WATTLE
WOLLONGONG ACADEMY FOR TERTIARY TEACHING & LEARNING EXCELLENCE

UOW AUSTRALIA

Image: UOW HEA Senior Fellows, June/July 2019

WATTLE Annual Report 2019

WATTLE Profile

The Wollongong Academy for Tertiary Teaching & Learning Excellence (WATTLE) is a leadership community dedicated to providing space for teaching and learning recognition, development, passion and dialogue. WATTLE aims to create a community of practice where a diversity of expertise can be recognised and utilised to further teaching and learning locally, nationally and internationally.

Under the guidance of the then DVC(E) and LTC Director, the WATTLE Academy was established in May 2014 with an initial induction of 60 UOW staff members, who had received recognition for excellence in teaching and learning. With the closure of the government's Office for Teaching and Learning in June 2016, the need for institutions to deeply embed an Academy into their structure became more of an imperative. In August 2016, a new UOW WATTLE Executive Committee model was formed with the objective of galvanising the Academy and reengaging with the T&L community.

Since then, the Academy has grown to its current membership of over 300 Principal Fellows, Senior Fellows, Fellows and Associate Fellows committed to enhancing the learning experience of all our students. Every member of staff, whether they are teaching, research or professional; employed as casual, part-time or continuing can become a member of this Academy.

Purpose

The broad purpose of the Academy is to: Promote excellence and leadership in teaching and learning at the University of Wollongong (UOW). WATTLE's key objectives are:

1. Building a higher education-focused community of expertise, scholarship and research to lead discussion, collaboration and innovation in University teaching and learning, within and outside of the University of Wollongong.
2. Building networks of knowledge fostering national and international relationships with respect to teaching and learning.
3. Increasing UOW's national and international reputation with respect to teaching and learning.

Links to UOW strategic plan

Under the current strategic plan, WATTLE addresses Goal (3); Transforming the Workplace: Investing in our Staff…, and the UOW Core Strategy Education (2016-2020) priority to; Further develop staff culture to recognise excellence in teaching and academic practice.

WATTLE aligns with the following aspirations of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (Consultation Draft – Aug 2019): UOW Values of Intellectual Openness; Excellence and Dedication; Empowerment and

Academic Freedom; and Recognition and Performance. WATTLE aligns with Goal 1: Empowering Students for their future, specifically Goal 1.5 Promote and reward teaching excellence.

We will support ongoing staff development through proactive communities of practice, and enhance career progression opportunities for teaching excellent academics. This in turn supports the Strategic Enablers of People and Culture.

A Word from the Chair – Tracey Kuit

The year 2019 has been a very exciting time for WATTLE with much change. We excitedly welcomed eight WATTLE members as Senior HEA Fellows of Advance HE, joining an already illustrious group of colleagues across UOW. Additionally, we continued our commitment to creating a collegial space where WATTLE members can propose events and speakers at UOW. In 2019, we hosted nine events where we were able to connect with our colleagues, share, and learn from experts nationally and internationally. We continue to welcome ideas from our WATTLE members in 2020. In 2019, we supported T&L scholars to disseminate good practice both nationally and internationally through conference funding.

Our WATTLE Hot Topic Group continued their great work in 2019, organising showcases and networking events, connecting with experts nationally and internationally to share practice and promote dialogue, which can be seen in this report. Many of the hot topic group leaders continue to be recognized within UOW having taken up additional leadership roles on central committees. I congratulate and thank all Hot Topic Group leaders on behalf of the WATTLE community for their continued efforts in 2019 and look forward to a review of the HTG model in 2020.

During 2019, there was much change to our UOW L&T leadership, as well as the membership of the WATTLE Executive and Hot Topic Groups. WATTLE wishes to thank the Senior DVC Professor Joe Chicharo for his support of WATTLE and welcomes the continuation of WATTLE under the leadership of the DVC Education Professor Theo Farrell. WATTLE thanks the Hot Topic Group leaders Dr Pranit Anand (Transforming Assessments) and Ms Natalie Cutler (Students as Partners) for their efforts and wishes them both all the best. We also wish to recognize the outstanding contributions of our outgoing Executive members – Dr Alisa Percy and Dr Kathryn Harden-Thew (LTC representatives) and our outgoing Chair Professor Sara O'Shea (SOC). Their efforts to support and lead WATTLE were exemplary and we wish them all the very best as they pursue new and exciting opportunities. In 2020, Tracey Kuit (Chair), Belinda Gibbons (Deputy Chair), Montse Ros, and Ann Rogerson look forward to welcoming new members to the WATTLE Executive.

In 2019, WATTLE's administration support moved from the School of Education to LTC, where it is better aligned to the current Executive structure. We continue to be supported by a very committed team. We wish to thank Melinda and her team in the School of Education, along with Brondalie, Caroline, Erin and Tanya from LTC.

WATTLE continues to be an Academy run by, and for its members. We thank the WATTLE membership for its ongoing dedication to L&T at UOW. We look forward to welcoming new members and connecting with you all in 2020. We welcome your input and involvement in 2020 as we continue in the strive for Excellence.

This report details our activities within our key objectives. We look forward to continuing this work in 2020.

A/Professor Tracey Kuit
Chair WATTLE Committee

1. Building a higher education-focused community of expertise, scholarship and research

HEA Senior Fellowships

As part of WATTLE's ongoing commitment to UOW staff teaching and learning professional development, in 2018-2019 WATTLE offered a number of fully funded places for teaching staff to undertake the Advance HE (formerly HEA) Fellowship (at either Fellowship or Senior Fellowship level).

Advance HE Fellowship is an international recognition of a commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education and demonstrates that your practice is aligned with UOW's CPD Framework (also UK Professional Standards Framework [UKPSF]).

In 2019, eight HEA Senior Fellowships were awarded. All awardees were mentored by WATTLE members with Advance HE Fellowships.

Image: WATTLE Advance HE Senior Fellows and their mentors.

Top: Dr Kathryn Harden-Thew (LTC; mentor), Dr Sanja Pupovac (BUS), A/Prof. Danielle Skropeta (SMAH), A/Prof. Tracey Kuit (SMAH), Dr Belinda Gibbons (BUS), Dr Bonnie Dean (LTC/SMAH; mentor), A/Prof. Ann Rogerson (BUS). Bottom: Mrs Lorraine Fields (SMAH), Dr Lynnaire Sheridan (BUS), Dr Michelle Eady (SOC; mentor), A/Prof. Troy Heffernan (BUS; mentor), Dr Lisa Thomas (SOC; mentor) and A/Prof. Kylie Mansfield (SMAH).

Disseminating Good Practice

As part of WATTLE's ongoing commitment to UOW staff, a competitive call for conference funding support saw five colleagues present their work at L&T conferences from Canberra to Atlanta.

2. Building networks of knowledge fostering national and international relationships

Hybrid Learning@UOW

The theme of the **2019 WATTLE Forum** was **Hybrid Learning@UOW**.

The forum featured a keynote by **Assoc Prof Margaret Bearman**, *Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University*, titled; **'Reimagining university education in a digital world'.**

The forum was attended by over 70 UOW teaching and learning enthusiasts.

"*Good speakers, particularly the Keynote speaker, and the student panel. A lovely friendly vibe with the group as well*" (Forum attendee 2019)

The keynote presentation was followed by a student panel on Hybrid Learning@UOW and parallel presentations from 10 of our UOW colleagues showcasing exemplary work in the area of Hybrid Learning.

Image: WATTLE members attending forum.

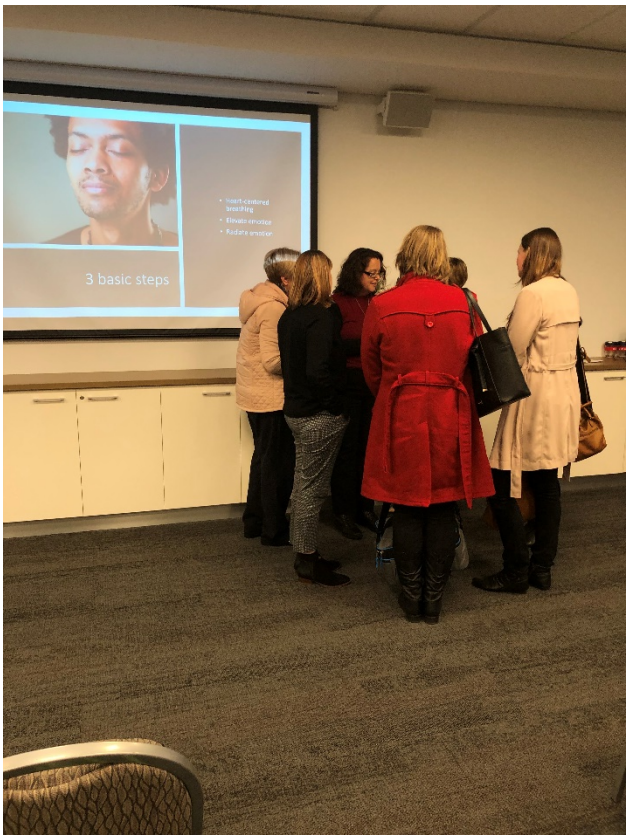
Image: UOW Student Panel

Mindfulness

Mindfulness was a key theme throughout 2019. In our WATTLE Winter Warmer, Internationally Accredited Life Coach and NeuroChange Solutions consultant, Holly Gibbons, introduced staff to what it means to be mindful and the benefits that a mindfulness practice can bring to your personal wellbeing and performance. Holly explored what it means to be in the moment and the mind-body connection from a neuroscience perspective. Holly introduced us to a mindfulness practice that we could utilise throughout our day to give us more awareness and presence in our lives resulting in less stress, more focus and overall enhanced life experience. *"Coming away with a toolkit for enacting mindfulness to increase coherence"* (Workshop attendee 2019).

The workshop seminar was enjoyed by all those who attended with over 80 academics from all different disciplines enjoying the time to consider the impact of stress and how we can use mindfulness to increase our productivity.

"It provided the scientific basis for the integration of mindfulness into our daily work, it benefits and how this enriches the team" (Workshop attendee 2019).



5 Meaningful Minutes: Small changes to pedagogy to support student wellbeing

Dr Lydia Woodyatt is an award-winning lecturer at Flinders University, with a focus on curriculum-based approaches to support transition into and out of university.

In this workshop seminar Lydia explored what can be done with 5 meaningful minutes to support wellbeing, in the context of understanding that students' experience of wellbeing and distress are interconnected with their learning and engagement.

Lydia discussed a students' experience of wellbeing and distress is interconnected with their learning and engagement. However, addressing wellbeing within curriculum can seem like an impossible task either because we don't have time in the classroom or curriculum, we don't have time ourselves to explore the options, or we feel that we lack the expertise. She explored what we can do with 5 meaningful minutes to support wellbeing.

- How can I support wellbeing in 5 meaningful minutes during a lecture or tutorial (particularly in a large class)?
- How can I support wellbeing via 5 meaningful minutes on online?

• How can I support wellbeing with only 5 meaningful minutes of changes to my course outlines?
• How can I use 5 meaningful minutes to support my own wellbeing?

Those in attendance looked at core Psychological Needs and discussed possible wellbeing junctions across the student lifecycle (where a student can move toward psychological distress) within our own classes. The group explored how small 5-minute changes in teaching practice can sometimes make big impacts on student wellbeing (and maybe help us along the way to improve our own teaching as well).

3. Increasing UOW's national and international reputation

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a learning approach that enhances the ability of all students to access and use course content and materials while limiting the need for special accommodations for those who have disabilities. The result is a better learning environment for all students, increased classroom inclusion, increased interactions among students, and reduced work for the instructor. This UDL workshop was presented by Associate Professor David Arendale, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA and co-hosted by the UOW Peer Learning Unit of LTC.

EmployABILITY@UOW

Employability is an important concern for students and academics alike. This workshop, presented by Professor Dawn Bennett, John Curtin Distinguished Professor of Higher Education and Director of the EmployABILITY and Creative Workforce Initiatives with Curtin University WA, utilized current unit outlines to embed EmployABILITY thinking: students' cognitive and social development as capable and informed individuals, professionals and social citizens. Consideration was given to how employABILITY thinking and development can be embedded across an entire course. Professor Bennett share numerous resources also available of her employABILITY website.

"The topic of Employability is an important one for me this session because WIL is going to be a central element in the curriculum. It was good to be in the same room with colleagues who are in the same space and are struggling with similar things." (Workshop attendee 2019).

#ACT4SDG

WATTLE collaborated with Global Challenges and iAccelerate to deliver the #ACT4SDG Dean Scholar Student Challenge for 2019 with the aim to harness the collective brainpower, creativity and passion of UOW's Deans Scholars in the 2nd UOW #Act4SDG collaborative. Continuing on the success of 2018, this year iAccelerate hosted the #Act4SDGs Challenge Pitch Final event.

Students engaged in multidisciplinary teams to tackle specific global challenges engaging in a 3 stage process to understand their challenge, innovate unique ideas culminating in a final pitch presentation competition held at iAccelerate on UOW's Innovation Campus. Students participated in;

Stage 1 - 'Introduction to the SDGs, where to start with innovative thinking, meet team and challenge',

Stage 2 - 'Where are your ideas at and how will you pitch',

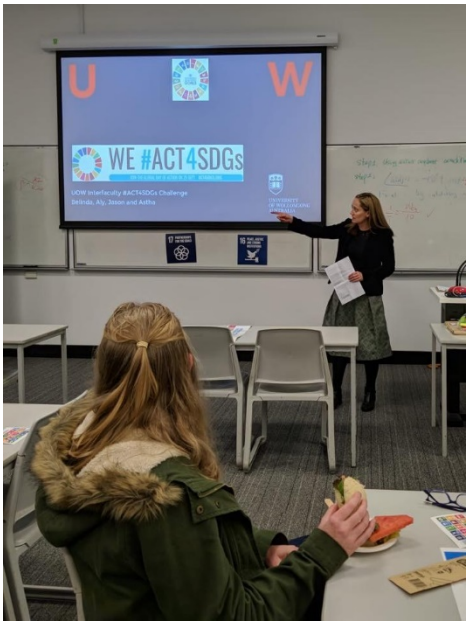
Stage 3 – 'Final pitch presentations'

"It was an eye-opener; I am more aware of the different issues that are upon us in this day and age" *(Student Reflection 2019).*

Four teams, consisting of interdisciplinary UOW Dean's Scholar students, came together to solve social development issues facing the Illawarra. Each deep demonstrated a deep understanding of the problems this regions faces, and judges and audience members were blown away by the

ingenious solutions pitched. We were so grateful to local judges and partners from the City of Wollongong, UOWX, Woolyungah Indigenous Centre UOW, Green Connect, and Scouts NSW.

Only one team, however, could take home the winning title, and that was team 'Full Employment' for their solution to the rising unemployment rates throughout the Illawarra. Honourable mentions go all the participating teams: team 'Mt Keira', the 'Trash Team', and team 'Wet 'n' Wild'.



"Honestly, I wanted to see what it was all about. SDGs were briefly mentioned in one of my first year lectures. I wanted to get a better understanding of the various goals and potentially make an actual impact. It's easy to say, this should be done, but now many people want to do something. I did and I still do. #Act4SDG gave me the insight and a platform to potentially make a difference. Alongside that, I was also looking forward to meeting other students, from various backgrounds and faculties" *(Student Reflection 2019).*

Celebration

WATTLE ended 2019 with a celebration that welcomed new members and acknowledged our amazing teaching and learning community. Particular thanks was given to Prof Sarah O'Shea.

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UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY REPORTS FROM THE TEL HOT TOPIC GROUP

Our July WATTLE TEL hot topic group showcase provided the opportunity for staff from many Faculties to present some short presentations on their work with social media, H5P, flipped classrooms, an exemplar TEL moodle site for staff, a MOOC for engaging men in Gender equality and violence prevention, and Institutional transformation. There were also updates from IMTS and the library. Casual academic staff were also grateful to be made aware of this event via their email distribution list.

Our TEL stocktake has progressed and most information has been consolidated onto the intranet site: https://intranet.uow.edu.au/dvce/learningandteaching/index.html. Stakeholders and the TEL hot topic group were consulted for feedback on this site. Discussions are ongoing to continue to update this resource.

Our research project paper from our 2018 staff and student TEL surveys and focus groups is nearing completion and submission to JULTP. Results of this study were disseminated at the TALE 2019 international conference in Wollongong.

Appendix 2: Schedule of WATTLE supported Events and Activities

MONTH	EVENT
FEBRUARY	**Wattle Forum Hybrid Learning @ UOW** **Margaret Bearman**
MAY	**Rite of Passage re-visited: Emotional reflections by students while lingering in a liminal space** **Christel Brost**
JUNE	**5 Meaningful Minutes** **Lydia Woodyatt**
JULY	**TEL Hot Topic Group Showcase**
JULY	**WATTLE Winter Warmer - Mindfulness** **Holly Gibbons**
SEPTEMBER	**Universal Design for Learning: Practical strategies to increase access, engagement, and academic success** **David Arendale**
SEPTEMBER	**#ACT4SDGs Student Challenge** **WATTLE, iAccelerate, Global Challenges, UOW Faculties**
NOVEMBER	**Employability** **Dawn Bennett**
DECEMBER	**Using creativity to cross disciplinary borders in Higher Education** **Claire Hamshire and Kirsten Jack**

Appendix 3: Qualitative Feedback from Member's Survey

As we are constantly trying to improve WATTLE, do you have any suggestions on how to strengthen WATTLE's approach to promoting excellence and leadership in teaching and learning at UOW in 2020?
Expand their reach
I have enjoyed the program this year
More activities interspersed throughout the year; it seems there has been an uptick in WATTLE activities with many things clustered here at the end of the year. Also more support for off-campus, sessional staff. For example, could you offer streaming/video and Web conferencing for some events?
I really like the talks from visiting scholars and other talks sharing local expertise, so keep these coming!
WATTLE is doing a great job with very little in the way of resource and support. It would strategic to see WATTLE prioritised and resourced by UOW, to be the institute it was originally it was intended to be. Link in with recognition programs and professional development programs (champion, support, provide governance or input into). WATTLE needs dedicated support to manage effectively with academic committee members who have a workload allowance to lead the group. WATTLE is great but has the potential to be so much more. Thank you for all you under tight conditions.
I hope the annual WATTLE forum will continue in 2020
Clear and consistent support from Executive. Support of the LTC staff. Clear ways to communicate to School Heads the importance of curriculum design.
Integrate probation and promotion activities into WATTLE
I would like WATTLE to take a lead role in reviving peer review of teaching for collegial professional development.
More consistent communications, more hands on sharing of practice sessions
More opportunities to connect and share informally
On-line learning approaches
The quality of seminars and topic areas is spot-on. However, if a yearly program is distributed in advance even if it has to be somewhat generalised. If not, then the WATTLE announcements arrive as a surprise with insufficient lead-up time.
Workshops / retreats to help writing education papers; Education conferences targeted at academics (THETA was more targeted at IT people and librarians)
What activities/ programs/ support would you like to see WATTLE offer in 2020?
More support and link to future strategic direction of the University in L & T
Given the university's strategy around blended, online, and technology-enhanced learning, could there be more presentations around the fundamentals and why the approaches might be of value. Also, more events where students are included and presenting. It has been great to get the student voice.
Assistance for others to achieve FHEA qualification

Would be nice to have some brown-bag lunch discussions around various topics we deal with (could maybe put out a poll to members about what they'd like to discuss) - I feel like this was something we got during the ULT trainings and often I get the best ideas from discussions with peers but there aren't many opportunities for these.
Inviting more students (student voice is important and insightful)
Greater links and collaboration with LTC.
This is a personal need and may not reflect the needs of other but something on good practice for online learning, some simple things we can do to increase the engagement of students with our online site
Casual lunch once a month to connect with people who "understand".
Funding for SoTL journals & travel, repository of learning materials and evaluation reports, refereeing process for design of learning materials
Peer review of teaching
Professional development sessions for staff
UOW College being a pathways, I'd like to see some programs/activities on how to bring students up to speed with basic arithmetic and foundations maths skills to equipment them for the course that they are studying to reduce the fail rates.
Writing retreats
Regular discussion groups, say once a month, that members could suggest topics for.
Similar activities as per 2019
Increase in number of travel/conference grants with an aim to fuller funding of each as opposed to cutting awards to meet a set cap of funds. Professional engagement at conferences is critical in the T&L area as this is where the action/knowledge turns over far more quickly than publications.
Embedding AI in teaching / learning / personalised feedback
Employability
If you attended any WATTLE events - can you explain which of these you benefitted from, or made the most impact in your teaching and learning practice?
The TEL sharing sessions were the most beneficial - great to see what others are working on and have the opportunity to ask questions
I have attended a variety. I really enjoyed the guy from the US who talked about lots of little interventions he included in his teaching. I think this probably was one that was most pertinent to my areas of work. I also really liked the assessment symposium, as there were lots of ideas presented, and, again, they had the student panel discussing assessment.
Because I am working to move toward a blended/flexible delivery for one of my subjects, the talks early this year where folks shared experiences and challenges were most beneficial
Help me think about my future in higher education
I really enjoyed the annual WATTLE forum, it is at a time of year when I have the space to reflect and take on new ideas for my teaching. I loved the presentation by Lydia Woodyatt, I was able to think of small was to increase my student engagement with the subject and with university I will be trying to incorporate some of her ideas in my first year subject
Networking is the most valuable component.

WATTLE forum - discussing ideas, identifying key areas for development
Dr Lydia Woodyatt. Very relevant to get some ideas on how to engage students in UOW College.
Both external speakers who bring new and scholarly perspectives; and internal presentations of cases studies
workplace learning
Both the TEL Hot topic Showcases and Workshops were beneficial
Further knowledge on best T&L practices; open the door for consideration of new ideas or informs on an existing item of importance, e.g. WIL
Showcase events to get ideas for my own teaching
Teaching improvement
Please provide any other feedback or comments on WATTLE
We have great expertise on campus and WATTLE is a great place for showcasing it.
Would be nice to have a clear calendar published well in advance & advertised every so often. I often find I am interested in an advertised session, but by the time it is advertised I have already booked something else in the time slot.
I love it!
Great work. Keep it up. It would be good to see WATTLE adequately supported and resourced and taking its place within the national/international L&T space.
To fully realise the potential of WATTLE additional ongoing financial investment is needed
I wonder about the connection if any between JULTP and WATTLE.
Generally, I think Wattle does a good job of supporting T & L - my main comment for 2019 is how badly organised the fellowship program was. The fellowship opportunity for recognition and accreditation were offered only to the Wattle executive team. Those of us who were accepted and not part of the Wattle executive were only offer fellowship level even though when we were assessed in program at a higher level. The reason given was costing and availability. There was funds to upgrade the Wattle executive accreditation. This is really poor practice on behalf of the Wattle team and left others feeling disappointed with how Wattle operates at UOW.
Kudos to the executive who work hard to deliver and engage amidst other demands. Consider segregating off more money which could support WATTLE members, for example a higher number of travel/conference grant awards, as many simply do not have adequate resources otherwise.
More SMAH / EIS events needed, seems to lean towards humanities because of the education element
I am passionate about learning and teaching, and I find these as good opportunities to continue my professional development and to inform my practice. I also like engaging with others to share ideas.