USC Gympie Manager’s Comment

How time flies

Welcome to the second edition of the USC Gympie Student Newsletter, Quest, which will bring you up to date with all the news and services available for students in semester two, 2014.

HOW time flies – it seems not that long ago that we published our first edition of ‘Quest’ and we’d like to thank everyone for all the positive feedback you have provided about this newsletter.

I am really pleased to say that our final student numbers for semester one 2014 were 145 and we anticipate figures for semester two 2014, to be well above 2013’s enrolments.

As we welcome current and new students for semester two we felt it was important to include in the newsletter some of the services and support, which are available for students on campus in the form of counselling, study support, career guidance, academic skills, scholarships for financial support and much more. We have also decided to include some more information on our very successful Tertiary Preparation Pathway program (TPP) which has been helping many students enter university and start studying for the career of their dreams.

As always we are very interested in the opinions and thoughts of our students so this semester we are asking students to tell us what we should ask you. The best response will receive a student printing credit to the value of $20, so get your thinking caps on and check the newsletter for details on how to enter.

It is fantastic to see the student community at USC Gympie growing and due to this you will notice that we have added eight new PCs on the first floor for students to use. We have also changed the furniture in this area to make it more appealing as a space to work.

USC Gympie is here to serve the regional community, so please help spread the word that people are welcome to come and talk with our friendly reception staff about studying here. Our team are only too happy to help.

We will soon share some more plans regarding additional courses and program offerings for 2015, so ‘stay tuned’.

Welcome back everyone and from all of us in the USC Gympie team we hope you have a great semester.

Graham Young

Ticket to tertiary studies started early for local student

STEFANIE, 17, of Kilkivan was a 2014 recipient of the $12,000 USC Vice Chancellors Merit Scholarship, which is awarded to students who achieve academic excellence while at high school.

The St Patricks College graduate is in the first year of her Bachelor of Commerce Accounting at USC Gympie.

She said she was honoured to receive the scholarship, which will provide $4,000 each year during her studies.

“I feel very grateful for the scholarship, it is providing me with the very best start to my tertiary studies,” she said.

“I did a lot of research while at high school to ensure I met all the pre-requisites for the scholarship and I worked very hard to give myself a good chance of receiving it.

“Any contribution or support towards text books and tuition costs can make a big difference over the long term.”

USC has a wide range of scholarships available for current, prospective and new students across categories including equity, research, sport and from external parties such as local businesses and government departments.

There are also faculty prizes and awards as well as scholarships for students experiencing financial hardship, international students and those from Indigenous backgrounds.

“I think it is so important for prospective and current USC students to be aware of the assistance which is available to students,” Stefanie said.

“Many students don’t realise that there are more than just academic scholarships on offer and its worth looking into, we can all do with a bit more support in our studies.

“It never hurts to apply and you never know, you might end up with some much needed financial assistance.”

To apply, students need to visit the USC website and complete a simple online application form.

Based on eligibility, their application will then be assessed for all eligible scholarships.

Applications for 2015 scholarships will open in August, 2014, for more information please contact USC Student Administration via email: scholarships@usc.edu.au or phone on 5430 2890. Additional information if available via the website: www.usc.edu.au/scholarships.
Doors open for student with a nursing dream

For USC Gympie Nursing student Fiona Vance, study is a way of life, but it wasn’t always that way.

FIONA, 37, completed USC’s Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP) program in 2013 and is now on her way to fulfilling her dream of becoming a registered nurse and midwife.

TPP is a four-subject program which provides an alternative pathway to a USC degree, allowing people to experience university life and gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed before they commit to a degree.

The Gympie resident said she decided to try TPP initially because she wanted to establish a solid foundation of skills to prepare her for university study.

“TPP provided access to opportunities I had previously never thought possible,” she said.

“I wanted to get a full understanding of academic writing, studying and learning and TPP provided that and more.

“It gave me the confidence and support to fulfill my potential.”

Fiona said the biggest misconception she found many students had was that they didn’t fit the mould of university study.

“It really is for everyone, not just young people and TPP offers entry to a diverse range of options for people from all backgrounds,” she said.

“The fact that the USC Gympie campus is such an intimate, friendly and inviting space, makes the study experience all the more enjoyable.

“I would recommend participating in TPP to all students, even students who are familiar with academic work.

“It really gives you the core framework of skills to help you succeed at tertiary study.”

Fiona hopes to one day travel with her nursing and midwifery qualifications, helping the lives of others through mission and volunteer projects.

USC Gympie is taking direct applications for the TPP summer course and 2015. For details email gympie@usc.edu.au or call 5456 5800.

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Ticket to business and travel

The new business studies offerings at USC Gympie has caught the attention of local student Bonnie Kowaltzke and she’s loving every minute of it.

BONNIE, 21, of Gympie is currently studying a Bachelor of Business, majoring in tourism, leisure and event management and marketing.

She said she decided to study business at USC Gympie because she wanted to study at a campus where she didn’t get lost in the crowd.

“Having a university located in Gympie is such a benefit for students like myself. I wanted a university experience that was inclusive and supportive which is exactly what USC Gympie offers,” she said.

“Students, lecturers and staff are just so friendly and approachable, the campus has a very welcoming and relaxed atmosphere, making it the ideal place to learn.”

“While I didn’t achieve an OP at highschool I knew I definitely wanted to study at university and this was possible through the Tertiary Preparation Pathway program.”

TPP is a four-subject program which provides an alternative pathway to a USC degree, allowing people to experience university life and gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed before they commit to a degree.

The program is flexible, offering an experience of university life before committing to a degree, and is free of charge for Commonwealth-supported students.

“TPP provided the gateway to study and a career which I have dreamt of for a long time,” she said.

“I now feel confident to tackle university study and would ultimately love to travel when I complete my degree and work specifically in event management.”

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Study dream turns to reality for Gympie mum of two

For single mum of two, Michelle Walker, going back to study had always been a dream but never a reality until she discovered the University of the Sunshine Coast, Gympie Campus.

MICHIELLE, 40, of Jones Hill, is now in her second year of a Bachelor of Primary Education and hasn’t looked back since.

“I started a Bachelor of Education a long time ago after I finished high school but I never got round to finishing it,” she said.

“It was one of my biggest regrets so when I discovered USC had a Gympie campus where I could study education I didn’t give it a second thought, I enrolled straight away.

“I have always wanted to change my career and USC Gympie really does offer the best of both worlds. I can juggle being a mum and a student.”

Michelle previously worked as a legal secretary and in administration roles for a number of years before she discovered a passion for working with children.

“There is a certain sense of satisfaction in being able to help children master skills and to go on and succeed in overcoming any educational obstacles that come their way,” Michelle said.

“To help young children discover their own talents and strengths and see them succeed in a chosen profession would be very rewarding.

“Returning as a mature age student was a little bit daunting at first, but due to the level of support on hand at USC Gympie and how friendly the staff and students are, I have never felt more welcome or at home at a place of learning before.

“It has been one of the best experiences I could have hoped for and I’m looking forward to continuing my studies and graduating in 2015.”
Leader of the Business Pack

Shaping the minds of the future business leaders of the Gympie and Sunshine Coast region was an offer too good to refuse for USC Lecturer in Management, Dr Wayne Graham.

Dr Graham started working at USC Gympie in early 2014 and believes now is the best time for students to consider taking advantage of the expanded business studies offering, which will be available in 2015.

He said from 2015 onwards there would be an expanded offering, with details due to be released later this year.

“This is very important for a regional centre like Gympie because business concepts can be applied to a variety of organisations and sectors ranging from small businesses to retail centres, government departments, home businesses and even farms,” Dr Graham said.

“I expect the positive and growing student interest in business studies at USC Gympie will only continue to increase.

“I have been very pleased with the academic performance of students from Gympie, they have done very well and I think this comes down to the supportive network the students provide each other and the environment at the campus. 

Business internships, work experience and engagement with local businesses as part of the study curriculum are part of Dr Graham’s hopes for students studying business at USC Gympie.

“The best thing about studying business is that it has applications for many disciplines and can equip students with the ability to excel in their chosen careers,” he said.

“Business is fun because it involves working with people to achieve great things, improving situations, innovating, solving problems as well as developing new processes, products and services. The scope is endless and limited only by a student’s imagination.

“My best advice for students planning on a career in business is to develop good habits early, success in this field is largely a combination of hard work and as much about what you know as who you know.”

Clearing the path for students with disabilities

Disability doesn’t have to mean disadvantage or dissatisfaction when it comes to university studies at USC Gympie campus.

STUDENTS experiencing any physical or mental disability need look no further than Lecturer in Education and Disability Advisor Rosemary Horn for guidance.

Rosemary said adapting learning strategies and employing specific tricks and tips can make a big difference to the lives of students who previously thought their disability would hold them back.

“It is really important for students to speak up for themselves and come forward to ask for support, we are only too willing to help and the sooner they talk with us, the easier we can make the transition to university life,” she said.

“Emotional support the key to academic success

For most students, having an unbiased ear to talk to can make all the difference during stressful study periods.

USC Gympie Counsellor at Student Life and Learning, Rebekah Fraser, can provide this and more for students seeking to make proactive changes in their lives and manage their study loads.

Rebekah said an increasing amount of students are seeking out her services and the opportunity to receive emotional support and guidance during their studies.

“I feel honoured to be able to help students during some of their most vulnerable and stressful times,” she said.

“My best advice for students is: if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Handling time management well, avoiding distractions and making time for family, health and personal time is important for student wellbeing.

“What most don’t realise is that I can help students with everything from personal difficulties, through to study and degree choices to career preparation and planning.”

Rebekah chose to work as a counsellor because she found she had a natural inclination for listening and a desire to understand the realms of psychology.

“It definitely is a very rewarding job and I enjoy working at the USC Gympie campus because it offers such a positive, welcoming vibe for both students and staff,” she said.

The counselling service is free and confidential for all USC Gympie Students. Appointments can be booked at https://careerhub.usc.edu.au/students or by phoning reception on 5456 5800.
**Study support in hand**

When it comes to succeeding at study, sometimes all you need is a helping hand. This is the motto of David Duncan, the Student Life and Learning Academic Skills Adviser at USC Gympie.

He ought to know, he was a student at USC once and after completing a Bachelor of Health Promotion in 2011 he decided to swap roles and help others searching for study support.

David now provides intensive skills courses, on campus support and email feedback to Gympie students each semester.

“Some of the biggest issues we see students struggling with are areas such as time management, task analysis, essay structure and referencing,” he said.

“As students prepare for semester 2, I would suggest that it’s never too early to start working on a task.”

“When it comes to assessment it is really important to read the question to identify key words, plan the research and writing and use the correct referencing guides in order to keep assessments on track.”

Student Life and Learning will be offering an intensive study skills workshop course for USC Gympie students at the start of semester two; however David will also be available for on-campus support each Monday, as well as providing email guidance during week days.

“For most new students, university can be a daunting experience and many Gympie students are often the first in their families to attend university,” David said.

“So it is important students aren’t shy in seeking out support to help make their learning experience as positive as possible.

“I help students to improve academic writing and their study skills through one-on-one consultations or email feedback, providing tips and time-saving strategies to assist in improving their overall academic abilities.”

David said everyone can do with brushing up with their skills and provided the following top tips for starting the semester in fine form.

1) Get a head start: attend the pre-semester academic skills workshop from July 21-25
2) Budget your time: develop a Semester Planner to manage your time
3) See the big picture: read your course outlines to get an overview of the semester
4) Know where to get help: there is a variety of support available at USC Gympie

For more information on the academic skills support available at USC Gympie via Student Life and Learning please visit: www.usc.edu.au/gympie

So who better to ask what we should be finding out, than the students themselves?

Tell us what you think we should ask students about studying at USC Gympie via the USC Gympie Facebook page and you could bag yourself a $20 print voucher for your efforts and have the suggestion featured in the next student newsletter.

Please visit facebook.com/uscgympie