

CSU CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF LIS EDUCATION

This year, the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University (CSU) is celebrating 40 years of Library and Information Science education at the University and its predecessor institutions, the Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education (RMIHE) and, prior to that, the Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE).

Our first librarianship students enrolled in the autumn of 1975. Introducing the 'Degree and Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Science', the 1975 RCAE Handbook noted that, 'The growth of literacy in the nineteenth century coupled with the increasingly rapid growth in volume of recorded knowledge in the twentieth century have resulted in a number of specialisms which have developed in industrialised economies ... Library and Information Scientists are engaged in social service; library and information systems exist in, and are bound actively to become involved in and serve the needs of, a host of overlapping societies and communities and subcultures. They are therefore artists, applied scientists and social scientists, and their education must take note of these three major strands.'

The first Graduate Diploma included the following core units: Libraries in the Community, Information and Reference, Computers and Computing, Collection



CSU's foundation principal lecturer, Edward Reid-Smith



The Class of 2014: CSU's students and staff celebrate a proud history

Building, Organisational Analysis, Storage and Retrieval of Information, Library Administration, and Cataloguing and Classification. It also offered the following electives: Subject Informatics, Library Extension Activities, Children's Literature and Librarianship, Public and Private Records, Education Librarianship and Documentation, and the somewhat exotic-sounding Bibliothecal History. It is interesting to note how many of these subjects are still studied today, albeit with slightly different names and in very different contexts.

From a staff of two including foundation principal lecturer Edward Reid-Smith, and student numbers in the tens, the courses have evolved into the largest LIS programs in Australia. The School of Information Studies at CSU currently has over 2,000 students enrolled in the Bachelors and Masters of Information Studies, the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship) and two other specialist courses. It also has 16 full time and two part time academic staff teaching and researching in a wide range of LIS subfields, and supervising a large cohort of PhD students. Many of the current lecturers are pictured above, photographed at last year's graduation ceremony.

Much has changed in higher education and in the information professions, but some things remain the same, including a commitment to preparing students for lifelong learning, and 'to foster a disposition towards self-development,' as the 1975 handbook put it.

To celebrate the anniversary, the School is organising a series of special events, to be held later in the year at the State Libraries of New South Wales and Victoria, as well as in Wagga Wagga, where the School is still based. All of our alumni, current students, and other colleagues connected to the School, are warmly invited to attend these occasions. Or you might like to get in touch with us via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email, or even snail mail, for a 'virtual' reunion! In addition, alumni of CSU can register at www.csu.edu.au/contacts/alumni-registration to receive the School's newsletter. We would certainly love to hear from you.

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