

# UECA NEWS



WELCOME FROM UECA PRESIDENT  
SIMON WINETROUBE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF UECA NEWS!

The UECA AGM provided an opportunity to reflect on the past year and there were a number of success stories to report on. One highlight of the year was the concerted effort, in collaboration with NEAS and English Australia, to influence the Guidance Note on the ELICOS National Standards. All of our recommendations (expertly drafted by Pamela Humphreys) were accepted, which averted the real danger that an IELTS test score could become the primary measure of readiness for Tertiary study.

Our PD events at UTS Insearch, Sydney, Monash College, Melbourne and University of Adelaide continued to get fantastic feedback from participants and the speed with which they filled up emphasised how highly regarded they have become. Last year, we added new elements through the inaugural UECA Assessment Symposium at UQ-ICTE and the Academic Manager's workshop at Monash College. We will be repeating both of these initiatives, which were very well received.

The benchmarking workshop which followed the AGM was well-attended and very encouraging. While there was still plenty of robust discussion, the overall feedback on the project was overwhelmingly positive and it was great to see how far we have come in the short space of time since the initial workshop. Sara and Thomas have done a great job driving this forward. It was good to hear Sara's view that University Language Centres demonstrate best practice in areas such as standardisation and moderation and are ahead of sector in our benchmarking practices. We will disseminate that message as best we can when the Report comes out in July. We'll also make some decisions, in consultation with members, on what the next stage of the project should look like.

It was great to see ex-UECA President David Larbalestier in Sydney and to hear that he hasn't lost any of his passion for our work. We presented David with a much delayed token of

appreciation for his work for UECA over such a long time. We were also able to announce the launch of the UECA Innovation and Leadership award sponsored by Education Solutions Australasia (Director David Larbalestier). This year's theme is "Innovation in Student Welfare". Look out for more details in this newsletter.

The AGM came at an "interesting" time for University Language Centres as it was held a couple of days after the ABC's 4 Corners episode, which once again questioned the English standards of International students. We can moan to each other about the lack of balance and unfairness of the portrayal, but the program was widely viewed and certainly did not do much for the overall reputation of the International Education sector. These kind of incidents seem to happen quite regularly and they do create challenges. Having said that, they also provide an opportunity for us to highlight the value of University Language Centres to our parent Universities. In the light of the concerns raised, we look at an even more attractive pathway option, as long as we can demonstrate that we are maintaining our standards. If we should be challenged, the UECA benchmarking project provides powerful evidence of our standards and our commitment to rigour in implementing those standards. We have a strong case to make, but in the current context, we are vulnerable and need to be ever vigilant not to offer any opportunities for critics to attack us.

Finally, congratulations and a warm welcome to Katherine Olston, University of Sydney, the latest addition to our committee and many thanks to Carolyn Matthews who has completed her term. Please do keep in contact with me or any of our committee members. University language centres do have a unique context and face unique challenges. We will continue to do our best to provide a forum for members to share information and ideas and work together for the good of the sector. We need your feedback, ideas and suggestions to help us do that.



# BENCHMARKING PROJECT PROGRESS

Early in May this year, UECA member institutions met at Doltone House, Sydney for the UECA Benchmarking Peer Review Workshop run by project leads Dr Sara Booth and A/Professor Thomas Roche. The Workshop followed at the end of Phase Three of the national benchmarking project, which saw some 60 assessors from 20 UECA institutions across Australia involved in peer reviews of fellow Centre assessment tasks and student work samples, benchmarking program outcomes against the CEFR. At the workshop Centres discussed the benchmarking project's processes and outcomes to date, with consensus emerging around the professional benefit for Centre staff with a number of participants commenting on how their teaching teams had developed a broader understanding of EAP assessment practices across the sector. Participating Centres are looking forward to the concluding report of the project being delivered in August prior the Director's Workshop in Melbourne.



## NEW SPONSORSHIP

UECA are thrilled to announce **Bookery** as a sponsor. In the past few months, Bookery has seen a lot of changes with renovations to their Melbourne headquarters, an expanded team, an overhauled website, and also a move away from being solely a retail operation.

From 2019 onwards, Bookery is taking a more consultative role in an effort to help teachers get more out of their resources and to ensure better student outcomes. To this end, we've begun hosting our own PD events with noted EAL teacher trainers and speakers. Also, we're endeavouring to visit more campuses to see how teachers use their resources and how we can help. In some cases this has been one on one meetings and in others it has been for a Bookery Bookfest, in which we bring a wide selection of books for teachers to inspect and discuss.

If you would like Bookery representatives to visit your campus with a selection of books and resources, please contact us at 03 8417 9500 or email any of the BD team: [sean@bookery.com.au](mailto:sean@bookery.com.au), [marie@bookery.com.au](mailto:marie@bookery.com.au), or [katharina@bookery.com.au](mailto:katharina@bookery.com.au).

## CAM TESOL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

UECA were proud to sponsor the Regional ELT Research Symposium at CamTESOL in 2019. In addition UECA continues to support the Research Mentoring program by providing financial support to a number of participants. Simon Winetroube attended the Research Symposium in 2019 to represent UECA. Sincere thanks to Darren Brookes who continues to facilitate the research mentoring program.





# UECA PD FEST

UNSW Global hosted the UECA PD Fest on 13th April 2019 in Sydney. The theme was Innovate! Delivery, Assessment, Support and Services in EAP and Pathway programs.

The theme for the PD Fest was designed to highlight innovative and creative approaches to Delivery, Assessment, Support and Services in EAP and Pathway programs, share best practice from our contexts and showcase developments we have made to improve student outcomes. It was also a call to action to examine our methods of delivery and assessment, identify the needs of our student cohorts and tailor support and services accordingly. The packed program reflected the trends in the sector over the past two years - monolingual classrooms, the increasing entry requirements, scrutiny from regulators and quality considerations in Direct Entry Pathways and showcased how these were being responded to by the UECA members.

The various streams in the program were organised as follows: Innovation in Direct Entry Programs; Innovation in classroom Delivery; Innovation in Student Support & Welfare.

The opening plenary by Dr. Pasi Sahlberg, Professor of Educational Policy, Deputy Director, Gonski Institute for Education, UNSW School of Education set the tone for the rest of the day. Dr Sahlberg spoke on the following topic "What do we really mean by Teacher Autonomy? Reimagining the teaching profession" and shared findings on views and responses to the teaching profession from around the world.

The day was attended by over 155 educators from NSW and interstate and the organisers received positive feedback on the program, organisation and impact of the PD Fest.

You can view all the slides from the day and a recording of Dr Sahlberg's keynote here: <http://www.ueca.edu.au/pdfest2019/>





<b>September 17</b>	Directors Forum	Melbourne	Monash
<b>October 26</b>	PD Fest	Melbourne	Swinburne



The logo for the UECA Assessment Symposium 2020 is displayed. It features a stylized lowercase 'a' in white on a dark blue square background. To the right of the 'a' is a large, bold, dark blue '2020'. The entire logo is set against a background of repeating text: 'UECA Assessment Symposium 2020'.

## UECA INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP AWARD

# 2019 THEME

# INNOVATION IN STUDENT WELFARE

Our new annual award will highlight innovation and leadership shown by staff in UECA centres. Find out more [ueca.edu/awards](https://ueca.edu/awards)