Griffith students shine in State International Education awards

By Carlene Duffy

Griffith University was recently acknowledged for its commitment to International education when we secured 2 wins at this year’s (2009) Queensland Education and Training International (QETI) Awards for Excellence. The awards were held 10 September at the Parliament House, Brisbane and the acclamations follow outstanding success at last year’s awards ceremony at which Griffith took home 7 of the 12 honours.

Recently graduated Master of International Business (MIB) student, Mr Camilo Santiago Costa Leite, won the award for International Student of the Year by which he was recognised for his outstanding contribution to the student community and to the international education industry.

On his arrival from Brazil, in February 2008, Camilo identified a need to bridge the gap between local and international students in the wider Brisbane area and has worked enthusiastically to achieve this by creating a number of culturally inclusive events that bring together students of both Australian and international origin.

Much of Camilo’s work was facilitated by his MIB internship, completed with Brisbane Marketing’s International Business Development Unit. Here, Camilo created the Study Brisbane International Student Ambassador program, recruiting international students to act as online volunteers to assist new international students for study in Brisbane. Further details can be found at www.studybrisbane.com.au.

Within his role at Brisbane Marketing, Camilo assembled a group of volunteers to appear on Australian television program “Getaway”, to profile Brisbane and Queensland as a tourist destination. He was also invited to speak at the Australian Education International’s (AEI) ESOS National Code Good Practice Workshop earlier this year to speak about his Student Ambassador project.

So impressive was Camilo’s work at Brisbane Marketing that Ken Bennett, Head, Work Integrated Learning (WIL), Griffith Business School nominated Camilo for the QETI award with recommendation from Camilo’s industry supervisor, Gordan Scott.

Camilo was thrilled to win the award. “The QETI award for International Student of the year means not only the recognition of my work as an international student but the recognition of the importance of international students, to Australia and the world," he said.

The second award went to Griffith graduate, Ms Phi Dung Tran Dang, for International Alumnus of the Year. Phi is recognised as one of Asia's emerging leaders in Public Health and she was commended for her work on raising awareness and the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Vietnam.
HIV/AIDS is a pressing public health concern in Vietnam and on graduating from Griffith University with a Master of Public Health in 2006, Phi returned to Vietnam to work as a Field Based Project Officer on Save the Children’s’ HIV/AIDS prevention program. She has been highly successful in her efforts and has produced some key population health outcomes, including a significant reduction in HIV infection rates among young males in Vietnam.

Phi is now regarded as one of the most valuable young graduates to be working in the Vietnamese public health sector and is also widely recognised by her colleagues, by academic experts in the field, her peers, the community via local media, and other global network organisations. She was even chosen to attend this year's Asia 50 Summit in Shanghai, China.

Phi, unaffected by her success, was delighted to win the QETI award. She said "I am thrilled and honoured to have been named the 2009 QETI International Alumnus of the Year. "I am privileged to have had the opportunity to study in Queensland, and I hope to be a positive example for other Queensland university students, especially international students," she said.