Dear Professor Griffin and Professor Shanahan, Research Institute and Research Centre Directors, Heads of School and Research Committee Chairs, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address your Division’s researchers who are receiving Supported Researcher Awards today, as well as those staff who are past awardees and staff who have applied for ARC DECRA, Discovery or Linkage grants in the last rounds.

Ladies and Gentleman, I am delighted to be here today.

This Division has come a long way over a very short period of time. There is no question that you are talented researchers. We have seen evidence of that today.

BUT I want you to raise your game.

I have a vision for UniSA. It is an ambitious vision – but one that I know we can achieve.

I want to see UniSA ranked among the Top Ten universities in Australia within the next 5 years. This will require us (i) to achieve at least half a dozen ERA 5 scores, several ERA 4 scores and no ERA 2 and ERA 1 scores; and (ii) to increase our annual research revenue to $80-100 million.

As I said, it is an ambitious aim. To get there, I need everyone to come on board – every Division, every researcher, every individual who works in this university.

Here at the Division of Business, I believe you have a key role to play. I believe that this Division can achieve one or two ERA 5 scores within the next three years. Why am I so confident that you can do this? Well, of the four divisions at UniSA, this is the Division that teaches entrepreneurship amongst other things. And isn’t entrepreneurship the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled?! I would like each one of you to unleash the entrepreneur from within.

But let me explain HOW, I think, we could achieve these ambitious goals as part of a much bigger picture.

Universities care about data and rankings. But data and rankings aren’t everything. Yes, we care about ERA and world rankings, and income from the ARC and industry to support our research programs. Numbers and data are used to assess our performance both internally and externally.
But those statistics are just part of the story. Achieving a high ERA ranking is about more than just numbers. The world is changing and we have to change with it. We need to align our research with our values and ensure that those values are embedded in a culture of innovation that pursues excellence with relevance, throughout the university.

So, today, I’m asking you to raise your game for a reason. I’m asking you to think, carefully, about your values, your work and how you can contribute to change that will have far-reaching repercussions out in society. Taking this approach will ensure greater recognition and enhanced performance – in terms of research income, ERA rankings and global reputation – for your division and the university as a whole. I’m asking you to see your research and your role here, at UniSA, as part of something much, much bigger.

You don’t need me to tell you that the business world has been hit by a crisis of confidence. We’ve seen economic scandal – the fall of Enron – and we’ve seen ethical scandal – evidence of phone hacking at Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation.

The world has looked on – us included – and we’ve shaken our heads. We know that business can be something better. We know that ethics are integral to responsible, sustainable business.

So this is one reason why I want you to think ‘Big’. I want you to think how we, as a university, can respond to a world that is looking for leadership and guidance. How can we stand out as an institution committed to ethical and socially responsible behaviour? How can we ensure that our pursuit of excellence – in research and education - is also relevant to a society seeking leadership, guidance and change? How can we ensure that excellence and relevance are equal in everything we do?

To find out how – there are three questions that I’d like you to ask yourself....

First: is my work – as a teacher, researcher and service provider to community and industry – truly innovative? I have combined those three roles on purpose.

At UniSA, you are more than just an academic or just a teacher. Outstanding, passionate research inspires outstanding passionate teaching. Both, in turn, inspire proactive constructive relationships with community, industry and society as a whole. As researchers, teachers and service providers – your role as educators requires all three – each and every one of you demonstrates excellence with relevance. You may not have thought about it before, but they are central to what you do.

Now, back to the word innovative. What do we mean by that word, here at UniSA? Well my definition of ‘innovative’ is something that adds value – and value is another important word, which I’ll come back to in a moment – or it is something that changes the game in some way. It brings about positive change for the better.

So is your work here innovative? As a researcher, teacher and service provider does your work contribute value to industry, community and society?

This brings me to my second question. What does value mean to you? What does it mean for you, as a researcher, teacher and service provider at UniSA?
Value is not just about dollars. The crises we referred to earlier have proven that. When we put dollars above everything else and ignore the ethics and wider consequences, even the most successful of businesses can land themselves in trouble.

Values are about attitude, mindset and integrity. When we stand by our values, and use them to inspire our performance as researchers and educators, recognition in the form of ERA rankings and investment will follow. Values drive actions: they motivate us to do the right thing, even when we feel isolated or insecure. At UniSA, I want to see our values – as an institution – embedded in everything we do.

So what are those values? Well this is my third question to you and – as someone still relatively new to UniSA – to the university as a whole.

As I’ve explained, values will drive innovation. Innovation will keep us current and relevant in a rapidly changing world. Our values will keep us relevant. They will also feed our passion for what we do - ensuring that there is integrity between what we believe and what we do, every day.

There are five values that I want you to think about. They are values that will help us all – as a university – ensure that our work aspires to excellence with relevance. They will also ensure that we bridge the gap between research and practice, ideas and outcomes, innovation and invention and science and application.

First: Dedication. This means dedication to your research, your field and your community. It is not about yourself or pursuing work for personal gain. Dedication means putting yourself at the service of society: investing yourself in outcomes that stand to benefit everyone, not just yourself.

Second: Charity. This is the ability to put others’ needs before our own. An ability to strive towards a greater good, and value our contribution to it, rather than putting our own needs first.

Third: Prudence. This is the ability to safeguard the future, even though we choose, also, to take full advantage of the present.

Fourth: Accountability. This where we take responsibility for our actions and show leadership in our ethical conduct. We show ethical behaviour by modelling that behaviour, as researchers, teachers and service providers.

Fifth: Equity. Let’s value each other as equals. Let’s not allow hierarchy or assumptions about each other prevent us from striving, achieving and making a difference.

These are values that I am attempting to embed in my work as your DVC, responsible for research and innovation. It is my intention to help to create an environment at UniSA where success will be inevitable.

I want us to be a first-choice university for students and researchers because they know we are an institution that cares to make a difference in key areas like building sustainable communities, teaching ethical practice in journalism, developing healthy communities and other key fields.
I want us to stand out locally and internationally, not only with students but in the wider community and with industry, so that we earn the reputation for being easy to do business with.

So what does this mean for you – here – at the Division of Business?
Well, I see your role as a leading example of excellence with relevance. I think some of your work here has the potential to achieve an ERA ranking of 5. Now that may sound ambitious, but as I said at the start, I want you to think ‘Big’. And it is my belief that if you are in it for the right reasons – the pursuit of innovation with integrity with values held high – then the ERA rankings will follow.

There is no doubt in my mind that the two go hand in hand. If you stand out as innovators – responding directly to society’s priorities with new ideas, direction, discoveries and solutions – then your work will necessarily be regarded as worthy of recognition, by academia and industry.

It is also important that we do pursue recognition, through the ERA ranking system. If we are to show leadership and true innovation, if we are to challenge current thinking, we have to stand out as a beacon – lighting the way for our students, our academic peers and our industry partners. There is no point building a lighthouse where no one can see it: we have to achieve the recognition that our efforts deserve.

My hope then, today, is that I’ve shown you how to achieve the recognition that you deserve. YES, data matters, YES, we need investment and YES, we need ERA recognition. But we won’t get there unless we raise our game and change our thinking. We need to challenge ourselves, in order to challenge others; we need to live and work in integrity with our values in order to pass on those values to our students, our peers and society as a whole.

So, before I close I want to tell you a story. It is a story that I told my two sons who are working in investment banking – one in London working for Morgan Stanley and the other in Melbourne working for Deutsche Bank.

I hope that this story will inspire you, too, to pursue your work here – as researchers, teachers and service providers in the Division of Business with passion and self-belief.

Gary Hamel is a business writer and advisor who taught for many years at the London Business School. This is the advice that he would give to students on completing their MBA:

First, your widowed mother has invested her life’s savings in your company. She’s the only shareholder and that investment is her only asset. Obviously, you’ll do everything you can to make sure she has a secure and happy retirement. That’s why the idea of sacrificing the long-term for a quick payout will never occur to you.

Second, your boss is an older sibling. You’ll always be respectful, but you won’t hesitate to offer frank advice when you think it’s warranted – and you’ll never suck up.

Third, your employees are childhood chums. You’ll always give them the benefit of the doubt and do whatever you can to smooth their path. When needed, though, you’ll remind that friendship is a reciprocal responsibility. You’ll never treat them as human “resources”.
Fourth, your children are the company’s primary customers. You want to please and delight them. That means you’ll challenge anyone who suggests you should deceive or take advantage of them. You’ll never exploit a customer.

Fifth, you’re independently wealthy. You work because you want to, not because you have to – so you will never sacrifice your integrity for a promotion or a glowing performance review. You’ll quit before you compromise.

Gary Hamel goes on to say: These assumptions, if acted upon, will help nourish the seeds of stewardship in your business life and, by example, in the lives of others. As we struggle with the uniquely complex challenges of the twenty-first century, it is good to remind ourselves that what matters most now is what’s always mattered: our bedrock values.

Today, I’m asking you to think about your bedrock values and how you can continue to contribute to a new culture of innovation: research excellence with relevance, here, at UniSA. How might Gary Hamel’s advice apply to you and your work here, as a researcher, teacher and service provider to industry and society?

I congratulate you all - we are truly proud of your achievements. I look forward to working with you all to make this university even more successful: an inspiring, dynamic place of learning and leadership. A lighthouse for others to see.