



Melbourne College of Divinity

Postgraduate Research Newsletter

Spring 2011

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1. Introduction

In the winter edition of this newsletter, I noted that it felt as though the year was flying by. Now that we are into the footy finals (Go Carlton!), it really does feel as though the year is rapidly slipping by. Perhaps, though, that is also a reflection of how busy things have been. It has indeed been a very busy year, with the last few months being particularly full. But it has, on the whole, been full of very good things. Certainly, there has been much to celebrate at the MCD (more of which, below). I do hope that the middle part of this year has also been profitable for you, and that you look now to the rest of the year with hopeful anticipation.

2. Specialist University

As was reported in the autumn edition of this newsletter, the MCD last year submitted an application to the Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to become a University with a Specialised Title (Specialist University).

You will, I'm sure, know by now that that application has been successful. The VRQA has approved the MCD to operate as a University of Specialisation, subject to Victorian parliamentary ratification, as of 1 January 2012. Our new name will be *MCD University of Divinity*.

The decision to approve the MCD as a Specialist University was placed in the Government Gazette on 29 August, with that notice now sitting before both Houses of the Victorian Parliament for up to 18 sitting days, after which time it will become law. This is indeed a momentous and historic occasion, not just for the MCD but indeed for the nation's higher education sector. The MCD is set to become Australia's first ever specialist university, and will be the first new university to be established in Victoria since 1990. Perhaps not surprisingly, this move has already attracted media attention, and is likely to continue to do so as we move into this next phase of our history.

The change to the MCD's name and status will take on an increasing significance under the new regulatory framework, established by the Tertiary Education and Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). We also expect that this decision will secure the MCD's access to Commonwealth research funding, to which we have had access for the last ten years.

For you as students, however, there is likely to be little impact, other than the knowledge that your degrees are set to be conferred by a slightly different type of institution. No doubt, you will hear more of this in the near future.

For now, though, let me take this opportunity to thank you, the research students of the MCD. The VRQA assessment panel was strongly affirming of the quality of this institution's research, not least of all that done by our HDR students. So whether you have been aware of it or not, your research activity, and those of your HDR predecessors, have been vital in helping the MCD gain this approval to become the country's first ever university of specialisation.

3. Grants and Scholarships

The Grants and Scholarships Working Group met on 16 June, to allocate grants for faculty and HDR student conference travel. It awarded travel grants to three students. Congratulations to Sarah Hart, Meg Warner and Deborah Storie, each of whom was funded to attend and present papers at the SBL conference in San Francisco.

Please remember to keep in mind the possibility of presenting your work to national and international conferences—it is always a useful thing to do, and creates excellent opportunities to network with leading scholars in your field. There are, in fact, a number of conferences coming up, some of which are listed below.

Please be advised that the closing date for the 3rd and Final Round for 2011 is Friday 23 September.

Students who wish to apply for APA or IPRS scholarships should do so on the forms

available on the MCD website, and have those applications lodged by 25 November.

4. Forthcoming MCD Events and Research Dates for 2011-12

- 23 September: deadline for HDR Annual Report Forms.
- 27 September: 2nd Annual ACU-MCD Postgraduate Conference for Theology and Philosophy. This year, the conference will be held at the Centre for Theology and Ministry.
- 10 October: deadline for HREC applications for the October meeting. 10 October: *God and the New Atheism*. Day-conference with Prof. David Fergusson (New College, University of Edinburgh). For details, see <http://www.mcd.edu.au/files/media/Registration%20form%20-%20final.pdf>
- 13-14 January 2012: *Sacrifice in Life, Love and Literature: 2nd Annual Girard Conference*, St Mary's College, University of Melbourne For details and the Call for Papers, see www.australiangirardseminar.org
- 26-28 March 2012: The Society for the Study of Theology (UK) will be hosting a conference on the topic of The Holy Spirit. <http://www.theologysociety.org.uk/>
- 2-5 May 2012: *Creation, Conflict and Cosmos: A Conference on Romans 5-8*, celebrating Princeton Theological Seminary's 200th birthday. For further details, and the call for papers, see http://www.ptsem.edu/Seminary_Relations/RomansConference/default.aspx

Details of various other conferences can be found on the MCD homepage, under the heading 'Upcoming Events'.

5. Postgraduate Seminars

The next series of postgraduate research seminars is scheduled for the following dates:

- Monday 3 October, 5:30pm
- Thursday 20 October, 5:30pm

All HDR students are expected to present a paper at *at least one* seminar during the course of their candidature. Please contact the Director of Research if you wish to offer a paper on any of these dates.

6. MCD-ACU Conference

In 2010, the MCD joined with the Australian Catholic University, the Australian College of Theology, Charles Sturt University and the Sydney College of Divinity, to host an inaugural Postgraduate Conference in Theology and Philosophy. The conference was specifically designed for postgraduate research students across all participating institutions to share their work with fellow students with whom they would not normally meet.

Due to the success of that conference, it was agreed to hold another such conference this year. The Melbourne leg of the conference will be held at the Centre for Theology and Ministry (29 College Crescent, Parkville), on Tuesday 27 September. Ten of our MCD students will be presenting, along with a small number of ACU students.

You are warmly encouraged to attend, even if you will not be presenting a paper.

7. Essay Prize

The Society for the Study of Theology and the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* offer an annual essay prize—now entering its eighth year—in memory of Rev Prof. Colin Gunton.

The topic for the 2011 prize is: **‘The theology of providence’**. The closing date is 1 November.

As the prize celebrates Colin Gunton’s contribution to constructive Christian theology, essays should work within that broad area. Entry to the competition is restricted to current students and to those within three years of their doctoral graduation at the closing date. Entries will be judged on academic merit.

The winning author will be invited to the Society for the Study of Theology annual conference in 2012, where a presentation of the **prize of £200** will be made at the conference reception. The winning essay will be published in the *IJST*; other competition entries may also be considered for publication.

Further details including about submission format, can be found on the [IJST website](#).

8. Research Office Staffing

As previously advised by email, The Research Student Support Office, Dr Lindsay Hutchinson, has been on extended leave from the MCD since August.

Until further notice, please contact the Director of Research, Dr Mark Lindsay, with all questions regarding candidature management, including enrolment, scholarships, etc...

9. RTI Research Coordinators 2011

RTI (Recognised Teaching Institution)	Research Coordinator	Email address
Australian Lutheran College (ALC)	Rev Dr Jeff Silcock	Jeffrey.Silcock@alc.edu.au
Churches of Christ Theological College (CCTC)	Rev Dr Alan Niven*	aniven@cctc.edu.au
Catholic Theological College (CTC)	Rev Dr Shane Mackinlay	smackinlay@ctc.edu.au
ICSPF	Rev Dr Michael Smith	smithm@mira.net
United Faculty of Theology (UFT)	Dr Peter Sherlock	dean@uft.edu.au
Whitley College	Dr Mark Brett	mbrett@whitley.unimelb.edu.au
Yarra Theological Union (YTU)	Rev Dr Michael Kelly*	m.kelly@ytu.edu.au
Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD)	Dr Mark R. Lindsay	mlindsay@mcd.edu.au

- *Please note that Rev Dr Alan Niven, and Rev Dr Michael Kelly, will be on leave for second semester 2011. Rev Dr Merryl Blair (CCTC) and Rev Dr Ross Fishburn (YTU) are deputising for them respectively, for the remainder of 2011.*

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