

## Vice Chancellor's Report to Council

### August 2021

#### Introduction

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Excitement was in the air when the students returned to Campus life at the start of Semester 2.

Semester 2 Orientation for M ori and Pasifika students, held on the first day back, attracted 60+ attendees who gave positive feedback. The Academic Skills Centre held two separate two-hour sessions over the first two weeks of the semester for M ori and Pasifika students to develop skills such as note taking and best study practices. International students, both onshore and online, also received a special orientation programme for Semester 2; new to UC and ongoing students online were also allocated to a mentor programme.

The full Incident Management Team (IMT) recently engaged in a desktop exercise focused on the scenario of a cyber-attack at UC. This desktop exercise provided an opportunity for the incident controllers, IMT and Director of Cyber Security to work through the initial response to a scenario in which all UC network-based services were compromised. Desktop exercises run by the IMT allow us to consider some of the contributing factors to and implications of an event of this sort in a way that builds awareness and confidence.

#### Engagement

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The new Ben Gough Family Foundation Leaders Scholarship (for MBA students) was launched at the Christchurch A

The Rhodes Medal, which recognises substantial contributions to community history, was awarded to Rita Wright for her 20 years' work at the Ashburton Museum.

Associate Professor Annelies Kamp has been appointed to the judging panel for the Engagement Australia 2021 Excellence Awards. UC remains the only New Zealand university working with Engagement Australia. Associate Professor Billy O'Steen, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, is a member of its board and three of our colleges are now active in the judging process.

Over 60 principals from secondary 2 (he)41S-25-h on004 Tcum4 (a)nui003>TA003nd12 (ve)6 (ri003>W)

Our inaugural alumni event in Taranaki New Plymouth took place with about 30 guests and Professor Milo Kral as the speaker. Even with an increased capacity for 144 guests, the Golden Graduates afternoon tea at the end of the month – on what will be Ernest Rutherford’s 150th birthday – has sold out and has a waiting list. Deputy Mayor Andrew Turner will attend to represent the City. Events in Napier, Dunedin, Invercargill, Tekapo and Wellington are being organised for later in the year.

The New Zealand Aerospace Summit isn

Skills. Each of these students has been sponsored by 14 Aotearoa companies, which are funding their participation in the micro-credential and supporting their progress towards a career within the marketing industry. Seven of these students are now enrolled

delivered via telehealth. The research will use a randomised, controlled trial design to evaluate the efficacy of telehealth-delivered, parent-implemented naturalistic developmental behavioural interventions and parent-focused acceptance and commitment therapy – alone and in combination – on children’s social communication and behaviour and on caregivers’ mental health and wellbeing. Participants in the study will include children aged two to five years who are on the autism spectrum and their parents.

Dr Matt Hobbs, School of Health Sciences, is part of a team who received a Better Start | Cure Kids grant of \$499,933 for the project “Does the environment young people grow up in promote or obstruct mental health?”. It is a nationwide geospatial study.

A research paper from the School of Earth and Environment has been shared by 134 media outlets, achieving an altmetric attention score of 1233. The international paper was led by Nicholas Patton, a PhD candidate from the University of Canterbury’s School of Earth and Environment, and Dr Chris O’Byrne of the University of Queensland. It highlights how, by uprooting carbon tapped in soil, wild pigs are releasing around 4.9 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide annually across the globe, the equivalent of emissions from 1.1 million cars.

Dr Michele Bannister, School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, was among the first in the world to identify a huge new comet. With an estimated size of between 100 and 370 kilometres, the object has the potential to be

submitted and 84 had completed their thesis and 123 were enrolled, compared with 58, 88 and 90 respectively at the same date in 2020. However, it remains challenging to recruit appropriate doctoral students in some areas of research, including one of the transdisciplinary research clusters.

A new UC Research website homepage will be launched in August or September. The homepage will showcase the six new research themes to improve our research profile. Each research theme will have its own showcase page, with news stories on research being done in that area, and will link to related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research & Innovation, UC Communications and Engagement and the UC Digital/Marketing teams have contributed to the project.

The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) is a block funding grant managed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). It rewards institutional research excellence from peer-reviewing individual research portfolios (the Quality Evaluation), alongside the number of research degree completions, and external research income success. For 2021, total PBRF funding for UC is some \$21 million. The 2025 PBRF will assess individual academics' research from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2024. The significant changes to the 2025 PBRF are a wider definition of 'research excellence', greater emphasis on impact, greater weighting for M ori and Pasifika academics and portfolios submitted to the Indigenous Knowledge Panel, and a greater weighting for income other than New Zealand public funding.

SciVal has been purchased and is now available. The tool will be implemented across the University in the second half of 2021. Training on how to access and use research performance data will be offered over the coming months. Training is open to all staff and will be of interest to anyone who wants quantitative data about their research performance. The Library is also looking at developing a research reporting framework to provide a regular series of reports on this part of the University's work. Professor Nick Draper, School of Health Sciences, gave a UC Connect public talk on

recognised expert in the ecology of Aotearoa, with a focus on Mātauranga Māori and Māori aspirations for better management of natural and managed environments and taonga species.

The Library has appointed a new Kairuruku Wānanga | Engagement and Learning Librarian to work in Te Rua Makerspace. The Makerspace now offers a range of structured workshops, informal drop-in sessions and activities with groups inside and outside the University, which has resulted in an increase in engaged makers using the space. The Library will focus on expanding its reach in Semester 2.

Currently showing at Tūranga Central Library, “We Stand Here: Celebrating five years of the Christchurch Documentary Project” is a selection of images from more than 1,500 taken by UC student photographers between 2014 and 2019. The exhibition “celebrates the







reduction. Yet even allowing for this, we are progressing well. The 2019 greenhouse gas emissions performance was a 23% reduction over the baseline year, exceeding our target at that stage of 20%.

The SDG Summit is to be held on 2–3 September. The programme, which is still being finalised, includes over 20 interactive sessions, plus field trips and a community feast. It will start with Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond joining