

Inagural column for the NTU Law School

It may be that some of the many and distinguished readers of *Balance* have been wondering what has been happening at the “NTU” Law School recently. Well, this column is the answer to your needs, your opportunity to keep up to date with developments, and there have been plenty.

First, of course, the name change. NTU will be no more as of 1 January 2004, welcome CDU – Charles Darwin University. Although one may often be sceptical about “re-badging” the name change heralds more than just an opportunity to change the sign in front of Building 39. The new university is, of course, an amalgam of NTU and Centralian College (based in Alice Springs). For the Law School this means taking our courses to Alice for the first time with the enrolment of approximately 20 students (at last count) who will complete their studies without having to relocate to Darwin. This semester the Law School is offering 2 subjects in Alice, Legal Process and Torts A. Other subjects will be rolled out over the next couple of years.

But the changes don't stop there folks (hold the steak knives)! This semester the Law School is also offering its program to students enrolled externally for the first time. There has been good initial support for this initiative with about 25 students set to enrol in the 2 subjects offered this semester. Students are primarily from northern Australia, the only area where advertising has taken place to date. The delivery of these units will make extensive use of the university's “Learnline” webpages, where students will access not only text-based materials but also audio recordings of lectures and “powerpoint” slides, billboards and group discussion pages. External students will have the opportunity to participate in real-time audio and keyboard tutorial sessions.

The reality of higher education is that student numbers to a large extent dictate funding. The initiatives taken recently by the Law School under the leadership of Head of School Prof. Ned Aughterson look certain to succeed in achieving a significant lift in

enrolments, with consequent benefits to the School, our students and the legal community generally. Other exciting developments are also underway, including a re-launch of the Masters in Comparative Law. Further details in a subsequent column.

Briefly on other issues, the Law School would like to thank all of those practitioners who have contributed their time. The School has always depended upon the strong support of the profession and, with higher education funding unlikely to increase significantly any time soon, this will continue to be the case. Many people have made great contributions over a long period. Personally, I would like to thank Ian Morris and Michael Grant who generously donated their time to sit as moot court judges in the assessable moot program in Torts B in semester 1. The experience was a very valuable one for students and there has been much positive feedback.

In addition, thank you to the Law Society for the generous donation of two copies of Riley J's “Red Book” which were presented to the students achieving the highest mark in the moot program in each of Torts B and Contracts A. The Torts B moot prize was won by Anne Burns and the Contracts A prize by Elizabeth Farquhar.

On a sad note, the Law School has recently bid *adieu* to Prof. Jesse Wu who retired on 30 June 2003 after 17 years association with the institution and its predecessors. Prof. Wu has made an outstanding contribution to the Law School and the NT legal community and he will be sorely missed. Amongst many other achievements, Prof. Wu was Foundation Director of the Centre for Southeast Asian Law (1994-1999), which he helped establish. He is also

joint editor (since 1998) of the international journal, *LAWASIA Journal*, the journal of the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific. In addition he has published 12 books and numerous articles, his most recent book being *Malaysian Public Law* in 2002, which he co-authored with Prof. Hickling of the UK.

As many of you are aware, Prof. Wu is a leading legal scholar with an international reputation. His work will continue and he is currently working on a book about the Malaysian judiciary. Also in demand as a speaker, Prof. Wu delivered the 4th Prof. Ahmad Ibrahim Memorial Lecture at the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur on 12 July 2003. The lecture was entitled “Sacrificing Personal Freedom in the Name of National Security” and concerned the Malaysian security laws, a very topical issue after September 11, 2001. Prof. Wu will speak in Kuala Lumpur again on 10 September 2003 when he gives the keynote address at a conference organised by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission.

Fortunately, the Law School will continue its association with Prof. Wu. Although he now resides in Adelaide, he has been appointed Adjunct Professor of Law at NTU/CDU. He will return to Darwin (and the Law School) approximately once every 6 months. We look forward to that. For the moment however, we wish Jesse well in retirement and for the new challenges he is sure to take up. We hope that he finds some time to improve his golf with the new “space-age” putter he received as a parting gift!

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