Introduction from Charles Watson

Executive Dean, Division of Health Sciences

I have followed the development of the Centre for International Health with great interest. In 1999 I appointed Paola to regenerate the development of the Centre for International Health. We were responding to a need for specialised education and research relevant to an international setting, with particular emphasis on our region. I am well aware of the students’ enthusiasm and contribution to current challenges that will see many of you working overseas. I am keen for the Centre to expand opportunities for more direct links between staff and students. This might, in the first instance, be developed through greater availability of web sites and the provision of some units through intensive face-to-face delivery as we have done with the John Curtin International Institute. The new web sites are currently being implemented. The intensive teaching however is a more complex proposition with so many students scattered across the nation and overseas. This venture requires carefully planning including ways of supporting student’s mobility to a common location. I have met the students from Perth and look forward to having an opportunity of meeting those of you from further afield.

Experience Remote Australia

Potential Opportunity for your Research Project

Laverton is an aboriginal community located 957kms north east of Perth. Curtin has developed a project with this remote Aboriginal Community whereby students belonging to Curtin Volunteers may visit the town every two weeks to undertake community service activities.

Much of what is done in Laverton involves the Wongatha Wonganurra Aboriginal Corporation. Students work on different activities and some of these involve recreational activities with children in the town. Laverton may provide an opportunity for your research project. As you may experience, the socio-environmental condition of that community is not entirely different from that of a developing country.

There are therefore, many opportunities for students to develop longer term projects involving health promotional activities which could be part of a student’s projects.

At Laverton – spot the lizard...

The cost of transport to and from the airport is $30 plus your food. Students at Laverton live in reasonable accommodation at a mining camp free of charge. You will travel by airplane to Laverton courtesy of a mining company. The plane leaves for Laverton Friday lunchtime and return Monday lunchtime.

For enquiries regarding going to Laverton as a Curtin Volunteer contact Helen Fairnie on 08 9266 2607 or email nfairnieh@cc.curtin.edu.au. In the meantime you may visit the Curtin Volunteers website at http://www.curtin.edu.au/cv/index.html and click on program at the bottom of the page.
New Programs

Having successfully established the three semester Master of International Health, as from next year the Centre will offer a more comprehensive study program that will include a Graduate Diploma and a professional Doctor of International Health. In recent years, professional doctoral programs have gained recognition and are assuming an important, much needed role in new formations of applied research and training. Like the professional Master of International Health, the doctorate program entails a proportion of course work. The thesis will consist of a practically oriented research project in a specific area of international health. Details of both these new programs will be on our Website soon.

Library Information

The Curtin University Library and Information Service aims to promote the development of information literacy skills to assist students in the processes of learning and undertaking research.

If you live within the Perth metropolitan area and your postcode is lower than 6200 (except Perth metropolitan post box codes beginning 68 or 69), please utilise the regular library services offered from the TL Robertson Library.

If you live more than 40 km from a Curtin University library, you can utilise the Off Campus library service (OCLS). OCLS will provide you with library services including book loans, supply of photocopied articles or past exam papers, assistance with literature searches, assistance with obtaining information in your subject area, any other help and advice that you could normally obtain as a library user at Bentley campus. Connecting to Lisweb http://lisweb.curtin.edu.au/ allows for interesting links which can assist you to make the best use of library resources. For example, the links to scholarly electronic databases to undertake your own literature search, help guides and training sections, OCLS.

Contact details for the Library are:
Information Desk · Phone: +61 8 9266-2145

Off Campus Library Services (OCLS)
Contact Katrina and Tania
Email: offcampus@boris.curtin.edu.au
Phone: +61 8 9266 2425   Fax: +61 8 9266 3371

Publications and Conferences

We are waiting for more of you to tell us what you are up to with conferences and papers. We would be especially interested to know if you are coming to Perth so that we may ensure we are available to meet with you at the Centre. A couple of you are coming this way in the next two months. We will immortalise the visits with photographic evidence and let you know who your colleagues are and what they are up to in the land of the “sandgropers”.

Keely McSweeney, one of our students in New South Wales, has just presented a paper Primary Health Care – A Reorientation to Nursing Practice. This was held in Bunbury, Western Australia at the Western Australian Community Nurses Special Interest Group Conference (8th – 9th September).

In July Paola and Sue presented a paper The Medicalisation of Sexuality, at the 5th Congress of the European Federation of Secology in Berlin. This research explores the psychosocial effects of using Viagra and the prescribing GP’s rationale.

Sue and Paola have also had a paper published in the Birth Issues Journal Vol 8, Number 4. This paper evaluates the role of Community Nursing in Child Health.

Professor Watson recently attended the 5th Meeting of the Regional Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis in the Western Pacific. The meeting was held in Manila. His report will soon be available on our website.
As from this semester, the Centre for International Health has agreed to teach the International Research Methodology unit for John Curtin International Institute (JCII). Paola, Feonagh and Sue have all been involved in the intensive teaching mode run over two weekends. There were 22 enrolments for the unit. The unit is now available on the web. An international health stream in the Master of International Studies run by JCII has been established. This includes three of the core units run by our Centre. Paola plans to offer such intensive courses in our core units as well.

JCII Class – during a morning tea break

Not all of you may be aware that our Centre has a link with the Department of General Practice in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Western Australia. For example, students may enrol in one of their units as a discipline unit. Paola is teaching with Doug Cordell, senior lecturer in General Practice, in a qualitative research unit in general practice. She also co-supervises Masters students’ research with Doug. We like to see students from UWA visiting us at the Centre. We are now planning other joint activities in which students and staff may present their research.

Small Steps to Breaking Down Inter-Institutional Barriers

Paola would like to expand collaboration between Universities, thus reducing unnecessary duplication of resources. To this end, a few weeks ago, Paola visited the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She met with Dr Jerry Wheeler to discuss potential collaboration of cross-institutional enrolments. With the support of Helen Fairnie, our International Liaison Director, preliminary discussions are underway.

Paola recently represented the European country reference group at a meeting with five Rectors from German Universities. At the meeting she had an opportunity to discuss international health issues with Professor Borchard, the Rector of Bonn University. They are planning to develop a Centre similar to ours. She has been extended an invitation to visit the university to further discuss collaborative activities.

Current world circumstances resulting in economic globalisation, mass migration, and the increasing numbers of refugees are stimulating a greater need for studies in international health. These factors are contributing to the development of Centres that respond to current health problems by offering relevant research and study opportunities that have immediate applicability.
New Staff to the Centre

Aileen Plant is a medical epidemiologist and a professor of international health. She has recently returned from Geneva where she was working with the WHO in TEPHI-NET, a program designed for training people to undertake surveillance, outbreak investigation, and control of infectious disease. She is undertaking research in Cambodia and Vietnam. Her main activities within the Centre for International Health are development, implementation and supervision of research. She has extensive experience in outbreak investigation.

Ms Feonagh Cooke teaches in the postgraduate programs. She has experience in international health and public health research. In Sierra Leone, Feonagh managed operating rooms in a leprosy and tuberculosis hospital, also teaching and developing community initiatives. In the Philippines, she conducted an evaluation of a water/sanitation program. She worked with a medical director managing the refugee health in Tanzania. In Australia, Feonagh has been involved with projects including TB, Aboriginal health services and migrant’s health.

Louise Potvin is a visiting professor on a one year sabbatical leave from University of Montreal, Canada. She has just received a ten-year Chair in community health from the Canadian Foundation for Health Services Research. Her main area of research is evaluation of community health promotion and public health programs. Recently, she has been involved in participatory projects concerned with diabetes prevention in an Aboriginal Canadian community and in studies linking individual health outcomes with community resources. The research programs she is developing will examine how public health can foster local development and impact on health inequalities in urban settings.

Steve Allsop is the Director, Clinical Education and Research at Next Step Specialist Drug and Alcohol Services and A/Professor to the Centre for International Health. He has worked extensively in clinical education and research in the drug field in Scotland and South Australia.

He has worked with a variety of professional groups, including medical practitioners, police, educators and a range of private enterprises. He has acted as a consultant and educator for many private companies across Australia and overseas. He has worked on a variety of international projects developing, implementing and evaluating responses to drug problems in the workplace.

New Enrolments

In addition to our 21 enrolments for first semester, 2000 we now have 27 new students enrolled in units from our Master of International Health. This includes 3 international students from Japan, 1 extension student, 1 John Curtin International Institute student and 5 Public Health students. We hope that everyone is enjoying the units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIH UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 students from the mid-year intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 students for the year 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professor Michael Alpers came to Curtin this year after 25 years as Director of the Papua New Guinea Medical Research Institute. Michael is a human biologist with a background in anthropology, medicine and virology. He first went to PNG to work on kuru, a strange neurological disease. In collaboration with Carleton Gajdusek (who was later awarded the Nobel Prize), this work demonstrated that kuru was a transmissible disease passed on by cannibalism. Under Michael's direction, the PNG MRI researched over 100 infectious diseases and made substantial contributions to international health. His current work includes a trial of a promising malaria vaccine.
**Student Activities and Experiences**

**SANDRA GUZZI**

Sandra Guzzi, one of our students in the Master of International Health is working at Alice Springs Hospital. Her main reason for being there is that she is particularly keen to work in remote areas with Aboriginal communities. According to Sandra, about 90% of the population in Alice Springs is Aboriginal. The hospital services an area of 1 million km² where approximately 70% of the patients are Aboriginal. The hospital has about 160 beds and has a RFDS base as well as servicing about 20 remote communities. The main health problems are diabetes and related complications such as renal failure, foot and leg ulcers, and heart conditions. Sandra finds her work especially rewarding, describing her patients as been the most beautiful, gentle, dignified people.

She is currently working on an acute medical ward where many admissions are for community acquired pneumonia. According to Sandra the health conditions of the communities is not different from those found in developing countries. We understand from Sandra she is learning a lot about the cultural and linguistic diversity of these Aboriginal communities.

She is learning different dialects and interestingly enough, according to her, most dialects have a common sign language.

In a few months, at the end of her contract in Alice Springs, Sandra will be going to Oxford. After a stint of six months there she will go on to Canada for one year. She is reassuring us that she is enjoying the course, which according to her is especially relevant to the work she is undertaking.

Thank you Sandra. We look forward to you keeping us informed about Oxford and your activities there.

**BARBARA ERICHSDOTTER**

Barbara, another of our students is about to go to on a study tour to Boston with a group from Birmingham University. Dr Bell, Medical Director Dartmouth Medical Center, has organised a series of activities looking at issues of quality measurements in health care delivery. These include visits to New Hampshire in medical practices where new sophisticated medical technologies are expected to provide increased support in clinical decisions.

At the end of the study tour, Barbara will be visiting Harvard University where she will undertake market research activities looking at current technologies being utilised in the area of health care delivery in the US. This will also provide her with an opportunity to meet with the academic staff of one of the most prestigious University in the north hemisphere.

We thank Barbara for her brief and look forward to more information on her return. Bon voyage to Barbara from all of us at the Centre.

**Evaluation of Units**

At the start of this semester, teaching staff at the Centre made a decision to use the Curtin Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) survey for obtaining feedback for all units offered by the Centre in the Masters program.

This will involve the Distance Education Service here at Curtin sending you a survey form near to the completion of each unit. This form has been especially designed for the evaluation of units offered by distance education and we would be most grateful if you could complete and return to Distance Education.

The information you provide is given anonymously, will be processed by Distance Education and is for your tutor’s information only.

This will be one of our main ways of improving both our teaching material and tutoring from year to year and we will be sending enrolled students a letter nearer the time to explaining the process and its importance in more detail.

**Health Care Systems**

Sonj Hall

Sonj is the lecturer for Health Care Systems 681, which is a core unit in the Master of International Health. She is currently a lecturer in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the School of Public Health here at Curtin. Her background is in public health after an earlier career in nursing, during which she worked in Europe and the Middle East. She presently consults to state government on various health policy issues.
As you know from our last newsletter, we held a Think Tank meeting with students. The objective was to begin to help students identify a research topic for their Master. The staff at the Centre will soon send another email providing a date, time and location for another Think Tank meeting. Students waiting to enrol in the Doctoral program will also be invited, as the meeting will be relevant to them.

Our First Think Tank

Donna Hindmarsh is a MIH student. She is also the Director of Nursing for the Dongara Denison region. Her community together with Narrogin are pilot sites for the Healthway Healthy Community Project. The project is aimed at building on the social capital of the community. Funding is for 3 years at a total of $170,000 dollars. Achievements to date include:

1. Community Assessment of the needs as the community perceives them to be - consultation with community groups
2. A "Community Celebration of Volunteers" event
3. Consolidation of the Youth Advisory Council
4. Assistance with the Local Drug Action Group formation - the only Youth Local Drug Action Group in the state
5. Assisting local groups to develop wider community appeal
6. Priorities for the project set by the management group
7. An evaluation tool formalised to assess impact for the priorities we are setting.

Thank you Donna, for this interesting information. Enquiries are welcome, email donnamh@midwest.com.au for more information.

Dissertation Requirements

Just to keep you informed, the word-length requirement for the dissertation in the Master of International Health Program is 15,000-20,000 words.

Healthy Communities

Donna Hindmarsh – Master of International Health student
We have put together some statistics to show you where our students live and what their occupations are. It is interesting to see the spread of professional areas in which you are involved. We hope that this information is of interest to you. We encourage you to participate in our student email list and talk to other students who live in the same area or are involved in the same professional activities. Please contact Nerellie (08 9266 3985) or email rrichard03@cc.curtin.edu.au for more information on how you can join the email list.
WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.CURTIN.EDU.AU/HEALTH/RESEARCH/CIH

How did you hear about us?

We would like to know how you heard about the Centre for International Health. Please let us know, as it helps us to maximise our resources in advertising.

Mission Statement

The Centre is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and applied skills in international health. Through our teaching and research activities we strive to develop and sustain a direct and meaningful link with the wider community. We nurture values that respect cultural diversity.

End of semester two 24 Nov
Re enrolment start 1 Nov
Re enrolment end 19 Dec
First semester begins 19 Feb
Last date for new external enrolments 23 Feb
Last date for withdrawal without penalty 31 March
Proposed date for invoice payment 30 April

Finally

Whenever you are in Perth, we would be delighted to see you at the Centre. If you let us know ahead of time we will organise a morning or afternoon tea and invite local students to come in so that you may meet with as many colleagues as possible. We take this opportunity to encourage you to stay in touch with your colleagues via email. This we think will alleviate a potential sense of isolation and provide valuable opportunities for sharing each others’ knowledge and experience. Please keep us informed through the newsletter about any activities you consider to be of interest.