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Real people..... real outcomes

UOW’s Shoalhaven Campus means many things to many people.

This booklet tells the stories of some of those people – real people whose stories show they have achieved real outcomes by their contact with the Campus.

Some have found exciting careers, some have learned new skills to help them do their jobs better, and some have found the special fulfilment that can only come from learning. Others have found the perfect environment to begin their tertiary education journey, or return to study.

All have one thing in common – an appreciation for the special environment of nurturing and learning that exists at UOW’s Shoalhaven Campus, and the opportunities that it provides.

These people – graduates, students and staff – generously gave their time to this project because they believe in the Campus and what is being achieved there. They were happy to tell their stories so that others might gain a greater appreciation of what the Shoalhaven Campus has to offer.

We thank them for their contribution and support.
Robbie Collins
Head, Shoalhaven Campus, University of Wollongong
Education is blossoming in the Shoalhaven

Education is blossoming in the Shoalhaven, and here at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus we are proud to be part of this community of learners.

The Campus is an important part of the University of Wollongong’s strategy to provide opportunities for tertiary education to the communities of the NSW South Coast.

As you will see from the personal stories contained in this booklet, our Campus serves an extraordinary variety of learning needs and provides a valuable service to the Shoalhaven. This is exactly as it should be, and I want to work closely with the community to ensure that we continue to meet its needs and expectations.

We are delighted to be able to offer students the opportunity to study in an environment that is accessible, cooperative and friendly. Flexibility is the key, because our students often must fit their studies around jobs and family responsibilities.

We are also flexible about entry, because we recognise that some people in our community may not have had the educational opportunities in the past to qualify them for University study. Once they are part of the Shoalhaven Campus, we aim to provide them with an intimate learning environment that will both nurture and inspire them.

Shoalhaven students achieve outstanding results, thanks to our small class sizes, high staff-student ratios and high-level technologies – and that extra bit of personal service that comes with a small campus.

Since I took up the position of Campus head in 2003, I have been greatly heartened by the warmth and enthusiasm the Shoalhaven community has for its University Campus. I sense a great eagerness in the community for this facility to reach even greater heights. We are well placed to work with the community to achieve this.

Our magnificent Campus, which we share with the Illawarra Institute of TAFE, is already an outstanding educational precinct in an inspired, and inspiring, location. But the best is still to come.

I look forward to working with the people of the Shoalhaven to build the future of education in the region.
Amy Dawes
Student
Bachelor of Business Administration (Hospitality)
Amy Dawes has her sights set firmly on working in a fine hotel in France – armed with her qualifications from the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus and TAFE NSW - Illawarra Institute’s Nowra Campus.

The 19-year-old is studying for her Bachelor of Business Administration (Hospitality), which is a dual qualification delivered jointly by UOW’s Faculty of Commerce and TAFE NSW - Illawarra Institute’s Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality.

And the former Bomaderry High student has fast-tracked her degree, completing extra subjects through Summer Sessions at UOW’s Wollongong Campus so that she can complete her three-year course one year early at the end of 2003, before heading overseas.

As part of the course, students must undertake work in the hospitality industry, and Amy works as a waitress at Nowra’s River Deli and the Woodbyne restaurant near Berry.

Amy became interested in the industry in Year 11 and 12 at Bomaderry High, when she took Hospitality and Tourism and Travel as her electives, but had no plans for University study when she completed her HSC in 2001.

“I wasn’t going to Uni because nothing interested me, then this course became available in Nowra,” she said. “It has worked out really well. It (UOW’s Shoalhaven Campus) is a good environment for learning. It feels like a little family, where it is more personal and by working in small groups you can really communicate with your tutors. And we use video conferencing with classes in other locations, so we get other students’ views as well.”

Amy said having the course available at the Shoalhaven Campus was the only way she could have combined her study and work.

“It is so convenient being able to study in Nowra. It is where I wanted to live and where my jobs are. I have a very heavy workload, with two days at TAFE and one and a half days at Uni, as well as study and work. I just couldn’t have done it if I’d had to travel to Wollongong to do the Uni work.”

But travel is definitely on Amy’s agenda for 2004. “I plan to go to Europe and work in top hotels in France for a few years to get experience,” she said. “Eventually I’d like to come home and open my own private retreat – a private hotel or really nice bed and breakfast place.”
Lee Carmichael
Graduate
Bachelor of Arts
(Community and Environment)
High-tech education gave Lee the edge

Lee Carmichael has no doubt that knowledge of video-conferencing and other e-world technologies that helped him complete his degree through the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus also helped him land his job.

UOW won its second Australian University of the Year award in 2000-2001 for the way it prepares students’ for the e-world, and nowhere is that more apparent than at the Shoalhaven Campus. Students make extensive use of video-conferencing to work with classes at other UOW Campuses for lectures, discussions and interactive presentations. They also use the University’s WebCT internet-based learning and communications programs, and are required to be highly computer-literate.

Lee works as a Development Planner with Shoalhaven City Council, evaluating the social and physical impacts of development proposals. He believes it wasn’t just his subject choices such as Human Geography, Rural Geography and Science and Technology in context of the Environment that appealed to his employer. “Local government is making more and more use of video-conferencing, email and the Internet, and Council was impressed with the experience I had with leading-edge technologies. I am sure that helped me get the job,” he said.

The 22-year-old from North Nowra enrolled at the Shoalhaven Campus straight from school, having completed his HSC at Nowra High in 1999.

“I weighed up the idea of going away to study like a lot of my friends were doing, but decided to study here for the first year. I figured I was getting the same education as they were, but they would find it tougher because they were living away from home.

“But I quickly realised this was a really good place to study. Because it is smaller, the Campus staff and tutors get to know you well and take an interest in you. They even get concerned if you miss a tutorial, so you have an experience that most university students never get.”

Lee did some of his electives at UOW’s Wollongong Campus, so experienced University life at large and small Campuses. On balance, he preferred the tight-knit environment at Shoalhaven. “And I liked the fact that I could always get access to a computer and a carpark here!” he said.

And as a Development Planner with the local council, Lee knows the region’s growth potential. “This Campus is just going to keep growing because there’s going to be more and more students who want to use it,” he said.
Phillip Jordan
Student
Bachelor of Commerce
Flexibility gave Phillip best of all worlds

When Phillip Jordan started his Bachelor of Commerce studies at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus, he only planned to stay a semester before switching to the main Campus in Wollongong. That plan didn’t last long.

Phillip really appreciates the flexibility of the small Campus, which allowed him to organise all his lectures and tutorials into two days. It meant Phillip, who lives 45 minutes drive north at Shellharbour, was able to reduce his travel and structure his week to include his studies, a part-time job at Jamberoo Recreation Park and playing representative basketball.

Phillip’s 2002 HSC results left him just short of a place at the Wollongong Campus, and he was offered the option of waiting for a place in the mid-year intake at Wollongong, or starting his degree at Shoalhaven. “I decided I’d do the first semester at Shoalhaven, and see how it went,” Phillip said. “And I really liked it. The small tutorial groups allow you to build a good one-on-one relationship with tutors, who are really interested in what you’re doing. The people are really friendly and the facilities are great, particularly the access to computers.

“I had the grades to move up to Wollongong in second semester, but decided to do another semester here. I was still able to fit everything into two days, so the flexibility was the real deciding factor (in staying).”

Phillip has friends attending the Wollongong Campus, and often goes there to use the library. “The two Campuses are very different, but I’m glad I’ve experienced Shoalhaven. I’d really recommend it as a good first-year option and as a stepping-stone to a big University, because you get more one-on-one attention which makes the transition from school a lot easier.

“And because of the flexibility I’d also recommend it to people who are having problems fitting everything in at Wollongong. And there are no external distractions at Shoalhaven. I just come in, do my work, and go home. It’s great.”

Phillip expects he will probably do his second year studies in Wollongong because it was closer to home and offers more options, but he would leave the Shoalhaven Campus with regret.
Christa Wood
Tutor
Faculty of Commerce
Christa Wood knows the University of Wollongong and its Shoalhaven Campus from both sides. She started as a student at UOW’s first Shoalhaven site at Berry in 1996, before completing her Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Strategic Human Resource Management degrees at the Wollongong Campus.

Now she is combining work for her PhD with tutoring in Finance, Accounting and Human Resource Management at both the Shoalhaven and Wollongong Campuses.

Christa says the main difference in teaching at the two Campuses is the more intimate atmosphere with fewer students at Shoalhaven. She believes there is a real advantage for students in the close inter-action and personal attention they receive.

“You get to know your students well at Shoalhaven,” she said. “I have around 8-10 in a tutorial, and twice that number in Wollongong. Small groups are especially good in business subjects and Financial Accounting. Students have to have a fair bit of input into the class discussions, and there is nowhere for them to hide. Everyone is compelled to contribute.”

She said there could be disadvantages for students in smaller groups that lacked the variety of bigger groups, where having more people brought different perspectives to problem-solving and discussions. “That’s where video-conferencing with groups at other Campuses comes in handy, to get the numbers up for really meaningful discussions,” she said.

Christa’s students participate in lectures and inter-active presentations via video-conferences with students at UOW’s other South Coast Campuses at Batemans Bay and Bega, and the main Campus in Wollongong.
Joy Sharpe
Postgraduate student
Master of Management
Local Campus just the job for busy people

Joy Sharpe knows she wouldn’t be studying for her Master of Management degree if she couldn’t do it in the Shoalhaven.

The mother of three combines the demands of family life on a rural retreat at West Cambewarra with study and her busy job as one of the managers of the South Eastern Community College, which provides vocational education across south-eastern NSW.

Joy, who already has a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education and Graduate Diploma in Education Studies, said she was drawn to the University of Wollongong’s Masters degree but could only fit it in to her schedule when it was offered at the Shoalhaven Campus for the first time in 2003.

“I could only do this course because it was close to home. I simply wouldn’t have the time if I had to travel to Wollongong for lectures,” Joy said.

“And it is well structured for busy people. We do a lot of lectures and tutorials between 7.30am and 11am so the people in our group tend to come in, attend classes, then dash off to work.”

The first postgraduate course offered at the Shoalhaven Campus is designed to give local business people the opportunity to acquire high-level management skills, with subjects especially chosen to be of maximum benefit to South Coast businesses. Subjects include Project Management, Supply Chain Management, Financial Management and Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Joy said the Shoalhaven students were getting access to the same quality academic staff as their Wollongong counterparts. “Our Supply Chain Management Professor wrote the text book, so we’re definitely not losing anything in the quality of the academic staff, who come down from the Wollongong Campus for our lectures and tutorials. It’s really valuable to have that face to face contact,” she said.
Alex Arnold
Graduate
Bachelor of Arts
(Community and Environment)
Late start to study good news for Alex

Shoalhaven journalist Alex Arnold knew he wasn’t ready for the challenges of University study when he finished school at Bomaderry High in 1993, so he headed off to see the world.

Five years later – having travelled the world and worked in a variety of jobs from bars to the mailroom of the famous English department store chain ‘Marks & Spencers’ – Alex returned home to Berry.

He’d learned a lot on his travels, but no more important lesson than that it was time to commit himself to study. Alex spent 1999 doing the Tertiary Preparation Certificate at Nowra TAFE, and performed so well that he earned a Mature Age Student Scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus in 2000.

Now Alex is working his dream job – as a journalist with the South Coast Register, Australia’s Newspaper of the Year in its category for the last three years.

“I gained a lot of life experience while I was away, but most of all I learned what hard work and determination can do – putting your head down and completing things,” said Alex, who admitted he probably wouldn’t have had the determination to do well at University if he gone there straight from school.

But starting as a Mature Age student was something entirely different. “The Tertiary Preparation Certificate at TAFE was a really good course, and prepared me well for Uni,” he said. “And I had enough of working in pubs and mailrooms, so I had the determination to see it (the degree) through.”

Alex enjoyed studying in the close, tight-knit environment of the Shoalhaven Campus and said the small group of students in his year had stuck together and helped each other. But the biggest bonus was the opportunity to do work experience at the South Coast Register, which led to him landing a job there.

“By staying here in the Shoalhaven to study I was able to get some work experience at the Register. That led to part-time work, and now I’ve got this fantastic job,” he said.

“A good thing about the degree was that quite a few subjects related to the local area which has helped me in my newspaper work. For example in Sociology we were able to do our research in the local community, so there was a good cross-over between work and study.”
Claudia Symonds

Graduate
Bachelor of Business Administration
Claudia pleased she took up the challenge

Back in 1997 a newspaper advertisement caught Claudia Symonds’ eye, posing the question: Are you over 25 and looking for a challenge?

Claudia figured that she fitted the bill perfectly. She was 40 at the time, and liked the sound of the challenge that the advertisement offered – studying at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus.

“I had done well at high school (in Sydney), but couldn’t make my mind up about going to Uni, so had joined the Public Service instead and worked there until I had a family,” said Claudia.

But she had never abandoned the idea of University study, and that advertisement ignited the spark that had lain dormant for years. Claudia enrolled as a part-time student at the old Berry Campus, and hasn’t looked back.

She graduated with flying colours in 2003, and now applies the skills she learned in her degree administering her husband’s building business, and in her part-time role as Bursar and Treasurer at the Jervis Bay Christian Community School.

“I’ve been able to apply a lot of the management and marketing I learned to my work at the school and with the building business, and it has also helped with financial projections and many other aspects of accounting,” she said.

The decision to return to study as a Mature Age student had been an extremely positive experience.

“The Shoalhaven Campus works well for Mature Age students. It is flexible and I was able to make my studies fit in well with family life and work commitments. I’ve met lots of new friends amongst the students and staff.

It really is a big asset for the community,” said Claudia, who is encouraging her son to consider study there when he finishes school.
David Roberts
Student
Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology
Shoalhaven Campus a stepping stone for David

For David Roberts, the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus has been a one-year wonder – and that’s exactly as he planned it.

The 18-year-old from Ulladulla knew from the start he’d just be at the Shoalhaven Campus for the first year of his Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology degree in 2003. He’ll do his second year subjects at UOW’s main Campus in Wollongong in 2004.

For David, the Shoalhaven Campus provided the perfect transition from school to University – allowing him to live at home while adjusting to the demands of tertiary study.

“I didn’t want to leave home straight after school, so being able to do this degree here gave me the option of staying home for the first year while studying and learning about Uni life,” he said. “It’s been a good stepping stone, and I’ll be ready to move to Wollongong next year.”

David makes the 50-minute journey from Ulladulla to Nowra four times a week, and has enjoyed the learning environment at the Shoalhaven Campus. “It’s been great here – really relaxed and friendly. You get really good support from the tutors, especially in the computer-related subjects where there is a really good teacher-student ratio and plenty of computers.”

David said as UOW had won its second Australian University of the Year (in 2000-2001) for the strength of its on-line learning, he was expecting it to be of a high standard and was not disappointed.

He enjoys the weekly video-conferencing with students and academics at other UOW Campuses, and the regular quizzes on UOW’s on-line learning system. “We do the quizzes on WebCT as part of our assessment and they are really helpful for revising what you’ve done,” he said.

As he approaches the end of his first year, he feels ready for the challenges of the main Campus and is considering broadening his degree to a Bachelor of Computer Science.

“I’ve gone pretty well this year, in fact better than I expected. Shoalhaven has been a good experience, and now I am looking forward to what the Wollongong Campus has to offer.”
Fran Tyler
Mature Age Student
Bachelor of Arts (Community & Environment)
Study gives Fran sense of fulfilment

Fran Tyler is finally studying at University – after convincing herself for almost 30 years that it wasn’t for her.

“I was deluding myself. I see that now,” said the 48-year-old from Bomaderry. “I should have done it (enrol at University) years ago.”

Fran grew up in Sydney, the youngest of seven children. Her older brothers and sisters all went to University, but Fran convinced herself it wasn’t for her. “I used to go to Sydney University with my older sister who was studying there, and was struck by the enormity of the place. I saw what they were going through – the stress and the long hours of study – and decided it wasn’t for me.”

Fran joined the Public Service, had a family and moved to the Shoalhaven. She spent a few years studying fashion at Bomaderry TAFE for personal interest, but didn’t consider more serious study.

However, a chance meeting in 2002 opened the mother-of-four’s eyes to the possibility of finally starting a University degree. “I was unhappy working in the private sector, and felt unfulfilled in my job,” she said. “I was speaking to one of the people from the Shoalhaven Campus at Christmas time, and he opened my eyes to what was available here.”

Fran visited the campus, met the staff and the rest, as they say, is history.

“I thought: Why not? It’s here, so I enrolled,” she said. “I was surprised at the relative ease with which I could enrol. They looked at a transcript from the TAFE course I’d done, and seemed to think I had the stamina for study.”

She is certain she would not have contemplated starting a University degree at this stage of her life had it not been so conveniently located. Having a Campus in Nowra fitted well with her family responsibilities.

And the verdict? “It’s wonderful. I have really embraced the whole process of adult learning. It is so different from what I remember at school. It’s an open environment where everyone contributes and where it is all very positive and encouraging.”

Fran has one piece of advice for anyone pondering adult learning. “Don’t delay. Enrol today!” she said, emphatically.
Mark King

Student
Bachelor of Commerce
(Accounting)
Education is empowerment!

Mark King’s a proud role model for his family, friends and his people. Mark originates from Mt Isa in outback Queensland and now lives in the Jervis Bay Region with his wife Angela and son Jiah. He knows the power of education and hopes that his studies at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus will inspire other indigenous people to follow suit.

Mark has returned to University to study for his Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) degree at the Shoalhaven Campus after working for several years in government and private organisations in Canberra, South Australia and the Northern Territory. His goals and aspirations are to become a successful Chartered Accountant. This will place him in the best position possible, enabling him to assist indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

“Education is empowerment – not power over someone else – but power over yourself… it gives you the ability and knowledge to choose where you want to go in your life,” Mark said.

“The Shoalhaven Campus is a fantastic University campus where you get to meet wonderful people who all want to help you. The bush setting, small class sizes, low student-teacher ratios, delicious food at the cafeteria, great access to library and computer facilities, and overall the relaxed atmosphere at the Shoalhaven Campus are just the recipe for a successful and enjoyable time at University.”
Lisa Evans
Graduate
Bachelor of Commerce
(Management)
Degree helped Lisa’s career take off

Lisa Evans loves her job in the high-powered and exciting world of the Australia’s defence forces.

Lisa is the Personal Assistant to Commodore Geoff Ledger, Commander of the Royal Australian Navy Aviation Group based at HMAS Albatross in Nowra.

And she believes she wouldn’t be able to do her job, indeed wouldn’t have got it in the first place, without the training she received and the skills she developed doing her Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus.

“My role is a very dynamic one, and I just wouldn’t be equipped for it without that education,” Lisa said. “My work is primarily managerial based, but I also rely on the accounting, marketing and communication skills I learned at University”.

The 26-year-old from Cambewarra finished school at Bomaderry High in 1995 and deferred her University studies, spending a year working in retail “to let my brain relax and earn some money”.

She enrolled at the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus (then located at Berry) in 1997, and after two years full-time study, spread her remaining subjects over three semesters, working part-time at Shoalhaven City Council in the final semester.

Lisa completed her degree at the new Campus at Nowra, and described the Shoalhaven Campus learning environment as “brilliant”.

“I think it is working really well as a University. I enjoyed the smaller, intimate groups, and having lecturers who got to know us on a personal level,” she said.
Shoalhaven studies add up for accountancy business

The team at Nowra accounting business Financial Dynamics know how to add up – and their figures show just how valuable the University of Wollongong’s Shoalhaven Campus is to their business.

Nine of Financial Dynamics’ 12 accountants are either UOW graduates or current students. However UOW-trained accountants Darren Wearne and Josh Rosskelly say the value of the Campus to the firm’s operation and the wider Shoalhaven business community was more significant than simply providing Bachelor of Commerce degrees in Accounting.

It’s helping prevent the brain-drain of talented young people leaving the Shoalhaven, and providing a steady stream of accountants for a district that might otherwise struggle to attract trained professionals.

“The Campus is obviously a great resource on our doorstep,” said Josh. “But the main thing is that it is good for a small town like Nowra to be able to offer this training in our community. Experience shows that if school-leavers go away to Sydney to study, chances are they won’t come back.

“Being able to offer Accountancy degrees in Nowra means we don’t lose young people to Sydney.”

Josh, who completed his Higher School Certificate at Nowra High in 1995, combined work with part-time study at the Shoalhaven Campus to complete his degree. “Practical experience counts so much in accounting, so it was great to be able to combine work for accountants with study – something I probably couldn’t have done if I had to go away to study.”

The firm works closely with the Shoalhaven Campus, by giving accountancy students the opportunity of work experience. He said there were plans to expand the Accountancy undergraduate program to provide more structured work experience which would give students a big advantage when they entered the workforce.
Courses available at Shoalhaven Campus

Arts
■ Bachelor of Arts (Community and Environment)

Commerce
■ Bachelor of Business Administration
■ Bachelor of Business Administration (Hospitality)
■ Bachelor of Commerce
■ Bachelor of Commerce (Accountancy)
■ Master of Management

Informatics
■ Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology
■ Bachelor of Internet Science and Technology (Internet Commerce)

The University of Wollongong is constantly reviewing courses offered at our satellite Campuses, in order to best serve the communities in which they are situated. For example, there are plans to introduce a Graduate Diploma of Education at Shoalhaven Campus in 2005.
University of Wollongong

Shoalhaven Campus

The University Building
George Evans Drive
West Nowra

Postal Address:
Shoalhaven Campus
The University of Wollongong
P.O. Box 5080
Nowra Distribution Centre
2541 NSW Australia

Phone: (02) 4448 0888

Fax: (02) 4448 0889

Web: http://shoalhaven.uow.edu.au