

Vice-Chancellor's Report

2010 was a year of challenges and new beginnings for the University of Canterbury. While some challenges were expected, others were unforeseen.

The opening of four new centres for research excellence and teaching strengthened our commitment to providing a world-class learning environment and took the first steps toward delivering on our Statement of Strategic Intent.

The implementation of Project Star (Supporting Teaching and Research) and the Canterbury earthquake provided challenges, which were met with resilience and determination.

Few people had predicted that an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude would hit Canterbury but the preparations and emergency action plans we had put in place in recent years proved vital in preventing extensive damage and disruption.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of all staff we were able to minimise the closure of premises and complete much of the clean up process within days, which was an outstanding achievement. Within two months we were largely "back on track". Further work at the James Hight Library continued over summer in preparation for its re-opening in February 2011.

The manner in which staff and students responded to delays and changes to the delivery of programmes was equally impressive and ensured minimal disruption to our students. We ensured that examination results were posted and graduation ceremonies occurred within our original calendar timetable. Students and staff have also benefitted from greatly expanded online resources, thanks to support from our international publishers.

Since 4 September we have played an important role in informing and assisting the wider community to rebuild and progress. The popular earthquake lectures delivered by members of the geology department provided research-based information to the local community and answered the concerns of the public.

The response of students was equally pleasing. In the wake of the earthquake several thousand assisted those in the community that were most affected. Using social networking sites to organise their

efforts, they greatly assisted the clean-up operation, proving to be terrific ambassadors for the University and upholding our status as a significant contributor to the community. Their efforts prompted the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Key, to personally thank UC student Sam Johnson for his role in galvanising support and organising others.

The BlueFern supercomputer has also provided significant data that has enabled national emergency response institutions to understand the earthquake's effects and provide a more efficient response in the future. It is greatly satisfying that our cutting-edge research capabilities are benefiting the country as well as improving our standing in international research. To this end, the University is preparing to make further investment in High Performance Computing as part of the National e-science Infrastructure project.

In all, the earthquake provided an unparalleled opportunity for the University, as one of the cornerstones of education in the region, to fulfil its mission of critiquing and disseminating relevant research and information, and in supporting its community. We want to build further on this foundation.

A challenge of equal measure was met with our response to the implementation of Project STAR, which was intended to ensure that the core functions of the University (Finance, HR, Marketing and Communications, Registry, Student Services, Library, ICTS and Facilities Management) were ably led and appropriately resourced.

With the project almost complete, we must acknowledge the hard work, unity and commitment staff have displayed during difficult circumstances.

The University will now see \$2.7 million savings in annual personnel costs. Fragmentation and duplication in service delivery has been reduced and the flattened reporting structures mean we now have a logically structured organisation, with more flexibility and clearly defined accountabilities and roles. More importantly, it allows us to make the most of resources entrusted to us and consequently allows greater investment in teaching and research. I want to acknowledge that, as a result of these changes, a number of dedicated, long-serving staff have left the University.

Our development of Learning Resources is progressing well after a lengthy consultation period in which staff spoke and the University listened. I would like to thank staff, students and other stakeholders for their engagement with this process. We are moving toward an environment where learning materials can be accessed anywhere, at any time, meeting the requirements of tomorrow's students. Integral to this is our partnership agreement announced in August with Microsoft New Zealand, the first in New Zealand, under which Microsoft becomes a partner in NZi3 and the University is able to access a vast array of products, services and collaborations.

The library network will remain our central hub of learning, continuing to provide a safe and inspiring place of study, which is being brought into the 21st century. Innovative staff members recognised that the earthquake provided an opportunity to bring forward plans to install radio frequency identification systems into the library's print and visual collections. This will facilitate greater self-service opportunities for students and greater efficiency in stock management, bringing benefits for staff and students alike.

There were a number of new appointments to the Senior Management Team during the year, including Lynn McClelland (Director of Communications and External Relations), Professor Sue McKnight (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning Resources), Dr Nello Angerilli (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Services and International) and Professor Ed Adelson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Arts). Professor Steve Weaver was appointed Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Professor Richard Duke was appointed Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

I am delighted that Darryn Russell (Ngai Tahu) has accepted the position of Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori) and will join the University in April. The appointment comes as the University welcomed a record number of students who identify as Māori. The Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori) and the newly created Senior Pacific Advisor position are part of a wider restructuring, which will improve our cultural connectedness and enhance our ability to provide a first-class education to all students.

I am confident that the sense of purpose we have collectively shown throughout 2010 proves we are able to overcome many obstacles in our quest to deliver a truly world-class experience for students and researchers. It is reflective of our flexibility and adaptability that in a year which provided such challenges, we have grown and developed our research capabilities.

The Biological Sciences Building was officially opened in October by the Prime Minister and has become a flagship facility. It provides six levels of specialist areas for biological research that house state-of-the-art equipment to support the first-class research undertaken by staff and students.

The facility cements the University as the leading research and teaching institute of study in biological sciences in New Zealand. It also reflects our commitment to environmental sustainability with its innovative design concepts that maximise energy efficiency, use of sustainable materials and its inventive water recycling systems.

Also this year, the Biomolecular Interaction Centre benefited from a multi-million dollar investment that propelled it to become one of the premier research institutes on campus. Research projects on new forms of antibiotic design to combat diseases such as tuberculosis and meningitis, and the use of nanotechnology to defend against bioterrorism, have already generated a high profile for the centre in academic circles.

With the study of biology and biological interaction at the forefront of contemporary scientific progress, the calibre of research undertaken by these centres will define the University as an increasingly relevant member of the international science community. The relevance of its research was further proved when New Zealand's major dairy exporter, Fonterra, provided a major research grant.

The Confucius Institute, launched in May, will promote a deeper understanding of Chinese language and culture and place the University at the forefront of cultural exchange between China and New Zealand, further developing our network of international co-operation. It will allow us to prepare students to be just as comfortable doing business in Beijing as they might in London or New York, which reflects

our commitment to helping people make a difference in years to come. Financial and in-kind assistance has been secured to help establish and develop the centre.

The Waterways Centre for Freshwater Management, opened in August by the Minister for the Environment Nick Smith, provides us with another centre of excellence that will continue the University's traditions of providing a standard of quality, independence and objectivity in our research. It will create high calibre graduates to tackle the increasingly prevalent issue of water resource management, providing a knowledge and skills base which will benefit the country's economy and help preserve our iconic water bodies. The research has particular relevance to the Canterbury region, which places a high value on its water resource for social, cultural, recreational and economic use.

Another new institute, The New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour, launched in December, has recently appointed five new post-doctoral fellows and has attracted more than \$2 million of Marsden Fund grants during its first year of operation. It is already achieving international recognition and co-operation.

These initiatives exemplify our intent to provide a learning environment of the highest quality in which talented and motivated staff and students can excel. Although in their infancy, they have already delivered internationally recognised research projects which, alongside our longer established research centres and groups, continue to raise our global profile.

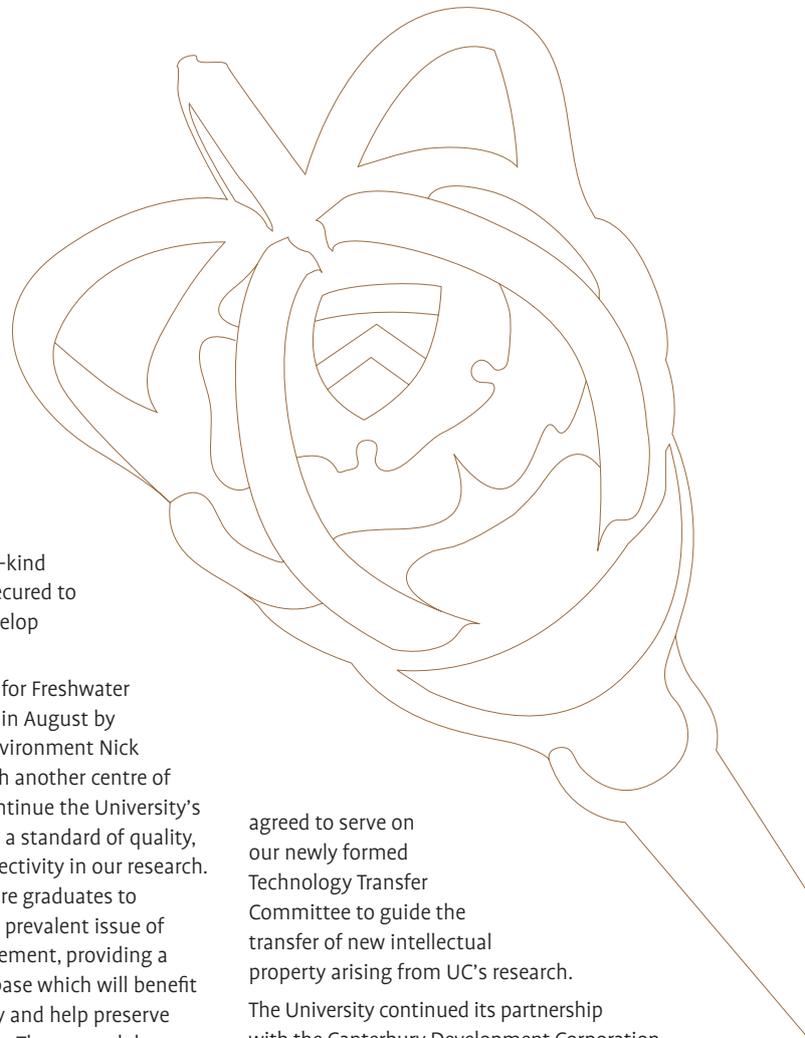
The University launched its new Research & Innovation (R&I) unit, which supports all stages of research and innovation development, from initial funding through to solving industry problems via consultancies and transferring new intellectual property into the market. Building on UC's already strong research reputation, our goal is to enhance the contribution that UC's research makes to New Zealand and our global community. Four prominent business people and entrepreneurs

agreed to serve on our newly formed Technology Transfer Committee to guide the transfer of new intellectual property arising from UC's research.

The University continued its partnership with the Canterbury Development Corporation and the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce to encourage growth through the V5 initiative. Four projects have been selected that, in the eyes of the independent judges, have the ability to generate significant value to the Canterbury region over the next 20 years. These include an international village focused on learning and advanced applied knowledge, the restoration and sustainable use of Lake Te Ao Hou and two irrigation projects – Central Plains Water and Lake Hurunui. Staff and students have contributed skill and time to advance these opportunities. The University's involvement in V5 is a significant opportunity for us to show our relevance and commitment to making a difference, and to engage with a number of professional and technical people outside the University.

Another example of the University's engagement with industry is the opening of the Electric Power Engineering Centre's (EPECentre) new offices on campus. In the eight years since the centre was established by the University and industry partners to address the shortage of power engineers, the number of students involved in power engineering has almost trebled, and we have significantly grown postgraduate work and created a research group that is known internationally for its innovation and leading research.

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The international regard in which the University is held was recognised with the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) becoming a partner in the Erasmus Mundus doctoral and post-doctoral mobility programme, a prestigious international student exchange programme run by the European Commission. With a total budget of €1.5 million (NZ\$2.65 million), the programme will allow for 99 fully-funded doctoral and postdoctoral exchanges between 10 participating Australasian and European universities over the next four years. The world-class research being carried out by NCRE was further recognised through a €1.2 million funding grant from the European Commission.

Our international standing was also recognised when, towards the end of 2009, the University was added to the list of less than 80 universities in the world at which Chinese students in receipt of China Scholarship Council funding may enrol.

2010 was also a year in which we welcomed record numbers of students and graduates. The number of students enrolled during 2010 was 18,771 compared to 18,537 in 2009. The number enrolled in postgraduate qualifications increased from 2716 in 2009 to 2996 in 2010. A total of 151 new continuing and fixed-term academic staff were appointed and 11 staff were promoted to the rank of professor. In a move designed to enhance the student experience, the University opened the Student Service Centre. This one-stop shop facilitates the academic, social and cultural support of students from pre-enrolment through to graduation.

The University launched the first stage of the Campus Master Plan. The plan is being developed in readiness for a \$1 billion investment in infrastructure over the next 20 years, maintaining the unique and attractive aspects of the campus and creating spaces which are more inviting and supporting of learning in the 21st century.

Research buildings and communal spaces require upgrading to match our changing aspirations and the plan will address issues such as a lack of a central campus hub, inflexible learning spaces and create a recognised main entrance to the university, as well as improving cultural and recreational

facilities, on-campus accommodation for visitors, security, transport connections and car parking. The 20-year investment is a signal of our intent and commitment to making the University of Canterbury an educational space of global renown.

While progression toward our goals has gathered momentum, we have also suffered some setbacks.

We are naturally disappointed that resource consent for our National Conservatorium of Music at the Arts Centre was declined, as we believed it would be a significant opportunity for the University and the wider Canterbury community. I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our staff and the University Council throughout the project and thank the Christchurch City Council and The Arts Centre Trust Board for their commitment to a shared vision. Given the benefits these facilities would bring to the region and our commitment to excellence in the arts, we will continue with plans to incorporate facilities for music into our Campus Master Plan.

The new year brings with it new challenges but with the experience gained in 2010 we will build on the foundation now in place in terms of strategy, people, programmes, plans and processes.

We will continue supporting demonstrable, measurable research outputs, to provide quality assurance in relation to teaching and learning and will focus on providing more effective use of teaching time.

The high calibre output of our research centres continue to grow and our faculty continues to develop. Our present successes and future plans will assist us in promoting the excellent and unique things we do. This will prove invaluable in attaining our goal of attracting a growing proportion and number of postgraduate students in coming years.

I wish to acknowledge and thank all those who have been prepared to join us in pursuing our vision – “People prepared to make a difference”. The UC Council, staff, students, generous alumni, friends and business partners contribute in a number of ways to support our teaching, learning and research, including funding research projects, and providing job and internship opportunities for our students. This year we have received \$4.7 million from donors to fund essential



postgraduate scholarships for students, create exciting new teaching positions and provide wonderful new facilities and equipment. Thank you for your support.

As we evolve into a world-class centre of learning we must challenge ourselves harder, concentrate on what we are good at and connect better to our stakeholders.

In 2009 we clarified our Statement of Strategic Intent; in 2010 we implemented a structure to give effect to that strategy. In 2011 we will continue to progress our agenda to promote a world-class learning environment where research, teaching and learning take place in ways that are inspirational and innovative.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod Carr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Rod Carr
Vice-Chancellor
28 February 2011