

# Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme



**TEACHERS  
HELPING  
TEACHERS**

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## Welcome

to the second newsletter for the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS). This newsletter will be published every two months for the entirety of the program. We welcome your feedback, input and comments at any point along the way. Thanks to those who provided feedback after the first issue, your comments were most welcome and very positive.

In this second issue of the newsletter, we wish to outline the aims of the PATS project and introduce the external reference group who will provide valuable advice and guidance to inform our work. We have also included some information on the workshops which will take place over the next few months as part of PATS.

In other exciting news, Dr Angela Carbone has accepted an Associate Professor position with the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) (OPVCLT). She will begin her new role as Associate Director on November 15.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and we look forward to engaging PATS within your Faculty.

## Project Aims

A brief overview of the PATS project was provided in the first newsletter. To deepen your understanding, here are the specific project aims:

- Improve the quality of teaching and student satisfaction
- Build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers
- Introduce sustainable processes to Faculty clusters and make recommendations to university level education committees
- To create a supportive environment in which teaching networks can be expanded and the teaching-research nexus strengthened and improved

***Each month we will introduce the people whose commitment makes this program possible.***

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### **EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP**

#### ***Ms. Sally Rogan***

Sally is the Head of Student Support & Peer Learning and is also the National Trainer for Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) at the University of Wollongong. *I have a strong interest in peer learning at all levels and I am the external evaluator for a PAL project Monash is undertaking.*

#### ***Ms. Katherine Lindsay***

Katherine is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Newcastle.

#### ***Mr. Phillip Dawson***

Phillip is a Lecturer in Education Studies at Deakin University in Warrnambool. *"I have an interest in peer learning and mentoring across a variety of higher education contexts. I'm also coordinating a new and rapidly growing course and am looking for ways to support the staff teaching in it."*

#### ***A/Prof Roger Hadgraft***

Roger is the Director of the Engineering Learning Unit (ELU) at the University of Melbourne.

#### ***Dr. Jane Skalicky***

Jane is the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) Program Coordinator Lecturer, Learning & Teaching for the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) at the University of Tasmania. *"The value of peer learning, both for students and teachers, is an area I am highly interested in. The outcomes and identification of factors of success for PATS should be of interest more broadly for the HE sector in supporting quality teaching and learning."*

#### ***Dr. Wendy Sutherland-Smith***

Wendy is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Teaching and Learning at Deakin University.

## EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP

### **Independent External Evaluator:**

#### ***Dr. Leigh Wood***

Leigh is the Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Macquarie University. Her expertise is in learning and teaching and her teaching area is applied mathematics and qualitative research methods. *"My aim is to work with the Faculty to enhance the outcomes of students and to make the profession of teaching more enjoyable, effective and efficient. As Associate Dean I have implemented a faculty wide peer observation schedule and am a participant of a peer review international benchmarking exercise. Moreover, I have seen the transformational effect of working collaboratively with peers to improve learning and am keen to enhance peer learning in universities."*

## OTHER NEWS

### ***ALTC Teaching Fellows' Forum***

The ALTC Fellows will meet together as a community of scholars from the 13-14th October in Brisbane.

### ***ALTC Awards Ceremony***

ALTC Fellows have been invited to attend the ALTC Awards Ceremony on November 16th at the Canberra Theatre, Parliament House.

### ***ACDICT Learning & Teaching Academy***

Angela will assist with the establishment of the Australian Council of Deans of ICT (ACDICT) Learning & Teaching Academy. The initial meeting will be held in Sydney on November 23rd.

### ***Learning & Teaching Conference***

Angela will be a keynote speaker at the Learning & Teaching Conference to be held at the University of Ballarat from November 29th to December 2nd.

### ***Business Education Research Network (BERN) Seminar***

Angela will speak about her experience as a successful teaching award winner on October 26th at the BERN seminar.

## Research in Progress

PATS was recently presented at the Faculty Education Committee (FEC) meetings to the remaining faculties of Education, Arts, Business & Economics, Art & Design, Medicine, Pharmacy and Law. The program was well received and the seven faculties will be participating in the 2011 scheme.

### Focus Groups

Focus group sessions with the PATS leaders and mentees will take place on October 28th and November 4th respectively. In the meetings, the participants will provide valuable feedback to improve the scheme.

### Workshops

During the semester, the PATS participants were consulted over which workshops they felt would be most beneficial in improving their teaching. The following workshops will be presented:

- Planning your Teaching 8/11 (Geoff White)
- Interactive Learning 12/11 (Geoff White)
- Peer Observation Partnership (POP) 8/12 (Maureen Bell)

### PATS Guide

A PATS guide is currently being produced. It will provide information on all things PATS and be a vital tool for future participants and faculties in the program. The guide will likely be available in early 2011.

## The HOW TO...Teaching Series from HERDSA

*(HERDSA News, April 2010)*

### *HOW TO...Deal with hurtful students' comments in anonymous surveys*

Nothing unravels us more than a hurtful comment. For many teachers the qualitative comments collected from students are among the most constructive aspect of student feedback. Yet, from time to time, students write mean, offensive or malicious comments intentionally aimed at humiliating, undermining or threatening their lecturers. Belittling statements by students hurt because we are surprised that some students resent our efforts to help them learn. After you are over the initial shock that one of your students wants to denigrate you there are some further actions you might consider:

- **Decide whether you need professional counselling**
- **Talk to your colleagues**
- **File a complaint with the survey unit**
- **Try to short-circuit abusive behaviour in your students**
- **Don't look like an easy target**

### What's next...

- **Briefing session with new PATS participants**

### CONTACT

If you wish to provide feedback or comment on the PATS program, please feel free to contact:

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