
February 2024

Introduction

With the start of the 2024 academic year and good student numbers, campus is busy with lectures, tutorials and other academic activities. 2,300 students participated Herea t Waka | Welcome Day on 16 February. Lectures began on 19 February and in the same week there was a Students Club Day that provided an opportunity for students to sign up for a diverse range of clubs covering sport, culture, education and social interests.

On International Women's Day the newly renovated and refurbished Ann Ballin Building (formerly the Psychology Staff building) was inaugurated at an event attended by the late Dame Ann Ballin's family, friends, former and current staff and students.

Engagement

UC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Special Olympics New Zealand Charitable Trust Board that will see the University providing accommodation and services during the Special Olympics 2025 New Zealand National Summer Games.

Now in its 11th year, Summer Startup is a 10-week business accelerator programme run by the UC Centre for Entrepreneurship (UCE). It's designed to provide students with the skills and support to launch innovative business ventures. This year's showcase took place on 8 February and the programme featured over 90 speakers, including Brianne West (Ethique, Business but Better, IncrediBalls), Vaughan Fergusson (Vend), James Laughlin, Guy Horrocks, Icehouse Ventures, and Blackbird, as well as in-depth workshops and field trips.

Academic and professional conferences advance knowledge and raise visibility of UC's academic work. Dr Anna Earl welcomed 80 delegates to campus in February for The Australia New Zealand International Business Academy Conference. Associate Professor Chris Jones and Dr Madi Williams welcomed 400 delegates for the ANZ Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies Conference in February.

On 27 February UC

Education Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

Student services were humming with Te P taka seeing 50% more students compared to the same time last year. Students were engaging with the services earlier with nearly 1400 students working with Kaitoko across January and early February, over a third more than the previous year. The library was also in high demand with 9300 students visiting on the first day of lectures. Staff at Te P taka were kept busy in the weeks leading up to the start of semester, seeing double the number of students that they had seen in previous years. Students were able to get answers to a range of queries including accommodation, digital needs and course changes. It was an opportunity to welcome cohorts of students for many of the new programmes.

Besides students coming to campus, the first UC cohort of over 70 pre-registration nursing students commenced with the programme being delivered via UC Online. UC's commitment to accessible and flexible education has resulted in a wider geographical spread of students.

Artificial Intelligence and Assessment workshops for Science and the Business School were conducted , with ongoing workshops across schools and faculties.

Research Impact on a Changing World

A presentation on looking after yourselves and our environment while in Aotearoa/New Zealand (student safety and environmental care) was part of the international student orientation event in February.

The School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing is running an eight-week course for students and staff on self-compassion. This offers the skills and support to build self-compassion and self-esteem and, in doing so, reduce self-criticism. It is based on research that compassion focused therapy is effective in managing stress and anxiety, regulating moods and improving overall mental well-being.

The Kaiwhakatere Oranga | Wellbeing Navigator programme has undergone significant expansion for 2024, now boasting twice the number of student Navigators compared to previous years. The 20 Navigators serve

Karen Mather, Director - Academy Affiliation and Organisational Development, has been appointed to the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Human Resources in the Higher Education Community Steering Group and was selected to be the ACU regional representative for Aotearoa New Zealand. The remit of this role is to connect and work with other HR professionals from across the Commonwealth, learn and share good practice, represent the University of Canterbury at a global level and work of the ACU HR in HE Community.

Internationalisation

UC welcomed 50 new international Erskine Fellows to UC for Semester 1 with more to arrive across the semester, bringing a total of 67 Erskine Fellows for the first half of the year. The Erskine Programme continues to be a stellar UC initiative that benefits both staff and students.

As part of the MBIE-funded 'Future Architecture of the Network' project, the Electric Power Engineering Centre has signed affiliate agreements with Aalborg University (Denmark), TU Dresden (Germany), The University of Cambridge (UK), the University of NSW (Australia) and TUMCREATE (a joint research programme between Technische Universität München (TUM) in Germany and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore). These affiliate agreements cover research cooperation and academic and student exchange.

In February the New Zealand Centre at IIT Delhi convened a meeting with all New Zealand universities and Education New Zealand scheduled a series of meetings around this and the QS India Summit. At the Summit, UC hosted a workshop on alternative energy with IIT Delhi and also a plenary panel on industry partnerships with academia. Professor Clemency Montelle and Professor Matt Wilson were awarded two of the four inaugural IIT-Delhi India-New Zealand Centre Fellowships which were celebrated in New Zealand Government and Indian media.

A new international internship course is underway this month, with seven UC students attending a four-week enriching work and cultural experience at Sendra, a leading international experiential education provider in the Netherlands.

Environmentally Sustainable

February saw a much higher engagement from students interested in getting directly involved in sustainability activities than we have seen in recent years. Approximately 150 students attended an open day held by Facilities Management's Sustainability Office at the community garden during O Week, while hundreds attended the stall during Clubs Days.

The Sustainability Hub hosted a student event at the start of semester in the Undercroft, specifically aimed at first year students, to learn more about what UC is doing about sustainability and the sustainable development goals. Students from the Sustainable Design Society had a table at the event, and happily signed up many more students to their club.