean Katselas is a Senior Lecturer in the Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics. Dean's methods involve illustrating the real-world applicability of methods used in finance via in-class empirical demonstrations, and assessment design encompassing real data from familiar companies. This 'learning by doing' approach characterises Dean's teaching philosophy that engages student interest, while concurrently promoting a 'deep learning' approach to education.

**M**y pathway into academia was motivated by a profound thirst for knowledge, and a great deal of personal satisfaction gained from learning generally. This still holds true today. Despite being an educator, I always view myself first and foremost as a student of the discipline of Finance; there is always more to learn and explore, and learning should be viewed a lifelong pursuit. This very notion, coupled with a constructivist approach to teaching, provides the basis of my teaching philosophy and approach in the classroom. Learning should be engaging; it should exhibit relevance to society, and the content should be delivered in an accessible way. Against this backdrop, my view is that this approach provides the foundation to enable my students to also develop a similar enthusiasm for lifelong learning as myself. Further, an ongoing attitude toward learning in their field is necessary for our graduates well beyond their university days. I love learning and I love teaching, and I feel that the former is a necessary condition to truly embrace the latter. Teaching involves the communication of one's acquired knowledge, their

learning, to a willing audience to facilitate their learning. As an educator it is my responsibility first and foremost, to lead by example and encourage student enthusiasm for learning.

All courses I have taught since joining the Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics in 2010 have been predominantly quantitative in nature. The beauty of Finance, however, is firstly that early research in the discipline forms the basis of many of the tools currently utilised by practitioners. This means that the tools explicated in many Finance courses do have relevance to the real world. Secondly, given the application of Finance research to the real world, there exists seemingly infinite available data which one may draw upon in the teaching process. Thus, rather than rely upon fictitious textbook exercises to illustrate the very tools drawn upon by practitioners, Finance educators are in a fortunate position of delivering and demonstrating content in a way that is reflective of their real-world application. I have continuously endeavoured to bridge the gap between the classroom and practice, and in turn to inspire students to learn by showing them that what they're learning is indeed relevant to society.

**"The assignment seemed more like a 'real life' sort of assignment, and I think it helped me understand the real reasons behind formulas and rules, rather than just memorising them, which I haven't seen in finance courses before."**

Student comment, SELT 2019



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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Bronwyn Loong

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dr Bronwyn Loong is a Senior Lecturer in Statistics. She is the convener of *Introduction to Bayesian Data Analysis*, as well as the compulsory first year statistics course for all undergraduate students at the ANU College of Business and Economics. Dr Loong is passionate about equipping students with solid statistical computational skills as they head into the workforce. She engages students by using real-life examples to motivate and explain statistical concepts.

**W**e live in a 'data-driven world' where business decisions are increasingly made based on data as evidence. In my teaching, I therefore aim to empower our students to get the skills they will need to analyse or interpret data in their future careers, whether this be at a basic or more advanced level.

Many students feel nervous about the mathematical requirements of statistical courses. My goal at the start of semester is therefore to make my students understand that statistics is much more than a bunch of mathematical formulae. Rather, statistics provide us with a structured approach to extract relevant information from data to help solve problems and support decision making. So, while some mathematical work will be required, I am equally focused on emphasising a conceptual understanding of statistics so that students can become confident and critical consumers of statistical output in their future careers.

In my courses, I generate passion and inspiration for statistics by making the material personally meaningful to the students and using real-life examples to

motivate each core learning outcome to help students appreciate the relevance of the course to the real world. Ultimately, I want my students to have fun with statistics and the statistical tools that they have learnt about in my courses. The freedom to choose their own data set in an assignment, for example, gives students the opportunity to stimulate their intellectual curiosity and independence in learning, with many students designing their own observational study or experiment to answer a question of interest to them.

One of my proudest teaching achievements to date has been to develop the course *Introduction to Bayesian Data Analysis*, which was first offered in Semester 2 2015. Bayesian statistics is an important approach to data analysis in data science today, but prior to 2015 there was no such course dedicated to teaching Bayesian methods at ANU. It has been a challenging but a most rewarding experience to lead and coordinate the development of this course from essentially a blank canvas. But the effort has been extremely worthwhile knowing that our statistics students are graduating with the necessary modern data analysis and computational skills to pursue their careers.

**"Everything learnt in class was very applicable to real-life situations, and this helped give me additional motivation in the course as I could see purpose behind essentially everything that we learnt in this class."**

Student comment, SELT 2019



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Anne Macduff

Law School, ANU College of Law

**Synopsis:** Dr Anne Macduff's scholarly commitment to diversity underpins her innovative approach to legal education. Her courses motivate and build student confidence to 'speak out', by first rehearsing how to 'speak up'. In class, students share ideas and generate new perspectives on the law. Diverse students, even the most reserved students, gain confidence in her courses.

It is imperative that we find innovative ways to motivate students to not just write about legal ideas, but talk about them too. I use two approaches in my teaching to build student motivation and confidence to speak up during class, making the content relevant and creating inclusive group work environments.

To make the course content relevant, I tap into the social knowledge that students already have by drawing on contemporary and topical issues to explore theory. Showing students how they can look differently at the world around them inspires them to be curious and engage with the material. Choosing topics that already concern students allows students to draw on what they already know, building motivation because they have something they can contribute immediately to the discussion. The learning impact is that students grow in confidence and competence.

The second approach to teaching that I use to build student confidence and motivation to speak up, is to carefully scaffold a range of inclusive group course experiences, including activities and assessment, delivered both in person

and online. The educational literature confirms that group work activities are beneficial. Group work enhances social belonging through creating inclusive peer networks and support. Group learning provides early feedback on concepts and critical perspectives. Groups can also be safe environments for practising new skills, understandings and respectful interactions. However, students generally, and law students in particular, seem to have a strong aversion to group work. Careful staging of group work experiences develops important interpersonal skills. Moving students gradually from smaller to larger group contexts is key to setting students up for success. The impact on student learning has been very positive. Through individual reflections, students have reported that they enjoyed the group work experience, were proud of what they had achieved as a group, and felt that the groups were inclusive learning environments that supported them to engage in a wide range of theoretical discussions.

**"Anne's facilitation of the seminars created an environment that was both challenging and comfortable. [...] Students volunteered insights, anecdotes and opinion that were often highly personal, something rare and valuable in this context. I think this was largely due to Anne's careful facilitation."**

Student comment



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<https://bit.ly/3DsatMo>



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Gen Nowak

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dr Gen Nowak is a Senior Lecturer in Statistics. He brings a wealth of teaching and research experience gained through his work at ANU and at leading universities overseas. Gen is passionate about teaching and committed to developing globally competitive graduates who have the skills and confidence to apply statistics across broad-ranging areas of economics, finance and scientific research. Gen received the ANU College of Business and Economics Award for Teaching Excellence in 2019.

**M**y teaching philosophy centres on teaching students 'how to think' so that they can confidently approach any given statistical problem and arrive at methodologies for reaching a solution. I believe that the role of a university educator is to provide a learning environment where students gain the knowledge and skills to confidently take their next steps in their chosen field. For statistics students, this may be in further statistical research, work in other scientifically related fields, or work in a profession that relies on statistical analysis. Given the globally competitive environment in which we operate, I also believe that students should be able to operate at a standard on par with graduates from other high-ranking universities around the world.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of innovation, adaptability and evaluation to ensure quality learning outcomes in a changing environment. To ensure that students continue to have a tangible, interactive and

personalised learning experience, I focus on applying a combination of innovative teaching methods and modes of delivery, with regular evaluation. I am influenced and driven by the successful teaching methods I experienced as an undergraduate and PhD student, as well as by the application of new methods that are adaptive to the diversity of the student body and changing needs of the current climate.

Two key aspects of my teaching methodology that I regularly employ in my teaching are: 1) the use of diverse real-world examples to convey complex statistical concepts; and, 2) the maximization of opportunities for active student participation to motivate and expand learning. The use of practical examples motivates and inspires students by highlighting the real-world relevance of statistical analysis and provides an insight into the type of work they could be undertaking in the future. I apply a variety of techniques to engage my students and encourage active participation. My courses will typically incorporate small group discussions, workshop style sessions and a question-and-answer based dialogue approach to demonstrate examples.

**"The explanation of concepts to students was exceptional. The teachings felt interactive, straight forward, and accessible. I, as a student, felt very involved in the course and engaged even though the course method was online."**

Student comment



Click to view the videos

<https://bit.ly/3DsatMo>

## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Sara Rapson

Research School of Biology, ANU College of Science

**Synopsis:** Dr Sara Rapson uses her passion for the diversity and function of life to create engaging learning environments for biology students. Teaching at ANU, she has been able to help students progress from the very start of their tertiary study in foundational biology courses, all the way through to identifying their own career values and opportunities before they successfully transition into the workplace when they graduate and 'leave the nest'.

**M**y approach to teaching focuses on providing students with inclusive opportunities for active learning, helping them to apply their newfound knowledge in a meaningful way, and empowering them to become life-long learners.

As children, we actively embraced learning about biology and the environment as we played in the mud, explored forests and looked for bugs. As a teacher, I encourage my students to revive that childhood wonder and awe. I also firmly believe that experience is a critical part of our learning and so my goal is to promote student engagement by creating an environment where students actively learn through guided enquiry, in pursuit of discovery. Enquiry-based learning is also beneficial for students' disciplinary and professional development because science is inherently a dynamic process, not simply a static set of facts.

To promote an inclusive learning environment, I attempt to normalise difference, ensuring that students with disability are not sidelined and students with diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds are able to relate to content in a personal way. To create a more meaningful learning

experience, I also encourage students to tailor their learning to their own interests and to draw connections between the academic knowledge and the real world.

With society's collective scientific knowledge increasing exponentially, today's students will encounter ever-increasing complexity in their chosen fields. By developing my students' critical imagination and their learning process, I can prepare them to comprehend and successfully navigate the types of transdisciplinary questions and challenges that will arise over the course of their careers.

There is always room for the improvement of teaching activities and so I constantly engage deeply with the pedagogical literature, actively using ideas from other disciplines. Adjusting them to better suit my purpose, I experiment with these ideas and evaluate success using both formal and informal student feedback. With valuable insight into students' experiences, I am able to then tweak and reinvent the learning activities to further enhance student engagement and learning.

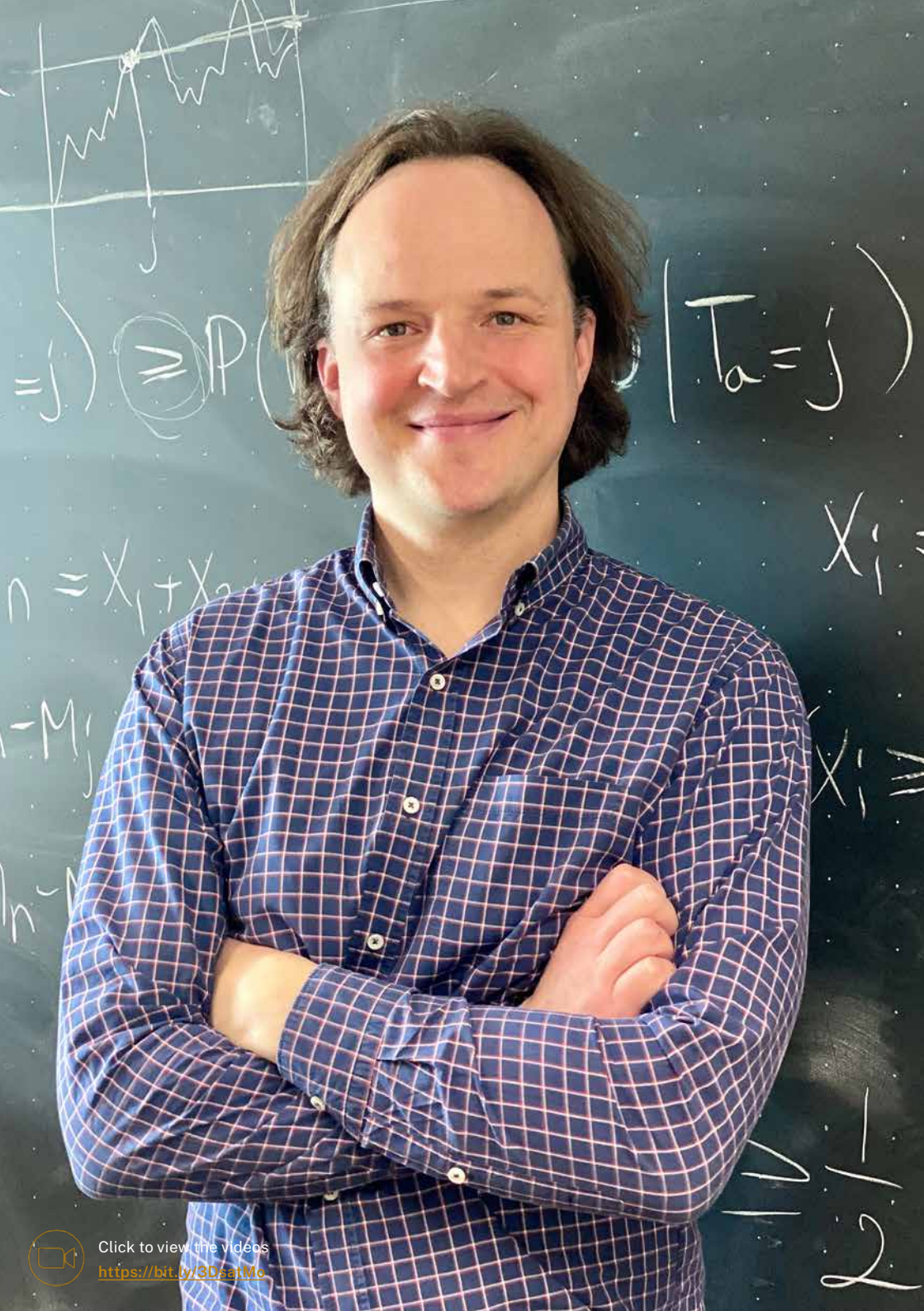
**"I think what made Medical Science in the Workplace particularly helpful was the amount of self-reflection that was built into each part of the course. You were not just having facts thrown at you, instead you were expected to be engaged in the content and thinking about how it's relevant to you and your future career."**

Student comment, SELT 2020



Click to view the videos  
<https://bit.ly/3DsAtMo>





## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Associate Professor Dale Roberts

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Associate Professor Dale Roberts is a mathematician specialising in probability theory. His deliberate style has evolved to 'humanise' his teaching by blending old-school mediums (live 'chalk and talk' blackboard lectures and handwritten notes instead of slide decks) with modern technologies. Making his teaching more personal and dynamic helped infuse something essential into his lectures in a time when social distancing was the norm and many of his students were isolated.

Teaching Mathematics is hard, and therefore it is not surprising that there is always fierce discussion around how to teach it at all levels of the education system. If this area is to be effectively taught, I've come to the realisation that one can't just stand there and talk to slides, and students can't just sit there and listen. As our teaching transitions to digital delivery, this is made all the more difficult. So how does one fix the shortcomings of this modern lecturing approach?

Pondering this question made me start to suspect that Mathematics was taught on blackboards over centuries for a reason. The blackboard is an ideal medium; it allows you to tackle the formal mathematical content in an informal and dynamic way through sketches, drawings and calculations. Perhaps the theatre of a lecturer at the blackboard is what keeps the audience engaged. Photographer Jessica Wynne says: "It is almost like this interesting dance or performance as you watch these mathematicians and it is really beautiful." That is something I wanted to bring back to my teaching. It's emotional,

personal and unscripted as questions from the audience sometimes drive the lectures in unintended directions. Over the last 10 years, I've actively transitioned from focusing on making beautiful slide decks to making my teaching more dynamic, artistic and raw.

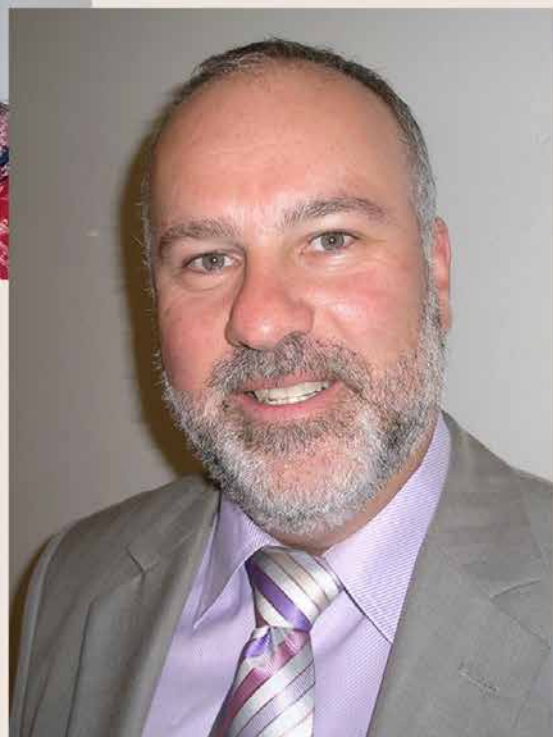
I feel my time is best spent getting my hands dirty, solving mathematical exercises on the topics with the students, and digging as deeply as I can into the theory so I can explain things in the clearest way possible. It's my belief that when the students watch me doing this every week, it encourages them to interact with the material as well, further promoting fluency, transfer and overall comprehension.

**"Dale is definitely one of my favourite lecturers at ANU. He is so easy to approach with questions and he always asks for feedback from students to improve his teaching. He shows great respect to his students and his lectures are a pleasure to attend, every single one."**

Student comment



Click to view the videos  
<https://bit.ly/3D5anMc>



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Sebastian Rosenberg, Ms Natasha Katruss

Research School of Population Health, ANU College of Health & Medicine

**Synopsis:** The second half of 2020 saw the University needing to respond to the changed teaching environment arising from COVID-19. With the active engagement of participating lecturers, and partly in response to the challenge posed by COVID-19 to develop online learning, Dr Sebastian Rosenberg and Natasha Katruss from the Learning and Development Unit at CMHR re-engineered the Mental Health masters' course to adopt a Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach.

Practically, this meant our students undertook group tutorials each week, based on the lecture topic. The tutorial had two parts: an initial tutorial where students discussed and designed a research problem and research tactics, and a second tutorial held a week later, where the research and solutions were discussed. Because the weekly PBL tutorials were student-led, long periods of silence, with blanked out faces and voices on mute, were not possible. Instead, with some guidance from the tutor, students were responsible for identifying and agreeing on a key research topic or problem, arising from that week's lecture. Each week, a different student led and coordinated the input from all the other students. Each student then made their contribution to an agreed, different aspect of that problem. The student leader for the week then summarised the discussion.

Informal feedback from students on the PBL tutorial sessions was very positive, with a high level of engagement and enthusiasm. Some of the students were experiencing periods of COVID-19-related lockdown during the semester and they

commented that the interactive PBL sessions were a highlight of an otherwise dull period.

Our experience with PBL was also very positive, with lecturers and tutors remarking on the impressive insight and leadership shown by the students in contributing to tutorials and providing nuanced and thoughtful critique. The PBL format reduced the pressure on teaching staff to lead discussions, instead sharing this productively with students. Staff already had some experience teaching this course, but the PBL experience permitted new topics and fresh ideas to emerge. Discussions took unanticipated and sometimes exciting turns in which students, tutors and lecturers alike found new perspectives.

In comparison to previous semesters, students appeared to be more proactive, enthusiastic and prepared for the tutorial discussions, possibly due to the onus of facilitation being placed on the students themselves. In addition, students were highly encouraging and supportive of each other. We can confidently say that the tutorial format change to PBL drastically improved the experience for students, tutors and lecturers alike, with students learning valuable skills for life and the workplace, and teachers learning new ways of approaching their research from the students' unique and creative insights.

**"The use of PBLs allowed us to be more involved in the courses and allowed for really interesting discussion topics..."**

Student comment

## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Amanda Stuart, Ms Alison Simpson, Mr Shane Herrington

School of Art and Design, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** The ANU School of Art and Design Environment Studio and its *Balawan* and *Buugang* courses are the culmination of many dedicated minds, hearts and hands. They would not be possible without the generous contributions of First Nations contributors. Both courses aim at providing undergraduate and postgraduate students from across ANU with meaningful learning opportunities that reveal the depth and vibrancy of Aboriginal culture. Key values of respect, reciprocity and shared cultural learning are central to course objectives and emergent outreach programs.

The Environment Studio's courses *Balawan* and *Buugang* are unique in their repeat format, field-based delivery. They are co-designed with First Nations collaborators who, alongside non-Indigenous contributors, engage students in culturally safe, inclusive, ethical and diverse learning environments.

Camping on country, in a learning environment acutely attuned to their physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing, the students experience the potency of peer learning and course content delivery, which comes directly from local cultural experts. Such a format is not only intellectually invigorating, but also highly motivating and inspires students to learn, reflect and cherish experiences that are frequently described as "life changing".

As the studio is field-based, practice-led learning initiatives encourage students to explore and direct their own learning journeys and creative responses in a multitude of ways. The Environment Studio draws on students from a wide range of creative practices—not only spanning all visual arts traditions and workshops, but

also including students from across the university, undertaking a range of degree programs. This encourages a healthy respect for diverse perspectives and approaches to the creative process—as well as an extraordinarily rich academic 'gene pool'. In addition, the courses combine both undergraduate and postgraduate student levels, which stimulates conversations and promotes appreciation for different learning levels and capacities.

At the heart of the Environment Studio courses are sustained collaborations with First Nations communities and a deep commitment to including their perspectives—unfiltered. Along with the deep cultural material shared by our generous facilitators, the courses frequently engage with themes that can be challenging to students, so a great deal of care is taken to support their pastoral, alongside individual, learning needs. There are ample debriefings and opportunities to reflect whilst they absorb course material and a buddy system is in place in the field. Field-based environments promote community bonding and we consistently observe a culture of kindness, camaraderie and care.

"Overall the experience was incredibly valuable, it was more than just a course it was knowledge that I will use for the rest of my life and a reminder to hold myself accountable to continue to learn about country I live on and most importantly listen to First Nations voices to be the best ally I can."

Student email, 2021



Ms Alison Simpson: Twofold Aboriginal Corporation  
Mr Shane Herrington: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (Tumut)

Acknowledging co-facilitators and sessional staff: Ms Amelia Zarafitis, Ms Heike Qualitz, Mr Aidan Hartshorn & Dr Kate Murphy.



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

#### Dr Yun Zhou

School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

**Synopsis:** Dr Yun Zhou is a lecturer in Chinese Language and Studies. She specialises in Chinese history, gender and religion. She began convening courses in 2020 and was the recipient of a 2020 Award for Excellence in Language Teaching at the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific. She envisions language learning as a process of engaging in different worlds. By incorporating various aspects of life into language courses, Yun encourages students to develop holistically.

I implement innovative ideas in language teaching that reflect the command of the field, and endeavour to design language courses in which the skills learned could extend into various aspects of life. For example, in teaching the lesson on divorce trends in China, I incorporated a section of an SBS Chinese radio broadcast on divorce rates in COVID-19 that used some of the grammar and idioms that had been learned in the textbook. I encouraged students to apply newly learnt grammar points and vocabulary to comprehend current trends and to rephrase the content using their own words in the target language. The activity cultivates students' ability to adapt when facing issues displayed in various formats. The transferrable skill of adaptability will benefit language students by teaching them how to adjust to new environments after graduation. Furthermore, the different settings that led to high divorce rates engaged language students in analytical thinking. In contrast to the textbook, which looked at the changing attitudes of Chinese people to

marriage after China's implementation of the open-door policy in the 1980s, the pandemic caused stress on various levels in many countries. The topic of increasing divorce rates thus became an opportunity for students to think on a broader scale empowered by their newly learnt language skills.

Aside from teaching in classroom settings, I endeavour to seek opportunities that can inspire and motivate students in using language in real-life situations. I firmly believe that the small departures from textbook sources to interpret and reflect on real situations not only instil vigour into language learning but also enhance students' adaptability and resilience, teaching them how to adjust to new circumstances and environments. I have helped organised events such as dumpling party in 2019, Lecture Series on Chinese Language & Culture in 2020 and Chinese Language Student Talent Show in 2021.

**"She made it funny and humorous, while bringing in a relevant and modern example to better explain some of the themes of the class and use the new vocabulary."**

Student comment, 2020



## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Ms Alison Cumming Thom

Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

**Synopsis:** Alison Cumming Thom has worked since 2009 to create an environment for learner-centred teaching practice, degree design and innovation at the Crawford School of Public Policy. Her practice focuses on 1) developing frameworks, principles and learning design processes to ensure consistent high quality education outcomes; 2) sustaining and developing individual and degree program teaching practice, reflectively and in community; and, 3) enabling high quality and aligned curriculum and course design and development at all levels.

I work with teaching programs and individual teachers to design and deliver exceptional graduate degrees and student learning experience at the Crawford School of Public Policy. I try to meet teachers and teaching programs 'where they are at' and in the context of our student cohort. I believe in allowing for multiple moments and modes of engagement, repeated opportunities to learn and deepen learning and development, always in the context of maximising teacher agency and relationality. I work from the 'rising tide lifts all boats' principle, avoiding the relatively low take-up of traditional workshops by just the keen few, and the inert nature of teaching and learning resources.

I love Alfred Korzybski's concept 'the map is not the territory' and use it to remind myself that the artefacts of teaching – the learning outcomes, course outline, the WATTLE site and so on – are not the entirety of the teaching and learning experience, and that important as they are, and as

much time as we put into developing processes and timelines and innovation in these, there is the territory of teaching and learning which stretches well beyond and around them. And through that territory travels a teacher or a teaching team – imperfect but ardent humans. Armed with the map, for sure – sometimes more of a mud map, a sketch from others of how they found the territory, but one that has to be filled in further on each journey. And on every journey the teachers are guided as much by their compass as by the maps – the fundamental values and orientation to the care of their students, the sharing of knowledge and the passion for student learning that sustain through deadlines and marking and even a rapid transition to emergency remote delivery. My practice with faculty is guided by the beliefs that all want to teach well, that in the 'classroom' all are teachers and all are learners, and that there is no single path to great teaching – but everyone has their own path. If I can help with supplies and a backpack for the journey, great. If you need me to walk along with you part of the way and chat about what we see – that's fine too.

**"Alison has always been fantastic as Crawford's Manager of Teaching and Learning, but since 2020 it's been hard to imagine how the school could function without her. [...] Most of all, I've valued her calm demeanour, her irrepressible humour, and the confidence she has shown in us as teachers faced with a new world."**

POGO convener



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## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Dr Janelle Hamilton

Medical School, ANU College of Health & Medicine

**Synopsis:** Dr Janelle Hamilton led a team that maintained clinical education for junior medical students during the 2020 COVID pandemic. She developed innovative online learning and on-campus teaching intensives to maintain students' motivation and academic standards. Janelle's responsive and encouraging approach has provided students with the support and skills they need to achieve at the highest levels, and to be well prepared for the next phase of their degree and their future careers.

I am an Academic Coordinator teaching clinical skills to junior medical students. As a GP for over 30 years, I understand the importance of good communication as well as strong academic skills. In 2020, my challenge was to convert a program that fundamentally involves physical interactions – learning how to interview a patient, or to examine a heart – to online teaching using innovative approaches to maintain academic standards. I created learning and teaching initiatives to enrich the student experience and helped sustain the momentum to train an essential future workforce.

My team and I worked in a rapidly changing environment developing 'bootcamps' to teach and assess over 200 students in small groups, with constant rearrangements to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions. Students completed their clinical skills teaching and after the standard assessments, progressed at the end of 2020. This maintained students' confidence in the program and in the standard of their teaching.

I aim for students to have an education with excellent academic outcomes, in a safe and supportive learning environment. I want to give students the skills to become ethical and compassionate practitioners – to learn how to work in teams; to learn from their mistakes; to know how to avoid burnout; and to thrive in a long and rewarding career.

The "COVID crisis" paradoxically provided opportunities to develop our program and achieve outcomes that I did not think possible at the beginning of 2020. Although many of the changes in 2020 started as 'emergency remote teaching', I was able to review and modify the whole program for 'fitness for purpose' in a new learning environment. Many of these changes will be kept long term. I developed innovative technological and other resources to preserve educational standards and create an environment that maintained morale and supported enhanced student learning. The reward has been to see the student group develop and progress despite these trials. As others have said with regards to teaching in a pandemic: "There may be no better time in history to learn what it means to be a physician."

"Hi Janelle, I've just had a few students message me and say how brilliant they think this session is going so far. [...] Just wanted to let you know how well received it's been (and we're only 30 minutes in!)."



Click to view the videos

<https://bit.ly/3DsatMo>

## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Dr Di Whiteman

Medical School, ANU College of Health & Medicine

**Synopsis:** Dr Di Whiteman (AFHEA) redesigned and delivered the Phase 2 Clinical Skills program at ANU Medical School following her appointment as the inaugural Academic Coordinator of the program in 2020. Di's experience as an emergency doctor, supervisor of medical students on clinical placements, and tutor at ANU Medical School provided the foundation to revitalise the program curriculum to extend and integrate students' prior learning whilst developing new knowledge and skills.

In both my teaching and curriculum design, I focus on creating a safe but challenging learning environment. I convey the importance of active participation of all students to foster the development of knowledge and skills that will enable them to be great doctors.

The Phase 2 Clinical Skills program extends the history and examination skills learnt in Phase 1, teaching the procedural skills required of an intern and an innovative simulation program. A unique challenge for the Phase 2 Clinical Skills program is that tutorials are entirely delivered by volunteer clinicians (200+ in 2021).

For the year 3 program, I successfully designed and implemented student resources including tutorial pre-reading, Key Step Guides for procedures and videos demonstrating correct technique. Innovative tutor resources, embedding pedagogy and evidence-based feedback methods, were also implemented to effectively deliver the program whilst

simultaneously enthusing students and tutors.

The Year 4 simulation program provides incremental opportunities for final year students to work in small teams to manage acutely deteriorating patients, developing the skills of patient assessment and management, and teamwork and communication. Students are required to apply knowledge and skills at the bedside, communicate with their team, utilise available resources and call for senior assistance using an evidence-based handover tool, emulating the requirements of junior doctors in the clinical environment. This program immerses students in a safe learning environment, where mistakes are normalised and reflection on performance is encouraged in structured debriefings under the supervision of two experienced clinicians. As opportunities to develop these skills are rare in the clinical environment, this program is vital to equip students with the skills they require to practice safely as interns.

The Clinical Skills Centre at ANU Medical School comes to life every week during simulation tutorials and student enthusiasm is palpable. As I listen to the laughter and enthusiastic discussion emanating from each classroom, I smile knowing that our students feel safe in an environment that fosters active learning.

**"Her passion is evident to all her students, and she inspires each and every one of us to be better students for our PATIENTS."**

Student nomination for Teacher of the Year Award, 2019/2020



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<https://bit.ly/3DsatMo>



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Associate Professor Nick Cox

Research School of Chemistry, ANU College of Science

**Synopsis:** Associate Professor Nick Cox has developed online and flipped classroom resources that promote self-directed learning, which provides training that is both discipline specific and translational, catering to all students regardless of their background or aspirations. The highly structured curriculum allows students to engage with the material at their own pace and encourages peer-to-peer learning.

I want all my students to have fun while learning. To simultaneously feel they have a high degree of agency and autonomy, while also feeling continuously supported. After some experimentation, I found that a structured flipped classroom model works best for me in achieving these goals. I shifted and condensed all lecture content online, with contact hours now devoted to students working in small groups. This lets the student progress through the material at their own pace and frees up time for me to work individually with students, to better encourage and support their learning.

I believe you learn while doing. All my lectures and workshops are now centred on short quizzes designed to reinforce and extend the concepts covered. As so much of chemistry is about what molecules look like, I've increasingly moved towards setting graphical problems – puzzles and the like, where students use software to visualise molecules in 3D, and then use this to fill in diagrams. I like puzzles. A good puzzle has its own logic, a simple set of rules or guiding principles, which are usually self-explanatory. The best ones can be attacked from different angles, giving

you multiple opportunities to succeed, and as a by-product actually teach you something practical. By using puzzles, my aim is: i) to give students a window into real-life chemical research, while not overwhelming them with detail; and ii) to begin their training in computational chemistry, which now forms part of the basic skill set of any chemistry student, regardless of the sub-discipline.

The online resources described above represent a mix of assessed and non-assessed modules all incorporated into the ANU teaching platform, Wattle. By using both automated and instructor graded tasks, individualised feedback can be provided immediately or within 12-24 hours of submission. And as feedback is continuous, students can self-assess their progress – identify what specifically they are having difficulty with, as opposed to whole topics or sections – making it easier for them to approach me or their peers with questions. This is particularly important for the compressed (Summer) version of the course in which students can fall quickly behind as a completely new set of material is covered each day.

**"I really liked the short lectures with a quiz approach to teaching the content. I found it far easier to conceptualise the topic when I got to do hands on activities."**

Student comment, SELT 2021



Click to view the videos

<https://bit.ly/3DsatMo>

## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Mr Andrew Henderson

Law School, ANU College of Law

**Synopsis:** Andrew Henderson is a PhD candidate, sessional tutor and research assistant at the ANU College of Law. Andrew was co-author of the ANU College of Law's review of its LLB (Hons) program. The final report was a unique and comprehensive statement to guide the future of the college's program. With Andrew's assistance, the review's recommendations ensure that the college continues to be a leader in legal education

**M**y objective as co-author of the ANU College of Law's LLB (Hons) program was to ensure that the review's recommendations were not just on the leading edge but ahead of it. In law, there are strong elements of history and tradition that frame its professional identity. At the same time, the profession faces significant challenges through automation, distributed transactions (e.g. blockchain) and AI. To make a persuasive argument, I drew together historical and theoretical research on the history and future of legal education to develop evaluative criteria against which to assess the existing program ranging from original accounts of colonial law schools to current predictions of the future of legal practice.

Consistent with the University's own strategic vision, teaching and learning within a discipline needs to have a national and global context. A discipline cannot be entirely inward-looking. Every discipline, including law, needs to be outward-looking and understand its place in helping to resolve 'wicked problems'. Given the imperative to future-proof the program, relying solely on academic research was

not enough. The views of current students, alumni and employers are essential to understand their perspective on real-time challenges to the legal profession and how legal education might have to adapt. We also need to look outside traditional scholarly sources to online discussions, blogs and even Reddit to identify emerging undercurrents.

Throughout researching and writing the report, I drew on my unique and diverse professional background. I understood the discipline and the broader context of history and tradition. But I also have experience in both the theory and practice of teaching and learning. I have taught in different settings since 2011. I have a deep commitment to authentic, hands-on learning activities. I have designed courses intended to carry abstract legal concepts into practical activities and assessments. My diverse experience meant that the report's contents were firmly based on practical concerns.

**"The review has led to improvements to our LLB degree which will only enhance its already considerable reputation and will provide law students with a 21st century legal education in the years to come. This would not have been possible without Mr Henderson and thus his development of this program truly demonstrate excellence and an outstanding command of his field."**



## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Dr Xuan Liang

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Aiming to educate and foster future data scientists, Dr Xuan Liang focuses on raising students' awareness of data importance, developing their statistical thinking and analytical ability, and preparing them for future careers in the era of big data. Xuan employs an array of tailored teaching methods, including motivating students' interest and contextualising statistical concepts within browser-based apps. Xuan was awarded the CBE 2020 Teaching Commendation for Outstanding Teaching.

To embrace the world of big data, the demands of data scientists and data analytical skills are increasing all over the world. Proper implementation of statistical analysis first requires a solid understanding of statistical concepts and methodologies. To help students better understand complex statistical concepts, I developed interactive browser-based apps by Shiny. Shiny is an R package that makes it easy to build interactive web apps straight from R. The advantage of using Shiny apps is that students can visually and interactively conduct numerical experiments with simple clicks or moving sliders in a browser. It is not only user-friendly for those students who have no experience in programming, but also stimulates students' interest and independent thinking when they employ the apps and investigate statistical findings on their own. With more hands-on experience in such apps, students' learning experiences become more engaging,

and students can explore more in-depth aspects of statistics.

Another important aspect for data analysis is to master a statistical programming language. However, students expressed concerns about programming due to their lack of training. To make it easier for students to understand the statistical techniques and R programming, I wrote my lecture notes by R Markdown, an R package which can embed R programming in high-quality documents, including reports, slides, and even books and websites.

The use of R Markdown further allows mathematical formulae, R commands, coding comments, and output, all shown in the same slide, which makes my lecture slides more organised. Since the statistical output is automatically embedded in my lecture notes, it immediately gives students a sense of what these R programming commands are for, and how they can be connected to data analysis. In my course, students gained a lot of confidence and had a lot of joy in statistical analysis with R programming.

**"I cannot overstate this, I did my undergrad in maths and never liked programming but now that I took this course, I love R. I think the course and the lecturer did a fantastic job helping us feel comfortable with coding."**

Student comment, SELT 2021



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<https://bit.ly/3DsAtMo>

## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Dr Erica Seccombe

School of Art and Design, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** A cutting-edge course, *Art in the Digital Age*, equips students with critical knowledge of the impact of digital technologies on contemporary art and life. Who knew that artists are often the pioneers and inventors of the technologies and technological language we use today? For students to overcome threshold concepts and begin problem solving, this course is transformative in its delivery, drawing on a wide range of perspectives.

My redesign and renaming of the course *Art in the Digital Age*, reflects the fact that most students enrolling in the course in 2020 are 'digital natives', and all are dependent on a networked society as users, rather than as pioneers. Teaching this demographic creates new challenges. What tools might they need to engage in their own time more critically and creatively? For students to overcome threshold concepts and begin problem solving, this course is transformative in its delivery, drawing on a wide range of perspectives. It supports a significant shift in a student's understanding of the subject so that it is difficult to unlearn. As my teaching practice is integrative, I enjoy revealing the connections between global subjects such as surveillance, interactivity, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, cyberethics, data mining, decolonisation, posthumanism, gender and race politics, new materialism, multispecies thinking and the Anthropocene, and then binding them specifically to the discipline of art practice in the digital age. As many of the topics are potentially difficult to grasp, counter-

intuitive, and the works are non-traditional and conceptually challenging, the course also tests the students' pre-conceived ideas and unconscious bias they may carry for both art and technology.

To enhance student learning in this "year from hell" – to quote the Vice-Chancellor – I adapted to a synchronous lecture program that included an extraordinary number of important guest speakers and colleagues who have made original contributions to this field. Interested in the cycle of engagement through which the passive learner becomes an active learner, my specific approach to relating practice and research is informed by my experience of teaching studio skills, such as drawing and printmaking, where learning is understood through doing and theory. I have transferred this pedagogy of 'praxis' to lecturing in art theory and art history. These ideas follow contemporary theories of progressive education, where the curriculum is designed to enable students to push their conceptual thresholds toward "a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something." My co-tutor and colleague Dr Tony Curran reflected on this year's course, "Erica was able to adapt the global catastrophe of a pandemic to make an art historical subject highly practical by aligning the online mode of delivery to the subject of investigation – the intersection of art practice and digital technology."

**"The course was an incredible learning experience and was taught with finesse."**

Student comment, SELT 2020





## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

#### Mr Barry Yau

School of Legal Practice, ANU College of Law

**Synopsis:** Barry Yau (SFHEA) is a senior lecturer at the ANU School of Legal Practice, ANU College of Law. Barry convenes *Commercial Practice* in the Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, the final qualification for students entering legal practice. Barry was awarded the 2020 College Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, and works tirelessly to bridge the gap between legal theory and law practice to prepare students for legal careers.

If my teaching at ANU can be remembered for just one thing, I'd like it to be for inspiring students in the curriculum and beyond by elevating the virtual learning environment through the Humboldtian model of unity of teaching and research. Soon after I came on board at ANU, my supervisor serendipitously distributed an academic journal article that continues to have a profound effect on my teaching (Evers, 2011). The article motivated me to unify my teaching with research, consistent with the Humboldtian model, all in an online space. This led to my launch of what has become a qualitative longitudinal research project that examines the lives of law students and lawyers. I've been fortunate to draw upon the research to inform my teaching in ways I could not have foreseen when I first started at ANU.

One of my primary teaching goals has been to enliven *Commercial Practice* to make it more relatable, relevant, appealing and even fun. In collaboration with my colleague, Associate Professor Vivien Holmes SFHEA, I integrated an 'embedded'

ethical issue in the assessment task to dispel misconceptions that legal ethics occurs in a 'silo', by presenting the salient reality that ethical dilemmas arise in many commercial law situations.

I also augment my *Commercial Practice* by blogging my research, observations and legal career experiences to my students in an informative, engaging manner with a touch of humour, empathy and pop culture. My blogs aligned with the truism "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." My weekly blogging of my research observations about commercial law perceptions, wellbeing, work-life balance, resilience and perseverance, and informed career choices, brought me closer to empathising with my students and their ambitions, aspirations and anxieties, as they get one step closer to a legal career and beyond.

**"Only once before throughout my law degree and now graduate diploma have I met a legal academic who has been such an instinctive teacher. He goes much further than just delivering course content in an online environment – he encourages interactivity, independent learning and enjoying the experience of learning. I was at a crossroads as to whether to continue this course and, unbeknownst to him, Mr Yau was a big factor in my continuing through to completion."**

Student comment



Click to view the videos  
<https://bit.ly/3DsatsMo>





## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPERVISION

#### Associate Professor Benjamin Penny

School of Culture, History and Language, Australian Centre on China in the World, ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

**Synopsis:** In Associate Professor Benjamin Penny's supervision, he tries to develop students' critical thinking, curiosity, disciplinary self-reflection, academic humility, courage to try out ideas and skill to see things differently. He does not regard graduation as signalling the end of the relationship between supervisor and student but continues to mentor his students.

The scholarly worlds in which PhD supervisors work are all, by necessity, specialised. One of the most notable distinguishing features of Chinese Studies is the set of demands it places on scholars linguistically, especially those who work on pre-twentieth century topics. In addition, as China has been a literate culture for more than 2,500 years, the Sinological method—that is, how a scholar must deal with this vast written heritage—is a highly-developed, specialised skill that must also be mastered.

In my supervisions, I pay close attention to the technical aspects of the student's work, often having long sessions where we read texts together so that I can assess how well the student is really understanding their sources. We talk through their drafts as well as through important scholarly work in their field to make sure they recognise what makes the work remarkable. I also talk with them about my own current work—where applicable—typically in order to show them that sometimes struggling with the direction of your ideas is normal. I encourage them to think about the premises on which their work is based, to reflect on why and how they do the work in

the way they do, to wonder if the material they are working on could be usefully viewed through a different lens, and to try out new ideas on me with the confidence that I will respect what they say. Finally, I hope I help them realise the intrinsic value of academic research, and to see that making knowledge, transmitting research results, participating in a community of scholars and aiding in the formation of new generations of scholars are all noble causes.

I model my supervisory practice on that of my ANU PhD supervisor Bill Jenner, who worked hard to engender trust between student and supervisor. He empathised with students in the difficulties they were going through academically; he encouraged every student to make their own discoveries and listened and showed patience with them; he challenged ideas gently and firmly; he read students' work respectfully, closely and thoroughly and returned it in a timely way. These practices enabled Bill's students to perform at their best and are ones I have tried to follow in my own career as a PhD supervisor.

**"Dr Penny was attuned to the level of support I required at different stages of my project to ensure its steady advance toward completion. [...] Dr Penny ensured that delight in learning and discovery remained a part of the research process."**

Dr Nathan Woolley, University of Glasgow, ANU PhD 2010, Crawford Prize winner

## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPERVISION

#### Dr Zhengdao Ye

School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Dr Zhengdao Ye adopts a bespoke approach to supervision that fosters scholarship, intellectual rigour, plurality of perspectives, social responsibility and a sense of belonging through a combination of formal supervision and semi-formal group learning and consistent modelling of the research process.

I don't think there is one supervision style that suits all my students, and I vary my style in accordance with a range of factors, the most important element of which is the candidate themselves. This premise of adopting a bespoke style also helps to define what I want to achieve in my supervision – to foster scholarship and intellectual rigour, to nurture multiple perspectives and social responsibility and to ensure the overall wellbeing of the candidates.

In practice, I tap into three 'elements', which I believe can make a difference to the quality of a candidate's research experience.

The first is the potential of pluralistic viewpoints and perspectives which candidates themselves bring to their research project and broader scholarly debates. Realising that potential requires firm grounding in discipline knowledge, and a high level of awareness on the part of candidates of what is unique and distinct about their own 'scholarly position'. I scaffold my students' discipline knowledge by offering diverse coursework and by guiding them to finding their own 'scholarly footing'. I channel their

own views and perspectives through sustained conversations.

Modelling the research process is crucial to developing intellectual rigour. I focus on 'text work/identify work' and help candidates find their voice in writing through timely, constructive and supportive feedback. I encourage my students to reconceptualise thesis writing not only as construction of new knowledge, but also as a scholar-in-the-making process.

The second element is the research candidates themselves as a supporting network. I facilitate the formation of this network by creating a semi-formal learning space in which candidates come together to learn from and support each other.

The third element is my academic network. I have supported the academic and professional development of my students by creating a range of opportunities through my existing network, such as a visiting PhD opportunity, presentations at workshops and international conferences and publication in journals following masterclasses I organised.

**"She has challenged me to set and reach goals I didn't think were possible, provided endless feedback on works in progress, given time generously to our meetings, encouraged me to develop across all academic areas, and supported me to become someone I am proud of."**



Click to view the videos  
<https://bit.ly/3DsatM6>

## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

#### Ms Anna Buckley

Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

**Synopsis:** Anna Buckley's sincerity brings an energetic, nurturing and research-led approach to tutoring that inspires students to see patterns and connections not previously imagined. Anna explores Chinese politics empathetically and gracefully, sharing stories from experiences stimulating curiosity and collaborative conversations in a collegial, inclusive environment. Anna's infectious passion and integrity stem from three gentle convictions, diversity is strength, belief in every student's potential, and the notion that quality education transforms lives, communities, and nations.

Australia is grappling with a transforming geostrategic and geopolitical environment, and the course I tutor, *The Politics of China*, is at the heart of matters. The beauty of this course is it draws on students from around the world. The diversity in cultures, discipline and language expertise is a significant asset. Each student brings unique perspectives, analysis and understanding of China, its wonders, influences and impact. These are strengths I try to harness throughout the course. I have the future in mind, knowing that my students will be major decision-makers, leaders, policymakers and practitioners and will have the power to build relationships and shape policy for more peaceful and understanding interactions and dialogue. Thus, motivating and inspiring students to delve deeper into Chinese politics to gain a more balanced, considered and in-depth knowledge in a warm and collegial environment is at the heart of my tutoring strategy.

This is no easy task as students must collaborate and discuss often contentious issues, connecting dots and patterns in ways not previously conceptualised. To meet this challenge, my tutoring approach is grounded in four fundamental principles: caring, listening, authentic teaching and experiential learning. In this way, trust and rapport are fostered collectively so that individuals share their discoveries, down to earth stories and quirks. Students not only learn new knowledge but are also empowered to foster empathy and respect essential skills in *Politics of China* classes. This builds confidence, understanding and self-efficacy in ways that assist students to see beyond their original horizon. Thus, one of the most exciting things about tutoring at the coalface is that students are empowered to take ownership and responsibility of their learning. Indeed, tutoring Chinese politics in this manner builds confidence in students, builds intellectual and emotional bridges that balances an insight into a 5,000-year-old history with a diverse array of ethnic peoples, cultures and perspectives. It is a great privilege to tutor this course and certainly one of my life's greatest honours to be a small part of paying it forward to the next generation.

**"Anna demonstrates deep care and appreciation for her students. She engages students through tutoring methods I have never witnessed. Through this approach, Anna pushes students to be the absolute best they can be."**





## CANDIDATE - HIGHLY COMMENDED

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

#### Dr Baptiste Brossard

School of Sociology, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Dr Baptiste Brossard is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology. He combines elements inspired by the Community of Inquiry framework, the Humboldtian model of higher education and the Bourdieusian sociology of education to design innovative, creative and experience-focused ways of teaching sociology. This includes the design of a collective-research teaching on utopian literature, the use of video assessments in introductory sociology classes and the implementation of practical experiments in methodology seminars.

**W**hen I teach, I always think of how I felt when I was taught sociology for the first time, in 2002: a sudden and somewhat dizzying feeling of awareness. This memory keeps me passionate about my work, hoping to share with my students this realisation that more than an academic discipline, sociology is a way of seeing the world that goes beyond the classroom. Pedagogy translates ideals into action, and I converted this idea into three principles that guide my approach to teaching.

First, privileging practical exercises over theoretical discussions enables students to experience course contents, through activities such as collective observations and in-class experiments. This approach is inspired by the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007), itself influenced by pragmatist philosophy (Dewey, 1938), that places shared experiences at the core of the learning process.

Second, teaching and research are intertwined processes, in which teaching

offers an introduction into the practicality of knowledge production. The model of apprenticeship applied to higher education (Billett, 2016) proved effective in sociology with the School of Chicago (Ohm, 1988; Orcutt, 1996), that produced pathbreaking studies through this method. My own teachers applied this method when I was studying at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris. This approach is also rooted in the Humboldtian model of higher education, adapted to the contemporary university life (Macfarlane and Erikson, 2020; Pritchard, 2004).

Third, beyond degrees, courses produce memories for cohorts of future citizens. From a social and political perspective, teaching is a form of community service. This idea contrasts with the trend towards individualism, marketisation and consumerism in higher education, whose effects on learning outcomes and inequalities are concerning (Tomlison, 2017; Harrisson and Risler, 2015). Studying Bourdieu's sociology of education and the pedagogical reflections it unfolded regarding social justice (Watkins, 2018), led me to value collective activities beyond individuals, and community engagement beyond university.

**"Baptiste is one of the few sociology teachers that base their lectures off of theory, which has been incredibly helpful in showing clearly why these sociological theories are important even if they are decades old."**

Student comment



CANDIDATE - HIGHLY COMMENDED

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

**Intifur Chowdhury**

School of Politics and International Relations, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Intifur Chowdhury is a passionate political science teacher who takes the responsibility to empower the future custodians of democracy. She uses evidence-based, feedback-informed teaching strategies to equip students with the tools to take charge of their own learning and apply it to the real world. She leverages on the diversity in learner types to encourage students to challenge their political worldviews in a constructive way. Intifur received the 2020 CASS Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Tutoring.

Learning – much like exploration – is a personal activity. I consider it as a journey across challenging, but interesting, countryside terrains. Here, I see myself as a local guide who has previously been to these terrains but is still exploring – because the countryside is continually changing, always presenting something new to learn (much like the politics discipline). As a guide, it is my responsibility to equip students with maps (learning outcomes), compasses and other travel tools (learning activities) that will help them ace their journeys (learning).

Like travellers, no two learners are the same. My teaching approach aims to address educational disadvantage of marginalised groups. Upon reflection, I realised that there are both visible and invisible differences between students that impact their learning. It has been easy to make my classes more socially inclusive towards visible diversity, such as sex, race and ethnicity. However, it is more difficult to cater for invisible diversity, such as the differences in health status, sexuality,

marital status and learner types. While grappling with the challenges presented by the global pandemic, I realised that honestly communicating my attempt to cater for all learner types is the best way to build trust-based relationships with students, who then feel comfortable to ask for adjustments to better their learning experiences.

Like the exploration journey, a learning environment is the most effective when it is designed to care for individual learners. Employing the multi-sensory teaching (MST) method, I design my tutorials based on three main learning styles – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. At the start of the semester, my students take an online test to recognise their preferred way of learning. I then pack tutorials with versatile activities which invite, challenge and allow students to choose their own ways of working. This method helped me keep the learning relevant and engaging even during the COVID-19 teaching disruption, as it catered for all three types of learners. Notably, this design helped to 'humanise' the virtual classroom, and to alleviate the inherent hierarchy that exists between the educator and the student, which to some extent presents roadblocks to genuine, trust-based connections.

**"Your work in 'humanising the classroom' is highly impressive, as is your self-awareness. It is evident that you are a committed educator who possesses a sincere heart for teaching."**

EFS Assessor, 2020



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<https://bit.ly/3DganMo>

CANDIDATE - HIGHLY COMMENDED

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

### Karen Cooke

School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

**Synopsis:** Karen Cooke is a PhD candidate in Biological Anthropology, and was a recipient of the University Medal in 2016. She was the recipient of the 2020 CASS Dean's Commendation for Tutoring and Demonstrating. Karen incorporates novel technology-based approaches to teaching to create positive, engaging and supportive approaches to online learning.

**T**utors are more than just educators. We create communities that support and engage our students, enriching their learning environment.

University isn't only the classroom, it's the space around it. While teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic, I worked to build a sense of community through informal spaces around class time, allowing students to build familiarity between each other and feel comfortable contributing during class. I began opening lectures with 'get to know you' questions, and light-hearted opinion debates (such as Podcast vs Music on long drives) to engage students as they entered the Zoom session. I sought to replicate the hallway conversations that occur outside the lecture theatre in a digital space. This lets students talk and get to know each other informally, building relationships and encouraging them to participate in class. After class, we would often stay for informal discussions about studies and life, anything that was bothering or exciting my students, mirroring the conversations that would take place on the walk back to my office.

I used the challenge of transitioning to online learning mid-semester due to

COVID-19 as an opportunity to experiment with new technology-based learning tools. I approach teaching creatively, and I am always looking for new ways to improve classes and engage with students. This included using non-traditional resources, such as online 3D models, podcasts and documentaries, which provided an alternative for students struggling to focus through lock-down, as well as additional casual learning for those wanting to challenge themselves intellectually. Technology provided the means to create an active conversation between myself and students while teaching online. This enabled me to foster peer-to-peer and independent learning, while encouraging students' enthusiasm. I made the online classroom an advantage, using technology to drive engagement, rather than an obstacle to overcome.

My greatest satisfaction in teaching is sharing my passion for learning with my students. Education has the power to expose students to new ideas, points of view and experiences that will drive them both professionally and personally. Sharing my enthusiasm with students, and seeing them develop their own, is both motivating and inspiring.

**"Karen's record of accomplishment in teaching is exceptional as she is able to balance her consummate professionalism with her enthusiasm for both teaching and the subject matter."**

Associate Professor Alison Behie, Head of School, School of Archaeology and Anthropology



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<https://bit.ly/3DwatMa>





CANDIDATE - HIGHLY COMMENDED

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

### Mr Zhi Yang Tho

Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics,  
ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Zhi Yang Tho is a PhD candidate in Statistics at the ANU College of Business and Economics. He has tutored under- and postgraduate Statistics courses for over two years and was awarded the 2020 CBE Teaching Commendation for Outstanding Tutoring. Zhi Yang is committed to inspiring students to learn and enjoy statistics using interesting, real-world problems.

The biggest challenge in teaching a first-year Statistics course is that students without a statistical background often find themselves getting lost amidst the abstract statistical concepts introduced. To address this gap in student learning, I use contemporary real-life issues to motivate students to think critically about the concept being taught. For instance, I used the example of COVID-19 testing to introduce the idea of false positives and false negatives in hypothesis testing, which enabled students to establish a close connection between the course material and real-life applications.

Inspired by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, students are encouraged to analyse datasets in class using statistical software. Realising that students have different levels of proficiency in those software, I provide some hints, such as the key function to guide them in the right direction. This process facilitates the development of research skills and motivates students to consciously link these practical experiences to the concepts learnt in the lecture.

To promote an inclusive learning experience and encourage students'

participation in tutorials, students are told that 'There's no such thing as a stupid question' in the first tutorial of every semester. I take students' questions seriously and frame my response in understandable ways to create positive feedback loops, as this makes me more approachable, so students are more willing to take part in discussions with me.

"Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative." –Hattie and Timperley (2007). With this in mind, I generally provide just the right amount of feedback for students as I hold to the principle that the main purpose of feedback is to facilitate improvement rather than exposing mistakes. When marking the course assessment, the strategy that I employ is to put myself in students' shoes, which allows me to understand the thinking and logic employed by students. In addition to what went wrong in the student's attempt, doing so enables me to understand why the student made a particular mistake. From there, I can provide customised feedback to students according to their strengths and weaknesses.

**"The real-world statistical examples that Zhi Yang gave are interesting, and they sparked my interest in learning Stat(istics)."**

Student comment, 2019

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## CANDIDATE

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TUTORING OR DEMONSTRATING

#### Mr Dixin Wu

Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business & Economics

**Synopsis:** Dixin Wu is a PhD candidate at the Research School of Accounting, ANU College of Business and Economics. Dixin has abundant experience in tutoring accounting, statistics and econometrics courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Students' learning interests and learning efficiency are at the forefront of Dixin's teaching. Dixin's sustained excellence in teaching was recognised with the 2020 CBE Teaching Commendation for Outstanding Tutoring.

There is a Chinese saying that "give a man a fish, he eats for a day. Teach him to fish, he will never go hungry." My tutorial classes aim not only to help students better understand accounting information (the narrow goal), but also equip them with a technique to efficiently mine, process and analyse the information ('new knowledge') they may encounter in other courses (the broad goal), as well as in their future careers (the ultimate goal).

To achieve my teaching goals, I have developed my distinctive teaching style with the following characteristics:

(i) I cook delicious 'fish dishes' for my students. The course I teach (*Financial Statements and Reporting*) is a foundation course of financial accounting, in which some students have little or no accounting background. Therefore, the greatest value of my tutorials is to help students discover the best and simplest way to understand accounting jargon (making 'fish dishes'), rather than simply regurgitating textbook or lecture contents (feeding on 'raw fishes'). Students truly enjoy the Feynman

technique that I adopted (a mental model to convey information using concise thoughts and simple language, created by the Nobel Prize winner Professor Richard Feynman) and my usage of plain language, real-life examples and fun games to explain abstract accounting concepts and journal entries.

(ii) I cook but I do not deliver 'fish meat' into students' mouths. Through the inquiry-based approach, I always start a topic by asking questions instead of telling the answers or conclusions. In this way, students will explore what they want to know and gain a deeper understanding of the accounting concepts or journal entries, instead of merely memorising.

(iii) I also impart how to 'fish'. After several weeks' training, many students understand how to acquire and analyse relevant information to study a new topic. Guest tutors are then invited to lead the class discussion or share their novel problem-solving methods with the remaining class. By doing so, students' learning capacity is upgraded from 'mere input' to 'output'.

**"Having a responsible member like Dixin in the team gives me (the lecturer) the peace in mind that students are well looked after."**

Dr Stanley Choi, Course convener



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<https://bit.ly/90satMo>





## RECIPIENT

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR PROGRAMS THAT ENHANCE LEARNING

**Marina Lobastov, Richard Lander-Clarke, Sharon Elliott, Rebekka Leary, Grant Melvin, Melinda Drummond, Dale Newbery, Sophia Xian, Timothy East**

CEIST – College Education Innovation Support Team, ANU College of Law

**Synopsis:** CEIST (College Education Innovation and Support Team) at the ANU College of Law supports the college's operational and strategic educational initiatives. CEIST staff have a range of academic, professional and discipline backgrounds, a key strength that is drawn upon to provide pedagogical and technical support for educational activities and innovations.

The team focusses on various aspects of improving student learning and engagement, be it through supporting academics with technology, pedagogical suggestions and advice, or directly through mentoring.

The team are instrumental throughout a student's experience from before they start their course (engaging with setting up Wattle sites), training new academics, developing learning outcomes, supporting the creation of resources, managing sites, mentoring students, attention to accessibility, assessment design, feedback suggestions, exam support, through to marking support and the archival of sites.

CEIST supports staff in creating resources to enrich the student experience, with reference to pedagogical literature and research into contemporary, best practice techniques. Developing media-rich resources deepens student engagement and provides a learning experience that far outweighs 'course notes and quiz' teaching.

The team works with a range of technology in supporting the college, and collaborative technologies such as discussion forums, chat and web conferencing are used to

promote engagement and learning. CEIST collaborates with lecturers to understand their requirement and assists them with new technologies through individual support, group training sessions and 'just-in-time' learning.

The Peer Assisted Learning mentor program aims to support all first year students. The program sits within CEIST and, under the direction of the Deputy Manager, is run by later year students. This involves weekly session planning, pairs of mentors running sessions for students, feedback and support, pastoral care, session observation and reflection on practice. The program now runs over the entire year and support and training is provided to the mentors in technology, mental health and pedagogical approaches. Mentors undertake peer observations of each other's sessions throughout the semester and meet to discuss these over coffee. Mentors also write reflections twice a semester on the program, their own experiences and their pedagogical development. Their personal development and joy at a genuine chance to reflect is a beautiful read.

**"Being able to easily contact people who work in the Law School, and intimately know our courses and students, is priceless. Course support (and Ceist more generally) save me so much time and energy and help me to be the best possible teacher."**

Feedback from the 2021 academic survey



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## CREDITS

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