
May 2023

As the year progresses, I am pleased to see the number of campus visitors returning to pre-COVID-19 levels. During the past month, UC hosted a number of high-profile local and international guests on campus, including politicians, ambassadors and the Christchurch Mayor – all of whom we are honoured to receive. I have also been delighted by the continued student networking activities and UC's community engagement in accompanying members of the public on a recent campus tour and

UC participated in Open Christchurch when 280 community members toured the Ilam buildings of Puaka-James Hight, Ernest Rutherford, Angus Tait, Macmillan Brown Library and College House. Corban Te Aika led a successful tour under the theme "Transforming the Campus of a Te Tiriti Based University". Dr Erin Harrington presented a lecture on the history of the original campu

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With the Erskine Programme is in its 60th year, plans are under way for an event to celebrate this milestone in Semester 2, which will also complement the University of Canterbury 150th celebrations. UC looks forward to the arrival of new Fellows in Semester 2, along with 200 Study Abroad students and 100 new international students.

UC has continued to offer lifelong learning experiences through short courses, microcredentials and co-curricular learning experiences. The newly

researchers in future rounds and help potential applicants to understand the funding calls and how to participate in a consortium. A cross-university group formed by the New Zealand universities last year is working collaboratively to understand the needs and requirements of Horizon Europe.

The KiwiNet Research Commercialisation awards are the biggest national event for the research commercialisation sector. Dr Sean Feast has been selected as a finalist for the Breakthrough Innovator Award and is also a finalist in the Hi-Tech Awards Young Achiever category. Sean is CEO of Precision Chroma, a UC spin-out company in partnership with BridgeWest – an international venture capital fund. The venture is commercialising 3D printed chromatography columns, founded on Professor Conan Fee's research in this area. Award recipients will be announced at a gala dinner hosted in Auckland on 28 September.

Professor Santiago Pujol and PhD student Charlie Kerby are conducting new, innovative research in earthquake testing that may have a major impact on concrete wall construction. This research is proposing new remediation techniques, as highlighted recently in national media. It is funded by Toka Tāke EQC (the Earthquake Commission) through its contestable Biennial Grants scheme, which supports research on improving the resilience of buildings.

The Faculty of Science has the following outgoing Erskines during the mid-semester break:

Associate Professor Pieter Pelser from Biological Sciences will visit University of Tampa, Arizona State University and Shasta College, all in the USA. His purpose is to learn more about improving the first-year experience and student success, making courses more inclusive such as by using adaptive lab technologies, and providing in-course support for students with anxiety or depression, neurodiverse students and students from underprivileged backgrounds.

Senior Lecturer Dr Sarah Flanagan will visit UNSW, Australia and the University of British Columbia, Canada. She will also go to the USA to attend the Evolution and iEvoBio conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico and participate in a workshop on "Fostering Academic Futures through Online Teaching" at the University of California. Her focus will be on improving engagement and developing resilience in quantitative BIOL teaching, including by developing problem-solving teaching approaches such as online, problem-based learning tools.

Senior Lecturer Dr Andy Vonasch will visit the University of Kent, UK and attend a preconference workshop on the psychology of conspiracy theories in Krakow, Poland to work on his teaching of topics in moral psychology and personality psychology.

Senior Lecturer Dr Seth Harty will visit the universities of Oklahoma and Nebraska in the USA to work with experts in teaching adolescent identity development and developmental models of aggression in relation to adolescent outcomes, and on clinical interviewing and interventions, including for dually diagnosed patients. He will also visit New York City and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to work with experts in the assessment and treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and in substance use.

UC is contributing to the Universities New Zealand project to respond to the unions' pay parity national claim under the 2020 amendments to the Equal Pay Act 1972. This is a gender-based claim about the pay and conditions for a range of clerical and library-based roles in the sector. The project is now moving into what is likely to be an extended phase of investigating the claim. In line with legislative requirements, staff in relevant roles have received a letter explaining the process.

People and Culture has launched the new online staff learning management system DevelopMe, which is now the platform for the rollout of a range of professional development modules aimed at supporting staff in core areas of their roles. A module on the Privacy Act 2020 has been rolled out in May. Other modules to be implemented in 2023 cover doctoral supervision, conflict of interest, the Student Pastoral Care Code, risk management, and health and safety. Managers will receive reports on completion rates by existing staff, and a range of modules will form an orientation programme for new staff, including the annual intake of fixed-term academic support staff, many of whom are also students.

The Burnside West Christchurch University Cricket Club hosted an evening event for about 100 students, featuring the student group Lads Without Labels. Other guests included former All Black captain Kieran Read, All Black Fletcher Newell and Black Caps Ish Sodhi and Todd Astle. A panel discussion covering aspects of mental health was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori provision will get a phased 15% increase in funding. This results in a 5.25% increase in SAC/DQ on average when this additional funding is included.

Half-price public transport fares for people aged under 25 years from 1 July 2023 will help many students financially and allow them to live in cheaper places further from some CBD campuses.

There was no increase in major research funds, other than Horizon Europe Pillar II (\$37.6 million) and no increase in Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) funding. Three Wellington-based multi-institution research hubs will receive a total of \$400 million of capital expenditure and \$51 million of operational expenditure funding. The hubs are:

- climate change and resilience, which involves the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), GNS Science, Victoria University of Wellington, Massey University "and others", and will be "part of a national centre for research on oceans, climate and hazards"
- health and pandemic readiness, involving Victoria University of Wellington, Otago University, the Institute of Environmental Research (ESR), Malaghan Institute of Medical Research and Callaghan Innovation
- technology and innovation, involving Callaghan Innovation, GNS Science, Victoria University of Wellington and the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research. It will be based at Gracefield.

Positive news for UC's Digital Screen Campus is that the Government has promised a 20% rebate on game developers' expenditure in a bid to compete with comparable, though larger, rebates in Australia. Australian-based game developers are able to claim a tax rebate of between 30 and 40 cents for every dollar they spend developing a computer game. Game developers in New Zealand will be able to access the 20% rebate if they meet a minimum \$250,000 expenditure threshold.

Considering the Budget on balance, although increases for research funding were limited, the 5.0% increase in SAC/DQ is above UC expectations. We are also delighted to see a material response from the Government to the Australian game development subsidy.

Digital Services and the Library have been progressing a project to replace our 27-year-old Horizons platform with a modern, cloud-based library system that is easy to integrate and use. Following approval of the business case and having assessed competing platforms in the market, the team has now selected the preferred platform. The new library system will be introduced over the next nine months with an initial target release date of early 2024.

In the ongoing rollout of our new Ako | Māhi | Work Integrated Learning platform (UC Placements), the Faculty of Education received training and was onboarded last month, facilitating the management of student placements within the community for over 1,100 students. Go live of UC Placements for five schools across UC is scheduled before the end of June, and Engineering is going live shortly after. The target for project completion is the end of the first quarter of 2024.

The Digital Services team helped the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) to establish a separate Microsoft 365 tenancy, which went live last month. COMNAP is an international association with members comprising the national Antarctic programmes of 32 governments around the world. Those programmes are the organisations responsible for delivering and supporting scientific research in the Antarctic Treaty Area on behalf of their respective

governments and in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty. The project established a separate Microsoft 365 tenancy for COMNAP for email and SharePoint online, with the Secretary for COMNAP as administrator. The project resolved multiple security and administrative challenges that COMNAP faced in hosting and organising collaboration among its global members.

In other notable news, the Chief Digital Officer of Digital Services, Michael Oulsnam, has been appointed as the New Zealand representative on the Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT) Executive Committee. CAUDIT is an incorporated not-for-profit association that draws its membership

The Waste Contract Working Group (involving Facilities Management, the UC Students' Association and UniLodge) has begun its contracts review. All parties are working to closely align waste systems and the services procured to support them in improving environmental sustainability.

The new Cycle Plan 2022–2030 was published on the UC website. Part of developing this plan involved setting organisational targets for other forms of sustainable commuting. A recent audit of bike stand use showed that 40% percent of bike stands were in use on average across one week in March, up from 33% in 2022.

During May, UC celebrated World Biodiversity Day with a Biodiversity Walk through Ilam Gardens. Thirty people also participated in a University event to promote the City Nature Challenge, resulting in over 500 observations. Over the weekend, one EnviroSoc student contributed to more than 2,000 observations. A second predator trap line was established on campus (along Waiutuutu-Okeover Stream). In another initiative, an Edible Campus Tour attracted 30 attendees.