

# 2017 AALL ACT REPORT

## 1 Membership Levels

As at August 2016 the ACT has 19 current AALL members, with a further 17 non-members on our mailing list. It is disappointing to see our membership decline from previous years and in 2018, we would like to see some of our non-members join the Association.

## 2 ACT highlights 2017

The ACT chapter of AALL had a quieter year in 2017. We lost one of our state representatives which impacted on our ability to organise and host events (see table 1 below). . Additionally there has been significant staff movement in some of our institutions. However, the events that we held were well attended and prompted some great collegial discussions and support.

One of the highlights of this year has been the addition of both University of Canberra and ANU College colleagues at our meetings. Being a small branch, many staff move across institutions and sectors so it is great to be able to stay in touch and continue to share experience and knowledge. Cross sector engagement is helpful to us all.

A number of ACT members are attending the AALL conference and presenting papers.

Finally, it is wonderful that Lesley Cioccarelli has been elected the new ACT representative. She will bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to our Branch meetings.

Tess Snowball, ACT State Representative.

Table 1: ACT events in 2016

Date/venue (host)	Participants	Events /agenda	Remarks
<b>30.03.2017</b> <b>CIT Campus,</b> <b>Bruce campus</b>	13 representing UNSW Canberra, ANU, UC, ACU, CIT	Measuring our success plus networking	We had a discussion about ways in which we measure and evaluate our success – particularly in the light of external threats.
<b>16.05. 2017</b> <b>UNSW</b> <b>Canberra</b>	15 representing UNSW Canberra, ANU, UC, ACU, CIT	Presenter Anne-Marie Singh: <b>Academic Advising: a critical element of student success</b>	Approaches to academic advising at UNSW Kensington, what works, what doesn't (and why); things they are hoping to try as well as any major roadblocks that they have dealt with/are anticipating in the future.
<b>28.10.2017</b> <b>ANU</b>	20 participants ANU, UNSW Canberra, ANU, ANU College, CIT, ACU	Network meeting and summary of presentations for AALL conference	At short notice we had a great turnout and had the chance to meet a number of new colleagues.

### 3 Reports from ACT intuitions

#### 3.1 Australian National University (ANU) (prepared by Tess Snowball, Manager)

This year our motto has been “baby steps”. We have patiently been further embedding ourselves into faculty and trying to change some of the deficit discourse at our university around English language and academic literacy. We have also patiently been moving more into the peer mentoring space. 2018 should see some results from this year’s work. ANU itself is undergoing huge changes with construction everywhere we look. This will mean a brand new home for us and see us finally collocated with the rest of Student Life in 2019.

- **Orientation Week** workshops were more popular than ever in 2017. We introduced new workshops specifically focused on English language proficiency.
- Our **one-to-one teaching** has continued to reach more individual students than previous years and students from different disciplines.
- We are pleased that even with a move to a 12-week semester, our **embedded teaching** has continued to be popular. Our closer ties to Colleges has meant that new opportunities have arisen – particularly in higher degree research.
- **Academic integrity** continues to be an area of focus. This year ANU signed on as a foundation member for an Epiguem academic integrity module. The plan is to make it mandatory for all new students. We are looking at how we can continue to support academic integrity in our online and face-to-face resources.
- In partnership with our student associations, we piloted English Conversation groups which were popular and we plan to expand the service in 2018
- This year we allocated an adviser to each residential Hall. This has meant much closer ties to the academic and pastoral teams. This helps us to have more influence over the integrity of the programs and provide support to mentors. As part of this, we have created a Moodle site with resources specifically for academic mentors.
- We also allocated an adviser to each College. Advisers have been attending Education Committee meetings and other relevant College meetings. This has greatly improved our knowledge of the current thinking and concerns of our academic colleagues. It has also help to raise our profile.

In sum, we are looking forward to seeing results and new opportunities arise from the forming of new and stronger relationships. We have some new projects ready to start in 2018, which promises to be an interesting year.

#### 3.2 University of Canberra (prepared by Gail Heinrich)

##### **Learning Advisor activities in 2016:**

Study Skills have had another productive year at UC in 2017 and continues to expand its reach to students through a range of face-to-face and online programs:

- Drop-in Study Help in the Library has expanded its hours to include a popular regular late Thursday afternoon session to cater for students seeking out-of-hours support. The numbers of students attending drop-ins with the Learning Advisors continues to increase.

- The drop-in service at the Ngunnawal Centre one day a week has also become a regular part of our learning support program, improving access to Study Skills services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Our Orientation programs in 2017 were very successful with our Study Skills Essentials and Get Online at UC sessions very well attended.
- Study Skills has also built a program of in-unit support across the faculties in their first year units, delivering Study Skills overviews and tailored research and assignment help sessions to approximately twenty units per semester. This has led to more awareness of Study Skills services in faculties, increased referrals from staff and increased usage of core services amongst students.
- The increased collaboration with faculties led to the launch of a new preparation program in 2017, Study Skills for Success. The program was designed in conjunction with the faculty Associate Deans of Education as well as needs identified by new students in the Student Readiness Survey conducted by Study Skills at the beginning of each semester. The full day program, run on the Saturday of Week 2 in Semesters 1 and 2, included an orientation to the online environment, time management, research, assignment writing and referencing strategies and the workshop approach proved popular with students, with satisfaction ratings of 100% for both iterations. 130 students attended the sessions in 2017.
- The online Study Help Moodle site has continued to be an essential resource for UC students seeking online support through over 200 interactive modules, animations and information resources. The team has been busy this year planning for the change in Learning Management System at UC in 2018 which has involved planning and creating the new Study Help site as well as reviewing the resources on the existing site in preparation for the change. Study Skills also continues to offer students online assignment writing feedback and tutoring through third party providers and successfully trialled an Australian provider in 2017. Evaluations of the services are currently being conducted.
- Study Skills' individual consultations have expanded in 2017, with referrals being opened up to academic staff to enable them to identify and refer at-risk students during the semester who may benefit from academic support. This is in addition to the consultations already offered by Learning Advisors to students referred for academic integrity issues as well as those from targeted equity groups including students with a learning disability, severe anxiety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- The peer learning service, formerly known as the Study Skills Rovers, has also expanded in 2017 to become a shared service including the Library Rovers. The newly formed team of Academic Skills and Knowledge (ASK) Advisors now provides a comprehensive front-facing service in the library, with all 30 team members trained to answer general queries in information, academic and digital literacy as well as library loans and shelving duties.
- Our Peer Assisted Learning Sessions (PALS) run by peer learning advisors remains a popular way for students to extend their content learning in large cohort first-year units. Over 30 units were supported by the workshop-based PALS program in 2017, with data showing that students who attend PALS sessions perform better in their units than non-attendees. Exam preparation sessions have also become a regular feature of the semester PALS program.
- The Maths and Statistics Help (MASH) drop-in centre, which became a part of Study Skills in Semester 2, 2016, has expanded its reach to students across 2017, offering general maths and stats support across Mondays to Fridays and has become an integral part of Study Skills' services.

- The Intensive English course, a four day program aimed at improving student's academic reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, ran four times in 2017, the increase was the result of high demand for the three programs delivered in 2016. Primarily attended by international students, the demand for this course has led us to continue the four iterations in 2018, before O-Week and in the break week (Week 8) of each semester.
- Study Skills workshops also ran again in 2017, this included: research, referencing, exam preparation, oral presentations, EndNote and the new Mahara (ePortfolio) workshop. The need for digital literacy workshops for students was realised with the high attendance rates at the EndNote and Mahara sessions.
- Study Skills also continues to manage the Academic Integrity Module (AIM) in which all students are automatically enrolled, we also deliver the academic sessions in the Australia Awards Introductory Academic Program and coordinate the Outstanding Scholars program.

As the year comes to a close, the Study Skills team is working to bring our current online sites into the new LMS, which will include Study Help, AIM and the newly acquired Consent Matters module as well as developing digital literacy guides for students for the new LMS and other new online programs being transitioned in the new Virtual Learning Environment at UC in 2018.

### 3.3 UNSW Canberra (prepared by Dr David Meacheam)

In 2016, the UNSW Canberra leadership took the decision to disestablish the existing Academic Language and Learning (ALL) unit. Dr Linda Devereux, Dr Maya Gunawardena and Dr Anne Isaac took redundancies in late 2016 and early 2017. A skeletal ALL service was maintained by Anne Kiley and Beth Barber throughout most of semester 1, 2017.

In July 2017, Dr Janise Farrell and Dr Erin Moore were engaged as continuing staff for the ALL service, with Dr David Meacheam, the Director of Academic Support Services, acting as a manager for both ALL and the Technology Enabled Learning Support Unit (TELS). We have a debt of gratitude to both Linda Devereux and Anne Kiley. Linda left in place extensive documentation to enable the new team to get established, which was well reinforced with advice and support from Anne Kiley.

As the time of the writing this report, we are still in the process of 'finding our feet', establishing the parameters of a new service. Janise and Erin are both engaged as professional, rather than academic staff. One of the implications of that engagement is that there is no requirement or expectation of research output. However, Erin and Janise are busy developing partnerships with academic staff at the campus with an intention to develop research output. At the instigation of the Associate Dean (Education), the ALL unit is currently undertaking interviews with 1<sup>st</sup> year students to gauge their satisfaction with their studies and to better understand their academic support needs. This study is longitudinal; we will interview all the students involved in the 2 to 3 subsequent years of their enrolment. The data generated will complement the swathe of data we can draw from the Australian Defence Force regular surveys of the experience of our cadets and midshipmen.

We are also gearing up for the 2018 intake of undergraduate students. A major focus is developing an English benchmarking quiz (EBQ), a process initiated by our former coordinators of learning and teaching development, Associate Professors Paul Tranter and Eleanor Hancock. This work is a continuation of the English skills benchmark testing undertaken by Linda, Anne and Maya. In 2018, the parallel testing of students' mathematical skills will be undertaken in computer labs, possibly with electronic invigilation. If possible, in 2019 we will also have students undertake the EBQ on PCs.

Meanwhile, we are focused on delivering advice and support to our undergraduate and postgraduate student populations. As always, getting the timing right in relation to undergraduate workshops is difficult, with the ADF strictly scheduling so much student time. Our plans for 2018 and beyond include integrating ALL workshops into ADF scheduled time and embedding workshops within individual courses. HDR demand for our service is consistently high, with a burgeoning international HDR population at the campus.

Janise is drawing upon her expertise in listening and pronunciation training to improve the oral/aural communication skills of our international HDR students. We are also planning to run a weekly conversation group, with the aim of both improving communication skills and reducing the isolation of our HDR students.

### Research Output

Cutler, A., & Farrell, J. (In press). Listening in first and second language. In *TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.

Farrell, J., & Dillon Savage, I. (2017). Student representation in large university courses: A model of student partnership. In L. N. Wood & Y. A. Breyer (Eds.), *Success in higher education: Transitions to, within and from university* (167-188).

Wilson, K., Kiley, A. M., Gunawardena, M., & Devereux, L. (2017). Taking a position in management. *Norwegian English for Academic Purposes Conference*. HiAO, Oslo, Norway.

### 3.4 Canberra Institute of Technology (prepared by Lesley Cioccarelli)

ALL services at Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) are provided by different departments, and across our two main campuses and three smaller centres.

#### 3.4.1 CIT Student Support

We have several staff working in Education Advising roles: three in Disability, plus a dedicated ASD Support Officer, one working with Migrant and Refugee student and another with International students. We work directly with students in one-to-one sessions and also run scheduled drop-in tutorials at the main campuses. We work closely with teaching staff in all programs to identify students potentially at risk, but also to develop teachers' skills in designing and delivering learning for all students, including classroom teaching practice and developing assessment tasks.

Student Support staff have also delivered workshops to CIT teachers undertaking the:

- *Support the development of adult language, literacy and numeracy skills unit in the Diploma of Vocational Education and Training*
- *Develop strategies to meet diverse learner needs unit in the Advanced Diploma of Adult Vocational Education*

And we are developing a module on *Universal Design for Learning* for delivery in workshops, blended and/or online.

In 2017, Student Support started co-ordinating dissemination of information about study and learning support options to students, which has made it easier to identify and refer to appropriate services when needed.

### 3.4.2 Collaboration with the CIT Student Association (CITSA)

Also in 2017, responsibility for the **Peer Tutoring program** was moved to the CIT Student Association (CITSA). CIT Student Support staff work closely with CITSA in determining whether students are eligible for subsidised support under our equity guidelines. CITSA and Student Support are also jointly running **Conversation Groups** for CALD students.

### 3.4.3 CIT Foundation Skills

Foundation Skills department provide a range of services, including: embedded support, especially in Apprenticeship programs; general academic support in scheduled drop-in tutorials; delivery of courses for vocational pathways - literacy, numeracy, basic computing, work preparation; and facilitating the assessment of Language, Literacy and Numeracy skills on entry. The increasing use of an on entry assessment is helping identify students that may need additional support, which enables teachers to work with students and Foundational Skills and/or Student Support staff to develop individual learning plans and/or modified programs.

### 3.4.4 CIT College Tutorial Support

Some CIT College departments run tutorial support sessions for specific areas/subjects. Some of these are delivered by subject teachers, others employing ESL or Foundation Skills teachers, depending on perceived need. Each teaching program has an International Student Pastoral Care, who are coordinated by the Pastoral Care manager working in CIT Student Support.

### 3.4.5 Third Party Services

CIT has now had *Studiosity* (formerly known as *YourTutor*) for just over one year. Reports received from the third party provider indicate that our tertiary students are the heaviest users (particularly the Bachelor of Business co-delivered with CSU) of the 24-hour writing feedback service. One issue is that the word count of many assessments tasks in VET courses is quite low, but *Studiosity* have a minimum charge. The real-time tutorial option appears to be most heavily used for students requiring support for mathematics skills.