



**The Higher Education research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA)** [www.herdsa.org.au](http://www.herdsa.org.au) is a scholarly society for people committed to the improvement of teaching and learning in higher education. It promotes the development of higher education policy, practice and the study of teaching and learning. HERDSA was established in 1972 and was a founding member of ICED. Membership averages approximately 800 (fluctuates with the size of the annual conference), predominantly drawn from Australia and New Zealand. Standard membership fee is currently \$160 annually.

An Executive committee (up to 15 members) is elected every two years. The current Executive ends their two-year term in June 2017. Only the position of President is elected as a specific position (elected in the alternate year to the rest of the Executive as President-elect to serve a one-year term before assuming the Presidency). Under the current arrangement there are four portfolios which focus on the main priorities of the society: *Publications, Networks, New Scholars in Learning and teaching*, and the *HERDSA Fellowship Scheme*. Executive members generally self-assign to a portfolio based on interest and expertise. The current executive is reviewing this structure with the potential of introducing further roles dedicated to specific management aspects of the Executive.

Administrative support is managed through an office in Sydney. In addition, there are four "Officers of HERDSA" who support the publications portfolio. The Executive meets three times each year in one-day face-to-face meetings in March, July (conference) and November. Allan Goody is the current President (two-year term ending July 2017) and has been re-elected to serve a third term (2017 – 2019). Allan is the HERDSA representative on ICED Council and is currently a Vice President of ICED.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Higher Education Research & Development (HERD)** is a leading scholarly journal on higher education teaching and learning research. HERD is published by Taylor & Francis and there are six issues annually. The transnational editorial team is led by Executive Editor Barbara Grant of The University of Auckland. The current Editorial team completes a very successful six year tenure at the end of 2016. A new Editorial team lead by co-executive editors Wendy Green (University of Tasmania) and Craig Whitsed (Murdoch University) begins a three year term beginning January 2017. We have negotiated a new contract with Taylor & Francis which has resulted in an increase to seven issues a year, better financial support for the editorial team and conference sponsorship which will allow us to offer three small grants to assist those in need to attend the conference.

The **HERDSA Guides** Series is a very successful outreach activity of the Society. HERDSA Guides provide practical ideas and information on a range of teaching and learning topics. There are more than twenty current titles in the catalogue. Written by experts in specific fields and subjected to peer-review, the Guides are grounded in evidence-based scholarship that supports good practice, enhancing the inherent practical nature of the Guides. We aim to produce two new Guides annually. Allan Goody is the HERDSA Guides Series Editor.

**HERDSA News** is published three times per year and offers a more informative space for members to share their insights, practices and to feature Society activities. Maureen Bell is the Editor of HERDSA News and has completed a renewal of the format and look of News.

**HERDSA Notices** is an open list to which anyone can subscribe. All past and current members are automatically on the list. The weekly email offers regular updates, news and publicises branch and other teaching and learning events. There are about 2500 subscribers to the list. It is not a discussion listserve but for dissemination of news and events. Anyone can submit a notice to the list (ICED member networks are welcome to publicise conferences and activities) which is moderated by Peter Kandlbinder.

**HERDSA Review of Higher Education** is HERDSA's online journal. It contains expert commentary on the latest developments in higher education research and development. The peer-reviewed articles are written by commissioned authors based on an annual survey of key issues in higher education. The articles describe how current issues are conceptualized within the literature and identify theories and practices that are shaping the outcomes of higher education, drawing out implications for policy, research and development. This online journal is free to download from the HERDSA website. The journal is edited by Peter Kandlbinder.

HERDSA also publishes **Occasional Publications** including in 2016 the TATAL (Talking about Teaching and Learning) workbook. The workbook supports workshops for academics on developing teaching philosophies.

## **NETWORKS**

There is a HERDSA branch in most Australian states plus New Zealand and Hong Kong. Branches facilitate activities for members in their regions. The annual HERDSA conference generally attracts between 300 and 400 delegates. The 2016 conference was held in Fremantle, Western Australia and the 2017 conference will be held in Sydney (27 – 30 June). Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have existed in HERDSA for many years but they are difficult to sustain. There are a number of SIGs in the early stages of development.

## **NEW SCHOLARS IN LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The new scholars program recognises scholars new to teaching, learning and research in higher education. HERDSA is offering support to these scholars through tailored programs, mentoring, networking, and the provision of resources. The New Scholars Portfolio is close to finishing the development of an online module on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

## **HERDSA FELLOWSHIP SCHEME**

The HERDSA Fellowship Scheme is a professional recognition and development scheme designed to recognise higher education teaching and the support of learning and teaching. Applicants develop a professional portfolio under the guidance of a mentor and the portfolios are assessed by a panel of assessors against a set of criteria. A challenge for the Scheme is the growing adoption of the HEA Fellowships in Australian universities. The next twelve months will provide a clearer picture of where the Fellowships fit into the Australian context of teaching recognition.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The Roger Landbeck Professional Development Fund awarded its first grant in 2016 to an early career academic from the University of the South Pacific. The aim of the Fund is to offer grants for professional development activities for colleagues from emerging networks or disadvantaged backgrounds. This initiative helps the current and incoming HERDSA Executive to progress two aims – supporting early career academics and reaching out to colleagues in neighbouring countries.

In 2016 we redesigned the webpage for more functionality

## **SUCCESS and CHALLENGES**

The conferences and publications continue to be successful as an avenue for members to disseminate their research and practice as well as raising revenue for the Society. Our journal, HERD, has grown and strength and reputation due to the current Editorial Team.

A challenge for many Australian members has been the abolition of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). The OLT funded fellowships grants for projects to enhance learning and teaching as well as the national teaching awards program (the awards program has survived and is administered by the Department of Education). The grants and fellowships were the main source of funding for teaching and learning enhancement and this has left a large gap in the sector. Ako Aotearoa, the NZ equivalent of the OLT is still functioning.

The closure of the OLT in Australia has also left a gap in the leadership of higher education Learning and teaching. This has led to further collaboration between a number of professional groups including HERDSA to fill that gap. This is still a work in progress.

The changing role of Educational Developers plus the need for professional development in the new skills required to undertake these roles continues to be a challenge. At the ICED Council meetings we seem to focus heavily on “identify(ing) another major issue related to the preparation and development of university teachers in your country”. Educational development has moved far beyond this aspect of our work (at least in Australia) and our discussions should have a broader focus.

The consequences of the budget restraint, constant restructuring, closure and resurrection of teaching and learning centres continue to be an issue. This is exemplified no better than on a national (Australia) level with the closing of the OLT with nothing to replace it.

Changing academic roles with an increase in teaching focused positions and the Expectation or requirement for SoTL output as a part of that role (often without time allocation or resources).

Dr Allan Goody, HERDSA President  
November 2016

## **Hot topics**

Need for more collaboration between teaching and learning focused societies to reduce duplication (and save precious resources) and a present more unified leadership in teaching and learning.

Broader focus of educational development and the skills needed to manage changing roles of educational developers.