

# Newsletter Issue 4

## December 2014



## President's Update

by Dave Marr



The recent AAIR Annual Forum brought to a successful close AAIR's activities for 2014. And wasn't it a great way to end the year? The Annual Forum continues to attract the top practitioners in the higher education sector as keynotes, session presenters and panel members. It was also great to have our AHEEF colleagues joining with us. It reinforced to me that this collaboration is mutually beneficial and so I'm optimistic that this arrangement will continue for a number of years to come.

Of course, the Annual General Meeting at this year's Forum included the election of office bearers. I'm honoured to have been elected President for a second term. We say 'goodbye' to Dean Ward who has served as a

committee member for many, many years including around 10 years as Honorary Secretary. I'd like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks for Dean's generous and valuable contributions to AAIR, to the Committee and to me as President. Of course with Dean leaving the Committee we'll lose a great deal of experience and knowledge but I'm confident that others will step up to fill his role and AAIR will continue to move forward. And knowing Dean, he'll always be available to assist the Committee with his advice and good counsel.

Joining the Committee will be Michael Cudmore from La Trobe University and Kerry Martin from the University of the Sunshine Coast. Both Michael and Kerry were seconded onto the Committee during 2014 but will join us as elected representatives for the next two years. It's gratifying when people offer to get more involved and this year Milly Taylor from the University of New England has volunteered to join the Committee adding to the female and regional university representation on the Committee.

The full elected Committee therefore will be: Kathie Rabel (Vice-President), Bruce Guthrie (Honorary Secretary), David De Bellis (Honorary Treasurer), Michael Cudmore, Jeff Holmes, Andrea Jeffreys, Don Johnston,

Kerry Martin with Milly Taylor as a co-opted member. A very strong and committed team that I look forward to working with over the next two years.

Please check out the 2014 AGM reports on the AAIR website's [Annual Statements and Reports](#) page.

### So what's planned for 2015?

- The Committee will continue working through the Strategic Planning process that was commenced in 2014. It would be hoped that in the first half of 2015 we'll be able to take a draft plan to the membership for comment and feedback;
- The 2015 SIG Forum is to be hosted by the University of Southern Queensland, to be held at the Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island. How good does that sound! Further details will be distributed early in 2015;
- If you were at the Annual Forum in Melbourne you'd be aware that next year's Annual Forum will be held in Wellington, New Zealand. It's been 15 years since the Forum was held across the Tasman, so we're well and truly

## President's Update (continued)

overdue to visit our colleagues there. And I for one am very much looking forward to what I suspect will be a great Forum. Kathie Rabel, AAIR Vice President, and local Wellington resident, has agreed to Chair the Local Organising Committee, so I'm confident the organisation is in safe hands. Leishman Associates has agreed again to partner with us as our event manager; and

- With Louise publishing a regular AAIR Newsletter, we'll be keeping you informed of what's most relevant to you from across the sectors we represent.

So I'm sure you'll agree that 2015 is shaping up to be another great year for AAIR as we continue to provide the kinds of opportunities our members respond so well to. Of course if there are things you'd like to see us doing, we're always happy to receive your contributions.

As 2014 draws to a close may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2015.

**David Marr**  
President



2014 Committee members at the Forum  
L-R: Jeff Holmes, Dean Ward, Kathie Rabel, Michael Cudmore, and Don Johnston  
Rear: Bruce Guthrie and David de Bellis  
Front: Dave Marr



An original AAIRies Dinner was held during the Forum. Past Presidents who joined the celebrations included L-R Denis Ham (1994-1998), Josie Palermo (2008-2012), Raj Sharma (1990-1994), Wendy Marchment (2002-2006), Bruce Zimmer (1998-2002) and Dave Marr (2012-present)

## 2014 AAIR Forum – Melbourne



## 2015 AAIR Data Warehouse, Business Intelligence and Load Management Special Interest Group Forum

Hosted by University of Southern Queensland  
19-21 August 2015

Next year's AAIR Special Interest Groups (SIG) for Data Warehouse, Business Intelligence and Load Management will be hosted by the University of Southern Queensland and held at the Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island. Accommodation packages are currently being finalised.

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# Higher Education@home

by Louise Hargreaves

1. The Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment (HERRA) Bill 2014 – update. On Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December the Senate voted (33 to 31) to block the government's Higher Education Reform Bill.

HERRA was [amended](#) to include:

- keeping HECS indexation at the CPI level rather than the proposed 10-year bond rate;
- introducing a five-year "HECS pause" for the primary carer of a new child;
- enhancing the proposed Commonwealth Scholarships scheme to target disadvantaged students;
- providing for the creation of a structural adjustment fund for universities, focussed on those with large numbers of low SES students (\$100 million over three years); and
- ensuring domestic fees are less than those for international students.

HERRA Mark II was returned to the lower house and will most likely enter the Senate in the first parliamentary sitting week commencing 9 February 2015.

2. [A tumultuous year in higher education comes to a close, another soon to follow.](#) Even if HERRA Mark II and the cost it has to the budget is acceptable to parliament, timing becomes critical. If the government passes a new package too late, universities will be pressed to implement in time for 2016. If the government delays the start date to 2017 or later, it will pull debate over the new system into an election year before its initial consequences are shown.
3. An article in in [The Conversation](#) by Stephen Schwartz Executive Director, CHASS and Oliver Smithies Fellow of Balliol College at University of Oxford, debunks the common view that deregulated fees will create a crisis for the arts and humanities.
4. Timothy Higgins, Senior Lecturer in Actuarial Studies at Australian National University's College of Business and Economics wrote an interesting article in

The Australian suggesting that [universities should share the risk of student borrowing](#). To limit the costs to taxpayers of unpaid student debt, Higgins suggests that government funds HELP up to a specific cap (for example, present fee levels), with any additional fees charged underwritten by the universities. That is, these extra fees are paid to the universities only if and when the students they educate earn sufficient income to repay.

5. [Labor proposal to link funding with student retention.](#) The Labor Government could make universities more accountable for dropouts and employment outcomes by making some funding conditional on retaining and graduating students as the opposition pitches an alternative policy aimed at focusing the demand-driven system of uncapped places.
6. The [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(TEQSA\) Amendment Bill 2014](#) was endorsed by the Senate on December 4. The Bill separates the roles and responsibilities of the TEQSA Chief Commissioner and CEO and leaves the contentious role of sector-wide survey of quality with the Agency. Dr Nicoll and Ian Hawke will [leave TEQSA](#) at the end of the year.
7. The essay, as the primary form of assessment, should be dead! This is the kind of comment that terrifies academics everywhere. Shirley Alexander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Teaching, Learning & Equity) at University of Technology, Sydney article [Buying essays: how to make sure assessment is authentic](#) appeared in The Conversation at the time of the [MyMaster](#) University student cheating scandal was revealed in mid-November.
8. A new report from Australia's Department of Education contains information on the study pathways international students take in the Australian education system. The report [Study pathways of international students in Australia](#), highlights how key the



ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) sector is to enrolments in Australia's higher education sector, and to a smaller but still significant extent, its VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector. It also contains projections of what would happen to higher education and VET sectors if ELICOS enrolments were to increase – or to decrease.

[What next for tertiary education? Some preliminary sketches](#) [NCVER]. In 2014 a group of prominent thinkers on tertiary education came together to reflect on the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education report (the Martin report). This publication is the culmination of the ideas discussed and is intended to generate discussion and debate on the possibilities for the future of tertiary education in Australia. See below for Companion publication. A companion publication

9. [A differentiated model for tertiary education: past ideas, contemporary policy and future possibilities](#) [NCVER]. The year 2014 represents the 50-year anniversary of the introduction of the binary system of education in Australia. Using history as a policy tool, Francesca Beddie looks back at the binary system as well as its demise with the Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s to uncover the lessons learned.
10. Did per student higher education funding increase under Labor? Labor's higher education spokesman Kim Carr isn't happy with [Universities Australia's claim](#) that 'per-student funding has decreased in real terms over a number of years.' Carr says that per student funding increased under Labor. In a [recent blog](#)

Andrew Norton highlights just how difficult it is to answer this question.

11. The [New Colombo Plan 2015 scholarships](#) were announced on 2 December. Sixty-nine of Australia's most talented undergraduate students have been awarded New Colombo Plan scholarships to live, study and work in the region in 2015.
12. Confucius Institutes and Chinese soft power in Australia. The Chinese Government through the Hanban, and in partnership with Australian universities, colleges and schools, has established 13 Confucius Institutes and 35 classrooms across Australia. They promote Chinese language and culture in a friendly, accessible and educational way and we welcome them. [This paper](#) examines the role of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in Australia and how they facilitate Chinese soft power influence.
13. [FTA adds 77 more private Australian providers on China's 'white list'](#). After 10 years of negotiations, a bilateral trade agreement between China and Australia will extend the number of Australia's private HE institutions featured on the Chinese government's JSJ (Jiaoyu Shewai Jianguan Xinxi Wang) or "white list" of quasi-approved institutions where currently only public universities, TAFEs and one private provider are listed.
14. [English Language Proficiency and Employability Framework](#). This report presents the *English Language Proficiency (ELP) and Employability Framework*, which has been designed to inform and support higher education institutions' (HEIs) policies and practices on ELP and graduate employability.
15. [Taskforce to 'future-proof' the tertiary sector](#). Influential business leadership group the ADC Forum has launched a high level "taskforce" to drive the stronger involvement of corporations and business in public universities and TAFEs to make them more entrepreneurial and efficient to weather massive disruption from

the rise of online learning and competition from global brands like the US Ivy League universities.

16. [Students opt for university over VET](#). The introduction of the uncapped demand-driven system for universities is seemingly driving changes in participation in tertiary education, with far fewer young people undertaking vocational education and training (VET) in favour of higher education, according to a report published by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), [Young people in education and training 2013](#).
17. Explainer: [what is a Small Private Online Course?](#) If you have studied an online course at a university over the past couple of decades, you've probably already experienced a SPOC, or Small Private Online Course. SPOC is a [new term](#) for an old concept, which appears to be [frustrating members of the distance education](#) community.

## Tips and Tricks

18. Do you want to understand your social media return-on-investment (ROI)? Are you tracking the customer journey in Google Analytics? In this [article](#) you'll discover how to collect and analyze the data you need to properly calculate how social media marketing impacts on your institution.
19. [Four ways to strategically collect and use college student retention data](#). We all know the importance of data-driven student retention planning and action, right? That said, if you are finding it difficult to implement actions based on your data, you are far from alone.

So what prevents us from getting the data we need? And what stops us from using the data we are given? Here are some practical ways to collect and use data more effectively in order to reduce frustration and lead to more successful student intervention and strategic planning efforts.

## Call for Papers

20. EAIR 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum 30 August to 2 September, 2015 Danube University of Krems, Austria  
Theme: *From Here to There: Positioning Higher Education Institutions*

Deadline for [submissions](#) Monday 9 February 2015 (23:59hrs. CET)  
<http://www.eairweb.org/forum2015/>

## Positions Vacant



Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research? Try our [Opportunities](#) webpage for current vacancies in the profession.

## Looking for some training and development?

See our [Training and Development](#) webpage focused on training for institutional researchers.

## Looking for higher education conferences and events?

See our [Events/Fora](#) webpage for the latest national and international events.

## Enjoy Reading?



Here are a few recent and upcoming releases:

*[Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates](#)* by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, University of Chicago Press, September 2014.

In their 2011 book *[Academically Adrift](#)*, authors Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, argued that colleges are failing to educate students. Many undergraduates, the authors wrote, are "drifting through college without a clear sense of purpose," with more than a third of students not demonstrating any significant improvement in learning over four years in college.

Now Arum and Roksa have revisited a large sampling of those same undergraduates for a new book examining how they've fared after

graduation. They're no longer students, the authors write, but they are still adrift.

*[Remaking College: The Changing Ecology of Higher Education](#)* edited by Michael W Kirst and Mitchell L Stevens, Stanford University Press, January 2015.

Between 1945 and 1990 the United States built the largest and most productive higher education system in world history. Over the last two decades, however, dramatic budget cuts to public academic services and skyrocketing tuition have made college completion more difficult for many. Nevertheless, the democratic promise of education and the global competition for educated workers mean ever growing demand.

*[Remaking College](#)* considers this changing context, arguing that a growing accountability revolution, the push for greater efficiency and productivity, and the explosion of online learning are changing the character of higher education.

For those of you who missed it, the New Media Consortium (NMC) released the *[Horizon Report 2014 Higher Education Edition](#)* at the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) Annual Meeting earlier this year. Some of the findings include "Integration of Online, Hybrid, and Collaborative Learning" as a fast trend (1-2 years), the "Shift from Students as Consumers to Students as Creators" as a mid-range trend (3-5 years) and "Evolution of Online Learning" as a long range trend (5+ years).

*[Reshaping the University: the Rise of the Regulated Market in Higher Education](#)* by David Palfreyman and Ted Tapper, Oxford University Press, June 2014.

This book focuses, in particular, upon the policy of removing, almost entirely, public support for the payment of student fees. This has emerged from a steady process of change, which has broad political support and is underwritten by the idea that higher education is now seen more as a private than a public, good.

In her recent book *[The Value of the Humanities](#)* (Oxford University Press), Helen Small considers what she sees as the five primary claims made in defense of the humanities, laying out the historical background for each argument and considering its strengths and weaknesses. In Small's view, "There is no... all-silencing justification to be had"; rather, the case for

the humanities must be made in different ways on different fronts.

In his book *[The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education \(2013\)](#)*, UK scholar Andrew McGettigan gives one of the best analyses of market-driven approaches to university reform that I have seen. McGettigan shows how education has moved from being a public good to an 'individual financial investment', one that – in the end – will not only be detrimental to economic interests but also to students, society and democracy at large. While the book is focused on the British system, Australian readers will have no trouble drawing the connections between England and our own beleaguered tertiary system, *as Ben Etherington pointed out in a [Sydney Review of Books](#) essay* earlier this year.

*[Privatization and the Public Good: Public Universities in the Balance](#)* by Mathew T Lambert, Harvard Education Press, September, 2014.

In *Privatization and the Public Good*, Lambert examines a range of developments related to the "privatization" of public higher education in the United States, including increasing "institutional autonomy, higher tuition, diminishing appropriations, alternative revenue sources such as philanthropy and new business ventures, and modified governance relationships." These developments, in turn, have resulted in an uncertain future for public academic institutions across the country, posing unprecedented questions and challenges for them.

*[Universities in Transition: Foregrounding Social Contexts of Knowledge in the First Year Experience](#)* edited by Heather Brooks and her colleagues at the University of Adelaide, was released this month.

For some time now the terms 'transition to university' and 'first-year experience' have been at the centre of discussion and discourse at, and about, Australian universities. For those university administrators, researchers and teachers involved, this focus has been framed by a number of interlinked factors ranging from social justice concerns to the hard economic realities confronting the contemporary corporatising university.

# Higher Education Abroad

by Louise Hargreaves

1. [Can universities respond effectively to the challenges of the new era?](#) Falling decisively into the “each age gets the thought that it needs” camp is a new report entitled [the lifetime learner: A journey through the future of postsecondary education](#) issued by Deloitte University Press. Its authors look at how the traditional learning pathways for acquiring skills, credentials and good jobs – such as universities – are being challenged by what they describe as “a growing array of unorthodox learning providers who are experimenting not only with delivering educational content faster, cheaper and on demand but also with entirely new learning experiences”.

2. [Should Universities be exempt from Freedom of Information requests?](#) As public funding for universities in the UK reduces, is it time they became as exempt from Freedom of Information laws as the private sector? Or should we reform FOI instead? Times Higher magazine recently ran [an interesting exchange about universities and Freedom of Information](#). It’s not a new controversy.

3. A new report from the UK’s Open University entitled [Innovating Pedagogy 2014: Exploring new forms of teaching, learning and assessment, to guide educators and policy makers](#), examines 10 innovations that have the potential to transform education in the next several years.

The Higher Education Consulting Group’s review of this publication, [Count on it: why good data are vital for the future of Universities](#) indicates that in an era of ever more choice and competition, institutions must know what works, what doesn’t, and what might need tweaking. Data are crucial, but arguably of greater importance is intelligence – that is, institutions need to access and analyse their data but also ensure they are measuring activities aligned to their goals and strategies, so they can filter out irrelevant “noise”.

4. [US: House panel probes 'Confucius institutes'](#). China's investment in higher education in the U.S. came under scrutiny recently by a congressional panel probing “Confucius institutes” at 97 colleges and

universities. Congress could decide to withhold money for the Education Department or for State Department exchange programs if it decides the Chinese-sponsored efforts are compromising academic freedoms in the U.S.

## Online Learning

5. [Study reveals most popular online recruiting strategies of US colleges](#). The always-insightful consulting and research firm Noel-Levitz is out this year with two new studies that nicely add to the current research on online recruiting practices and the motivations and concerns of prospective international students.

The first, [2014 E-Recruiting Practices Report for Four-Year and Two-Year Institutions](#), draws on a survey of 258 US colleges and universities to provide a summary of the online recruiting strategies most commonly used among US institutions. A second study, [2014 International E-Expectations Report](#), surveyed more than 2,400 prospective international students (from 164 countries) in order to map the major preferences, concerns, and requirements of students planning to study in the US.

6. [Move over MOOCs – Collaborative MOOC 2.0 is coming](#). A new type of MOOC – dubbed MOOC 2.0 – could disrupt the way courses are devised, altering the top-down university designed curriculum and the professor-to-student course structure that is still part of the MOOC model.

7. [From MOOCs to Learning Analytics: Scratching the surface of the 'visual'](#). MOOCs and data analytics seem well suited to one another; more data about student behaviors and activities would appear to suggest greater accuracy in prediction and personalization, and the huge enrollment numbers in MOOCs might then hold such a promise.

8. [New big data MOOCs coming from BerkeleyX](#). BerkeleyX, the massive open online course arm of the University of California-Berkeley, is launching two MOOCs focused on a big data processing



engine. The free courses will focus on Apache Spark, an open-source project touted by Databricks — its creator — as the most active engine in big data. BerkeleyX, working with the edX online platform, will offer the five-week courses starting on Feb. 23 and April 14.

## Rankings

9. Since they were launched over a decade ago, global rankings have provoked numerous debates about appropriate ways to measure higher education activities. In an [article](#) for World University News, Ellen Hazelkorn investigates how much we understand about how rankings are impacting on higher education. To what extent institutional strategies or processes have been affected or changed because of rankings is examined in the publication [Rankings in Institutional Strategies and Processes: Impact or Illusion?](#) The report produced as part of the European University Association (EUA) *Rankings in Institutional Strategies and Processes* (RISP) project. Although the report examines the impact and influence on European Universities it concludes that it is crucial that all institutions improve their **institutional research capacity** so as to be able to provide meaningful, comparative information about institutional performance to the public.

10. [How to win citations and rise up the university rankings](#) – now there’s a headline that should pique the interest of most institutional researchers. This article provides an analysis of Thomson Reuters’ citations indicator methodology

(previously used in the Times Higher Education Rankings) and how it can be manipulated. The article concludes that every year there are more multi-authored, multi-cited papers. It would not be surprising if university presidents started scanning the author lists of publications, send out recruitment letters and get ready for ranking stardom.

11. Times Higher Education (THE) has announced a number of changes to its [World University Rankings](#). While the methodology for the rankings will largely be preserved, *THE* will bring its data collection in-house, rather than outsourcing it to Thomson Reuters, as has been done in the past. *THE* will also begin to draw the publication data used for the rankings from Elsevier's Scopus database as well as from Elsevier's SciVal research metrics analysis tool.

Furthermore, *THE* has announced that it will now be responsible for its [global academic reputation survey](#), rather than Thomson Reuters. Elsevier will provide support in administering the survey. *THE* will also expand the number of languages used in distributing the survey from 9 to 15 "We are now entering an exciting new phase in the development of *THE*'s gold-standard analyses. Our partnership with Elsevier will ensure that we remain at the forefront of developments and innovations in the evaluation of university performance," said Trevor Barratt, Managing Director of *THE*.

12. University Rankings Watch - [Is Asia really rising?](#) There are some sceptics but in general the rise of Asia and the decline of the US and UK seems to have become part of the accepted wisdom of Western pontificators. So is Asia rising? And if it is, is it the whole of the continent or just parts of it?

## Student Recruitment and Mobility

13. International students, already so key to the internationalisation goals and revenue streams of many American institutions, seem poised to become even more important in the world's leading study destination. The 2014 [Survey of College and University Admissions Directors](#) shows a growing interest in education agents among US Colleges.

14. [Latest Research on Transnational Education: Data and Insights from the UK](#). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) recently released a report entitled "[Directions of travel: Transnational pathways into English higher education](#)". This report aims to focus more on understanding pathways taken by students pursuing TNE in home country to programs in the UK. It highlights several interesting points including the fact that over a third of the international entrants (students) enrolling in first degree programs (bachelor's degree or undergraduate program) in 2012-13 came through programs delivered overseas by UK education providers through TNE models.
15. [International internships: how is this sector evolving?](#) An internship abroad is a costly investment, financially, socially and time-wise. But the appeal of a work placement is growing, along with the rise of commercial companies offering to set up an internship and the number of universities and governments keen to enable such an opportunity. Businesses, educators and associations across the world are now moving away from the black cloud of exploitation and elitism, to foster a more controlled, open and incentivised internship landscape that in many cases can be backed by a national ambition to internationalise.

## 2015 - The Year Ahead

16. [13 higher ed tech tools and approaches to watch in 2015](#). Higher education technology businesses can get lost in the weeds after their launch has passed and they're no longer in the startup or seed funding mode. College administrators and their IT staffs can labor in relative anonymity as they try to improve their learning technology and approaches for students. Sometimes recognition through awards, or top 10 or 20 lists, can supply just what a company needs for a marketing boost or what a college needs to shine a light on its progress.
17. [6 Higher Ed presidents to watch in 2015](#). Higher Ed leaders have always faced a plethora of hurdles and issues confronting their institutions, but the 21st Century has brought perhaps some of the most challenging: disruptive technological forces, changing demographics, falling enrollments, and

ongoing questions over the value of a college education amid skyrocketing student loan debt. These six Higher Ed presidents you may want to keep an eye on through 2015.

18. [What's Next for E-Textbooks?](#) The digital textbook of tomorrow probably doesn't look like a book at all. Imagine, instead, an online service that remixes itself on the fly for consumption via any device, with concepts tailored to a specific student's knowledge gaps and learning style — and examples and problems updated to immerse the learner in timely, compelling content.

And before I make it a wrap for the year you might like to check out the [Top 10 Christmas gifts for academics – in pictures](#). Give your university colleagues everything they've ever wanted this festive season – a giant stomach ache microbe or perhaps some Freudian slippers!

Best wishes for the festive season!

**Louise Hargreaves**  
AAIR eNewsletter Editor

