Health Centre offers students perfect mix under one roof

The $150 million Griffith Health Centre is fast taking shape on the corner of Olsen Avenue and Parklands Drive.

So too are the dreams and ambitions of future health students at the Gold Coast campus, where the next wave of health professionals will train in unrivalled, unprecedented clinical and learning surrounds.

The eleven-floor building will be completed in 2013, opening the doors to an interdisciplinary learning environment that will also give students the opportunity to utilise facilities at the new Gold Coast University Hospital across the road.

The $1.76 billion hospital and new health centre will reinforce teaching and research collaborations between Griffith University and the Gold Coast Health Service District.

“At the heart of the new area is a purpose-built kitchen, food preparation and consumption facility designed for the development of skills related to the provision of nutritious meals.” Professor Roslyn Sorensen, Head of School of Public Health

“This should enable greater opportunities for collaborative interdisciplinary research as well as greater opportunities for teaching together. Psychology looks forward to being part of a vibrant evidence-based health service.” Professor Paul Martin, Head of School of Applied Psychology

The $1.76 billion hospital and new health centre will reinforce teaching and research collaborations between Griffith University and the Gold Coast Health Service District.

“Striding forward. Learning online. Heads up. Healthy outlook.”

News, Careers and more in Health Winter 2012
Environment comes calling

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Opportunity is knocking for future graduates.

Dr Ross Sadler at Griffith University’s School of Public Health identifies a wide and ever-extending mix of career paths for environmental health officers to pursue.

“In Queensland they are needed everywhere,” Dr Sadler says. “But there is also great scope for employment overseas.”

Changes to state government policy have created new openings at local authority level, while airlines, cruise ships and traditional large institutions now have an unprecedented environmental health focus.

“Environmental health officers are also needed more and more in the wake of natural disasters, after extreme weather events, and to deal with the fallout from chemical accidents.

“Emerging areas like the science of climate change, e-waste and the natural resources sector all have an environmental health presence.”

From the start of 2013 Griffith University will offer a stand-alone Bachelor of Environmental Health* at its Gold Coast campus, responding to an emerging market need.

Sally Swanson is a third-year student of Public Health at Griffith University, who hopes to work as an environmental health officer in local government on the Gold Coast.

“The population of the Gold Coast is continually expanding, and environmental health factors are keeping pace,” she says.

Along with a vigorous analysis of workplace health and safety, infection control, and food and drug safety, students will also study the legislation underlying environmental health. There will also be a dedicated focus on the latest scientific knowledge informing the area.

“A good environmental health officer should only use legislation as a last resort,” Dr Sadler says.

“In most cases they are able to work with a non-compliant industry to get them where they need to be in terms of environmental health standards.

“At Griffith University we place considerable emphasis on developing judgment and interpersonal skills so our graduates are well equipped to solve problems by professional interaction with industry and the community.”

Gaining the skills to reshape lives

APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

As a psychologist Govind Krishnamoorthy talks about the light bulb moment, that millisecond when his professional endeavours connect with a client.

“I love the challenge of getting people to be receptive, to realise that what they think they want is perhaps not necessarily what they need in their lives at this point,” he says.

“I’ve always been into figuring out why people do what they do. It’s a kind of curiosity.”

He says he had an abstract outlook on life from an early age that set him apart from his peers.

“My dad used to encourage me to question everything, including traditions and authority.”

These early thoughts and attitudes crystallised into career ambitions for Govind. A real career pathway took shape while he gained a degree in Behavioural Science, an honours degree in Psychology and a PhD in Clinical Psychology from 2003 to 2011 at Griffith University.

“When I was reading for exams I found it all very interesting, very different, very exciting.

“Doing the coursework made me reflect on my own personal struggles and I realised if people were more attentive to their internal lives – their thoughts, emotions and desires – they could shape their lives to be a lot more satisfying.

“Change is often difficult. It’s important to listen carefully to people’s experiences and skillfully communicate what we (psychologists) know about human behaviour. I see this as a process of guiding them to create a life that best fits their needs.”

Near the time of his graduation Govind was appointed as a professional development coordinator at a Mater Hospital Community Outpatient Clinic in Brisbane.

He works mainly with children, their carers and other relevant stakeholders in issues of mental health linked to foster care.

“I had a placement at the Mater’s Child and Youth Mental Health service in 2008. I learned a lot there and the support and supervision was great. My work continues to challenge me, pushing me to develop greater insights into the human condition.”

* Subject to final University approval. Accreditation for Griffith’s Environmental Health degree is being sought with Environmental Health Australia.

griffith.edu.au/health

CLEARING THE AIR. Dr Ross Sadler discusses air quality with environmental health students.

CURIOUS MIND. Govind Krishnamoorthy has always been intrigued by what makes people tick.
Life in the fast lane

**MEDICAL SCIENCE**

Victoria Ozberk was only 19 when she graduated with an honours degree in biomedical science.

She is now researching a doctoral thesis into ageing hearts, which she aims to complete within three years. After that she plans to do medicine and train to be a doctor.

“Life in the fast lane...”

She has a keen focus and gritty attitude, which has led her to success in her honours degree.

A limited number of high schools make the accelerated pathway available to students through partnerships with Griffith Health.

Victoria was one of 15 high school students selected for the program and had to devote hours of extra study to intensive courses in biophysics, anatomy and physiology as part of a health study certificate.

She now reflects on this effort with pride, delighted by the prospect of completing a PhD in her early 20s. "As a nurse I was able to work part-time and earn a professional-level wage, enabling me to practise important skills relevant to both nursing and medicine while studying to be a doctor."

A keen focus and gritty attitude accelerated Victoria from her last two years of high school at the Queensland Academy of Health Sciences straight into second year of a biomedical science degree at Griffith University’s Gold Coast campus.

"I found the first semester very challenging. It required a certain type of determination," she says.

"I had to find things out faster, learn techniques while also keeping up with the theory. But I had great support from classmates and mentors and there came a point where I knew I had it under control."

"Without that research how would we have medicine, how would we have prescriptions? It is the kind of new knowledge that has to be discovered before it can be applied to a medical situation."

Nursing degree leads to doctor’s future

**MEDICINE**

When 25-year-old School of Medicine graduate Dale Currey started life as an intern at Logan Hospital, she held an advantage over most of her peers.

Dale, from Brisbane, had previously worked at the hospital as an emergency nurse after graduating as a nurse in 2006.

Her nursing degree would ultimately pave the way for her to study medicine through Griffith University’s Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery program from 2008 to 2011.

"I think nursing has been an excellent stepping stone to becoming a doctor," she says.

"It has given me a great advantage throughout my clinical training years and also when I started my career as an intern.

"You get to know how a hospital works and learn many of the skills that, like nurses, doctors also require. Most importantly, you learn how to talk to, and interact with, patients.

"As a nurse I was able to work part-time and earn a professional-level wage, enabling me to practise important skills relevant to both nursing and medicine while studying to be a doctor."

Dale also bolstered her studies by completing a research article as part of a Griffith University Primary Health Care writing bursary scholarship. The research investigated different neonatal outcomes resulting from caesarean sections compared with natural births.

"I always want to know more," says Dale, who started her internship on the obstetrics and gynaecology ward.

She also received a Queensland Health bonded medical scholarship to support her education at Griffith University and is excited that, as a result, she will be working within Queensland Health for six years, as she lays the foundations for a medical career.

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Revelling in the range of opportunities

HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL WORK

A lifelong ambition was realised for Tammie Usher when she travelled to Bangalore as part of a Griffith University study trip involving human services and social work students.

The Gateway to India project focused on social justice and community development in some of the city’s poorest areas.

Tammie says she was struck by the lack of government support for NGOs in India compared to Australia, and also how women were largely undermined in the male-dominated culture.

The memory of the deformed face of a young woman who begged her for five rupees has also stayed with Tammie on her return.

“I don’t think I was prepared for it. Preparing to go there I thought ‘Great, we get to go and help children’.

“Here, we turn on a tap and get clean water. They turn on a tap and get diarrhoea.

“I think we still have social problems here that are covered up and the study tour highlighted some strategies that could be implemented here.”

The mum of two is in her second year of a human services degree at Griffith University’s Logan campus.

“I’ve come to university wanting a better life for me and my family. I’ve always had that passion for a better life, but now I want a career, not just a job. I know I’m on the right track.

“Everybody has a right to go somewhere in life. There are about 80 different jobs I could have. The mind boggles.”

Tammie finished high school without an OP but that did not deter her ambition.

“I believe anyone can do anything,” she says.

After 10 years’ working in childcare and two years as a teacher aid, she knew which direction she wanted to go in and she pursued that ambition.

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When the midwife for the birth of her second baby alerted her to the online possibilities of Griffith University’s Bachelor of Midwifery program, Jodie Turner’s career ambitions had a new lease of life.

“I wouldn’t have been able to take on university without this online opportunity,” the Toowoomba mother says. “I couldn’t commit to time and lectures at university.”

Jodie contacted the School of Nursing and Midwifery to discuss how achievable a three-year full-time university program would be for a mum with two children under the age of three.

After a little hesitation, she took a leap of faith.

“It’s definitely busier than the average course but it’s a lot more flexible. I can do the modules in my time. I don’t have to be anywhere at any specific time. For me, after I put the children to bed, 7pm–11pm is my prime time for learning and study each night.”

With a little give-and-take in husband Sean’s schedule, Jodie also organised her week so that practical placements and clinical skills training at Toowoomba Base Hospital and local birthing centres were easily arranged.

“I love it. It suits me very well. I like to work at my own pace. I’ve always worked well setting myself goals.”

Among the key interactive elements of her education are the online lectures where she can get involved and ask a question by simply putting a virtual hand in the air. The option to review archived lectures also gives her further room for manoeuvre.

“We have a lively Facebook page which helps students get to know each other better. I feel, even though we live in different towns, that I know people better than I would if I was physically studying at university.”

Students based in Townsville and northern NSW are also taking advantage of the online teaching facility.

Jodie aims to work in a continuity of care role, supporting women through pregnancy and childbirth, in the future and eventually be eligible to work in private practice.

“I would love to see society embrace birth as a positive and empowering experience.”

Now the third-year nursing student from Brisbane is only a step or two from making this ambition a reality, with Africa very much in her sights.

Her plan is to gain valuable hospital experience after she graduates from Griffith University’s School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2012, before packing her bags and turning her attentions to the wider world.

An influential part of her African preparation is already safely in the bag in the form of an international clinical placement in Laos.

Kimberley was among 34 Griffith University nursing students who provided healthcare services to rural Laos as part of a three-week placement in January 2012.

“Before Laos I didn’t know if I could handle such challenging situations. That’s one of many reasons why Laos was so important to me. I realised I could handle difficult situations and not let my emotions be led by the terror people are exposed to and the terrible lack of resources,” she says.

“Our skills were tested and we were constantly challenged to come up with ideas and solutions for the problems we faced. It was so exciting to be making important decisions with our teachers and the health workers in Laos.”

After spells working in hospitality and debt collecting, Kimberley found a more progressive career pathway in nursing.

“I was sick of jobs that you only get so far with. Nursing is a perfect base to do so many things at home and overseas. The opportunities seemed endless when I started looking into it,” she says.

“I love people, I love talking to people, listening to people, I love helping people, learning about other people’s lives and hearing their stories.

“Nursing allows me to do that. To begin with, it is a solid career choice.”
Jessica can’t shake pharmacy bug

Starting work as a 19-year-old pharmacy assistant set Tasmanian Jessica Bugg on the road to Griffith University.

During this time she developed an interest and passion for the pharmaceutical world.

“I loved learning about the medications and I loved the enduring relationships that we developed and nurtured with clients through the years,” Jessica says.

“I just enjoyed helping people and learning about healthcare at the same time.”

When she moved to Queensland in 2005 it was natural that she should take up a job working as a dispensary technician at a Gold Coast pharmacy.

She entered and won through to the finals of the Queensland Pharmacy Assistant of the Year.

“I had completed all the education I could up to that point, short of going to university, and I wanted a new challenge,” she says.

She eventually applied to do a Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science and, after completing bridging courses in chemistry and maths, she started university full-time in 2009, aged 29.

Along with previous TAFE certificates and extensive experience in the industry, she was very well equipped for the challenge.

“I got a traineeship in my home town and I haven’t looked back. It’s definitely pharmacy for me all the way. It’s in my blood, I guess.

I had the experience, I knew what it was like to work there so I knew this is what I wanted to study.”

Jessica graduated with a degree in pharmaceutical science in December 2011, helped along with a scholarship from Pharmacy Cricket, an initiative of pharmacists of Australia, and is now studying a Master of Pharmacy.

“I’m not sure exactly where I will end up but I’m looking forward to being able to use my new skills, to embracing the future of pharmacy and the expanding role of the pharmacist.”

Getting to the art of dental detail

DENTISTRY AND ORAL HEALTH

As a child Terrie Sichter always looked forward to visiting her Townsville dentist and soon settled on dentistry as a realistic and attractive career option for her.

“I just loved it. I loved the smell. I loved the whole experience,” she says.

As a child Terrie also loved art.

Throughout her primary school days her flair for art was nurtured and encouraged, and by the time she had moved on to high school Terrie was determined not to let the big, bad world swallow up her artistic streak.

“I wanted to do something with it. I didn’t want to waste it in a boring job,” she says.

When she discovered the Bachelor of Oral Health in Dental Technology, a Griffith University program, her hopes and dreams seemed to come together.

“It’s the artistic side of dentistry. You get to make things with your hands, you get to go into a lab and do practical, hands-on work.”

She is excited about the creative range of opportunities at her dental technology fingertips, from orthodontics to dentures.

“There are so many areas to choose from, so many areas where I could specialise. And I like so many of them.”

HELPING HAND. Dr Jane Evans (right) has nurtured Terrie Sichter’s avid interest in dental prosthetics.

As you like into it.”

She is drawn, predominantly, to the world of dental prosthetics. The creative and transformative process of waxing, pouring and designing implants appeals to her artistic side.

“With the wax you can carve it out and put as much detail as you like into it.”

The third-year student plans to build on her degree in Oral Health in Dental Technology, and study a Master of Dental Technology in Prosthetics at the new Griffith Health Centre.
Appetite for education enhanced by exchange

NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

As a talented young triathlete Jamie Mollica recalls a seminar hosted by the Queensland Academy of Sport and a lecture on the importance of healthy eating for high-performance athletes.

The Gold Coast teenager was influenced at the time by the very latest information and knowledge on nutrition. He was also inspired significantly in another way by the lecture.

“I thought to myself I could do that,” the 21-year-old says. New in his third year at Griffith University, the Nutrition and Dietetics student is on course to achieve that ambition, and even build on it.

“I did public health in first year because I wanted to get a feel for its broader range of possibilities. There are so many options,” he says.

“I had been leaning towards nutrition because I already had an interest in staying healthy and living healthy through sport.

“If I could combine this with helping people in the healthcare industry, then all the better.”

He says his interest in the subject has been further invigorated by the anatomy and physiology part of the program which has revealed a “a whole new world.”

The link between obesity and diabetes and cardiovascular disease has also been an eye-opener, so too the prevalence of anorexia, which he describes as an overlooked side of nutrition and dietetics.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT. Jamie Mollica’s interest in healthy diets has been taken to a new level at Griffith University.

Sneak preview points Sean in right direction

PHYSIOTHERAPY AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

All Sean Certeza needed was a week in the life of another graduate of exercise science to know where his career was heading.

His friend Adam Lyons, a qualified exercise physiologist, had invited Sean to shadow him for a week as he attended aged care facilities across the Gold Coast.

Sean watched Adam, who graduated from Griffith University with a degree in exercise science in 2009, as he helped people get their lives on track after health setbacks.

“You really have to think on your feet,” Sean says. “It’s important to be able to develop a rapport with people and to understand their psychological needs.”

Adam had clocked up the 500 hours required for accreditation by Exercise and Physiotherapy and Exercise Science Australia during his time in the workforce after graduation. He is now an accredited exercise physiologist.

For Sean, who graduated with a Bachelor of Exercise Science in 2011, another option presented itself in the form of Griffith University’s Graduate Diploma of Exercise Science.

The one-year postgraduate program combines advanced exercise science coursework with key clinical placements, allowing students to build up the hours required while developing the skills to work in a range of clinical settings.

This has been the ideal springboard for Sean to consider emerging employment opportunities. He is enthusiastic about the future and the prospect of prescribing exercise as treatment.

“A lot of people aren’t aware of how exercise helps in the management and prevention of chronic diseases like prostate cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and its role in tackling the obesity epidemic. A proper exercise routine can prevent the onset of diabetes as well as associated conditions such as heart failure or hypertension,” he says.

“I will be able to advise people on setting goals for weight loss and support people recovering from a stroke. Helping people return to work after illness is a major part of the role of the exercise physiologist.”

A helping hand through early days of uni life

GRiffITH HOUnOURS collEGE

In her own words Yasuchiyo Hamilton was “a bit torn” about her dream career while a high school student on the Gold Coast.

She was attracted to veterinary science but had more than a hankering for medicine. In the end she opted for the latter and has not regretted that decision for a moment.

“I’m loving it,” says the second-year student of medical science at Griffith University’s Gold Coast campus.

On completion of second year, the 19-year-old will gain automatic entrance to the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery program at Griffith University (subject to entry requirements).

“Everything is so interesting and relevant.”

She makes no secret of the culture shock she first experienced when taking the leap from high school to university life, but has been motivated and guided by the people around her at Griffith University.

She is vocal in her appreciation of the support that came her way from the Griffith Honours College.

The security and reassurance they provide you is something you wouldn’t normally get somewhere else. When I spoke with Jeanne (McConachie) she just put things in perspective, broke it all down for me.”

Jeanne McConachie is Manager of the Griffith Honours College, which is designed to enrich the experiences of outstanding university students in combination with their undergraduate studies.

Yasuchiyo gained entry to the Honours College on winning a prestigious Sir Samuel Griffith Scholarship.

“The networks of advice are wonderful and it has also led to friendships across the university’s faculties,” she says.

Students of biomedical science, who are also members of the Honours College, have the opportunity to observe operating theatres through study trips to countries like Cambodia and Nepal.

As an Honours College student, Yasuchiyo also took part in a critical thinking workshop run in conjunction with a performance of Mary Poppins at QPAC.

To learn more about Griffith Honours College go to: griffith.edu.au/honours-college

WHAT AN HONOUR. Biomedical science student Yasuchiyo Hamilton found the Griffith Honours College an important source of support.

griffith.edu.au/health

7
It’s all go for student with medicine in mind

She is a first-year student of biomedical science but Tamara Palmer’s connection to Griffith University goes back four years.

As a Year 9 student of Upper Coomera State College she visited Griffith’s Gold Coast campus, and in 2009 she took part in the Go Health Go Griffith experience.

It was here that Tamara first met Dr Suzanne Owen from Griffith Health who presented a workshop on testing lung capacity.

“It was so much fun, such an experience, and I couldn’t wait to come back and do something here at Griffith,” Tamara says. “I loved every minute of it.”

The following year Tamara was one of the first students to sign up for Griffith University’s new Go Health Go Griffith program, a partnership with Queensland Health and Education Queensland to promote health-related studies in designated Gold Coast schools.

The program, led by Dr Owen, creates a pathway for senior high school students to do Griffith Health undergraduate programs.

“My involvement in the Go Health Go Griffith program definitely helped me make up my mind and decide that a career in medicine was the path I wanted to pursue,” Tamara says.

“I had thought about doing it but it was not quite set in stone in my mind. This was probably the defining moment.”

Another chance meeting with Dr Owen at an information night took Tamara another step forward as she entered Year 11. On Dr Owen’s advice to her and her parents, she enrolled in the Griffith Biology program which was run over Year 11 and Year 12 and integrated into the high school biology course.

This helped earn Tamara entry into Griffith University’s Bachelor of Biomedical Science in 2012.

“I’m now one step closer to achieving my goal of pursuing a career in medicine.”

David keeps the study wheels in motion

Talented cyclist David Edwards has enjoyed the best of both worlds since making his way from north Queensland to study psychology at Griffith University.

He has been able to pursue his international cycling dream while also building a study routine into a demanding schedule.

“I knew, coming to university, that cycling was going to be a big part of my life. So I only did three subjects for the first semester, which gave me some breathing space to focus on cycling,” he says.

“I deferred the second semester because I knew the cycling would get serious during this period.

“But I’m equally determined to keep working away at my degree. I think studying would be the perfect way to get my mind off cycling when I’m away on training camps.”

David rode through the state and national ranks before taking out the Australian under-17 time trial in 2009. He made the Australian team the following year, leading to a brace of three-month training stints in Italy.

Last year he claimed a bronze medal in the junior men’s time trial at the World Road Cycling Championships in Denmark, and he hopes to build on this success by joining a professional tour team during the next five years.

David has been able to pursue his international cycling dream while also building a study routine into a demanding schedule.

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“But I’m equally determined to keep working away at my degree. I think studying would be the perfect way to get my mind off cycling when I’m away on training camps.”

David has also been backed by Griffith University with a Griffith Sports Excellence Scholarship.

MEDAL MAN. A Griffith Sports Excellence Scholarship has allowed David Edwards to pursue academic and sporting targets.

New program captures passion for communication

Thirty-five students made up the first cohort to study a Master of Speech Pathology when it started on the Gold Coast in 2012.

Griffith University has collaborated with a wide range of service providers in southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales to gather support for student placement opportunities for the innovative program.

Griffith Health also liaised closely with the Gold Coast Health Service District in the development of the program, which aims to develop and retain a local workforce.

“We are in a fantastic position from the outset to connect and engage with clients, clinicians, and the whole community,” Associate Professor Elizabeth Cardell (pictured), who heads the program, says.

The two-year full-time program will eventually be based at the new $150 million Griffith Health Centre which is due to be completed in 2013.

Undergraduate pathways to the Master of Speech Pathology vary, with potential opportunities through degrees in health science, linguistics, medical science, psychology, public health, education and nursing.

Renee Buckingham from the Gold Coast is part of the first cohort. She had previously studied a Bachelor of Journalism at Griffith University.

Her training will incorporate a series of industry and clinical placements designed to give full and early effect to classroom learning.

She will be trained to help and support a range of people in need from post trauma patients, to children and adults with speech, language or swallowing difficulties.

“I’ve always had this desire to help people directly,” she says.

“I’ve had such a passion for communication, I had skills in articulation and I believed I could use all this to really help people.”

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