From the Dean of Graduate Studies

This edition brings another good news story from our ever increasing contingent of first class PhD students – and their very skilled supervisors. Adam Loch’s doctorate passed without a single correction. Fantastic. Something to strive for, enjoy, celebrate and savour. And, for the record, not something I have ever experienced personally!

Apart from the individual achievement though, I would ask readers – mainly research students and their supervisors – to take a step back and think about the bigger picture: this is an example of a UniSA team producing excellence with relevance, an important quality that sets our research apart from that of many other universities. The relevance of this contribution to knowledge lies in its direct application to solving the Murray-Darling water dilemma – an impossible balancing act between environmental concerns and the needs of irrigators. And that is what our best research at UniSA should be about: solving real-world problems.

Prof Phil Weinstein

A two ‘1s’ success story

Continuing UniSA’s strong history of water market research, Adam Loch’s PhD thesis
Irrigator trade behaviour in southern Murray-Darling Basin water allocation markets
recently received a pass forthwith result from both examiners.

The examiners, renowned water economist Prof Michael Hanemann of Berkeley and econometrics expert Prof Robert Brooks of Monash University, felt the thesis delivered a clear and deep understanding of the literature, had policy relevance, and uniquely contributed to the field. They also reported learning a lot about Murray-Darling Basin water markets. A key outcome was a better understanding of within-season influences on water allocation trade decisions during a period when water markets were helping irrigators adjust to reduced water supply.

Adam’s principal supervisors were Prof Henning Bjornlund (who also holds a position at Lethbridge University, Canada) and Dr Sarah Wheeler. Additional supervisors were Dr Jeff Connor from CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences (Waite) and Dr Kesten Green from the International Graduate School of Business.

Adam is now employed with UniSA’s Centre for Regulation and Market Analysis as a Research Fellow under a National Climate Change Adaptation Research Foundation funded project examining water market adaptation advantages for irrigators facing climate change. This position gives him the opportunity to expand on four research publications already achieved from the thesis research.

‘UniSA provided me with an excellent array of resources, assistance and opportunities during my candidature – without which the process would have been much harder. My advice to other students would be to make sure you take full advantage of all these things while undertaking your own research journey!’

Below left: Much of Adam’s research was drought-focused
Below right: Adam with his UniSA supervisors
Meet our Vacation Research students

High-achieving undergraduate UniSA students can apply for a Vacation Research Scholarship and spend up to 8 weeks doing supervised research (up to $300 per week) between November and February.

This month’s featured student

Pablo Muslera’s project (2011/12) was 'A full accounting? A snapshot of the personnel serving in the South Australian 27th Battalion in WWI'. His supervisor was Dr Paul Skrebels (School of Communication, International Studies and Languages).

Pablo: ‘[This was] a valuable experience in primary research [and an] opportunity to:
- dig into first-hand reports and narratives of South Australian troops in training and active service
- connect with the past and individuals from a couple of generations ago
- weave this into a creative narrative that painted my own picture of the battalion
- gain an understanding of both the conditions of jungle warfare, and the candid perspective of the battalion’s commanding officer regarding decisions made up the chain of command – and how these affected his troops.

Although the bulk of the project involved recording soldiers’ names in a spreadsheet, the process of glean ing historical gems from the battalion’s unit diaries was richly rewarding. I was left with a deep appreciation for the individuals I was researching, and the efforts historians make to provide their audience with a vivid and credible portrait of the past.’

Pictured: Pablo Muslera with Dr Paul Skrebels

Meet Zhi Yi Ong – shortlisted for prestigious award

Congratulations to Zhi Yi (pictured), who was shortlisted for the Ross Wishart Memorial Award.
Read the news.com.au featured story Fat kids get a head start in the womb.

Zhi Yi: ‘I am in my final stages of my PhD and am writing up my thesis. The title is “The impact of maternal “junk food” feeding on offspring food preferences later in life: the role of the mesolimbic reward system”. My supervisor is Dr Beverly Mühlhäusler, who is affiliated with UniSA. I chose UniSA because I was interested in what my supervisor was doing and wanted to work with her. I have found people very friendly and helpful at UniSA. Some pharmacy Honours students helped me during my candidature and were fantastic. I am really interested in the area of neurobiology of food intake and reward, and would like to pursue a career in this field. After my PhD, I hope to get a postdoctoral position and contribute further in this area of research.’

Scholarship opportunities

Completion and Fee-relief Scholarships
Are you in the final stages of writing your thesis?
You may be eligible for a Completion Scholarship. Applications close 15 August.
More information and how to apply

Are you a domestic student who has exceeded the funding period for your scholarship?
You may be eligible for a Fee-relief Scholarship. Applications close 15 August.
More information and how to apply

ATN e-Grad School courses

Upcoming courses
- Practice-led research in Creative Arts, Media and Design: 6 August–10 September (MORE research methodology)
- Entrepreneurship, Project management, Leadership and communication, Research commercialisation, Public policy: 3 September–12 October (LEAP employability skills)

More information and to enrol

EndNote Research Guide

Save time by using EndNote software to create a database to collect, store and organise your references. Working with Word, you can also insert in-text citations in your document and create your reference list, all with a few clicks of the mouse!

Refer to the recently revised EndNote Research Guide for help with creating a database to manage your references and format your bibliography.

Upcoming events – keep your diary free!

Welcome Week for international students
Wed 11 July
New international research degree students, come to the HDR information session, City West campus, Room HH4-08, 2.15–4.15pm. More information

Practical Hazard Management training course
Mon 16 July
Understand more about the hazard management process within the University. Register (staff) or contact Pam Gomes phone 8302 1634 (students)

Illumination: UniSA’s research degree information evening
Wed 8 August
Meet our academics and PhD students, discover what scholarships are on offer, and learn where a research degree can take you. More information and to register

Here’s Health. Research
Wed 15 August
If you have an interest in health and medical research, we invite you to attend Here’s Health. Research.