**Griffith Health Vision**

*Promoting Health, Enabling Communities*

Griffith Health will, through leadership and innovation in teaching, research and community engagement, create sustained improvements in all aspects of health and health care for the local, national and international communities.

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**Griffith’s Nobel Lecture Series**

Griffith’s Nobel Lecture series was launched recently on the Gold Coast with an informative and entertaining public lecture by Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty.

Professor Doherty, an immunologist and winner of the 1996 Nobel Prize for Medicine, took the audience of about 250 people on a journey documenting our war against infectious diseases.

From plague in the middle ages to SARS, HIV/AIDS and bird flu, his lecture was partly a sobering reminder of our vulnerability and of the role infectious diseases have played in shaping our world.

History shows that formidable armies have been defeated by infectious diseases such as malaria, he said. More recently, SARS demonstrated the profound economic effects that an epidemic can have in areas such as international travel and trade.

Professor Doherty’s lecture, titled *How Science Protects Humanity*, also outlined our successes and many remaining challenges in understanding, harnessing and enhancing our immune response to infectious diseases.

“We've done well in terms of vaccines against systemic infections such as the polio virus which doesn’t mutate much. Antibodies can neutralise the virus in the circulatory system before it gets to the brain and causes meningitis,” he said. Similarly with yellow fever, vaccine-induced antibodies can fight off the virus before there is any damage to the liver.

Mucosal immunity was however a much more difficult challenge and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and influenza, involving rapidly mutating viruses, remained major problems. He reminded the audience that influenza alone kills about 20,000-30,000 Americans, mainly the elderly, each and every year.

Professor Doherty said while science was our major weapon in the war against infectious diseases, there were also limits to the good it could do. Human behaviour and our ability to overcome logistical problems were also important variables.

“In countries such as the US and Australia we are doing everything possible to get ready by increasing vaccine production and planning for the next major outbreak.” However developing countries with poor infrastructure remain major danger points, he said.

Professor Doherty, Australian of the Year in 1997, commutes between St Jude Children’s Research Hospital in the US and the University of Melbourne.

His research interests include cell-mediated immunity, T-cell recognition and repertoire, immunological tolerance, viral immunology, immunopathology and immune memory.

He recently authored *The Beginner’s Guide to Winning the Nobel Prize*, a book which aims to improve understanding of science and scientists.
School of Nursing and Midwifery

Head of School – Professor Elizabeth Patterson

The School of Nursing and Midwifery is the largest School in the Health Group and is undergoing significant growth. Currently there are 781 commencing and 1209 continuing students across the three campuses and offshore in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. These numbers will continue to grow with 20 additional funded places in 2007 being granted by the Commonwealth government for the Bachelor of Nursing program at the Gold Coast campus and 10 for the Master of Midwifery program at Logan. Offshore programs in Japan and Singapore are attracting increasing enrolments and a recent overseas trip by the Academic International Convenor has revealed the opportunity for additional offshore ventures. Staff growth has been commensurate with 12 new appointments this year and a further 12 being advertised for 2007.

School of Pharmacy

Head of School – Professor Nerida Smith

The Pharmacy School reached a major milestone when its first cohort of the Master of Pharmacy students graduate. This is the culmination of the vision of the leaders in the university and the pharmacy profession in initiating and developing the programme. The continued goodwill and support the School has enjoyed from all sectors of the pharmacy profession has been extraordinary, and we take this opportunity to acknowledge in particular the efforts made by the local community and hospital pharmacists and the professional organisations representing pharmacy (Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Pharmacists’ Board of Queensland). The program would never have reached fruition without the dedication and enthusiasm of the School staff.

Genomics Research Centre

Director – Professor Lyn Griffith

The Genomics Research Centre undertakes molecular research aimed at identifying the genes involved in common human genetic disorders. These studies are currently directed towards identifying genes involved in high blood pressure, migraine, cancer of various types, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis, neurodegenerative disorders and genes relating to substance abuse. This research spans Population Genomics to Functional Genomics, with a strong emphasis on gene mapping, gene expression and gene characterisation, but also encompasses clinical and ethical issues associated with human genomics. Underpinning the research at the Centre are researchers with good bioinformatic and statistical genetics skills and synergistic research collaborations with clinicians and medical researchers at local Gold Coast and Brisbane Hospitals.

The Centre has grown to include several principal researchers: Professor Lyn Griffiths, Director (Neurogenetics and Gene Mapping); Dr Steve Ralph, Deputy Director (Immunogenetics and Vaccine Development); Dr Nigel Morrison (Bone Differentiation Genetics); Dr Dean Pountney (Parkinson’s Disease and Dementia Research); Dr Alfreda Stadlin (Substance Abuse Genetics); Dr Gary Grant (Pharmacogenetics Research; Dr Roselyn Rose’Meyer (Molecular and Pharmacology Research); Dr David Maguire (Mitochondrial Genetics); Dr Madelyn Peterson (Genetic Counselling Research); Dr Anne McDonnell (Tissue Injury and Cell Growth Research); Dr Lucia Pembble (Leukaemia and Diagnostic Techniques); Dr Dianne Moses (Endocrine Molecular Genetics); Dr Francesca Fernandez, Postdoctoral Scientist (Migraine Genetics Research); Dr Lotti Tajouri, Postdoctoral Scientist (MS Molecular Research).
Staff Profiles

Dr Jane Truscott, PhD, MBA, MS, RN, NP
Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Dr Truscott joined Griffith Health, School of Nursing and Midwifery in February 2006 and has recently received endorsement from the Queensland Nursing Council (QNC) as a Nurse Practitioner, making her the first Nurse Practitioner registered with QNC under new regulatory policy. She is also board certified as a Family Nurse Practitioner with the American Nurses Credentialing Center and has practiced as a Nurse Practitioner in aged care, palliative care and primary care settings in the United States.

Prior to moving to Australia, Dr Truscott received a National Research Service Award (NRSA), a highly competitive fellowship with the National Institutes of Health, USA while completing her PhD studies and research at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colorado, USA. She has also been a team member of the National Center for Children, Families and Communities, conducting State-wide evaluation research of a nurse home-visitation program for at-risk mothers.

Her research interests include implications of advanced practice nursing and the impact of policy and social reform on health program and service outcomes. She is currently teaching post-graduate quantitative research methods and coordinating the initial phases of Nurse Practitioner curriculum development for Griffith.

Dr Pete Johnson
Lecturer, School of Pharmacy

Pete completed a PhD at the University of Melbourne in 1999, and then held positions at Central Queensland University and James Cook University before commencing at Griffith in mid 2005.

Pete is a member of the Heart Foundation Research Centre and his research interests include aging and neurodegeneration, autonomic neuropharmacology and herbal medicines. His convenorships include courses in the Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science, Biomedical Science and Oral Health, and he is the School of Pharmacy First Year Advisor.

Pete is committed to improving student learning, and this year was awarded a Griffith Learning and Teaching I Grant to implement peer and self-assessment practices in biomedical and allied health sciences. After hours, Pete spends his time playing backyard rugby with his three boys.

Associate Professor Nick Buys
Dean, Learning and Teaching

Associate Professor Nick Buys has been appointed Dean, Learning and Teaching for the Health Group. He faces the challenge of maintaining the rapid growth of the Group while continuing to develop high quality teaching and learning activities.

One of the major initiatives for the group will be the introduction of a Foundation Year in 2007 – a common first year for the 650 students entering undergraduate programs in the Schools of Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Exercise Science, Dentistry and Oral Health, and Medical Science.

“It provides a better way of teaching disciplines such as biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, and increases consistency in teaching and assessment across first-year courses. It also reduces the administrative load associated with teaching multiple versions of the same course.”

“There is also a strong focus on the orientation and engagement of students – the Foundation Year enables us to introduce some new initiatives to support students with their studies. Students will also have more flexibility at the end of their first year.”

Associate Professor Buys said reviews of available courses in research methods, and communication and interpersonal skills, were also likely in an effort to encourage more integration across the group and reduce duplication of effort. He said there was also the possibility of introducing a generic Honours year – to increase opportunities for students by providing an interdisciplinary experience. The range of postgraduate programs is also under review, and likely to increase in order to meet the huge growth in demand for health education.

In order to ensure due recognition for innovative learning and teaching initiatives, Associate Professor Buys said he will be encouraging nominations of academic staff for learning and teaching awards and citations. “There are some excellent teaching practices happening in the Group and these should be recognised”.

Associate Professor Buys has been associated with Griffith since 1994 when he was appointed a lecturer in rehabilitation and disability studies in the then Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences. He was instrumental in helping to establish the School of Human Services at Logan campus and was Head of school between 2001-2005.
Group News

Health chosen to raise University profile

Over the past two months Griffith’s latest corporate advertisement has been airing on television. The ad features Griffith Health’s own Professor Debra Creedy and is shot on location at the Centre for Medicine and Oral Health, adjacent to the Gold Coast Hospital in Southport. This most recent ad reflects on the quality offering of programs and innovative teaching techniques by taking a closer look at the Centre and its key focus on health prevention and community involvement. The ad, along with further information on the Centre, is available for viewing at www.griffith.edu.au/er/campaign/creedy

Peking University visit to Dental School

Delegates from Peking University - Dental School visited the School of Dentistry and Oral Health. A meeting to discuss collaborations in all aspects of research, teaching and exchange programs was held. Attendants at the meeting included Prof Chris Madden (PVC - International), Mr Thomas Toh (International Marketing Manager), Mardi Chapman (Griffith Health Communications Officer), Stefanie Klag (International office advisor), Prof Newell Johnson and Dr Jin Gao.

The School of Dentistry and Oral Health will commence collaborative research on head and neck cancer - bone metastasis using an animal model which Jin has previously established at the Queensland University of Technology. The project will be funded by Australian-China Special Fund (grant submitted), Griffith Health and Peking University research grant. Support will also be sought from both Griffith and Peking Universities’ for Visiting Fellowships for Research Fellows from Peking University - Dental School to carry out experiments under the supervision of Dr Jin Gao at the brand new research facility at the Centre for Medicine and Oral Health.

International Collaboration

Dr Saeed Mohammad Al-Shamsi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates accompanied by Mr Grayson Perry, Manager, Economic Development, Gold Coast City Council, met with Professor Newell Johnson to discuss areas of potential collaboration. Dr Saeed toured the Centre for Medicine and Oral Health facilities and commented on the high standard of clinical, teaching and research facilities.

Donation to Medical Research

Professor Allan Cripps visited the Chung Tian Temple in Priestwood on 26 July to personally thank the Abbess Master Yi Lai for her donation of $10,000 to medical research.

The Buddhist temple is part of the Fo Guang Shan Monastery which was founded in 1967 by the Venerable Master Hsing Yun who was recently admitted to the degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the international community.

Master of Nutrition and Dietetics

Planning is underway for a significant expansion of the popular Master of Nutrition and Dietetics Program on the Gold Coast. From 2007 this professionally accredited program will change from the current 1.5 to a 2 year Masters with three majors in public health nutrition, management or research.

Grant Funding


Creedy D, Henderson A, Patterson E, Hobb L, Cooke M, Armit L. Leading for effective partnering in clinical contexts. Carrick Institute, $170,000.


Griffiths LR & Colson NJ. GlaxoSmithKline Postgraduate Support Grant for PhD student Natalie Colson. The role of hormonal and vascular genes in migraine susceptibility 2006–2007:$30,000.


Staff News

Awards
Bronwyn Betts, an associate lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, has been awarded the Ambulance Service Medal in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

The award recognises her long-term involvement with the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), starting in 1985 with a Mobile Coronary Care Ambulance project. Ms Betts was Charge Nurse of the Coronary Care Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital at the time and the project involved registered nurses working beside paramedics in the pre-hospital setting providing emergency care to patients suffering from a cardiac event. The trial ran for 18 months and ultimately resulted in the introduction of cardiac monitors and defibrillators into all Queensland ambulances.

Bronwyn, a registered nurse and lawyer, has also taught in the QAS training school in both clinical subjects, and more recently, in health law. She maintains close links with the QAS providing legal and policy advice in matters relating to patient care and health service delivery. She teaches part time in health, law and ethics to Griffith’s nursing students at the Logan and Nathan campuses.

Conference Leadership
Professor Wendy Moyle (School of Nursing and Midwifery) recently co-convened the successful 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference – Advances in Qualitative Methods Looking to the Future: Opportunities and Challenges for Qualitative Research on the Gold Coast of which Griffith University was a sponsor.

Dr Moya Conrick (School of Nursing and Midwifery) recently returned from the International Medical Informatics - Nursing Informatics (IMIA NI) World Congress in Seoul, Korea where she was involved in presenting several workshops on the International Classification for Nursing Practice and Developing Archetypes for Electronic Health Records. Moya was the only Australian invited to chair at the international ‘closed-door’ summit on the future of nursing to the year 2020 following the congress and was one of only two who representing Australia and so Griffith. This is the first time that Griffith Health has been represented at this level in the health informatics arena.

Moya has been invited to Chair the International Nursing Leaders Congress in Brisbane in 2007 and was invited to Yongse University and the Severance Hospital to discuss ehealth initiatives.

External Board Appointments
Mr John Mackay and Ms Jane Evans, School of Dentistry and Oral Health have been appointed to the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board, Chairperson and member respectively.

Dr Madelyn Peterson has recently been promoted to Chair of the Australasian Society of Genetic Counsellors.

Prof Lyn Griffiths has recently accepted a position as a Member of Board of International Directors of CNN Future Summit.

A/Prof Ian Glendon assumed the Presidency of the Division of Traffic and Transportation Psychology of the International Association of Applied Psychology.

New Staff Appointments
School of Human Services
  Dr Julie Clark, Lecturer; Avanka Vandenberg, Associate Lecturer
School of Medicine
  Ms Libby Holden, Research Facilitator
School of Public Health:
  Prof Don Stewart, Professor; Michael Hardie, Lecturer, Bachelor of Health Promotion program;
  Dr Jing Sun, Lecturer, Bachelor of Health Promotion program; Dr Tony Shadwell, Adjunct Lecturer
School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science
  Justin Kavanagh, Lecturer

Student News

Awards
The first lymphoma postgraduate research scholarship has been awarded to Michael Green, who gained first class honours in his Biomedical Sciences degree from the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Michael is an excellent candidate to undertake research on the genes involved in lymphoma susceptibility and progression and has just started his research at the Genomics Research Centre. Michael is working with clinicians, Dr Peter Wood from RBH and Dr Paula Marlton from the PA Hospital as well as with Prof Griffiths and Dr Rod Lea, a GRC affiliate from NZ, to investigate gene expression differences and genetic susceptibility to Lymphoma.

The Griffith University Lymphoma Project was launched in 2005 to develop new ways for early detection and better treatment of lymphoma. The project has been aided by the establishment of a Lymphoma Taskforce who have been helping with various fundraising activities to help this research.
Conference Presentations


Coyne E. Changed Horizons Raising the Voice of Young Women with Breast Cancer. 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference, Gold Coast, 13-16 July 2006.


Gamble, J. Political myths and realities – keynote, The Power, Passion and Politics, Australian College of Midwives Queensland Branch State Conference, Rockhampton, 7-8 July 2006


Griffiths LR. Invited Presentation. An integrated approach to identifying the genes that play a role in migraine. MCRI Molecular Medicine Seminar Series, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne. 6 June 2006


Groves M. PBL, context and learning style: (How) do they relate? ANZAME Conference, Gold Coast, 29 June 2006.

Harris, N. Demystifying qualitative data analysis for public health students: A three stage process to thematic analysis, 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference Advances in Qualitative Methods, Gold Coast, 13-16 July 2006.


Huang Y, Kellett U, St John W. The experience of caregiving for a Taiwanese mother of a child with cerebral palsy. 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference Advances in Qualitative Methods, Gold Coast, 13-16 July 2006.

Hughes, R. Competencies for effective public health nutrition practice. 8th EU Public Health Nutrition Summer School, Vienna, 1-8 July 2006.

Kandiah DA. Clinical decision-making for final year medical students. ANZAME Conference, Gold Coast, 29 June 2006.


Mitchell M. Improving transfer for families from the ICU. Guy’s & St Thomas’s Hospital, United Kingdom, 8 May 2006

Mitchell M. Reducing anxiety and uncertainty for families in ICU. Queen’s University, Ireland, 4 May 2006

McAllister, M. Moving beyond the problem: Using cultural theory to transform nursing education and practice. 4th International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, Tunisia. 3-6 July 2006.

McAllister, M. Transformative and critical social theory approaches to researching solution focused nursing. Round Table at the 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference Advances in Qualitative Methods. 13-16 July 2006, Gold Coast, Queensland.


Shaban, R. Paramedics accounting for judgment and decision-making of mental illness: (E)merging discourses in professional work. 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference Advances in Qualitative Methods. Surfers Paradise, Queensland. 13-16 July 2006.

Shaban, R. 'They’re all Nuts You Know...' - Constructs and characterisations of mental illness and the mentally ill in the discourse of paramedics. 7th International Interdisciplinary Conference Advances in Qualitative Methods. Surfers Paradise, Queensland. 13-16 July 2006.


Walker R. Chairperson, Clinical coordinators Forum, Griffith University, Nathan. 7 July 2006

Walker R. Speaker, Clinical Workshop for PAH Facilitators/preceptors. Princess Alexandra Hospital. 25 July 2006

Publications


Quilty MC, Gai WP, Pountney DL, West AK, Vickers JC, Dickson TC. Alpha-synuclein is upregulated in neurons in response to chronic oxidative stress and is associated with neuroprotection. *Exp Neurol* 2006;199,249-56.


Quilty MC, Gai WP, Pountney DL, West AK, Vickers JC, Dickson TC. Alpha-synuclein is upregulated in neurons in response to chronic oxidative stress and is associated with neuroprotection. *Exp Neurol* 2006;199,249-56.


Congratulations

Professor Lesley Chenoweth (School of Human Services) book entitled “The road to social work and human service practice: An introductory text” co-authored with Donna McAuliffe has been shortlisted for an Australian Publishers Association Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing under the category of Tertiary Education (Wholly Australian).
Research Update

Griffith Institute of Health and Medical Research Laboratory

Equipment is being progressively installed in the brand new suite of biomedical research laboratories in the Centre for Medicine and Oral Health. The first users are colleagues in the Centre of Excellence in Oral, Head, Neck and Thyroid Diseases - a collaborative group between the School of Dentistry and Oral Health and School of Medicine.

A specific project on molecular markers predictive of treatment response in oral cancer patients has been active in the labs with Karin Boslooper, a medical student here on Elective Placement from the University of Groningen. The project is led by Dr Jin Gao and Professors Alfred Lam and Newell Johnson in collaboration with A/Professor Stephen Weinstein, Director of Pathology for Queensland Health on the Gold Coast.

Another project of the Head and Neck Centre encompasses epidemiology, risk factors, diagnostic and prognostic markers and predictors of treatment response, in the hope of individualising patient care. Head and neck squamous cell carcinoma is the sixth most common cancer in the world, and the highest rates are found on our doorstep in Melanesia. There is growing evidence that Human Papilloma Viruses [HPV’s] are a risk factor in some individuals. We are launching studies of HPV epidemiology in the upper aerodigestive tract in populations in Australia, the Pacific, India and Africa, with parallel studies of Human Herpes Viruses [HHV’s]. Coordinating this study is Dr Lis Sedlak-Weinstein with key clinical collaborator Dr John Chuah from the Gold Coast Sexual Health Clinic.

Several PhD studentships are on offer in these areas. Candidates with relevant experience can contact Dr Jin Gao, j.gao@griffith.edu.au, 07 5678 0752 for studies in cell, bone and molecular biology; and Dr Lis Sedlak-Weinstein, l.sedlak-weinstein@griffith.edu.au, 07 5678 80728 for viral studies.

Genomics Research Centre

Cancer Vaccine Research

The arrival of the new VEVO 770 ultrasound machine for small animals will boost the lymphoma project as it will be able to detect small lymphomas at an early stage of development. The ultrasound allows monitoring of the progress of the tumours as they shrink or grow over time. Using this new technology will enable testing of the potency of newly developed anti-cancer therapies to eliminate cancers from animal models in preparation for clinical trials with human cancer patients.

Several new treatments are being developed as part of the research into improving therapies to cure cancer. A/Professor Jiri Neuzil, Head of the Apoptosis Research Group, has discovered a set of novel drugs targeting the mitochondria of cancer cells. These drugs appear to have very little side effects. We are proposing testing a combination of these drug treatments to reduce the tumour burden, followed by immunisation with a specially formulated cancer vaccine. Not only will this eliminate tumours such as lymphoma, but help prevent their recurrence. It is expected these new treatments will complement and improve on survival outcomes with existing immunotherapies. This research is still in its early phases however and would benefit from additional funding.

Parkinson’s Disease Research

Griffith researchers shared the stage recently with Gold Coast neurologist Dr Max Williams at a community forum to discuss the latest research and treatment for people with Parkinson’s disease.

Dr Dean Pountney is studying alpha-synuclein, the protein that aggregates in neural cells in the brain and contributes to cell death and dysfunction. Cell death in the substantia nigra is irreversible and reduces levels of the important neurotransmitter dopamine. Treatment for Parkinson’s disease currently relies heavily on dopamine replacement therapy, however the alpha-synuclein microaggregates may be a suitable target for potential vaccines. He is also interested in whether the protein can be detected in blood or saliva samples before symptoms occur. If so, there is the potential to diagnose the disease at an earlier stage than is currently possible.

Dr Steve Morrison, from the School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science, is expanding his research on walking, posture, grasping and tremor in Parkinson’s disease. “We believe there are exercises and other physical interventions that can help maintain or improve strength and dexterity in these patients and will ultimately improve their quality of life. We are also devising new balance tests and walking assessments that we would like to trial in people with Parkinson’s disease,” he said.