From the Dean
The UWA Law School was founded in 1928 and since then has established a reputation for outstanding legal education. It is my privilege and honour to be the first female Dean of the UWA Faculty of Law, particularly at this exciting time when we are transitioning to new undergraduate majors and the JD program, as well as building our postgraduate coursework and research degrees. We are proud of our recent achievements and are excited to showcase them in this inaugural newsletter.

As UWA enters its second century, it is reshaping and streamlining its courses to prepare graduates for the new challenges of today. Under the new courses structure, law is offered at postgraduate level only, as a three-year professional Juris Doctor (JD) degree rather than as an undergraduate Bachelor of Laws degree. The JD is a widely recognised degree providing scope for UWA Law graduates to seek admission to legal practice in international common law jurisdictions. In introducing the JD, UWA joins 12 other Australian institutions offering the program.

Under the revised degree structure, students are required to take four additional core units beyond the traditional compulsory subjects: Dispute Resolution and Foundations of Public Law in first year; and Remedies and Legal Theory and Ethics in second year. In addition, students must choose one unit from a suite of “internationally-focused” options.

The JD allows for greater equity in the selection process, which is based on an applicant’s performance in their undergraduate degree rather than on school leaver results only. This also increases the diversity in the student body. As JD students study law only, a closer and more cohesive student group is fostered, creating greater scope to forge strong friendships and networks throughout their degree.

The JD focuses on equipping graduates with professional legal skills at an advanced level. “The JD facilitates learning by ensuring the integrated, co-ordinated and progressive development of attributes and skills and the alignment of assessment,” explains Dr Natalie Skead, Associate Dean of Students.

UWA JD students will continue to have opportunities to be involved in the rich and diverse extra-curricular activities and competitions organised by the law students’ Blackstone Society. This includes Blackstone’s award winning social justice projects and volunteering activities.

“Not only is the Faculty of Law enthusiastic and excited about the introduction of the JD, but our experience so far is that the JD students themselves are enjoying the academic challenge and collegiality of the program.”
New Undergraduate and Postgraduates Courses

Following the introduction of UWA's New Courses 2012, undergraduate students can choose from one of five bachelor degrees: Arts, Commerce, Design, Philosophy or Science. In this degree, students can select a variety of majors, including two offered by the Faculty of Law.

**Law and Society**
Law and Society is offered as a major within the Bachelor of Arts, and a second major within all other disciplines. This major examines broad theoretical issues about the nature of law in society, and how the relationship plays out in particular fields of legal and social policy nationally and internationally. Students may study areas such as human rights, decisions about birth and death, crime and justice, indigenous rights, freedom of expression, and religion.

While ‘law and society’ work maintains a focus on legal principles, institutions and practices, it extends beyond a doctrinal, black letter approach, and instead seeks to understand how law operates as a social phenomenon. Exploring these issues at the undergraduate level is particularly important in a global world, and the Law and Society major instills this broader context of law into students who may pursue careers in law, journalism, environmental consulting, academia, or the policy and planning sectors. The Law and Society major is one possible gateway into the Juris Doctor, but does not itself involve the study of law with an outcome that produces legal practitioners.

**Business Law**
Law is a fundamental business discipline. It is vital that anyone engaged in the conduct of a business have a thorough understanding of important legal concepts, such as the duties of company directors, the basic principles of contract and torts law, and the nature and different types of property. For this reason, the Faculty of Law now offers a Business Law major that can be taken as a degree-specific major within the Bachelor of Commerce, or as a second major within UWA’s other new Bachelors degrees.

The Business Law major builds on the long-standing tradition of UWA partnering law with commerce in order to provide business graduates with fundamental legal knowledge and skills. Many of the units offered in the major count towards professional recognition, as they are required by the Tax Practitioners Board, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Chartered Accountants in Australia, and the National Institute of Accountants. Across the eight core units that comprise the major, students will study the law relating to areas such as contracts, torts, companies, taxation, and trade practices.

The Business Law major is ideal for those planning careers in a wide range of business areas, including professional accounting, business management, international trade, and industrial relations. In addition, it will give students who are contemplating the Juris Doctor program an invaluable ‘pre-law’ grounding in legal method and reasoning.

**Master of Mining and Energy Laws**
Commencing in 2014, this postgraduate Masters degree provides legal and non-legal professionals with the expertise to pursue careers in the mining and energy industries. Its units focus on the law applicable to areas of mining and energy, including petroleum law, mining law, and corporate governance for resource companies. Electives include international oil and gas law, environmental law, international environmental law, climate change and emissions trading, and oil and gas project development law.

This complements existing postgraduate courses on offer:
- Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice
- Graduate Diploma in Law
- Graduate Diploma in Energy Law
- Graduate Diploma in Commercial and Resources Law
- Master of Commercial and Resources Law
- Master of Laws (LLM)
- Master of Philosophy (Research) Resources Law

For more information, go to: law.uwa.edu.au/research/cmenrl
Since 2011, the UWA Faculty of Law has stepped up its focus on research. Our academics have received national and state grants, and continue to undertake world-class research in the Faculty.

National
In 2011, Dr Hilde Tubex received an ARC Future Fellowship (2012-2015) to work at the UWA Crime Research Centre on the project, ‘Reducing imprisonment rates in Australia: International experiences, marginal populations and a focus on the over-representation of Indigenous people’. The study explores the relevance of international experience in dealing with increasing prison numbers and its applicability to the Australian situation.

In 2012, Faculty of Law Dean Professor Erika Techera received an ARC Discovery research grant (2013-2015) to examine the options, opportunities and obstacles to improved international governance of sharks. Professor Techera will join forces with Professor Natalie Klein, Dean of Macquarie University Law School.

State
In 2012, Law School Professor Eileen Webb and Associate Professor Aviva Freilich received a Lotterywest grant to research ‘The Impact of Legislation on Housing Security for Seniors in Western Australia’. Roxanne will spend a year at New York University completing a Master of Laws (International Legal Studies), specialising in public international law and human rights law.

Leon Firios, a 2010 graduate of the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws with First Class Honours degrees, has been awarded a prestigious Frank Knox Memorial Fellowship to complete a Master of Laws at Harvard Law School, Boston, commencing August 2013. Since graduating, Leon has worked as an associate to WA Supreme Court Justice Ken Martin, a lawyer with Ashurst, has tutored and lectured UWA law students, and taught law on a voluntary basis to Burmese refugees in Thailand.

In 2013, we were once again reminded of the calibre of our Faculty of Law graduates, with success by current students and alumni ensuring that our name continues to impress on the world stage.

2013 Young Australian of the Year, Akram Azimi, is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Science at UWA. Akram has been recognised for his contribution to the broader community, in mentoring children from various backgrounds, working in the True Blue Dreaming social justice initiative with young Indigenous people from WA’s Kimberly region, and co-founding the student-run initiative I am the Other, which aims to share the nation’s Indigenous heritage with non-Indigenous Australians.

2013 UWA Law graduate Michael Sheldrick was a state finalist for the Young Australian of the Year 2013 and winner of the West Australian of the Year 2013 Youth Award. Michael was recognised for his role as a community activist who started campaigning against poverty. He now manages an international campaign against polio, as a global policy and advocacy manager with the Global Poverty Project.

Former Principal Associate to the WA Supreme Court Chief Justice Wayne Martin AC, and UWA 2011 Law graduate, Roxanne Moore, has been awarded a 2013 Fulbright Western Australia Scholarship to undertake legal research in the United States. Roxanne will spend a year at New York University completing a Master of Laws (International Legal Studies), specialising in public international law and human rights law.

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Using online polling in lectures

Assistant Professor Kate Offer, 
Faculty of Law

Inspired by Eric Mazur’s Peer Instruction method, I have been using on-line polling to conduct multi-choice conceptual quizzes during large lectures. Polling is an opportunity to test students’ understanding as we go along and to build in more opportunities for reflection, discussion with peers, application and consolidation of concepts.

Once a quiz is displayed, created on www.polleverywhere.com, students are given time to work through the questions with their neighbour and then submit an answer using their mobile phone. After a period of time, the results chart is displayed on screen with the correct answer highlighted. More time is then spent going through each answer, explaining why it was or was not correct.

Some of the benefits of polling include:
- immediate feedback for both students and the lecturer. Polling gives me an opportunity to uncover misunderstandings and correct them as they arise;
- ease of use;
- anonymity of responses. Many students do not want to contribute in class for fear of getting something wrong in front of their peers. Shy students, who may feel confident they know the answers but do not like speaking in front of others, can feel more comfortable participating; and
- opportunities to discuss the material and learn from each other.

Using online polling in class is enjoyable but more importantly, ‘value-adds’ by giving students a chance to test what they are learning as they go, creating, hopefully, a more meaningful, interactive and connected classroom experience.

Friends of UWA in the UK and Europe is pleased to announce the formation of UWA Law in the UK as a specialised UWA alumni group to further the interests of those involved in the law.

Are you practising Law in the UK? Did you study Law at UWA? Are you interested in becoming involved?

The aim of UWA Law in the UK is to encourage the interaction of alumni with a law background and a present involvement or interest in the legal profession, similar to the way UWA Business in the UK caters for those operating in the commercial world. So far, UWA Law in the UK has hosted two events, with special guest speakers Winthrop Professor Peter Handford, and Andrea Coomber, who is the Executive Director of the high profile human rights organisation, Justice.

UWA Law in the UK:
- conducts a programme of events built around distinguished speakers from the legal profession;
- retains close communications with the UWA Law School through interaction with visiting faculty members;
- facilitates networking for career and personal development; and
- provides professional support for current student activities in the UK and USA including the Jessup Moot.

If you would like to be part of this alumni group please email law@uwa.org.uk

Those joining UWA Law in the UK will be added to a mailing list and be advised of events and other activities.