

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council



September 2023

Introduction

The final term of the 2023 academic year began on 11 September, coinciding with the arrival of Spring and marked by the beautiful blooms on campus.

We hosted a successful Rā Tōmene | Open Day 2023 where prospective students and their whānau were engaged and informed of essential information for attendees to make decisions about their tertiary education and course choices. Across our 109 information sessions, we filled approximately 12,000 seats in lecture theatres throughout the day. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

150th celebrations continued in September, and notable among the events was the trip to the United Kingdom. The UC delegation (including the Chancellor) visited Christ Church College, Oxford, for an Evensong Service at Christ Church Cathedral followed by a dinner; both officiated by the Dean of Christ Church, the Very Reverend Professor Sarah Foot, in commemoration of our shared historic ties.

At Cambridge University we met with the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education to discuss potential areas of collaboration, and afterwards there was a lunch with students, staff, UC Alumni, Cambridge fellows and key collaborators. Professor Mary Fowler, great granddaughter of Ernest Rutherford, spoke about the close ties between UC and Cambridge. Our UK trip concluded with an alumni reception in London, with 127 registered guests, where New Zealand High Commissioner Phil Goff gave an opening address following a welcome by the Chancellor.

As part of the same trip I attended the Times Higher Education World Academic Summit in Sydney, where I participated in the Presidents' Forum and presented in a panel session on "*Closing the Equity gap*". I also spoke at the Sydney Alumni event which was very well attended. Sydney Alumni were especially receptive, as this was the first time we'd been to Sydney since 2016.

Engagement

Our UC 150th Anniversary photographic travelling exhibition, showcasing some of UC's historic photos and contrasting them with modern UC shots, was on display in the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall in Methven on 11-19 September and featured in *Snowfed* community news. The exhibition was in Ashburton until 29 September and will travel to the Te Ara Ātea community and library building in Selwyn during 9-12 October.

As part of the Tauhere UC Connect public lecture series, Dr Rachael Wood presented "*Can we end endometriosis?*", highlighting her current work on innovating solutions for diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis. Professor Bronwyn Hayward presented her research in "*Change our politics, not the climate*" on 27 September.

We hosted a stand at the Smart Christchurch Innovation Exhibition (SCIE) on 10-11 September, to celebrate UC's impact over the last 150 years and showcase current innovations from across the University to inspire future innovators. More than 8,000 people attended SCIE and engaged with the stands and activities.

On 7 September 83 career advisors from schools around Aotearoa participated in Rongo o te Wā, a two-day conference promoting UC and Ōtautahi Christchurch as a study destination for students. I had an opportunity to deliver a presentation to the advisors focussing on UC's commitment to accessible, flexible and future-focussed education. On the second day of the conference they participated in our successful Rā Tōmene | Open Day on 8 September.

The Faculty of Education hosted a Primary School Principals Day on 1 September with over 30 school leaders and more than 180 students attending the event. Principals said they were impressed with UC student leadership during the event and hoped to continue their success with hiring UC graduates.

On 16-17 September the Faculty of Science hosted the two-day NIWA Canterbury Westland Schools' Science and Technology Fair featuring hundreds of science and technology based research projects.

The University's first staff giving campaign with an on-campus ice cream social was attended by more than 300 staff members on 7 September.

With the help of Foundation trustee Andrew Oh and his firm Duncan Cotterill, on 6 September we hosted a free estate planning workshop for alumni and donors that was attended by 34 people. The event was well-received and has led to one notified bequest.

Education – Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

UC took part in the second Tūwhitia symposium held at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Catherine Moran presented on how UC uses data to support taura success, and Deputy Assistant Vice-Chancellor Māori Liz Brown participated in a panel considering holistic taura success. The keynote presenter was Dr Karen Stout, Chief Executive Officer of Achieving the Dream. UC has worked with Karen in the past and it was an excellent opportunity to share practice. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa graciously acknowledged UC's launch of the inaugural Tūwhitia symposium and next year the symposium will continue, hosted by Te Pūkenga.

The 2023 Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), which looks at early outcomes of students who have completed their studies with us in 2022, had a 35% response rate. The overall employment rate for 2022 graduates is 88%, up 4 percentage points from 2021 graduates. Notably, the employment rate for Māori graduates is up to 92% from 88%, Pacific graduates up to 87% from 79%, and female graduates is up at 89%, from 83% in the previous survey year. Just over half of employed graduates indicate employment in the Ōtautahi Christchurch area (51%, up from 49%). Approximately 27% of survey respondents indicate pursuing further study, with the majority continuing to study at University of Canterbury. Lastly, 80% of graduates would recommend their completed programme at UC to others, up slightly from 78% in 2022's survey.

While some students prepare to finish their time with UC, many are looking to join us in 2024. The Future Student Advisors and Kaitoko first year advisors joined forces on Rā Tōmene | Open Day to provide course planning advice for more than 200 prospective students. Te Pātaka was a hive of activity as students and their whānau, many from out of town, took the opportunity to explore the support services that UC offers.

Congratulations to Professor Philippa Martin on winning a Te Whatu Kairangi – Aotearoa Tertiary Educator Award. The award recognises her trailblazing work to transform engineering education to include greater diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We also acknowledge this year's recipients of the Distributed Leadership in Teaching Programme (DLTP) Scholarships, with awards in two categories.

General Category Recipients:

- Rachael Evans, William Grant, Adrienne Paul (Faculty of Law) - *Indigenising the LLB*
- Kathryn MacCallum (Faculty of Education) - *AI as a pedagogy: Exploring the approaches and the literacies to better facilitate learners to utilize AI*

- Clare Worley (Faculty of Science) - *Designing a Customisable Adaptive Learning System*
- Sarah Flanagan (Faculty of Science) - *Engaging Students and Building Resiliency by Cultivating Problem-solving Mindsets*

Work Integrated Learning Category Recipients:

- Kate Cook, Gina Tillard (Faculty of Science) - *Identifying transfer of knowledge and skills for work-integrated learning (WIL); what do supervisors and students describe as the key characteristics*
- Lyndon Fraser (Faculty of Art) - *Building Career Development and Work-Integrated Learning into Programme Curricula: The BA Cultural Heritage Specialisation as a Case Study*
- Carolin Ritter (Faculty of Science) - *Building meaningful Career Development Learning and Work-Integrated Learning into the new Bachelor of Psychological Science*

Research – Impact on a Changing World

Professor Peter Gostomski has assumed the role of Acting Tumu Tuarua Rangahau | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, responsible for Research and Innovation and the Graduate School; with Professor Catherine Moran taking up the Library portfolio until the end of year, while Professor Ian Wright remains on medical leave.

UC researchers have been awarded \$28.92 million in this year's MBIE Endeavour funding round, almost doubling our 2023 round total of \$16 million and the University's best performance in this fund to date.

The successful programmes were:

- Dr Sarah Kessans - *Developing platforms for biological research in microgravity* (\$9.9 million)
- Professor Richard Green - *Predicting the unseen: a new method for accurate yield estimation in viticulture / horticulture* (\$6.1 million)
- Dr Heather Hendrickson - *Adaptable phage solutions for precision biocontrol for primary industries* (\$9.0 million)

The successful Smart Ideas, which each receive \$1 million in funding, were:

- Professor Peter Gostomski - *Enhancing the sustainability of dairy farming using advanced methane biofiltration*
- Associate Professor Deborah Crittenden - *Long-lived, high-performance organic batteries for a greener rechargeable world*
- Dr Sylwia Kolenderska - *Extending the Boundaries of Digital Signal Processing: AI-powered Fourier Transformation Alternative*
- Professor Daniel Holland - *Redefining the future of forensic drug testing using NMR*

UC sponsored the H₂ 2 Zero Summit in Wellington this month, with 250 attendees including industry, government, and investment leaders focused on hydrogen projects. Keynote speakers included the Japanese Ambassador to New Zealand, the German Director-General for Energy, the United States Department of Energy's Director of Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies, and the Research Director of the Scaling Green Hydrogen Cooperative Research Centre in Australia. UC received industry recognition for its work, and Dr Rebecca Peer represented UC effectively in a Research and Innovation Panel discussion.

People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

After a year of competitions in eight sports between all Universities, UC has won both the overall award, the Universities' Sporting Shield (the trophy's 100th year in our 150th year), and the Te Kaitiaki Spirit Trophy. We last won the shield in 2007; the University of Auckland has held it since 2011. It is the first time UC has won the Te Kaitiaki Spirit Trophy, and the first time ever that a University has won both trophies in the same year. My congratulations to all of the sportspeople, coaches and administrators involved.

UC celebrated Te Wiki o te Reo Māori week early in September, continuing last year's theme of *Kia Kaha Te Reo Māori* (making the language stronger). This special occasion was celebrated with many events around campus, from sharing kai, practicing Te Reo, learning more about names of UC buildings and opening with karakia at Rehua each morning.

UC's Wellbeing team delivered various events to uplift and focus on mental wellbeing during Mental Health Awareness Month. Programmes were structured around learning, connecting, an active lifestyle, giving and awareness, with wellbeing related prizes on offer for participation.

Women's Suffrage Day was on 19 September and the UC Wellbeing Team took the opportunity to recognise the occasion by integrating it into the University's Mental Health Awareness Month activities. Students and staff were invited to join the "Pedalling Path to Freedom" route, designed to be explored by bicycle or on foot and aimed to educate participants about influential women at UC. Some of the notable figures featured on the trail were Alice Candy, Beatrice Tinsley, Elsie Lock, and Jane Soons. At the end of the tour participants were able to explore Kate Sheppard House.

In early September 16 academic staff participated in the Early Career Academics workshop. Over two days participants from all faculties discussed a range of issues including planning research and teaching careers, research-informed teaching, innovative teaching, developing a media profile and work/life balance.

UC and other Canterbury Tertiary institutions co-hosted Te Huinga Tauira at UCSA, the annual National Māori Students Conference. More than 200 participants from around the country took part over four days in a range of learning, sporting, cultural, and social activities.

On 25 September we welcomed Keith Lilley as Director of Facilities Management. Keith has many years of experience gained from various similar senior roles in the public sector across the UK, most recently from the University of Sheffield.

Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked

European Union Ambassador to New Zealand, Her Excellency Nina Obermaier, visited Christchurch on 28 August to thank the city for its active involvement in the International Urban and Regional Cooperation program. The University is a significant partner in this program and Christchurch was singled out as a standout participant. A successor, city co-operation program is planned, involving cities with a history of commitment to sustainability goals which Canterbury (and UC) will be part of.

UC's program for hosting international delegations is an activity that maintains our global footprint, aiming to drive international student recruitment and research collaboration. The visiting delegations to UC in September included President Yuan Wen of Shanghai Normal University and President Professor Zhang Honghai of Qufu Normal University. Assistant Vice-Chancellor Engagement Brett Berquist progressed the development of a joint education program in Mathematics.

On 21 September the University of Canterbury and the Fiji Government's Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Services (TSLs) signed a letter of agreement to enable sponsored Fijian students to study at UC at the undergraduate as well as postgraduate (MA and PhD) levels from 2024.

From Washington DC, The Chronicle of Higher Education Executive Editor Liz McMillen interviewed me for their series *On Demand: Global Leadership Interview*, where they discuss with university leaders from around the world how they approach the many challenges facing higher education institutions. In the interview we talked about the background of UC's Office of Treaty Partnership, steps taken to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students, and community feedback about the partnership.

Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030

The Digital Services and the Student Insights team have established UC's first Azure Machine Learning Application Landing Zone initially for the Analytics for Course Engagement project. This enables us to develop UC's internal Machine Learning capabilities to produce more accurate and timely engagement scores for ACE, whilst enabling both Student Insights and Digital to explore other initiatives leveraging predictive analytics, intelligent student enrolment and management.

Digital Services rolled out new password manager software for all staff in September, following the deployment of the software for all UC Students earlier in the year. This simple to use password manager software provides easy security of passwords and enables teams who have to use shared passwords for legitimate reasons to have a secure method of protecting these. The product has also been offered with an additional benefit for UC continuing staff who can now access free 1Password accounts for their family members.

Our Digital Services Product Manager for Research Experience, Jamie Hart, was recently awarded the emerging ICT leader award at the Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology Incorporated (CAUDIT).

Environmentally Sustainable

Civil Engineering student Thomas Steele was awarded the prestigious title of Best Student of the Southern Region in the 30th NZ Institute of Building People Awards, run by the NZ Institute of Building.

Nicole Hamilton-Cross, Laboratory Manager Chemical and Process Engineering, has developed Chemical Waste Disposal Guidelines that are being used at other New Zealand tertiary institutes. The guidelines were established to be consistent with Christchurch City Council (CCC) bylaws and provide direction for researchers on the safe disposal of chemical waste, as well as a framework (in the form of a decision tree) that enables safe, independent decision-making by students.

UC won the hotly contested TEFMA (Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association) Innovation Award for the initial pilot work undertaken on digital monitoring of stream water quality.

All programmed water meter installations for 2023 have been completed. This enables a far more accurate understanding (and reporting) of potable water use across campus, as well as identification of any system failures (i.e. leaks) and therefore faster response times.

A zero-waste Sustainability Māketē was hosted by Facility Management's Sustainability Office, with around 500 people attending in Haere Roa.

In conjunction with the CCC and local organisations such as Spokes Canterbury, a local cycling advocacy group, the UC Sustainability team is hosting a series of "Biketober" events, activities and activations during October to encourage staff and students to choose cycling as their mode of transport.