Dear Colleagues and Friends

As another year comes to an end it is time not only to reflect on our achievements but also to look to the year ahead.

By all measures, whether it is in scholarly activity, research outcomes, grants or student achievements, 2013 has again been a brilliant year for the School. The year started with the School-Industry Research Forum, taking the School to the city for the day to link with industry partners and looking to synergies. In the months since, our research centres and hubs have been engaging with industry partners through various forums and workshops and through Cooperative Research Centres ... just a couple of these forums are mentioned in this short newsletter. We see this engagement as fundamental to the health and success of our School. As engineers ourselves, the importance we place on the movement of our research to practice cannot be overstated. It is fundamental to whom we are and what the School is about.

In December we saw the best of our 3rd and 4th year PhD students present their works at our annual Research Student Forum, this year in the foyer of AECOM. This not only provided an opportunity for industry friends to see what we have been doing over the past year but was also an important enabler for colleagues to search for cross-disciplinary opportunities and new ideas.

Another of our aims and themes for 2014 will be to further engage with industry partners through various forums and workshops and through Cooperative Research Centres ... just a couple of these forums are mentioned in this short newsletter. We see this engagement as fundamental to the health and success of our School. As engineers ourselves, the importance we place on the movement of our research to practice cannot be overstated. It is fundamental to whom we are and what the School is about.

In this newsletter you are introduced to the new members of our School team, including those in surveying and geospatial engineering (SAGE). We started the year with some uncertainty with regards the merging of SAGE into CVEN ... I am happy to report that the merger has happened seamlessly; with even closer links to our surveying colleagues, there are new industry and research opportunities that we are keen to exploit.

Over the course of the last months our marketing and IT staff have been drawing on all of their creative talents to build our new web pages ... I'd invite all to have a look around and see some of the fabulous work that is being done in our School. Lastly, on behalf of all of my colleagues, I wish all our partners, alumni and friends our best wishes for the coming holidays and the year ahead.

Professor Stephen Foster, HoS

Stellar Year

The School has had a stellar year for Australian Research Council (ARC) Grants announced in 2013, achieving its highest ever level of funding, winning a total of $4.28 Million in 4 Discovery, 5 Linkage and 1 Early Career Researcher Grant (DECRA).

‘This is another wonderful result for the School and our research staff - as well as our industry linkage partners - who are all to be congratulated.’ Professor Stephen Foster, Head of CVEN, said as he welcomed the news.

Our heartiest congratulations goes to the School academic and research staff involved in the recently announced successful ARC Discovery Projects and DECRA awards: Arnaud Castel, Wei Gao, Ian Gilbert, Fiona Johnson, Nasser Khalili, Yi Liu, Lucy Marshall, Yong-Lin Pi, Adrian Russell, Ashish Sharma, Huu-Tai Thai, Francis Tin-Loi, Ian Turner and Brian Uy. Projects include investigations into flood forecasting, the reduction and reuse of structural steel, the safety of large spatially curved – complex structures, vegetation biomass carbon records for Australia, and the system reliability of concrete-filled steel tubular frames.

Earlier in the year, Linkage Grants were awarded to School researchers Martin Anderson, Vinayak Dixit, Lauren Gardner, Rita Henderson, Taha Hossein Rashidi, Ashish Sharma, Richard Stuetz, David Waite and Travis Waller. The projects involve research into improvements in water quality, streamflow prediction, transport planning techniques and efficient car share systems.

UNSW Goldstar Grants were awarded for projects by A/Prof Mario Attard and Dr David Kellerman, as well as A/Prof Linlin Ge while Lauren Gardner was a co-CI on a Goldstar grant for a project administered by the UNSW School of Medicine.
Head of School, Professor Stephen Foster was recently elected as a Fellow of IEAust.

Through his research work in the area of reinforced and prestressed concrete structures and also in the writing of key texts in the same field, Stephen Foster has had direct involvement in the implementation of key changes to the 2009 Australian Concrete Structures Standard, AS3600. Internationally, he has engaged with the Federation of Structural Concrete (fib) that led to his works being incorporated into the fib 2010 Model Code. Professor Foster is a member of the editorial board for the Journal of Structural Concrete. He was a member of the Civil and Structural Panel, IEAust Sydney Division, from 2010 to 2012.

David Waite - Shaping the story

David Waite is an internationally recognised research leader in water quality issues – in particular in physico-chemical transformation of species in natural and engineered systems. He will be providing technical advice regarding the best research articles, critical reviews, and features for the journal, which aims to promote interdisciplinary understanding in the environmental field.

ES&T seeks to publish research papers that are particularly significant and original. The news and features section of ES&T presents objective reports and analyses of the major advances, trends, and challenges in environmental science, technology, and policy for a diverse professional audience. http://pubs.acs.org/page/esthtag/about.html.

The Malcolm Chaikin Prize for Research Excellence in Engineering

Dr Yi Liu from the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering has been awarded the Malcolm Chaikin Prize for the best PhD thesis in 2013 in Engineering. The prize carries with it a Medal and $10,000 in recognition for the excellence demonstrated in course of research by a doctoral student in any research area within the UNSW Faculty of Engineering.

Dr Liu completed his PhD degree in the School under the supervision of A/Prof Matthew McCabe and A/Prof Jason Evans from the Climate Change Research Centre, on the topic of “using satellite based microwave observations to characterize land surface hydrology”. He used remote sensing techniques to monitor elements of Earth’s hydrological cycle, at both the regional and global scale.

Yi is the second recipient of this prestigious award for the hydrology group, and the third for the School, all in the last 5 years. Given that this award represents the best PhD thesis across the entire Engineering faculty, it is an apt testimony to the quality of research that is being accomplished in the School.

VC Award for Excellence

Ms Pattie McLaughlin, Administrative Officer, was highly commended in the Vice Chancellor’s 2013 Excellence in Professional Services award. This is a well-deserved tribute to her exceptional contribution to the School over many years.

Associate Professor Stuart Khan is an active water researcher with a focus on chemical contaminants in drinking water, wastewater and recycled water, and has made significant contributions to Australian water quality guidelines. He is the leader of the Trace Chemical Contaminants research team at the UNSW Water Research Centre. He is a member of the Water Quality Advisory Committee (WQAC) to the National Health and Medical Research Council. During 2013, Stuart led the development of a major report on the direct supplementation of drinking waters from recycled water for the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and a report on the management of water produced from coal seam gas operations for the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.

Scientia Professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering David Waite has been invited to join the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) of the journal Environmental Science & Technology (ES&T) - the top-ranked environmental science and technology journal in the world.

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Associate Professor Adrian Russell completed his BE Civil (1997) and PhD (2004) - in the field of geotechnical engineering - at UNSW, and PGCert (2007) in Higher Education Science & Technology (ES&T) - the top-ranked environmental science and technology journal in the world.

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UNSW Civil Engineering honours student Bryce Neyland has won the 2013 Engineers Australia Rod McGee medal. The Medal recognises and encourages engineering students across the country to engage in career opportunities in public works engineering.

Working with Associate Professor Bill Peirson, Bryce’s fourth year honours thesis explored the topic of mitigating evaporation from farm dams. As Bryce noted, water security in rural areas is a national and recurring problem, where times of drought push producers to the economic and emotional brink. After graduation, Bryce will take up a graduate position with MWH in the irrigation and water resources team. His work will entail designing a large range of different irrigation systems and farm layouts for clients all over the country.

Joshua Van Der Heiden from Thiess presents the Year 4 Environmental Engineering Prize to Alice Walker at the School’s Annual Year 4 Dinner (see also p8).

Class of 1962 Full Time Civil Engineering and Surveying Alumni Prize

The full time Civil Engineers and Surveyors who graduated on the 4th May 1962 have remained close friends for over 50 years. The group have organised reunions every 2 or 3 years since graduation and have visited many places including Perth, Sydney, the Gold Coast and Kota Kinabalu in North Borneo where two of the Civil Engineers live.

At the 50th Golden Jubilee get together in 2012 the group decided to donate funds so that a prize could be awarded to an undergraduate Civil Engineering or Surveying student. They also wanted to encourage more females to study Civil Engineering or Surveying. As from 2014 a prize of $1,000 will be awarded to a female Civil Engineering or Surveying student moving from third to fourth year with the highest WAM (weighted average mark).

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Dr Bruce Harvey

Current position
Senior Lecturer, Surveying

Previous roles
Registered Surveyor; Postdoctoral position at CSIRO in the Division of Radiophysics doing Geodesy and Astrometry.

Professional goals
To be a good teacher.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Rowan Atkinson. About 20 years ago some of my students thought I looked like Mr Bean. I’ve put on weight since then!

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
When I first joined the civil school, at one of their morning teas I was told that after giving two-hour lectures the lecturers in civil got given a massage. I still haven’t got one, and I don’t know where they are done or by whom. Stirrers.

Dr Linlin Ge

Current position
Associate Professor and leader of the Geoscience and Earth Observing Systems (GEOS) group. Co-founder of Laboratory for Imaging of the Mining Environment (LIME).

Previous roles
NSW Chair Professor for Geospatial Engineering; NSW Scientist of the Year 2009 Award in the Physics, Earth Sciences, Chemistry and Astronomy Category.

Research interests
Satellite Remote Sensing and Applications; Near-real-time monitoring of natural disasters; Persistent scatterer radar interferometry to monitor long term ground displacement; Differential radar interferometry; Interferometric synthetic aperture radar for terrain mapping; Integration of InSAR, GPS and GIS; Remote sensing with satellite, airborne and UAV platforms; Remote sensing with multi-temporal imagery; Remote sensing with sub-pixel analysis.

Professional goals
To make satellite remote sensing more timely, accurate, affordable and widely applicable.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Rowan Atkinson. About 20 years ago some of my students thought I looked like Mr Bean. I’ve put on weight since then!

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I married my undergraduate classmate Jean Li. We have two talented children, Reyna Ge, 2010 Dux of the Sydney Girls High School, and George Ge, 2011 Captain of the Woollahra Public School.

Associate Professor Samsung Lim

Current position
Associate Professor, Geospatial Engineering

Previous roles
Associate Professor at Inha University, Incheon, South Korea.

Research interests
Improving the way we view, understand, design, plan, manage, analyse, interpret and extract spatio-temporal information.

Professional goals
Applying the geospatial information approach to real-world problems and help decision-making in the fields of asset/utility management, natural resources exploration, intelligent transportation, natural disaster and emergency management, and public health research.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Matt Damon for my junior years, and Robin Williams for (future) senior years.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I collaborate with archaeologists to identify and map artefacts using non-destructive geospatial information technology, and also work with medical professionals to explore associations between diseases and patients’ geographical contexts.

From 1 March 2013, the School of Surveying and Geospatial Engineering was integrated within CVEN. The reintegration of SAGE with CVEN brings together the related disciplines of surveying/geospatial and civil/environmental engineering and will facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and research activities relating to natural and engineered systems. We welcome the staff of SAGE to the School.
Professor Chris Rizos

Current position
Professor, Geodesy and Navigation

Previous roles
Graduated in 1980 with a PhD in Satellite Geodesy from UNSW; postdoc in Germany; research assistant, School of Surveying, UNSW; UNSW academic since 1987; President, International Association of Geodesy (IAG) (2011-2015).

Research interests
Positioning technology; geodetic infrastructure to facilitate precise positioning with respect to a stable International Terrestrial Reference Frame (ITRF).

Professional goals
To further Geodesy so that it can contribute even more to global change studies of the water cycle, atmospheric and oceanic circulation; tectonic effects; sea level rise; and ice sheet melting in response to climate change.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Anthony Hopkins - debonair, witty, charming, intelligent, with the appropriate gravitas.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I enjoy my career (nay, life) as a geodetic evangelist, and as the champion of the unique skills (and insight) of Surveyors.

Dr Craig Roberts

Current position
Senior Lecturer in Surveying/GPS/Geodesy

Previous roles
Private surveyor in Adelaide; Geodetic Engineer at UNAVCO, USA; Scientific assistant at the GeoForschungsZentrum, Germany; Completed PhD thesis on volcano monitoring using low-cost GPS networks in 2002; Lecturer at RMIT University in Melbourne.

Research interests
Datum modernisation and leveraging GNSS Continuously Operating Reference Station positioning infrastructure for practical application to surveying, geophysics and geospatial information.

Professional goals
To inspire future generations of Surveyors and Geospatial Engineers to broaden their thinking and develop innovative services and business opportunities using new terrestrial, aerial and satellite positioning technologies. To contribute to the development of reliable mathematical modeling and quality control procedures for geospatial mapping and navigation applications.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Matt Damon, but I’m better looking.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I climbed the Nose of El Capitan in Yosemite Valley in 1993 with a friend over 4.5 days.

Professor Jinling Wang

Current position
Associate Professor, Surveying and Geospatial Engineering

Previous roles
Director of Postgraduate Studies, Postgraduate Coordinator and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the old school of SAGE.

Research interests
Geospatial mapping and navigation with multi-sensor integration.

Professional goals
To contribute to the training of high quality graduates in the field of Surveying and Geospatial Engineering at both UG/PG levels to meet industrial needs. To contribute to the development of reliable mathematical modeling and quality control procedures for geospatial mapping and navigation applications.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Ang Lee. He will need to move to the front of the camera for this role.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I have a good instinct for gardening.

Dr Yincai Zhou

Current position
Professional Officer

Previous roles
Professional Officer at previous School of Surveying and Geospatial Engineering since 2003, providing IT support, teaching and research support, honours thesis supervision, surveying CAD teaching, survey camp supervision, tutorials, lab management and school administration.

Professional goals
To apply my skills in surveying, geospatial engineering and information technology to engineering teaching and research within the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. I have been applying digital close range photogrammetry technology to a number of civil engineering projects since 2012. I am also lecturing and supervising an honours thesis with an academic staff member.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Ang Lee. He will need to move to the front of the camera for this role.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I have a good instinct for gardening.
Mr Anthony Dever

Current position
Business Manager

Previous roles
My previous experience has been in the NSW Public Sector. I was Head of Finance at NSW Maritime prior to joining UNSW six months ago. NSW Maritime was a self-funded State Government Agency with the responsibility of ensuring safe and clean waterways for the boating community.

Professional goals
To establish a career at UNSW and do the best job I can through process improvement, good controls and ensuring audit requirements are satisfied.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Russell Crowe – he is very passionate about his work, he ensures that things are done right, he thinks outside the square and is a mad Souths supporter like me.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I have identical, mirror image twin boys.

Ms Kristy Guia

Current position
Student Services Officer.

Previous roles
Primary school teacher; Student Central and Admissions at UNSW.

Professional goals
Ideally I’d like to combine my qualifications as an educator along with my administration background and step into a senior administrative role.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
I’ve been told I look like Madonna’s daughter. I wouldn’t mind living that life!

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I’ve bungee jumped!

Ms Lekana Lim

Current position
Administrative Officer - Finance

Previous roles
Administrative Assistant, School of Humanities; Client Services Officer, Australian First Mortgage.

Professional goals
To further my career in the finance area.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Freida Pinto – from Slumdog Millionaire.

Dr Lucy Marshall

Current position
Senior Lecturer and Future Fellow, Water/Hydrology

Previous roles
Associate Professor of Watershed Analysis, Montana State University

Professional goals
To help train the next generation of hydrologic researchers and practitioners. I think this is a big challenge given how hydrology is evolving to become a much more interdisciplinary field across engineering, environmental science and earth science.

Research interests
Modeling hydrologic processes, understanding uncertainty in hydrologic systems, and water resources forecasting. The foundation of a lot of my research is Bayesian inference, so I conduct a lot of research related to model and data uncertainty.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
Woody Allen would be a good candidate.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
Since moving to Sydney, I have taken up running and am training for a half marathon next year!

Dr Taha Hossein Rashidi

Current position
Lecturer, Transport Engineering

Previous roles
Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Department of Civil Engineering in the University of Toronto, Canada.

Professional goals
Establishing and expanding my research group focusing on development of behavioural models for transport related decisions made by individuals.

Research interests
Behavioural choice modelling, travel demand modelling, land use modelling and freight transport.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story?
No idea… but probably Woody Allen would be a good candidate.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I am very passionate about playing soccer. I used to play in an amateur league up until last year.

FAREWELL

In 2013 the School farewelled Dr Chris Blenkinsopp. Chris has returned to England to take up a position as Lecturer in Civil Engineering Hydraulics in the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Bath.
Dr Xuesong (Johnson) Shen

Current position
Lecturer, Engineering Construction & Management

Previous roles
Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Alberta, Canada.

Research interests
Construction-surveying integration and automation, in particular tunnel boring machine (TBM) control and guidance; Intelligent resources management in construction; Sustainable development of urban underground space; Data-driven operations modeling and closed-loop project control.

Professional goals
To develop a world leading research program in construction automation and to train more HQPs at UNSW.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues
I picked my English name Johnson about 12 years ago when I was attending an English course in China. Later when I worked in Canada and Australia, I realised Johnson should be a last name – and why people often miscalled me Jonathan or Joseph. But most of my friends have got used to Johnson, so I will just keep it.

Dr Sawekchay (Ball) Tangaramvong

Current position
Lecturer in Structural Engineering

Previous roles
Structural Consulting Engineer, Taylor Thomson Whitting (TTW) Pty Ltd; Postdoctoral Fellow, UNSW; Lecturer, RMIT University.

Research interests
The development of high-performance, advanced computational tools for the safety and integrity assessment of large-scale structures, whilst considering the influences of inelastic/softening material properties, large deformations, contact mechanics and uncertainty.

Professional goals
I see myself as an educator and researcher who is keen to drive the great success to the School and students as a whole.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story? Russell Crowe as I love his performance as a Maximus in Gladiator.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
My nick name “Ball” came from my chubby body and naughty style when I was a little kid.

Professor Brian Uy

Current position
Professor of Structural Engineering and Director, Centre for Infrastructure Engineering & Safety, UNSW.

Previous roles
Foundation Director, Institute for Infrastructure Engineering, UWS; Head, School of Engineering (akin to Dean of Engineering, Built Environment and Design), UWS; Professor of Structural Engineering, UWS; Professor of Structural Engineering and Head of School of Civil, Mining and Environmental Engineering, University of Wollongong.

Research interests
Composite construction, steel structures, structural engineering, sustainable construction.

Professional goals
To strive for continuous improvement in whatever role I am fortunate to be working within. To help and mentor staff and students to assist them achieve their professional goals.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story? Not Russell Crowe (Note from designer, how about Karl Urban?)

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
I much prefer watching Australian or French films to Hollywood blockbusters.

Associate Professor Tommy Wiedmann

Current position
Associate Professor of Sustainability Research; Leader, Sustainability Assessment Program; Coordinator, Sustainable Engineering Initiative.

Previous roles
Coordinated several research projects funded by the European Commission and Australian and UK Governments, through affiliations with the CSIRO and Stockholm Environment Institute.

Research interests
How to achieve human wellbeing without increasing environmental impacts. I develop and apply environmental input-output analysis as part of a holistic approach to life cycle assessment, industrial ecology, and sustainable consumption and production research.

Professional goals
To create a hub of expertise in sustainability research at UNSW.

Who would play you in the Hollywood blockbuster of your life story? Nicolas Cage is born on the same day as I but I think my ‘life story’ would be better played by (the younger?) Robert de Niro.

Something about you that would surprise your colleagues?
My Saturdays are reserved for DIYing on the property: wood cutting, brush cutting, fence repairing, gardening etc.
Industry Focused Symposium

Around 110 geotechnical engineers, including 80 from industry and 30 from universities, visited UNSW on 10 October to take part in the CIES Symposium ‘Geotechnical Modelling: Analytical Solutions for Practising Engineers’, chaired by Associate Professor Adrian Russell.

The symposium showcased a range of analytical methods applied to give quick, low-cost information about geotechnical problems.

A central theme was the development of models for analyses, which capture important complexities while being simple enough to be solved analytically and implemented easily.

A take home message of the symposium was that there is always scope to use analytical methods in the problem solving process. Also, analytical methods and more advanced computational analyses are complementary.

Feedback from participants affirmed that the event had proved very useful for industry practitioners as well as for researchers.

For more information on the presentations visit the website (www.cies.unsw.edu.au/node/779). For more information on geotechnical modelling research at UNSW contact Symposium Chair Associate Professor Adrian Russell (a.russell@unsw.edu.au).

Research Student Forum

On December 11 the School hosted a Research Student Forum to showcase the practical and cutting edge research within the School. Held in AECOM’s foyer in the city, the evening provided a chance for industry colleagues to more closely interact with our research students and academic staff.

Approximately 30 posters summarizing the research outcomes of our postgraduate students across numerous fields including Water Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Geotechnical Engineering, Structural Engineering, Construction Management, Transport Engineering and Surveying and Geospatial Engineering were displayed – providing information on our emerging and exciting research, and inspiring lively discussions.

Year 4 Industry Prizes and Annual Dinner

Industry generously sponsored ten prizes for outstanding CVEN Year 4 students, presented at the annual Year 4 dinner celebrated on Nov 30.

Our grateful thanks go to AECOM, Arup, Aurecon, Brookfield Multiplex, Cardno, GHD, PSM, Thiess, and URS for their generous support of our students and the dinner.

David Pitronaci of Cardno presents the prize for Civil Engineering Practice to John Trieu.

Cleaning Up Hong Kong Harbour

Professor David Carmichael on a recent visit to Hong Kong took time to catch up with some of his MEngSc Leighton Asia students, and was given a site visit to the Leighton-LNS Joint Venture Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) at Cyberport on Hong Kong Island.

Leadership in Engineering

School alumnus Dr Mehreen Faruqi (MEngSc ’94, PhD 2000) has been awarded the prestigious Judy Raper Award for Leadership in Engineering. Mehreen, who is the newly appointed Greens Member of the NSW Legislative Council, has always been concerned with environmental issues – global and local.

Her PhD completed in 2000 explored issues in wastewater treatment – her topic being ‘Intensification of anaerobic lagoons for abattoir wastewater treatment and biogas recovery’. Mehreen delivered several groundbreaking new courses within the UNSW Masters of Environmental Management at UNSW, and developed a new course for delivery through the Masters of Business Technology (MBT) program at UNSW - in leadership in complex environments, focusing on sustainability aims.

The School congratulates Mehreen on her award. Proud as always of our hard working, high achieving, solutions-focused, Big Picture alumni!