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FROM THE PRESIDENT

And we are off – in more ways than one!

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope that you have all had a lovely holiday, and that unlike me, most of you are still on a break. There is something about having to be back early in the year that is difficult and yet easy at the same time. The difficult part is that you are back and have to get up early and get to work. It is also annual reporting time for me, so is one of the busiest times of the year. The easy part is that in some ways you can ease into it as there aren't as many students around.

Unfortunately, I think that governments on both sides of the Tasman haven't made it easy for us at all, with significant budget cuts looming in Australia and fee free changes in New Zealand, making things quite stressful all round. So, let's leave that behind and get into data analysis, dashboarding, metadata, data visualisation, data warehousing and surveying, etc. – it all feels so much saner.

Speaking of surveying, we surveyed you—our members and readers—about the AAIR Jobs Board on our website. The survey was open from

21 September through 20 October 2017. We sent the survey out to 905 recipients, and from that we received 76 responses (or an 8.4% response rate). The clear majority of respondents were AAIR members and were from Australia. They were predominantly from the university sector, with the top four job roles being: management, analyst, survey management and institutional planning.

Jobs Board

Overall, 85.5% of respondents had visited the website. And although some people regularly visit the Jobs Board on the AAIR website, most accessed it after receiving the broadcast email. We asked for advice on how we might improve our Jobs Board, and while most didn't have any advice, a few did. One person responded with a comment about how they used it which surprised me. They didn't actually use it to apply for or advertise positions, but for a

rather different set of reasons:

- to keep abreast of changes in the sector;
- to download relevant positions descriptions that they might use to develop their own later;
- to support a business case with their own institution.

Thank you to those who took the time to respond to the survey – we really do appreciate it and find it a useful way to hear from you. We will be using the information to improve the service and make changes. If you ever have something you want to say or raise with AAIR, please don't hesitate to contact me at president@air.org.au or through our Executive Officer at info@air.org.au.

Here's to a great 2018!



Kathie Rabel, AAIR President



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first AAIR newsletter for 2018.

We kick-off the year with plenty of sector-focused news from the back half of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. At the forefront is the late 2017 MYEFO announcement on the freeze on government funding for undergraduate places. The Australian government projects this will save \$2.2 billion over the forward estimates. The Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) payment to Universities for bachelor level courses has been capped and frozen at the 2017 total funding amount. This means no increases for bachelor degree places or for increased costs due to inflation, nor payment for additional enrolments. How this will impact on the strategic plans of our institutions will become obvious in the coming months.

So, as a distraction to this news we've provided plenty of higher education reading as well (page 8) and a reminder that we welcome book and report recommendations at any time during the year.

Finally, *The Institutional Researcher* is pleased to bring you our interview with Omer Yezdani Director, Office of Planning and Strategic Management (OPSM) at Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Deputy Chair of the Australian Network of University Planners (ANUP). Late last year higher education commentator Andrew Norton claimed (via [social media](#)) that Omer was "a sharp new voice" in higher education. Well, we certainly agree.

Happy reading

Tracy Creagh

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

Australia's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook

On 18 December the Federal Government [announced](#) in its **Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO)** that government contributions to domestic undergraduate places would be frozen at 2017 levels for two years, effectively bringing to an end the demand-driven system, with any additional student places only attracting the student contribution amount. Future growth in places is to be allocated on the basis of performance measures which have yet to be determined. The measure replaces proposed efficiency dividend cuts which were opposed in the Senate, with the freezing at 2017 levels effectively imposing similar reductions in funding even if student numbers are not increased. The MYEFO also proposed a reduction in the HELP repayment threshold to \$45,000 and a lifetime limit on individual student HELP borrowing. These latter measures will still require legislative change in order to be implemented.

It's still unclear whether the proposal is intended to be a long-term policy, or a bargaining chip to achieve the cuts Education Minister Simon Birmingham [tried to push through earlier this year](#). According to [Mark Warburton from the LH Martin Institute](#) it's not very good policy, as it's primarily about making savings rather than improving higher education. [Universities Australia Chair Professor Margaret Gardner](#) said the move would leave university funding "frozen in time" – and the blow would be hardest in areas where university attainment is lowest – such as regional Australia. The [Innovative Research Universities](#) condemned the MYEFO, as did the [Australian Technologies Network](#) and the [Regional Universities Network](#) warned that an end to demand driven funding will undermine good policy.

[Universities 'credit negative' as government freeze begins to hit](#). Robert Bolton in the *Australian Financial Review* (January 12) reported that universities have been warned by a major ratings agency that these recent Federal government funding changes are "credit negative".

Late 2017 summary ...

2017 was dominated by the Higher Education Reform package and the subsequent debate this triggered throughout the year. By the end of 2017 we heard a lot of voices, but it remained a non-starter in the Australian Parliament. Across the sector debate continued right up to the end of the year. Mark Warburton from LH Martin Institute

addressed a Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education and KPMG seminar on November 28 with [five propositions for a sustainable system](#).

In late November, the Federal Government [released new data](#) that revealed only two-thirds of students are completing their degrees within six years. Two separate reports: one based on a 2017 graduate survey and the other which analyses data on student outcomes four, six and nine years after commencing study.

Key points:

- Only 71 per cent of graduates secure a job straight out of uni
- Fifteen per cent are still unemployed four years after graduating
- Students who study off-campus, are part-time, are mature-age students, have low ATAR scores or are of low socio-economic status are more likely to fail to finish

[Campus Morning Mail](#) reported on Minister Simon Birmingham's response criticising the universities with high attrition rates. And of course, the response to the Minister's comments from Universities Australia was immediate [suggesting he had things out of proportion](#).

So, we head into 2018 in interesting times. 2018 marks a decade since the release of the Review of the [Australian Higher Education Report](#), commonly known as the Bradley Report. Significant in the recommendations was the target setting for widening participation, particularly for students from low SES backgrounds. In [Times Higher Education](#) Jack Grove has written an excellent piece on current strategies in the UK, US and Australia to widen participation and considerations for target setting.

Other news

QILT released the [2017 Graduate Outcomes Survey](#) in mid-January reporting with the overall employment rate for undergraduates at 86.5 per cent, consistent with the rate in 2016 of 86.4 per cent, indicating that there has been a shift towards full-time employment among undergraduates in 2017. [Universities Australia](#) said this latest national report showed strong signs of recovery for the graduate jobs market.

[Experts question government's university funding model](#). *The Guardian* interviewed Andrew Norton from the Grattan Institute and Universities Australia's acting chief executive Catriona Jackson in response to the January 8 release of the Employer Satisfaction Survey and plans to tie university funding to student performance (further reported on page 5 in 'Graduate Outcomes and Employability')



Stephen Matchett (*Campus Morning Mail*, December 13) rounded off 2017 with his list of 'achievers' in higher education. Listed [alphabetically](#) the main achievers are principally senior management figures. These included the Education Minister Simon Birmingham, the University of South Australia's Tracey Bretag, Universities Australia Chair Margaret Gardner and ANU DVC Marnie Hughes Warrington.

David Myton interviewed 'achiever' Professor Margaret Gardner, the current Monash VC and Chair of Universities Australia in [Campus Morning Mail](#) in early December 2017. While Professor Gardner recognised the challenges across the sector from digital disruption she quoted the "false alarmism" that has prevailed for much of 2017 around the future of universities.

Gavin Moodie's presentation at the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association 2017 Conference reported on data from Statistics Canada's National Graduate Survey 2013 and its 2011 National Household Survey to investigate the further study and employment destinations of Canadian college and university graduates. (access to the paper via [Academia](#))

The Institute of Public Affairs released their [Free speech on campus audit 2017](#), a systematic analysis of over 165 policies and actions at Australia's 42 universities. The Audit rates each university's support for free speech through analysis of policies and actions that limit the diversity of ideas on campus.

And finally, the *Audit of university responses to the Change the course report* was released by the Australian Human Rights Commission. All 39 universities have accepted the majority of the Commission's recommendations, and 32 universities have explicitly accepted all nine recommendations made. In addition, in the information provided to the Commission, universities highlighted specific actions they were taking which align with the recommendations of Change the course. This [audit document](#) outlines the responses.

Campus news

Curtin University has signed-on again with private provider [Navitas which will run Curtin College](#) until 2028 with a further five-year option. The college is now based on Curtin's Perth campus at Bentley and teaches commerce, IT, engineering, built environment, creative industries, and health sciences. Students who complete college study qualify for entry to the second year of a bachelor degree. The partners plan to move the college to the new "Greater Curtin" precinct, expected to be ready in four years.

[Dropbox moves into EdTech with Uni Syd agreement](#). The multi-million-dollar deal aims to support multidisciplinary research and collaboration both internally and externally of the university and drive opportunities for global commercial engagement, providing different levels of access to its 67,000 researchers, staff and students.

[Reshaping the Campus Experience with the Right Information at the Right Time](#)

According to *Campus Technology* Digital signage can improve the way students, faculty, staff and visitors interact with a university campus, offering relevant and timely information in a targeted, helpful manner.

Rankings

Over half Australia's public universities make the world top 500 in the new [Times Higher Education list](#) of teaching and research performance in the physical sciences. ANU stays in the top spot, up seven places to 31 but it is the universities of Melbourne and Sydney which made the big improvement. They are followed by the rest of the Group of Eight; University of Queensland at 93 (up from 98), UNSW at 100 (down from 83), the universities of Adelaide and New South Wales (neither rated last year) and Monash University in the 101-125 group

Meanwhile in New Zealand

[Australia drops plans to charge Kiwis more for tertiary education](#). The Australian government has dropped its plans to make New Zealanders studying at Australian universities pay higher fees. The government had proposed legislation which would have removed access to government subsidised fees for New Zealanders and permanent residents. But without the support of many Australian MPs, the government did not have the votes in the senate to pass the bill and has scrapped the legislation.

Around the world

[UK: International students add £20bn to economy, study finds](#). International students bring economic benefits to the UK worth £20.3 billion, or 10 times the costs of hosting them, according to a new study jointly published by the [Higher Education Policy Institute](#) and [Kaplan International Pathways](#).

[Toby Young to help lead government's new universities regulator](#). The former journalist and free school advocate [Toby Young](#) is among a group of business executives who are to help head the UK government's drive

to apply market forces to higher education in England, as new laws come into force that will regulate universities in the same way as water or gas utilities.

Young will head up the UK's Office for Students (OfS) when it comes into operation as a regulatory body this year and Catherine Boyd in [A beginner's guide to the Office of Students](#) (WHONKE, January 8) comprehensively summarises the role of the OfS.

[US may restrict int'l STEM students to curb intellectual theft](#). The Trump administration's [new National Security Strategy](#) will consider restricting international students from certain designated countries who wish to study STEM subjects in the US in order to prevent technology transfer and intellectual property theft.

[France is more attractive for study than Germany, US, UK, survey finds](#). The attractiveness of France as a study destination for international students is continuing to grow, with nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents in a recent [Campus France](#) survey choosing it ahead of Germany, the US and the UK. Only Canada came in ahead of France, with 69% respondents choosing it as a study destination that is increasing in attractiveness.

[UK PM facing renewed calls to remove students from migration stats](#). British Prime Minister Theresa May has been under pressure to reconsider her stance on including international students in net migration figures, as reports suggesting disunity in the government on the matter have gathered significant attention.

The United Kingdom's National Audit Office has published a [damning report](#) on the effectiveness of the government's increasing reliance in recent years on delivering higher education using market mechanisms, particularly student choice, to improve quality and value for money, and reduce social inequity.

Also in the UK, the government announced plans for [two-year accelerated bachelor degrees](#) that it claims could save students up to £25,000 compared with taking the degree over three years in the normal way. Accelerated degrees will offer the same qualifications and will be quality assured in the same way as a standard degree, but delivered over a shorter, usually two-year timespan, according to the proposals, which have been set out for consultation.

The Danish government has launched a [new research and innovation strategy](#) aimed at both getting value for money from spending



on research, innovation and the distribution of knowledge based on research, and ensuring research is of the highest quality. Under the strategy, titled 'Denmark: Ready for the Future. The governmental goals for Danish research and innovation', the government will establish a 'Nobel Pact', strengthen technological research, gear allocation of research funding more to supporting high quality research and create better research careers for young people.

[What do universities want to be? A content analysis of mission and vision statements worldwide.](#) (LSE Impact Blog) Julián David Cortés-Sánchez conducted a large-scale content analysis and found a trend towards global influence, an unsurprising emphasis on research and teaching, certain geographical patterns, and a noticeable focus on either the individual or process depending on whether a university was public or private.

2018 Predictions



Of course, there have been multiple New Year articles with predictions aligned to education and technology. Nesta, the global innovation foundation, has [ten predictions](#) related to technology and social movements which include increased use of drones for public benefit and a better understanding of how to use public data. *Inside Higher Ed* has [7 trends](#) for 2018 and also listed [7 alternative trends](#), specifically with a focus on higher education in the US. *Inside Higher Ed* also summarised 2017 with [what issues would remain a legacy](#) in the future (a 2022 future), these included: AI, algorithms and robotics; the development of career and competency-based education (often supported by digital learning); disruptive innovation; the proliferation of open educational resources (OERs), and; expansion of higher education via digital learning.

EDUCAUSE listed [ten trends](#) in student use of campus technology noting the use of predictive analytics for student success as useful. LinkedIn bombarded us with [50 big ideas for 2018](#) which included a predicted crash of Bitcoin, a catch-up in data privacy regulations and a focus on making open work spaces "less miserable". Patrick McGhee had a go at humorously predicting the next 12 months in UK higher education in [Times Higher Education](#) with Brexit and the current REF scenarios in mind.

Reflections of what has shaped higher education in 2017 and the year ahead from

[EdSurge](#). From *Education Dive*, [five 2018 trends](#) focused on students and university business models. And the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) examined the role of the academic in 2018 with the shift in the demographic of students.

Philip Altbach in *University World News* (January 12) took a broader view of higher education internationally, focusing on the impact of nationalism and fiscal concerns.

BIG DATA, ONLINE LEARNING, ANALYTICS & TECHNOLOGY

[Online learning took a tech turn in 2017.](#)

Online learning platform [Coursera](#) has revealed a trend towards tech-based courses in 2017. The 30 million-user site divulged the top 10 popular courses, and the most popular specialisations, as signed up for by its "registered learners". Machine Learning, a course taught by Coursera's co-founder Andrew Ng in conjunction with Stanford University, proved most popular, topping the list of courses that were based on the average daily enrolments. Blockchain, Cryptocurrencies and Bitcoin also feature.

[Prepare for a worldwide digital transformation.](#) Mobility, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and big data analytics are among the most important technologies in the digital economy today, says the OECD's latest report on international science, technology and industry. In its 214 pages of data, tables and elaborations, the [OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2017](#) shows how digital transformation is affecting science, innovation, the economy, and the way people work and live.

At The University of Alabama, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) team are making sure that data is used effectively to help students—and the university—prosper. [5 reasons why analytics tech is a game-changer for universities](#) (*eCampus News*) reported on the use of analytics and data visualisation to analyse and report on the university's enrolment and retention goals.

In *EdTech* (December 12, 2017) [4 Ways Data Empowers Universities Beyond Retention](#). From targeted recruiting to more effective fundraising, higher education institutions find more uses for business intelligence solutions.

Netflix for education? In a move designed to lower student costs in the US and improve access to learning, Cengage, an education

and technology company, recently announced 'Cengage Unlimited'. This first-of-its-kind subscription [gives students access to all the company's digital higher education materials](#)—more than 20,000 products across 70 disciplines and more than 675 courses—for \$119.99 a semester, no matter how many Cengage materials they use.

From *The Evollution* two articles on the value of CIO's in higher education: [How a Transformational CIO Can Help Your Institution Grow](#) and [Information or Innovation? The Emerging Role of Postsecondary CIOs](#).

[Data is key to improving campus outcomes — but infrastructure challenges are holding it back.](#) In a [new paper](#) the American Council on Education lays out the case for higher education executives to "prioritize the creation of a campus-wide analytics culture focused on the use of data to promote equity and inclusion, improve student outcomes, develop more inclusive environments, and create more holistic resource strategies."

Stephen Few from Perceptual Edge finished off 2017 with a review of [Heatmaps](#). In the piece he explores the question, "When, if ever, does it make sense to use binned rather than continuous colour scales for heatmaps?"

Privacy issues

[Big Brother: College Edition.](#) A US student has raised concerns with Georgia Tech for monitoring his social media accounts, including details about his travel plans and activist work on campus. When Matthew Wolfson, a student activist at Georgia Tech, asked the University for all its records on him, he got back two binders of documents. He also found that administrators kept tabs on his political affiliation and a trip he took to Washington in July. While experts said in interviews that colleges and universities often rely on social media channels for the pulse of campus, they were unaware of any cases in which an institution had in essence profiled a student -- raising questions about the appropriateness of Georgia Tech's social media practices.

In her regular blog, Audrey Watters discussed [The Weaponization of Education Data](#) and the privacy concerns raised in 2017 around the collection of student data via various incidences of hacks and breaches.

GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

Our Institutional Researcher this month, **Omer Yezdani**, has written on several



occasions for [The Conversation](#). In late November last year his piece [Five myths about Australian university graduate outcomes](#) provided a concise overview of five myths or misconceptions about Australian university graduate outcomes. The analysis uses data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Labour Force Survey, Quality Indicators of Learning and Teaching](#) (QILT), and former Australian Graduate Survey (AGS).

QILT released the [2017 Employer Satisfaction Survey \(ESS\) Results National Report](#) – please see the summary on page 7. [Universities Australia](#) curtailed the criticism of the results reported in some media outlets (i.e. *The Australian*: [University degrees are failing to deliver for business](#)) noting that more than nine out of 10 employers said university graduates were well-prepared by their university education for their current job. Peter van Onselen editorial in the *Weekend Australian* (January 13-14) further curtailed the negative comments with his [piece](#) (summarised in the online article, the original print copy was titled 'Universities qualify for a high distinction, Mr Wilcox') and added: "While anti-intellectual university bashing might be in vogue ... to declare universities as "failing business" when 84 per cent of businesses are satisfied with graduates they hire is a nonsense".

From *eCampus News*, [Top 5 ways universities can amplify the student experience](#) – essentially: (1) Don't ignore your data (2) Engage students on every channel (3) Be willing to get personal (4) Know what they're saying about you (5) Get your arms around AI – now.

An [ANU/CSIRO](#) team used natural language processing machine-learning to analyse 29,000 job advertisements. They discovered hidden demand for "highly skilled researchers" the sort of people who have PhDs. "There is a large 'hidden job market' for PhD graduates in the Australian workforce," they conclude.

LEARNING & TEACHING

An international perspective on plans for the Ramsey Centre for Western Civilisation with a piece from Sophie Inge writing for Times Higher Education and published in *Inside Higher Ed*. [Inge reports](#) that the new centre seeks to influence curriculum shifts in recent years, which have focused on Asia and on the country's Aboriginal heritage. Inge questions whether the country needs more study of "white men" but notes, "Ultimately, the test will be whether students sign up to the courses, and whether they influence

teaching and curricula at other Australian universities".

[Measuring Learning Will Be Key to Improving It in 2018. In EdSurge](#). Arjun Singh writes that gathering and synthesising information about student learning and performance won't only be useful for faculty to see, but students could gain valuable information about their own progress as well.

[As Campuses Move to Embrace OER, College Libraries Become Key Players](#). Textbook publishers typically deploy sales reps to campuses to convince professors to adopt their titles. But who makes the pitch for free or low-cost alternatives to textbooks known as OER, or open educational resources? Increasingly, the answer is the campus library (perspective from the University of Texas full-time Open Education Librarian, Michelle Reed)

RESEARCH

In November 2017 the ARC announced fine-tuning changes to the engagement and impact profiles which universities must submit this year. And now the ARC has [codified](#) the whole process into four reading handbooks on what universities must do what to meet requirements. In [The Conversation](#), QUT's Pauline Zardo reported on this introduction of the Australian Research Council's (ARC) Engagement and Impact Assessment. It will run alongside the current Excellence in Research Australia [ERA](#) assessment exercise. This follows a [pilot](#) of the Engagement and Impact Assessment, run in 2017.

[Australian research 'has a Daversity problem': Analysis shows too many men work mostly with other men](#). UTS Professor Deb Verhoeven used a social network analysis (SNA) which measures the relationships between people. Professor Verhoeven and her team created data maps of the men and women who received coveted academic grants in Australia, and who they worked with. They looked at Australian Research Council Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (ARC LIEF) grants (2008-17) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) program grants (2003-18). According to her team's analysis, 79 per cent of ARC LIEF grant recipients were male. As well, males received 82 per cent of NHMRC program grants. Data only available for the NHMRC grants suggest that 84 per cent of all the men who received a grant worked in male-only teams.

Coincidentally, on December 7 last year the National Health and Medical Research

Council announced and re-announced new grants. Among these, [fresh funding for 34 projects that have female chief investigators](#). This brings the funding rate for projects with women leads to 15.3 per cent compared to 17.1 per cent for those with men. Genetics researcher Gaetan Burgio (ANU) also published an analysis of outcomes of grants via Twitter (reported in the [Campus Morning Mail](#) on December 11). Dr Burgio reported that applications were down, pushing the funding success rate up a couple of per cent on 2015, to 16 per cent or so and that without the 34-grant pool reserved for projects with women chief investigators (a first-time move) the gender distribution would be unchanged. As well, more grants were allocated to basic science research in 2017, but with less money on average than other areas.

From NZ, Mark Wilson wrote an eye-opening piece in *The Conversation* on his three-year project examining the cost of university research. [Universities spend millions on accessing results of publicly funded research](#) indicated University research is generally funded from the public purse. The results, however, are published in peer-reviewed academic journals, many of which charge subscription fees and NZ universities are paying around \$15 million per year to just four publishers.

(MORE) REPORTS AND RESOURCES



[Are we all speaking the same language? Understanding 'quality' in the VET sector](#)

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Quality in the vocational education and training (VET) sector is an ongoing area of interest — but what does 'quality' really mean? This paper examines what quality in VET might mean from the perspectives of five key stakeholder groups: learners, employers/industry, providers, government and regulators. The research found that while there are some differences in what is important to each of the stakeholder groups, underpinning all the views is an expectation that learners gain the expected skills from



their training. The paper also explores how useful any currently available measures of quality are and how they might be improved.

Please note: a companion report to this publication by Josie Misko can be accessed [here](#).



[2017 Employer Satisfaction Survey \(ESS\) Results National Report](#)

Australian Government Department of Education and Training, The Social Research Centre

Over 4,000 supervisors of Australian resident and international undergraduates, postgraduate coursework graduates and postgraduate research graduates from Australian universities and non-university higher education institutions participated in the ESS in 2017, making it the largest ever Australian survey of employers of higher education graduates. Results have been combined from the 2016 and 2017 ESS to provide comparisons across universities.

Selection of key findings:

- Results for overall employer satisfaction confirm findings from the 2017 Graduate Outcomes Survey that employers seem to prefer graduates with vocationally oriented degrees over those with generalist degrees since the former have higher employment outcomes immediately upon graduation
- Supervisors expressed higher levels of overall satisfaction with younger graduates aged 30 years or under, 85 per cent, in comparison with graduates aged over 30, 82 per cent.
- Employers of graduates working in professional occupations, reported significantly higher overall satisfaction 87 per cent, compared with those of graduates working in all other occupations.
- Overall, graduates tended to view their qualification as less important for their current employment than their supervisor. While a little over half of graduates, 56 per cent, considered their qualification to be 'very important' or 'important' to their current job, around 64 per cent, of supervisors indicated the

graduate's qualification was 'very important' or 'important'.

- Overall, there appears to be a strong relationship between skills and knowledge acquired by higher education graduates and the requirements of their jobs after graduation

ON THE MOVE

Sarah Walsh is Flinders University's new marketing director. Ms Walsh joins from Brand South Australia. She is a previous marketing research manager at the University of Adelaide.

Mark Considine will become provost of the University of Melbourne in February, replacing Margaret Sheil, who is moving to be vice chancellor at QUT. Professor Considine is now dean of the university's faculty of arts.

Caroline Finch will join Edith Cowan University in March as DVC Research. The exercise injury scientist moves from Federation University.

The director of the Research School of Population Health at ANU **Archie Clements** is moving to Curtin University to become PVC Health Sciences, starting in April.

Hung Nguyen will start in February as PVC of Swinburne U's faculty of science, engineering and technology. He joins from UTS

ANU Chancellor Gareth Evans will continue at the university for two more years. He became chancellor in January 2010, when Ian Chub was vice chancellor and will now stay on to December 31 2019.

Steve Wesselingh is the president elect of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes. Professor Wesselingh is foundation ED of the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute. He was also chair of the expert advisory group on the National Health and Medical Research Council review of grant allocations.

The **Australian New Zealand Student Services Association** has appointed a new executive; Christie White (USQ), president, Jordi Austin (UniSydney) immediate past president, VP Aus Mark Young (La Trobe U), VP NZ Karen Davis (Victoria Uni of Wellington), treasurer, Dorinda Harvey-Bravo (Griffith U) and secretary, Andrea Strachan (UoQ).

Jane O'Dwyer moves up to become ANU's inaugural Vice President for Engagement and Corporate Affairs and will report to DVC Global Engagement Shirley Leitch.

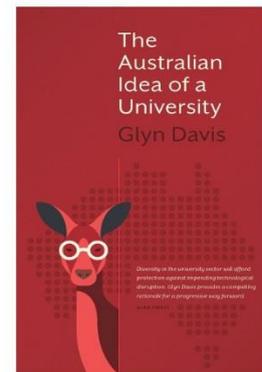
Former Open Universities Australia chief **Paul Wappett** will join private provider, Australian Institute of Business this year.

Jacinta Elson is Monash University's inaugural PVC Indigenous. Professor Elson moves from James Cook U where she is Professor of Indigenous Health.

Peter Dean will become PVC Education at UWA in February. He is now a senior fellow at the ANU Strategic and Defence Studies Centre.

Nick Wailes has been appointed the new head of the Australian Graduate School of Management. Professor Wailes moves from deputy dean, digital and innovation in the UNSW business school.

BOOK REVIEWS



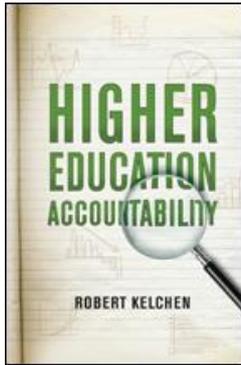
[The Australian Idea of a University](#)

Glyn Davis

Universities, like other industries, are challenged by disruptive market forces. Today there are nearly forty public universities in Australia. Relentless inventiveness and entrepreneurial agendas promise students a world of unbounded study options. In this powerful meditation on the need for institutional diversity, Glyn Davis argues that experimentation, innovation and resilience are the only way the public university will endure.

Professor Warren Bebbington interviewed Professor Davis for the [Campus Morning Mail](#) (November 21, 2017) on the new publication.

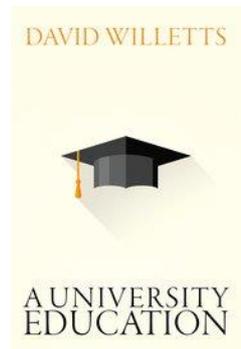




Higher Education Accountability

Robert Kelchen

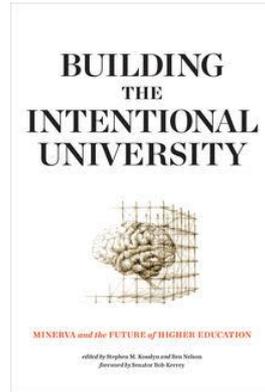
In *Higher Education Accountability*, Robert Kelchen delivers the first comprehensive overview of how colleges in the United States came to face such overwhelming scrutiny. Beginning with the earliest efforts to regulate schools, Kelchen reveals the rationale behind accountability and outlines the historical development of how federal and state policies, accreditation practices, private-sector interests, and internal requirements have become so important to institutional success and survival.



A University Education

David Willetts

In *A University Education*, David Willetts (former UK Universities and Science Minister) presents a compelling case for the ongoing importance of the university, both as one of the great institutions of modern society and as a transformational experience for the individual. The book also makes illuminating comparisons with higher education in other countries, especially the US and Germany. Stephen Curry from Imperial College in the UK has written a comprehensive review of the book in [The Guardian](#) (January 3).

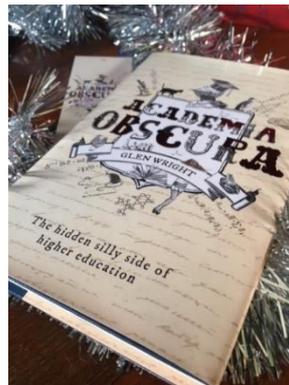


Building the Intentional University: Minerva and the Future of Higher Education

Stephen M. Kosslyn and Ben Nelson

Higher education is in crisis. It is too expensive, ineffective, and impractical for many of the world's students. But how would you reinvent it for the twenty-first century—how would you build it from the ground up? Many have speculated about changing higher education, but Minerva has actually created a new kind of university program. Its founders raised the funding, assembled the team, devised the curriculum and pedagogy, recruited the students, hired the faculty, and implemented a bold vision of a new and improved higher education. This book explains that vision and how it is being realised.

Recommended reading:



Academia Obscura: The hidden silly side of higher education

Glen Wright

If, like me, you are constantly amused/surprised/entranced by the protocols and machinations of higher education, then I recommend this read. Self-professed "procrastinating PhD student" Glen Wright has compiled a collection eccentric oddities from "the weird and wonderful world" of academia which gives us an "irrelevant glimpse inside the ivory tower".

Wright has organised the book to cover topics such as academic publishing, teaching, social media, outreach and engagement – and even academic animals - and punctuates the text with "obscure interludes" and plenty of footnotes. Best of all, Wright includes the most irrelevant lists, tables, figures and images from published research and even a copy of the peer review of this book. Lot's of fun, the book also includes an "irrelevant bibliography" but primarily provides a dose of comic relief for those of us tied to our institutions. As Wright says,

The relationship between humour and academia is nonetheless fraught. There are, broadly, two camps: those who think that jokes and humour have no place in science and academic inquiry; and those those who think that we should all just lighten up a bit. I am predictably (and staunchly) in the latter category. (p.3)

Me too. Wright's website is [here](#) and he also tweets as [@AcademiaObscura](#)



Note: Your editor received this in the mail just prior to Christmas 2017 – and was one of the 500 who crowdfunded the publication (that's my declaration of bias on reviewing this book).

POSITIONS VACANT

If you are seeking an international career change, see our American colleagues [AIR Careers](#) page.



LOOKING FOR SOME TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT?

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



Upcoming altis events

<http://air.org.au/event-location/professional-development/>

LOOKING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCES AND EVENTS?

Here is a selection of upcoming events (or past events) that may be of interest. See our [Events/Fora](#) webpage for more national and international events.

[Enterprise Data Governance Online](#)

January 24, 2018

This **free** online event features a full day of live sessions presented by industry experts. The educational program is designed to teach anyone working with data to execute and implement a successful Data Governance program, and to introduce the latest in governance technologies and best practices. [Register here.](#)

[Association of Institutional Research \(AIR\) upcoming webinar series *Institutional Culture of Evidence*](#)

Two-part series: February 22 and March 1, each 3:00 – 4:00 pm ET (US)

The webinars focus on why we should use data and evidence to inform decisions, and to measure the impact and effectiveness of those decisions.

[Bluenotes APAC 2018 Conference](#)



22-23 February 2018, Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus, Australia

Informing the Future: Using today's feedback to improve tomorrow

[Universities Australia Higher Education Conference 2018](#)



UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA
HIGHER EDUCATION
CONFERENCE 2018
NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE SYDNEY
28 FEBRUARY – 2 MARCH 2018
FUTURE FUNDAMENTALS

28 February – 2 March, 2018, National Convention Centre, Canberra, Australia

The 2018 conference theme - **Future Fundamentals** - will have speakers exploring the fundamental role of universities in teaching, learning and research as they reinvent themselves in a new political, economic and technological environment.



[The 8th International Learning Analytics & Knowledge Conference](#)

SMC Conference and Function Centre, Sydney, NSW, Australia

March 5-9, 2018

The conference will be held at the SMC Conference & Function Centre in Sydney, Australia on March 5–9, 2018. The preparations for LAK18 are currently ongoing and organisers will be releasing information in the coming months.

[The Higher Education HR/IR Conference 2018 - Leading the Way](#)



9-11 May, Stamford Plaza, Brisbane, Australia

For any further queries about the conference, please contact [Henry Wong](#), Conference Manager.

This conference will offer an impressive line of speakers, a unique dining experience, combined with invaluable networking opportunities.

[AIR Forum 2018](#)



May 29 – June 1, Orlando, Florida, US

The AIR Forum, the Association's annual conference, is the world's largest gathering of higher education professionals working in institutional research, assessment, planning, and related postsecondary education fields.

[EduTECH Australia 2018](#)



6-8 June, International Convention Centre, Sydney, Australia

EduTECH is an annual event where the entire education and training sector gather together to learn, debate, exchange ideas and be inspired by the very latest in education thought leadership.

[HERDSA: \(Re\)Valuing Education](#)

2-5 July 2018, Adelaide, Australia

HERDSA offers an annual international conference on topical teaching and learning issues with opportunities to meet colleagues with similar interests, exchange ideas about teaching and learning and learn about current developments from experienced researchers and practitioners

[STARS Conference](#)



8-11 July 2018, Auckland, New Zealand

Registrations are now open, as are submissions for the 2018 Conference. The STARS conference provides the opportunity to disseminate and discuss current research, good practice, emerging initiatives and leading-edge ideas that are aimed at enhancing students' tertiary learning experiences.



INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Five questions with Omer Yezdani, ACU



What is your job title?

Director, Office of Planning and Strategic Management (OPSM) at Australian Catholic University (ACU). I also help where I can as the Deputy Chair of the Australian Network of University Planners (ANUP).

Briefly, how would you describe your role in terms of your place in your institution?

My role is interesting and a continuous challenge. I'm privileged to have access to a lot of the university's information assets and have frequent engagements with the ACU Senior Executive. While I'm sometimes thought of as the 'data guy', I see my role as a function within the broader strategic management cycle—the provision of information analysis and reporting to guide and support the execution of our Strategic Plan.

The provision of information, advice and analysis are ultimately strategy related. I am involved in around 25 different advisory committees and groups—some of which meet every month—and I chair a handful of these. My days are often full of meetings, discussions and engagements, figuring out how we navigate many complex and interrelated challenges, and I am usually juggling many things at once. While my work is focused a lot on strategic thinking, technology, information and data, it's most often all about people.

From your perspective, what are the emerging areas of interest in institutional research?

Large-scale data integration: One of the major challenges for me has been wrangling multiple sources of data to derive meaningful analysis and insights. Our business intelligence (BI) mantra is to 'transform the university's information into a meaningful intelligence asset, available anywhere, anytime and on any device'. There is huge analytics potential using the data we already have, while making this information available when and where people need it. Sometimes it's not the best analysis that's used, it's simply the one that's available. For me, the relationship between time and value in data is always a pragmatic concern.

- **Machine learning and automation:** The robots are taking our jobs! Well, maybe not entirely, but I think automation is having a massive impact on the changeover of skills for institutional researchers, which at the same time opens many new doors for deep analysis. There is a lot to be excited about in machine learning, institutional researchers can be at the forefront of implementing this in their institutions.

Adding value: Like all corporate services, the provision of information, data and BI comes at a cost. A major focus for us has been the idea of 'adding value'. We do this through being proactive and more deeply understanding user needs, while striving to work in partnership. Our value proposition ('to be a vital source of business intelligence and a strategic partner in planning, quality and risk') is an enduring aspiration, but it's also always at risk, because needs and expectations are continuously evolving. The changing nature of higher education policy means we need to stay ahead of the curve and continue to ask ourselves: what value does this add, what's the return on investment, who are our clients, is there a better way, can this be automated?

What do you believe will be the future priorities for institutional research?

I think this is mostly covered in the answer above. To add one further point, there is a lot of untapped potential in predictive analytics that could be driven using existing data; however, technology is not usually the barrier. As mentioned earlier, during my time establishing and leading a BI program, I have learnt this is a program that's less about technology and more about people. We really need to understand what people's strategic goals (or problems) are and what they are trying to address and apply solutions to meet those needs.

Complete this statement: *In my role, I can't operate effectively without ...*

... an amazing team, which I am extremely proud of. Every member of my directorate brings a wealth of expertise and continues to expand their depth of knowledge in their area of responsibility. As the director I provide as much encouragement and support as I can for learning and development. To me, it's very important to be a learning organisation, to be a collaborative, agile and high-performing team, and to help our people realise their aspirations and have a fulfilling career at ACU. I also love a cup of coffee, or two.

Connect with Omer on [LinkedIn](#)

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Institutional Researcher Issue 2, February 2018

A great way to get involved with the AAIR community is to share your thoughts and ideas. Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? The next AAIR Newsletter will be published in late February 2018. Please send your contributions to the editor@air.org.au by February 9, 2018.

A reminder about the organisations' social media links to keep you up-to-date and in touch with all the latest news and events



AAIR on Twitter [@AAIRaustraliasia](#)



Tracy Creagh
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

