

# WOMEN AND RESEARCH

OCTOBER 2010

**Mission statement:** To foster an active and inclusive research environment in order to enhance high quality research output.

## FROM THE PEN OF ANGELA

Dear Researchers,  
Welcome to our last newsletter for 2010.

Yes, another year has flown by hasn't it? I am not sure where my year has gone, but as I look back at the Women and Research year we certainly managed to cram a lot in.

Let's see, we were there to congratulate Professor Heather Mitchell on her promotion. Dr Foula Kopanidis presented on her research on the differing communication styles between males and females. We interviewed Dr Marion Steel and her

automotive industry work proved an interesting topic.

In June we had so much good news that our newsletter increased to a four page spread. For example, we met Ms Sarah Sinclair and heard about her research into the baby bonus. In September we broadened the scope of our newsletter. We heard from Associate Professor Sandra Jones, from the School of Management and we had our first external industry presenter, Ms Shirley Robertson present on leadership for women in a man's world.

We were there for Dr Linda Robinson's successful PhD completion (her thesis was passed without change) and we've shared a lot of good news from our School and University. It has been a successful year.

Can next year be better? We think so. Our topic for the last Women and Research seminar for the year is "2011—am I prepared?". Full details on page 2. All are welcome.

All the best for a safe end of year and a wonderful beginning to 2011.

Angela

## OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER PRESENTATION, CONT 3

In October, Associate Professor Tracey Dagger presented on the subject of grant funding and grant applications.

Key points from Tracey's presentation were:

1. Grant applications are a lot of work!
2. Start with a novel idea that makes a contribution.
3. Your grant application should have a background and aims (show the impact and link to national priority areas).
4. Show the context and significance (show the impact - link to national priority areas).

5. Outline the theoretical and practical outcomes.
6. Explain your methodology.
7. Are you working with a partner organization? If so mention information about them and alignment.
8. What is the national benefit?
9. Your application should introduce the team! And their track records - independently, collectively.
10. Make sure you have an updated CV and one for each member of the team.
11. Outline your budget;

make it very detailed. It has to supply justification.

It is Increasingly difficult! So, start out with a department/faculty grant and then move onto a bigger one. Or work in a team with more experienced academics.

Tips for success included:

1. Should fit into a focused research strategy - your track record, 'fit' will be assessed;
2. Small grants (Dept or Faculty) you might 'go it alone', Category 1 grants better to work in a team;
3. Tracey's ARC Applications took about 1mth to put



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Associate Professor Tracey Dagger during her October Seminar Presentation

### INTERVIEW

**Grant applications—are a lot of work but are worth it**

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL: GOOD NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

## Good news 1



Remember last edition when we congratulated Minh Phuong Doan (pictured left) who presented at the Finance Integrity Research Network (FIRN) doctoral colloquium? We asked Phuong to let us know how her presentation went. She says:

“Being selected to present at the 2010 Financial Integrity Research Network (FIRN) Conference, I had a chance to meet the top PhD students and researchers in finance around the country. This wonderful experience has given me the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on my research work from the top scholars in the field.

The conference was also the chance for PhD students and researchers to networking for future research collaboration. I enjoyed the dinner night with other students whom I could share my frustration and excitement during the time of my study.”

Phuong’s title is “Systematic Skewness and Systematic Kurtosis in Asset Pricing” .

This study investigates the importance of systematic skewness and systematic kurtosis as pricing factors of asset returns. First, the study tests the validity of the four-moment model using the multivariate test of zero pricing error proposed by Gibbons, Ross and Shanken (1989). The study finds that the pricing error in the CAPM can be explained by systematic skewness and systematic kurtosis factors of the four-moment model. Second, the study examines the roles of systematic skewness and systematic kurtosis factors in explaining pattern of asset returns by using the Fama and French (1992) time-series approach and the Fama and MacBeth (1973) cross-sectional approach. The study concludes that the systematic skewness and systematic kurtosis are important pricing factors to the asset returns. Most

importantly, when the systematic skewness and systematic kurtosis are included in the CAPM, they become dominant explanatory variables while making the market factor insignificant. The results are found to be robust once the errors-in-variables (EIV) problems in the second-pass of the Fama and MacBeth procedure are corrected.

Good on you Phuong! Keep up the good work.

## Good news 2

Congratulations to Mamiza Haq (who used to be a tutor with the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing). Mamiza has just received her examiners’ reports for her PhD thesis. She has passed with minor amendments. Well done Mamiza! All the best.

## Good news 3

Congratulations to Foula Kopanidis and Linda Robinson on successful applications for Early Career Researcher Grants. Well done to both ladies.

## Have some good news?

Please email your good news and I will feature it in the next newsletter.

Email me at [angela.dobele@rmit.edu.au](mailto:angela.dobele@rmit.edu.au).

## OUR FINAL WOMEN AND RESEARCH MEETING

Hi Everyone,

Our last women and research seminar for 2010 will be held December 14 from 12.30pm–2.00pm in the Level 12 Seminar Room.

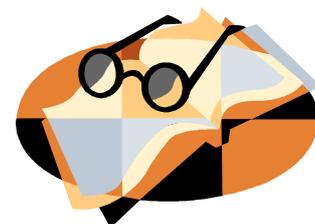
239 Bourke Street, 108.12.84.

All are welcome. Our topic is “2011—am I prepared?”. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by December 10 for catering purposes.

"Congratulations!"



Sign at an optometrist's office:



If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place.



## WOMEN AND RESEARCH

### GUEST PRESENTERS, CONT PG. 1

together – each person (3 people) probably spent at least a full week on the application. So allow enough time to do a proper job;

4. Read all the documents, fill them in carefully, follow all the guidelines .

Good luck! We thank Associate Professor Dagger for her very informative presentation.

Dr Liliana Bove presented at the November seminar. We began our November session by congratulating Liliana on her promotion to Associate Professor, effective from January 2011.

Liliana presented on industry engagement and she began her presentation by asking us to consider our worth, as researchers or academics, to industry.

Academia is, according to

Liliana, safe, secure, offers a flexible work plan, freedom, control and can be peaceful.

On the down side are lower pay and a labourious promotion process. Industry can be risky, insecure, has a structured work plan, workloads are dictated, there is greater reliance on others, no peace because of open-plan environment. But, on the positive side, can offer travel, higher pay and instant promotion.

As a qualified researcher, what can we offer industry? Well, it seems quite a lot. We have credibility (qualifications), the ability to communicate and be articulate, networking opportunities (friendly, accessible), information assimilation and critical thinking (review).

So if you are thinking about industry engagement, Lil-

ian's advice? Go for it! The benefits can be a two way street.

What should be your first steps once you are in industry?

Make sure everything you do brings relevance to your organization. Look for ways to influence other divisions or departments. And open up trust between these departments and your own research activities.

For example, look for opportunities to create value for others, make them look good, help them do their job better by advising, sharing and assisting. And participate in all social (informal) gatherings. That's how you will see the bigger picture of your organization's activities.

Thank you Dr Bove for your very interesting presentation.



Photo above: Angela Dobele thanks Associate Professor Dagger for her presentation on successful grant applications

Photo below: PhD student Jo En Yap thanking Dr Liliana Bove for her presentation on working with industry



### EXERCISING CAN HELP ME RESEARCH MORE?

Flourish: An Electronic Newsletter for Scholarly Writers, December 2008, vol 4, no. 8

Why is it that so much of the research on writing productivity shows that we are better at fooling ourselves than understanding ourselves?

Over twenty years ago, a study showed that there was little correlation between the methods that authors thought helped them write more and those that actually did. The study examined the strategies of over a

hundred science and engineering faculty and found that their most common strategies had little effect.

Specifically, productivity was not enhanced by "the cognitive strategy of mentally planning large units of text structure" or "selecting a pen or pencil" as a writing implement. Rather, productivity was enhanced by strategies few deployed: "using a dictation machine, preparing detailed written outlines before beginning a first draft, and the ritual of

exercising vigorously before or during a writing session." The only common practice that was correlated with high productivity was "selecting a quiet work environment."

I would write more about this finding, but I think I need to go out and get some exercise!

Ronald T. Kellogg, "Writing method and productivity of science and engineering faculty" *Research in Higher Education* 25, no. 2 (June 1986). <http://www.wendybelcher.com/pages/December2008.htm>



Exercising may help research productivity



## WOMEN AND RESEARCH

### GOOD NEWS FOR FEMALE ACADEMICS!

#### Gender gap at professor level grows smaller, Nov 17

Guy Healy from The Australian reported that "FEMALE academics in the highest ranks of the academy have more than doubled in the past 15 years but they still comprise only 26 per cent of senior academics".

They have done better on the administrative side, where the proportion of women at the senior level has risen from 28 per cent in 1995 to 44 per cent. "Progress has been made," Universities Australia executive women's group convener Julie Jackson said following the launch of the third major women's strategy. But the cultural change has been patchy in the sector, with some universities exceeding [the] targets of the previous action plan, and others with room for improvement," the La Trobe University pro vice-chancellor said. Women rose to the highest ranks in the greatest numbers in regional and

suburban universities, according to Professor Jackson's analysis of targets in the 2006-10 plan.

Sixteen universities exceeded the sector-wide target of women comprising 25 per cent of level E appointments (or professors). Female professors did best at the Australian Catholic University (41.5 per cent), Ballarat, La Trobe, Western Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney (33 per cent). Other top performers in this category were Deakin, Edith Cowan, Griffith, Charles Darwin and Southern Cross universities.

Similarly, 12 universities exceeded the sector target of 35 per cent of associate professors being female. Female associate professors did best at the University of Canberra (46 per cent), Western Sydney, Charles Darwin, the ACU and Southern Cross (41 per cent). Senior female administrators did best at

Sunshine Coast (63 per cent), Notre Dame, Newcastle and Melbourne universities, and at the ACU (53 per cent).

UA found women had difficulty establishing research profiles because of career breaks for child-rearing, care for elderly parents, movement between careers, lack of postdoctoral opportunities and a lack of sabbatical and study leave. These factors had an ongoing effect throughout women's careers. Among initiatives outlined in the new UA strategy, which will apply until 2014, female PhD students and women new to the academy will be targeted for career planning at three universities next year under a pilot program.

"It's getting people to think beyond where they are today to where they want to be in five to 10 years. Rather than just working hard and achieving at their current job, they need help to see what steps can be taken to get to the next point," Professor Jackson said.



"Rather than just working hard...they need help to see what steps can be taken to get to the next point"  
Professor Jackson

### NOT SO GOOD NEWS FOR FEMALE ACADEMICS

**Women not in the race** from The Australian, Jill Rowbotham, Nov 10, 2010.

FEMALE academics are recording dramatic dropout rates in the competition for Discovery Project grants. Women at senior levels make up only 6.3 per cent of applicants, according to Australian Research Council data. In its new Discovery Program consultation paper, the ARC notes the "worryingly low" retention rate of female researchers as they move through their careers. Between 2004 and 2009, young women who received their PhDs in the previous five years made up 35.6 per cent of all women considered for the grants, which this year were worth \$318 million. This compared with men in their early careers, who accounted for 22.5 per cent of all male applicants.

However, women with 25 years or more research experience made up only 6.3 per cent of the total women applicants, while men at that stage accounted for 18 per cent of their cohort.

But women who persevered with applications for the duration of their careers had the same success rates as men at the later stages. ARC chief executive Margaret Sheil said "the crucial time to provide opportunities to women is at the beginning of their research careers. I thought when I came to the ARC that it was all about the top-end drop-off as women made it to the senior levels, but it starts at the beginning".

Once women were established, there was no difference in their success rates and that "the difference in participation rates is because fewer women get that far". This consideration was

part of the rationale behind the recent announcement of a separate Discovery category for young applicants.

Up to 200 Discovery early career researchers awards will be made annually, with the program worth up to \$66m over three years.

Funding for these was redirected from Australian postdoctoral fellowships and from two established career grants programs in a restructure of the Discovery program.

The restructure was also aimed at addressing overlap in applications at senior levels and reducing duplication of processing for researchers and for the ARC.

Full article at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/women-not-in-the-race/story-e6frgcjx-1225950308904>.

Female academics are recording dramatic dropout rates in the competition for Discovery Project grants.

From The Australian

