Producing technological savvy graduates

Library, records and archives studies at Curtin University in 2000 — an update

The former Department of Information Studies at Curtin University now operates as part of the School of Media and Information (SMI) which has as its head, Professor James Donald.

How is our journey progressing? We now work with colleagues in the journalism, film and tv, and media areas. A number of new staff have joined the School in the Information Studies area, including Dr Jane Klobas. Jane formerly worked at the University of Western Australia. Jane will start in September 2000.

Undergraduate degree

It was heartening to read the March 2000 *Bottom Line* by Tracy Gerritsen, ALIA WA branch president [see http://www2.tpg.com.au/users/waalia/biblia/mar00/bl.html], when she wrote of her experience at the Curtin University, Division of Humanities graduation ceremony. She wrote: 'The change in the graduation ceremony over the years is probably a good metaphor for the changes in graduates... Last night's new graduates are probably more technologically savvy than many of us who graduated even a few years ago.'

This progress is reflected in our new undergraduate teachings. Many of you will remember discussions last year regarding the new undergraduate degree. Since then we have been very busy preparing for entry into our new School and its academic offerings. The undergraduate degree is currently known as the BA (Media and Information) Information Studies specialisation. From 2001 it will be a BA (Librarianship and Corporate Information Management).

Information Studies staff have been preparing flexible learning packages for all units, not only those which are core content to the new undergraduate degree. There are many commonalities in media and information education and the core units are giving all SMI students a very good grounding in communications practices and theory. All core units are completed.

We are phasing in the units for our component of this offering. For example, *Info 101: Information characteristics and use* is now up and running and the new practicum manuals and workbooks for *Workplace Practice 102* are nearing completion.

In the new undergraduate program we combine the tenets of librarianship, records management and archives and it is because of this that the demands on the content of each of the units is extensive. The program is being phased in and has to bed down before we can request its course recognition — something we are very keen to pursue when the time comes. Our student numbers are heartening. It would appear that prospective students do see value in a dual qualification.

Details of the course description and structure can be found at http://smi.curtin.edu.au/information/course-description.cfm and http://smi.curtin.edu.au/information/course-structure.cfm.

Graduate Diploma, Certificate and Higher degree offerings

These are under review. The post graduate models developed for the new School mean that we in Information Studies need to reconsider the ways in which we teach these programs. More on that as we progress, and until such time as all is completed, the graduate diplomas and certificates will continue as currently offered (http://smi.curtin.edu.au/information/graduate-diplomas.cfm and http://smi.curtin.edu.au/information/postgraduate.cfm).

Please telephone 08 9266 7215 or e-mail info@biblio.curtin.edu.au if you are interested in undertaking higher degree studies with us.

You can check our website at http://smi.curtin.edu.au (under construction) and http://smi.curtin.edu.au/information.html for further information.

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Resuscitating romance

Nola Scholes

It felt like a Dead Poets Society meeting. It began with discussions on Helen Demidenko and ended in flowers and food. Paper dragons were hanging on the walls, a child ran around us whispering to himself, and a sign reading 'Young Adult Junior' towered above my head — thank goodness it didn't fall.

Such was the atmosphere in the children's section of Indooroopilly Library during authors' night. Fourteen of us, all women apart from a young boy, sat in a circle to listen to the success story of romance fiction writer, Lynsey Stevens.

Sitting comfortably in black pants and a black top hidden under a loose flower-patterned shirt, Ms Stevens with eyes bright and a wide smile, explained that she had what it takes to be a romance writer — as a toddler.

She explained: 'When I was about three or four we drove past the Toowong cemetery. I had never seen a cemetery before and I said to my mother, "What's that?" She was caught on the spot and said, "Well, when you die they put you in this really nice casket, and they bury you under the green grass, and they put a little marker on top and everybody knows who you are." I gave this some thought and then I said to my mother, "No". I decided I didn't want to be buried under the ground when I died. They were to leave me on top so Prince Charming could come galloping along and take me off on his charger!' A romance writer was born.

Ms Stevens is author of, among other novels, *Rising passion, Forbidden wine*, and the more recent *A physical affair*, all published by Mills & Boon. And all these stories of tender heart flutters and passionate encounters are written by a self-confessed 'female chauvinist pig'. Ms Stevens did not hesitate to acknowledge feminist criticism of the Mills & Boon romance novels: 'The feminists have given romantic fiction a lot of flak over the years, and I have been personally told that I am being detrimental to the female cause by perpetuating the structure of male dominance'.

After her talk, Ms Stevens was thanked by library staff who presented her with a bouquet of flowers — in true romantic style. I realised I had been wrong after all. Far from being a Dead Poets Society, the public library meeting proved that romance writers are still entertaining and enriching the lives of many. ∎