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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS 2011
A CELEBRATION OF THE NOMINEES

ANU College of Law
The ANU College of Law Excellence in Education Awards help us to celebrate the teachers who guide, inspire, motivate and facilitate learning. Students and staff members were invited to voice their opinion about who they felt deserved special recognition for excellence in education within any program offered by the College.
In 2011, both staff and students from any program in Law were invited to nominate any teacher in the College for an Excellence in Education Award. All academic staff at the College were eligible for nomination, full-time or fractional, continuing or contract.

Staff could be nominated by students or colleagues. Nominations opened on the 26th of September and closed on the 31st of October. This year yielded 22 nominees eligible for consideration, with two candidates then withdrawing from the process.

Nominations were considered by a selection committee appointed by the Associate Dean. The Selection Committee made recommendations for awards which were approved by the Dean of the College.

The Selection Committee relied heavily on the information provided in the nomination forms. Nominators were encouraged to provide as many concrete details and stories as possible to illustrate how their nominee was outstanding in education. In this newsletter you’ll find excerpts from the nominations—with extended excerpts about our winners, and just snippets about the other nominees.
Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

Congratulations to those of you who have been nominated for a 2011 College Education Award. Students and/or colleagues have written glowingly of your skill in teaching and inspiring them. You are obviously doing something (or many things) right!

Thank you for engaging, explaining, evoking, inspiring, calming, empathizing, creating, working, being approachable and supportive, breaking down complexity, encouraging, developing, providing feedback, holding high standards, mentoring…and all of the other many things you do to deserve this nomination.

In admiration,

Molly Townes O’Brien

Director, Teaching & Learning
Winner

ANU College of Law
Award for Teaching Excellence

WAYNE MORGAN
Property Law, International Trade Law
LLB and JD Programs

> Wayne is not only an excellent teacher, but he responds with care and concern to student needs, and is genuinely concerned with providing students with the best educational experience possible.

> Wayne’s engaging teaching style ensured that a comparatively large number of students attended class, and enjoyed exploring the course material with him.

> Although Wayne had clearly taught property since the beginning of time, he made the material fresh and interesting, and facilitated student participation in his classes.

> His lectures were always well paced and were never too simple nor too complicated.

> He also welcomed input and questions from students, which he always answered clearly. I have only taken this one course with Wayne Morgan, but I enjoyed his teaching style so thoroughly that I am looking into his other courses.
Wayne is a teacher greatly admired by all students who come in contact with him, and deserves additional praise for his continuing engagement with students after they have moved on to other courses.

His humility and respectful manner encourages students to seek clarification, to engage in debate and to test intellectual ideas.

Not only is Wayne approachable, he is incredibly generous with his time and has a strong student focus.

He expresses faith in his students, which is reflected in students’ confidence levels.

Wayne has the rare ability to accept criticism and feedback gracefully.

Wayne’s commitment to the academic and individual development of ANU law students engenders great respect and is worthy of recognition. His willingness to engage with students individually enhances students’ educational experience.

His humility and the fact that he treated me as an equal gave me the confidence to articulate my ideas and effectively seek clarification. His manner set me at ease, which is something few academics have been able to do.

Wayne’s approach, reflected his sensitivity to the individual needs of different students.

He gets us to think about the law in more detail than just in relation to how the law would be applied to a certain fact scenario. He also asks us to evaluate whether the law is good law by suggesting we look at it from the perspective of developing countries or human rights.

His willingness to share his experience of working in the community legal sector was generous and reassured me that I was not alone in finding it overwhelming at times.
Wayne’s level of dedication to his students’ learning and personal development exceeds expectation and I believe it is very worthy of recognition.

Two and a half years after tentatively broaching the idea of enrolling in honours and with great apprehension, I successfully completed a thesis and graduated with first class honours. For someone who contemplated leaving law school in 2008, this is a significant achievement. Not only did Wayne guide me through the process but he enabled me to take the risk in the first place. I have no doubt that my confidence has grown significantly during the time that I have known Wayne.

I firmly believe that I will be able to make a valuable contribution to my community and profession because I have had Wayne as a mentor. Although Wayne is no longer my supervisor, his commitment to my development and academic progress has continued. He has encouraged me to submit my thesis to a journal with the goal of publication. He has also continued to discuss career options with me.

Every couple of weeks, there is a lecture hour devoted exclusively to analysing a problem question. The questions that we were asked to address have always been directly relevant to the material we have studied. They have provided us with an opportunity to apply what we have learned and in this way identify our progress in the course. As elective courses usually do not provide tutorials, this has been a very useful tool in developing my understanding of the course and preparation for the exam. Wayne has always led us through the questions in a way which has allowed us to directly participate in the analysis of the questions. When responding to our answers to the problem questions, he has always revisited the material relevant to the particular question. In this way he has made the link between the law and any potential problem questions very clear.
Winner

ANU College of Law
Award for Teaching Excellence

HELEN BERMINGHAM
Foundations of Australian Law and English in a Legal Context
LLB and JD Programs

> Miss Bermingham encourages us, listens to us and is very patient with our questions.

> Miss Bermingham enjoys teaching and she enjoys listening to her students and not only for herself.

> She is a dedicated teacher who is concerned with the welfare of her students, not only in terms of their learning but also as people.

> She helped first year international law students whose language is not English to resolve many problems in studying law and being familiar with the cultural things.

> Ms Bermingham is a fairly kind and patient teacher. She is very considerate, and keen to take every student’s situation into consideration when making decisions. She provided us the best resource for students’ learning. She also cares about students’ personal life outside the class.
Helen is deeply committed to ensuring that her students understand and can cope with their learning environment, that they do learn, and that they are inspired by the capacity of law to achieve social justice.

She has put considerable time, effort and thought into developing ‘English in a Legal Context’ to those ends, supporting and addressing the needs of some of our less confident and less skilled students.

Helen prepares her classes, whether lectures or tutorials, with a clear objective in mind for the class; she explains this to her students at the outset and then checks in frequently with them that they understand the points she is making and any discussion that ensues.

Helen reflects on her teaching and looks for ways to incorporate any feedback and realisations arising from such reflection into further iterations of her courses.

Helen worked collaboratively with her other colleagues and never shies away from extra work or responsibility when asked to help out.

Helen was invaluable in giving us insights...building on the skills to which the students had been introduced in Foundations; reinforcing those skills and...developing a sense of where students might need particular support or...further reinforcement.

Helen is a conscientious teacher who balances this role with her role as a researcher, doing her best to do justice to both roles. As a consequence, she regularly works far and above the ‘normal’ working week.

She shouldered responsibilities that would be expected of more senior colleagues and she has demonstrated a level of competence and skill in her teaching and pastoral care that one would expect of a dedicated teacher of many more years’ experience.
> Helen believes that teaching is the most important thing we do at university, notwithstanding how important research is. She believes we have a responsibility to our students to provide them, as best we can, with the best opportunities to learn and to develop as lifelong learners.

> Having spoken with Helen at length about her teaching, I know her to be deeply committed to helping her students access the law and to quickly become autonomous learners who develop a confidence in their own abilities that will serve them well throughout their studies. This takes time, commitment and being wholly present at the time one is dealing with students. It is demanding and the energy and efforts expended frequently go unrecognised and unacknowledged.
Nominee
STEVEN BOTTOMLEY
Takeovers & Securities
LLB and JD Program

> He showed a passion for teaching.
> He has a killing sense of humour.
> He is very engaging as a lecturer.

Nominee
NIGEL DOBBIE
Visa Compliance, Cancellation and Review
Migration Law Program

> His extensive practical experience in migration law and his willingness to share his knowledge and experience was distinct through the way he delivered his lectures.
> His professional integrity, personal values and sense of humour truly won my respect for legal practitioners.
> I may not have had the privilege to get to know Mr Dobbie over a long period of
time, due to the nature of the Program, however people often leave impression and impact on our lives through small actions. While Mr Dobbie was sharing his practice in migration law with us, I clearly remembered what he said, “We are dealing with lives, with futures, hopes and dreams”. I think this makes the difference between a teacher who imparts knowledge and a teacher who inspires values.

Nominee

DANIEL FITZPATRICK

Introduction to Law, Governance & Development

LLM Program

> Daniel is incredibly energetic and engaging with an infectious and genuine passion for his subject.

> He has dedicated his life to development of the region and in teaching his students the theory of it.

> He is, at the same time, humble and willing to learn from his students, some of whom in the postgrad subjects have a great deal of experience in the field.
Nominee

ALAN FRECKELTON
Australian Migration Law & Australia's Visa System
Migration Law Program

I admire his dedication and commitment in taking his time and giving his best in delegating every module in the best possible way where we all can best grasp and understand it.

Alan has excellent active listening skills. He both acknowledges everyone's opinion be it right or wrong. He never makes comments that offend us but rather makes comments that encourage us to strive more.

Alan was absolutely excellent in guiding our discussion forum, which was an important part of the course. He took time to respond and comment on everyone's postings in a very timely manner and made me feel appreciated and that my comments were welcomed. He provided an excellent summary of things that were discussed to ensure that everyone understood the topic that we were discussing.
Nominee

N I C K  H O R N

Legislation and Legislative Drafting
LLM Program

> His method of learning was exemplary in this course.

> Feedback on assessments was quick which enabled students to use that feedback to improve on future assessments.

> Nick took time to explain concepts in the lectures and answer questions, even though it may have seemed silly, which made learning enjoyable. His baked goodies were thoroughly enjoyed in the weekly evening lectures!

Nominee

K A R E N  L E E

Contracts
LLB and JD programs

> I feel Ms Karen Lee to be an extremely engaged and personal educator, who is keen to impart her knowledge and understanding of the subject to each and every one of her students.
As a transfer student from another Australian tertiary institution with a smaller cohort, there were initial apprehensions regarding the level of interaction I would have with my tutors. I am very happy that these fears have been proven to be unfounded.

As an international student not familiar with the Australian educational culture, I feel fortunate to have Karen as my tutor, who seemingly goes above and beyond her normal duties to talk to her students and answer their questions.

Nominee

ROBERT LIU

Visa Compliance, Cancellation and Review

Migration Law Program

His teaching is interesting, inspirational and intellectually challenging.

Students learn a great deal from his in-depth knowledge, expertise and his wonderful style of teaching.

He is also an inspirational human being with a passion for the right of migrants, refugees and any clients who needed assistance.
Nominee

ANNE MCNAUGHTON

Contracts

LLB Program

- She makes a subject like law a lot less hard on all of us in her class by incorporating exciting ideas.

- This year Anne has masterminded a more student-centred and pedagogically rigorous approach to the teaching of this compulsory subject despite the difficulty and extra time involved.

- Anne has also taken it on herself to reach out to other teachers of first year subjects, particular those at an early stage of their teaching careers, to provide support, encouragement and an informal forum for us all to swap stories about the things we’ve discovered that work, the things that don’t work so well, and the things we’d like to achieve through our teaching. This network has been an invaluable help to me, as it has been to others, in maintaining our commitment to good teaching in the face of competing priorities.
Nominee

MOIRA MURRAY
Practice Management Convenor, Professional Practice Core
GDLP Program

> Moira was a fantastic mentor. She was always available to talk and she would always help out when things became a bit tough.

> She is also very intelligent and was able to offer me good advice about how to work in legal practice.

> I was in a group of 4 students while undertaking the course with Moira. There were times when those students would not complete work on time. Moira made herself available to me should this happen and acted as a counsellor to sort it out. I was even able to contact her on her mobile phone in the evening. She continues to provide me with advice about my career.

Nominee

MOLLY TOWNES O’BRIEN
Evidence
LLB and JD Program

> Molly is a lecturer who goes out of her way to engage students in learning. She uses a range of different methods to help encourage students to participate.
She brings a new perspective and light to law which, in my final semester at the law school, has made it one of the most enjoyable courses that I have done.

Her lectures are interesting and informative; and unlike normal law lectures, there is never anyone sleeping in the back row!

Nominee

JOANNE PURCELL

Accounts Convenor, Professional Practice Core

GDLP Program

I have really appreciated her friendliness and willingness to give comprehensive feedback – particularly given how stressful the Professional Practice Core is.

I emailed Joanne on a weekend to ask about a specific issue to do with Accounts. Joanne sent me a lengthy (and friendly) email back again fully explaining the issue, and invited me to ring her if I needed more help.

Teachers like Joanne make a huge difference in an online teaching environment where it can all seem a little bit impersonal.
Nominee

SIMON RICE

Lawyers, Justice and Ethics

LLB, JD and Law Reform and Social Justice Programs

> Simon is a truly inspiring teacher and he is one of the few teachers at the College to challenge students to question the legal system and its injustices.

> He was always willing to share stories about his years in practice and reminded me why I started studying law in the first place.

> I am writing this because I genuinely, honestly believe that he cares about the students he works with in his Law Reform and Social Justice Program. Volunteering in this program is the first time at university that I’ve been in a space where I feel an educator seriously cares – about their students, about how to educate and about each other. I am incredibly lucky to have been in that space and greatly appreciate the efforts that Simon makes for me and my peers. I guess my point is that it is easy for people to not care, and often it is not in their interest to care, but it is meaningful and powerful when someone does.
Nominee

PAULINE RIDGE

Restitution

LLB and JD Program

> She encourages the critical examination of theorists from around the common law world and includes readings which canvass a wide range of opinions.

> Her assessment regime is carefully crafted and fairly covers the materials covered in class and the tutorials.

> She solicits the views of students and acts to either provide a better teaching regime or to explain and discuss why things are carried out in a particular manner.

Nominee

HELEN SAUNDERS

Contracts

LLB and JD Program

> Provides opportunities for active engagement in problem-solving, critical thinking and analysis.
She is an engaging and competent lecturer who delivers her material in a lively way, taking questions as they arise and interspersing her delivery with small activities to break up the flow in a way that keeps students engaged in the class and with the material.

She redesigned the seminar program, developing a variety of activities for each seminar across the semester, which would provide students with particular opportunities to practice and reinforce the skills to which they were introduced in Foundations of Australian Law.

Nominee

DANIEL STEWART
Contemporary Issues in Administrative Law
LLB and JD Programs

His approach to teaching is very engaging and he creates a collaborative learning environment.

Daniel also keeps the diverse backgrounds and interests of students in mind.

He also understands the importance of feedback and how this can be provided informally (for example, by stimulating discussion so students can test their ideas and by identifying areas that could be further explored after student presentations).
Nominee

JO - ANNE WEINMAN

Indigenous Australians and the Law

LLB and JD Programs

> Jo-Anne is a dedicated teacher. She researches the area and has a deep and enduring passion for the subject. She is thoughtful and accessible to her students and puts their interests and needs ahead of almost everything else but equity and fairness.

> Jo is deeply committed to the rights of Indigenous peoples; ATSI peoples in Australia and Sami people in Norway (her other homeland).

> This is a very brief summary of her commitment to research and advocacy in the area and the reason I mention this is to highlight her commitment to research led teaching that is so (rightly) valued in this College.

Nominee

CHRIS WHITE

Australian Migration Law

Migration Law Program

> He interacts with students with care, understanding, insight, and with a depth of knowledge.
> He guides the students in such a way they do not feel some one is guiding them, and makes the students feel they have discovered everything for themselves (i.e. the answers). Without his ingenious & ‘clever’ guidance we would never gain that understanding, conclusion, knowledge or insight.

> I highly recommend Chris for an award for his excellence, for his gentle and sympathetic approach with students from various backgrounds (age, ethnicity, culture), and his continuous pursuit until the students ‘get it’.

Nominee

MICHELLE WORTHINGTON

Torts

LLB and JD Programs

> Michelle brings all her passion and knowledge into the room, and instead of talking at us, she talks to us.

> She transforms the course content from the abstract into something that we can understand and work with.

> She made the class so engaging and such a positive place to be; every week I really looked forward to coming to her class.
Nominee

KATHARINE YOUNG

International Human Rights Law

LLM Program

> Dr Young’s style of teaching was particularly conducive to learning as she seamlessly balanced theory with practical exercises and personal experiences and created a participatory environment in the classroom that was highly engaging for students.

> Dr Young treated her students with upmost respect, often commenting how much she had gained from the students’ experiences.

> Dr Young clearly demonstrated her breadth of knowledge in the field and demonstrated her personal experience through the way she conducted the course. Her connections with key players in the field were also impressive and allowed the class to gain a broad spectrum of expertise through these guest lecturers.
Thank you to all those involved in the Excellence in Education Awards process here in the ANU College of Law. It is wonderful to highlight and celebrate the talent of our teachers.

Special thanks to the Award Committee: Andrea Benson, Alex Bruce, Angela Mula and Margie Rowe

We look forward to another successful year in 2012.
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