

# Partners in learning

**D**r Belle Alderman and Trish Milne from the Centre for Library and Information Studies at the University of Canberra have just been awarded a University of Canberra Teaching Grant to implement a new model of internship called *Partners in learning: internships for professional education in library and information studies*.

Internships are a feature of many professional courses and a Field Placement unit has been on offer for many years. What makes *Partners in learning* different is that it is based on the premise that learning, particularly skill based learning, is developmental and requires a longer time frame than is normally available during the course of a semester.

*Partners in learning* runs over two semesters. Students commence with a two-week block in the break between semesters three and four of a full-time course structure. They will then attend their placement for one full day a week for semester four. This pattern will be repeated with another two-week block before semester five and one day a week for that semester. It has been placed at this point in the course structure to ensure that students have accumulated enough knowledge to profit from the experience.

While the entire librarianship course is relevant to the internship, two assessment items relating to the workplace will be undertaken, one in a unit within the student's chosen librarianship specialisation undertaken in semester four or five, thus enhancing their career aspirations, and another assessment item within the culminating unit for all undergraduate students, *Supervisory management*, undertaken in semester six. Assessment items will provide the opportunity for students to discuss and evaluate theory in the light of workplace practices thus drawing together the experiences of both tertiary and workplace learning environ-

ments. So the students' course of academic study and internship are mutually reinforcing and enriching, and enhanced professional maturity and competency is anticipated.

Models of good practice are an important aspect of professional development and the role of workplace supervisors is a very important part of *Partners in learning*. A two day training period will be provided for supervisors to ensure that all those involved with the internships have a shared vision for the project. One seminar each semester will bring supervisors together to discuss and evaluate the program and supporting visits will be made by the academic staff during the course of the internships. *Partners in learning* is very much a cooperative venture between the Library and Information Studies Program at the University and many libraries in the ACT including the Parliamentary Li-

brary, ACT Library Service, Australian Archives, the libraries of the Australian National University, the University of Canberra and the Australian Defence Force Academy as well as a number of special libraries. It is expected that 45 students will be involved with the initial *Partners in learning* program.

Anticipated outcomes are that it will produce a continuing exchange of ideas between educators, the information profession and industry to design the best teaching and learning practices; create synergy between students, educators, industry and the profession thus providing an education responsive to present and future needs; forge stronger links between tertiary education providers and industry, with potential for external funding; and facilitate cooperative research between educators and industry, thus maintaining both leading-edge educational and professional practices. ■

## University library restructures

**D**uring the last 12 months the University of Melbourne library has been going through a restructuring process which sets in place recommendations arising from *The review of library services* conducted by Professor Barry Sheehan.

A key feature of the new structure is the Planning Group which is responsible for coordinating the library's programs and supporting its quality process. It comprises the university librarian and four directors covering the areas of information services, information resources staffing, budget and strategic planning.

The library's committee structure has also been re-aligned to the strategic plan enabling expert groups to influence and progress major planning programs. Expert groups have been established in the areas of planning, public relations,

reader education, conservation, collection management, information technology, staff development and health and safety. While divisions retain traditional hierarchical responsibilities these 'matrix' groups develop policy and exchange information. One of the key current policies relates to maximising the skills of staff across the system through the encouragement of exchange of expertise, including staff rotation, cross-functional responsibilities and skill sharing.

The outcomes of the restructuring have included greater devolution of responsibility, greater opportunities for cross-functional activities, a less hierarchical structure, a greater emphasis on teamwork and a management structure which is more closely aligned to user requirements as determined by the strategic planning process. ■

# CPD is alive and well in WA

*Bobbie Bruce outlines the Western Australian approach to professional development*

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been recognised by the Association as a necessity for professionals to keep up to date in our changing environments.

The Western Australian Branch decided that a concerted effort was required to harness the many professional development activities forecast to take place in Perth in 1995, and have produced

a schedule of events for the year. General Councillor, Kerry Smith, called a meeting of as many interested parties as the Branch could think of, and the result was a four page list of events!

Heading the list for February was copyright, with the Internet, project management, technology and basic skills featuring throughout the year. We've also listed vari-

ous visitors to the state and other events.

You too can achieve cohesion in your continuing education programs. Call your players and providers together at the end of the year, use your networks to find out what else might be provided in your town, gather over a cup of coffee and biscuits and plan. You'll be amazed at the result. ■