

PRINCIPAL'S ANNUAL REPORT

2008

I am pleased to present the Principal's Annual Report for 2008. This report has been compiled for members of the USC community to provide a snapshot of highlights from our seventh year of operation.

MISSION – In a diverse school community we aim to educate and prepare our students for tertiary study and lifetime success.

VISION – We will provide learning that resonates with young people from all backgrounds and be the college of choice for pre-tertiary education in SA.

**VALUES – We recognise and value cultural diversity.
We endorse a culture founded on integrity, mutual respect and teamwork.
We accept only the best of ourselves and for our students.
We promote creativity and risk taking in the education process.**

In 2008 we enrolled 436 students (334 local and 102 international). Despite the competitive nature of independent schooling in Adelaide there can be no doubt that the unique pathway to tertiary studies provided by USC continues to grow in its appeal.

To be part of the Adelaide University learning precinct is inspirational for students and staff alike. The experience of operating on campus, taking a greater responsibility for their own learning, and the intellectual challenge of a rigorous academic program has added greatly to the quality of the senior secondary experience.

We aim to develop more resilient graduates who have the confidence and know-how to cope with the demands of tertiary study.

GOVERNANCE

I acknowledge the ongoing support and professionalism shown by the members of our College Council under the leadership of Dr Judith Brine. The Council's role is to govern the school and provide strategic guidance consistent with the philosophy, mission and vision of the school. Since the retirement of Noel Guerin as CEO in 2007 the Council has taken on a heightened responsibility to ensure that the school operates smoothly and efficiently. I have been grateful for the integrity, honesty and objectivity shown by Council members in building a strong co-operative relationship with the senior management team of the school.

Council Membership 2008

Dr Judith Brine AM (Chair)
Mr Dale Hassam (Secretary)
Mr Mike Terlet AO

Professor John Taplin
Professor Birgit Lomman
Dr Milton Haseloff

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

The academic year commenced on a high note when we received full details of the Year 12 results from the 2007 SSABSA exams.

Paul Swincer was Dux of the school and secured merit awards in each of his five subjects. Ellen Calam, Megan Payne, Amanda Ho, Jessica Tan, Nikki Church, Laura Poppleton, Jane Baulis and Timothy Keen each secured a TER above 99. This places these 9 students in the top 1% of all SACE candidates, approximately 17,000 students from SA, NT and SE Asia.

USC students were awarded a total of 37 Merits (20/20). There were 6 Merits in Psychology, 5 in Maths Studies, 4 in Maths Applications and 3 in each of Chemistry, English Communications and Physics, a remarkable achievement. In addition a total of fifty six students (28% of the cohort) achieved a TER above 90. Nineteen students scored 5 A's and 68% of the total cohort scored A and B grades in all five subjects.

To support their further studies **Ellen Calam** was awarded a prestigious University of Adelaide Merit Scholarship and **Megan Payne** secured a University of Adelaide Principal's Scholarship.

Ellen Calam and Amanda Ho were recipients of an Australian Student Prize in recognition of their academic achievements.

February 7 marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year. 1,111 dumplings were rapidly consumed at a shared lunch in the Drama Theatre. 'Gold' coins were exchanged amongst students and staff to celebrate the beginning of the 'Year of the Rat.'

USC joined in a national fundraising event in March when staff and students combined forces to raised over \$5,000 through participation in 'The World's Greatest Shave.' **Michael Doukas and Alistair Pellen** were joined by Candy Brown, Nadia Lovett and Igor Plisko to shed their locks in support of the Leukaemia Foundation.

One of our International students, **Qiu Yu (Cathie)**, was responsible for initiating a fund raising drive within the school to support the victims of the earthquake in Chenghu. The \$1,800 raised by students was donated to UNICEF.

World Environment Day, Wednesday 6 June, was celebrated with a shared lunch in the Drama Theatre. Funds raised prior to this event were donated to 'Trees for Life'.

In March Lynn and Ryan Jackson were blessed with the birth of a beautiful daughter, Cassilda Laney Jackson.

Lily Chester (Year 12) and Alex Antoniou (Year 11) were awarded an Australian Defence Force Leadership and Teamwork Award for the positive manner in which they have conducted themselves on campus throughout the year. Both have added greatly to the productive and positive work tone of the broad school community through their manner and scholarship.

A number of students performed at the highest level in the senior division of the South Australian School Mathematics Competition. Zhong Yinxia (Lisa), Liu Zhiye (Blue), Qin Qiao (Rebecca), Zhou Xuan Ming (Nash) and Li Weijing (Angela) were awarded High Distinctions.

In the Australian Mathematics competition five students at Year 11, Matthew Makestas, Zhou Xuan Ming (Nash), Jang Seok Hee, Li Weijing (Angela) and Li Hao Yang (Leven), all secured High Distinctions. Eight other students at Year 11 secured Distinctions and twelve received Credits. A special Prudence award was presented to **LIU Zhiye (Blue)** for his outstanding effort in a demanding competition.

The Australian Mathematical Olympiad Committee (AMOC) invited 74 students in Australia to undertake the Senior Mathematics Contest. **Zhong Yinxia (Lisa) and Liu Zhiye (Blue)** were both awarded Credits in this demanding and prestigious competition.

Evan Markby was ranked first in SA and second in Australia in the National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition. In 2007 Evan won the same division and took part in Geography's Big Week Out – a gathering of aspiring young geographers from which the Australian Olympiad team is chosen.

Forty five of our Chemistry students, in teams of three, entered the RACI Titration Competition. Five of the fifteen teams did well enough to be invited to compete in the state finals and two teams won through to the national final. We congratulate Einas Ibrahim, Tanya Shanka (substituting for Charlotte Juhasz) and Miyako Kato of Year 11 who secured two gold medals and a silver, as well as our Year 12 team, Tu Nguyen, Thien Le and Mingmei Teo who also secured two gold and one silver medal – a stunning result!

Cathaya Yong (Stage 2, Japanese) and **Serrin Prior Bonus** (Stage 1, French) received an Award for Outstanding Achievement from the SA School of Languages. In addition Ellen Davies (Stage 2, German), Miyako Kato (Stage 1, Japanese) and Shaun Mercer (Stage 2, Japanese) received an Award of Merit for their academic performance during the year.

The Annual College Formal was held at the Adelaide Hilton Hotel, Victoria Square, in August. With 'Masked Ball' as the theme, approximately 400 staff and students attended a

very energetic and delightful gathering organised by Lisa Temple and an enthusiastic student committee. A surcharge on each ticket sold ensured that the formal was a carbon neutral event and the money raised was donated to 'Trees for Life'.

Year 12 Drama students presented four high calibre and entertaining performances of 'Amadeus' by Peter Shaffer, to a packed Little Theatre early in second term. The SSABSA moderators commented upon the high quality of the performances. Martin Gray, with support from old scholar Sophie Button, did a wonderful job in directing the productions.

During May seven of our Year 12 Drama students presented an 'Individual Study' in the Charles Street Theatre to fulfil the practical component of their course. The audience was entertained by an evening filled with a wide variety of dynamic, interesting and thought provoking performances.

The Year 11 Drama group performed 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in the Charles Street Theatre early in Term 4. Martin Gray was ably supported by Ocea Bradley throughout this entertaining and humorous production.

We were most fortunate to have internationally recognised artist, **Hossein Valamanesh** address the Year 12 Visual Arts Studies class. He outlined his personal history and those things that influence his ideas and ultimately his art. Hossein's work is represented in many collections including the Art Gallery of South Australia, the National gallery and even in the pavement leading to the Barr Smith Library.

During the last three weeks of Term 3 **Pamela Kouwenhoven** took on the role as 'Artist in Residence' with our Year 11 students. Pamela's contemporary style and a working medium of discarded materials, including dilapidated and rusted rainwater tanks, prompted a great deal of thought and positive discussion amongst our students.

The Graduate Exhibition of Art and Design by students of Year 12 Visual Arts Studies was officially opened by **Trudyanne Brown**, Gallery Director BMGART, on Friday 7 November in the Ira Raymond Room of the Barr Smith Library. Georgia Beach was awarded the Barr Smith Prize by Paul Wilkins (Deputy University Librarian). Four students, Lily Chester, Jenna Dikih, Lucy Fry and Zannia Yakas had work selected for exhibition at the SACE Art Show.

The Art Studio on level 1 of the Rundle Central Building in Charles Street was refurbished in April with the financial support of a grant through the Federal Government IOSP program. Another grant secured through the same program allowed us to improve production facilities in the Drama Theatre on Level 1 during August. Students in art and drama will benefit greatly from the improved learning facilities provided through this generous financial support.

USC Music students presented an entertaining and high quality Sunday Concert for parents and friends at Scot's Church on North Terrace during August. Geoff Rogers and Ashleigh Tobin supported the students in the organisation and delivery of a thoroughly enjoyable concert.

Jemima Thomson and Murray Curtis secured supporting roles in Scott Hicks' film 'The Boys are Back', starring Academy Award nominee – Clive Owen.

Marsha Ejova performed in the dancing chorus for the State Opera production of Rigoletto, directed by Elijah Moshinsky. Petra Szabo secured a lead role, 'Chef Ludmilla', in the musical production 'Dear Edwina' performed at the State Opera Studio. Petra followed this with a performance in the State Opera's production of Turandot.

A Year 11 International student, Qiu Yu (Cathie), was declared the winner of a short film competition in which Cathie addressed the theme 'RE Think Your Drink'. The competition was part of a national strategy to develop an awareness program for senior secondary students.

A number of Old Scholars, including Darcie Barry-Keen and Jadsada Chongvathanakij provided their support and advice to current students aspiring to enter Health Science through the UMAT pathway. Each year Lisa Temple coordinates a structured program to guide students through this demanding process.

Harry Hill-Smith was selected as a delegate to the 2008 United Nations Youth Conference in Hobart. Harry also researched and presented a scholarly paper on 'Zimbabwe: the road to recovery' as a component of a special extension studies course that he pursued at USC during 2008.

Emma Hall attended the Youth Science Congress in Dunedin, NZ, arranged by the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science.

We acknowledge the discipline and dedication shown by a number of students who have competed at the National level in their chosen sport. Fiona Kidd and Sam Kelly (Kayaking), Matthew Knight (Water Skiing), Will Lohmeyer (Hockey), Osama Malik (Soccer), Shannon Rowe (Lacrosse) and Lydia Wright (Athletics).

David McClaren of 'Carbon Planet' presented a lecture to the Year 12 Biology students on the impacts of carbon emission on global climate. Dr Tony Richards, Head of Economic Analysis RBA, spoke with students regarding strategies to deal with the current global financial situation. Dr Mark Buntine provided chemistry students with a number of informative lectures on topics within his area of research expertise.

The Bell Shakespeare 'Actors at Work' programme visited USC to perform 'Macbeth Intensive' in June. This young energetic troupe brought to life the language, imagery and theatricality of this classic tragedy for our English students.

Year 11 students were involved in a 'Career Research' program coordinated by Brian Bates at the end of term 2. The primary aim of the week is for students to secure a work placement to gain a better understanding of possible career pathways.

Year 12 Biology students took part in the practical study of DNA through the 'Getting into Genes' program. The workshop was conducted by Dr Monica Ogierman, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, University of Adelaide.

USC students had the opportunity to attend the Politics Students' Conference at the University of Adelaide. In addition this group of students had Dr Dean Jaensch AO, Dr Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes, Dr Bob Such MP and Kris Hanna MP as guest speakers during the year.

During National Science Week USC was invited to exhibit in the forecourt of the SA Museum. A theme of 'Pathways to Science' provided an opportunity to showcase aspects of the unique science experience available to USC students through our association with the University of Adelaide.

STAFF MATTERS

The success of USC during its short history is intimately linked to the energy, commitment and professionalism of the staff. I draw your attention to the staff list published in the 2008 Year Book to gain some insight into the depth of experience of the staff at USC.

During 2008 four academic staff pursued post-graduate studies, four accepted roles as SACE subject moderators, three delivered teacher training programs in the School of Education, two were appointed SACE examiners and others continue to be involved with the development of curriculum material for the wider education community. I am delighted to report that two members of the support staff commenced certificate courses in administration during the year. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to professional development and self-improvement that ultimately leads to better outcomes throughout the school community.

Paul Stokes (ESL) has decided to retire from teaching after 32 years of distinguished service. He taught in many DECS schools and came to USC in 2005 from the Australian Science and Maths School. Paul graduated with majors in History and Classics from the University of Adelaide and subsequently taught at senior secondary level. His strong background in History and English led him to specialise in the teaching of English as a Second Language and it is in this area that he developed a high level of expertise recognised throughout the education community in SA. USC students have been fortunate to work with Paul over the last four years and we will miss his scholarship and depth of knowledge. Staff and students wish Paul good health and happiness, whether tending his herb garden or visiting an exotic location in some remote corner of the world.

Lucy Victory undertook a contract during 2008 to teach Modern History. Lucy came to our attention during a teaching practicum while completing a Graduate Diploma in Education. So impressed were the staff with her energy and passion for teaching that we invited her to join us on campus and teach history. However, the desire to travel overseas and experience other places will mean that Lucy leaves USC at the end of the year. We thank her most sincerely for the support that she has provided to students and the injection of youthful enthusiasm and cheerfulness that she brought to the staff.

Nadia Lovett secured Federal Government funding to explore ways in which senior secondary schools can address the issue of "Young People and Alcohol". In addition Nadia has recently completed her Doctoral studies in Counselling and we will celebrate this achievement on her graduation day. Nadia researched the potential of digital storytelling as a means to explore help-seeking behaviours amongst young women. USC is fortunate to have access to the skills and expertise developed during this research project and I am sure that the material produced will find a wide and appreciative audience.

Brian Bates was presented with a Teaching Excellence Award by the Graduate School of Education, University of Adelaide, in recognition of his commitment to innovative teaching practice and curriculum design over many years of teaching in SA.

Kate Cutts was approached by the SACE Board of SA to travel to Kuala Lumpur and Roxby Downs to deliver workshops to teachers and students on Stage 2 Psychology.

Murray Thompson and Maurie Wetherall have led the science staff through a project to develop a computer-based assessment system that allows rapid diagnostic feedback to students. Funding for this project was secured through the newSACE office under the 'Innovations to Work Program'.

Lisa Temple, Di Averis, Lynn Jackson and Murray Thompson provided consultancy support for the Foundation Studies course delivered by Tsinghua COACE (Centre for Overseas Academic and Cultural Exchange) in Beijing. A number of graduates from this course will enrol with the University of Adelaide.

Noel Guerin (Founder of USC) has released a book, 'Education Revolution?' published by Shannon Research Press. Noel suggests that education will only flourish in Australia on a level playing field and outlines a strategy to end the current educational apartheid.

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Graham Payze has settled in to his new role as Deputy Principal with the same high degree of professionalism, understanding and compassion that we have come to expect from this 'man of numbers.' His capacity to think analytically and formulate logical solutions inspires confidence amongst colleagues. Most importantly Graham has earned the respect of others through his integrity, sense of humour, love of teaching and a genuine desire to help students reach their true potential.

Inger Schmidt (Head of USC International) continues to lead the International school with enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence. Over the last five years she has gathered a strong team and developed a supportive and positive learning pathway that truly prepares overseas students for the demands of tertiary studies. Inger's care and concern goes well beyond the classroom and her leadership has been inspirational.

We are indebted to the management and counselling skills of Lisa Temple (Year 12 Dean) and Kate Cutts (Year 11 Dean) as they monitor the academic progress of students and lead the mentoring program at each year level. Their role is crucial to the smooth operation of the school and ensures that every student is supported in their complex journey through the senior secondary years.

As student counsellor, Nadia Lovett provides a wealth of experience and understanding in helping students maintain a balance and sense of direction in their time at USC. Her capacity to connect with young people and provide meaningful support is a key element in the success of our program.

The administration of educational pathways at senior secondary level is a complex issue and we are indebted to Yvette Winter for the smooth delivery of all operational matters surrounding SACE and wonderful support provided in the Careers Centre. The advent of the newSACE has generated a multitude of variables that demand careful analysis and adaptation to the needs of USC. We are fortunate to have the experience and expertise of Murray Thompson as Director of Studies to guide us through this process. Additionally, Heather

Wiseman's role as IT Manager is pivotal in so many aspects of our daily routine and it seems to grow more complex by the day. These areas of the school's operation demand exceptional organisational skills and the capacity to work under pressure. It is comforting to know that Yvette, Murray and Heather are providing the support necessary to meet the needs and aspirations of our students.

As well as recognising the ongoing professional input from all the teaching staff I would like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by the support staff. They add much to the quality of our school. In particular I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by those with whom I work very closely on a day-to-day basis; Laurene Skinner, who fulfils the crucial role of Registrar, and Karen Boyd, our Finance Manager. Both add a high degree of efficiency in areas that demand a strong understanding of financial systems and interpersonal communication.

Similarly I wish to acknowledge the administration support provided by Merrilyn Ades, Jasmine Bates, Candy Brown, Laurel Clewlow, Michelle Giavis, Sophie Guerin, Lauren Lovett, Lee Paschburg, Natasha Pressley and Carolyn Woods. In addition, Helen Webber has done a wonderful job working with Graham Payze to maintain student records and unravel the complexities of our timetable. USC could not function without the expertise and efficiency of the support staff, nor could we hope to generate the same warm welcoming atmosphere.

FAREWELL TO STUDENTS

In less than two weeks from Graduation our students will receive their Year 12 results. Many will receive outstanding scores, but there may be a hiccup or two in store for some as well. It is timely to remember that success in exams is not necessarily a guarantee of success in life, let alone proof of wisdom. Nor is failure in exams a guarantee of future failure. Our graduates are poised to make a significant shift into tertiary education and we would hope that they make the transition a joyous, creative and productive journey.

A final word to the Class of 2008:

To the graduating class, I wish you every success, and will follow your journey with great interest.

Every member of the graduating class should take heart in the words of Nelson Mandela, sent to president-elect Barack Obama on Wednesday 5 November 2008

“Your victory has demonstrated that no person anywhere in the world should not dare to dream of wanting to change the world for a better place.”

You are about to move into tertiary education and embark on your career paths in complex and confusing times. We are all citizens of a troubled world and many amongst us have been placated by consumerism, upward mobility and power at the cost of sustainability and community. You are our hope to stem the tide. Identify your own pathway and create your own definition of success, but be forever mindful that you share this fragile planet with 6.6 billion other individuals. You can all make a difference and you do not have to be limited or directed by someone else’s expectations.

We thank you all for the positive contributions that you have made over the last two years. As a group you have generated a positive tone throughout the school and added greatly to the quality of the teaching program. The staff are confident that you have the energy, creativity and capacity to build a more sustainable and equitable society. We wish you all the courage to pursue your dreams and the humility to remind yourself who you really are. Enjoy the journey.

May I wish every member of the school community a most enjoyable festive season and a happy new year.

Bob Holloway
December 2008

Thanks to Candy Brown, Merrilyn Ades, Lauren Lovett & Laurene Skinner for helping with Graduation arrangements.

A special thank you goes to Sophie Guerin for compilation and production of the 2008 Year Book.