The University of Sydney has long been committed to recognising and rewarding excellence in learning and teaching. In 2005, the university offered three sets of Vice-Chancellor’s awards:

**Professor Frank Stilwell**  
Department of English, Faculty of Arts

**Dr Penelope Van Toorn**  
School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Faculty of Health Sciences

**Dr Roger Pamphlett**  
School of Indigenous Health Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences

I’ve taught at the University for 35 years, and I really enjoy it, perhaps more now than ever. I think it’s important that Professors are actively working ‘at the coal-face’ with undergraduates. Teaching introductory first year units is important because that is where the good foundations are laid for future students.

I don’t think there’s any ‘silver bullet’ that produces good learning outcomes. Teaching is essentially a social process. You have to put your whole body and personality into it, hoping that the enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. I’m lucky because my subject is inherently challenging. It draws on competing currents of theory and has direct relevance to understanding a rapidly changing world, and maybe contributing to making it better. I always begin lectures by posing the questions that will be explored during the hour, discussing why they are interesting or important. Around the mid-point, when students’ attention tends to flag, is a good moment to invite some two-way interaction—just for a few minutes because lingering longer can cause a loss of focus too.

The Committee were particularly impressed by Professor Stilwell’s sustained passion for teaching, and the positive influence he has had on past and present students.

**Dr Chris Chapparo**  
School of Occupation and Leisure Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences

**Sue Page & Sally Farrington**  
School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Faculty of Health Sciences

‘Making a difference’ to Indigenous student learning and community health is the inspiration for our work. Successful education outcomes for Indigenous health science students have a powerful potential to improve health status within Indigenous communities. We see our work as contributing to this.

I try to cultivate in students a healthy sense of their own agency as knowers and makers of meaning, by building on what they already know both from their previous studies and their own life-experiences. As students recognise the real-world relevance of the texts they are studying, they discover their own personal investments in the issues they are learning about. Without losing sight of how important it is to be able to make impartial, detached observations and judgements, it’s crucial that students see themselves as being inside the picture they are learning about. I therefore approach literature and film not as forms of high art, but rather as politically significant instruments that explore, reflect, and exercise particular kinds of power in real-world contexts. This double inside/outside positioning helps stimulate in students a kind of passionate curiosity about the texts and issues explored on the course, while also developing their skills in rigorous critical thinking.

The Committee considered that Dr Page and Ms Farrington’s application exhibited evidence of strong leadership in the area of indigenous education and teaching practice, thus enhancing outcomes for Indigenous students in all health science programs.

**Professor Frank Stilwell**  
Discipline of Political Economy, Faculty of Economics and Business

‘Outstanding teaching combines the facilitator’s research skills, subject knowledge, learning and teaching skills and passion. An outstanding teacher uses their research skills to critically evaluate and apply the learning and teaching literature and to design valid and reliable student assessments and evaluations of learning outcomes. Outstanding teachers engage their students in learning by sharing their research and inviting them to criticize, wonder, imagine and hypothesise with them. An outstanding teacher also shares knowledge with their peers through mentoring, presentations and publication.

In my area of clinical education, students’ personal and professional growth is facilitated, assessed and celebrated. Students learn to apply academic knowledge to the management of individuals, their families and carers as well as develop empathy and strong interpersonal skills. They are supported to challenge their attitudes and values and to bring a heightened sense of self-awareness to their clinical work. In order for this to occur an outstanding teacher creates a learning environment of trust, safety and challenge. This environment allows students to explore and extend academic and personal knowledge as well as develop the required clinical competencies.

The Committee considered that Dr Lincoln’s application exhibited an understanding of students’ needs, strong evidence of a scholarly approach to learning and teaching, and connections between research and teaching. They were particularly impressed with the fact that this was being achieved as a practitioner in a professional faculty.

**Professor Frank Stilwell**  
School of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Health Sciences

The Committee considered that Dr Lincoln’s application exhibited strong evidence of research-led teaching and a scholarly approach to teaching.

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Email: M.Lincoln@fhs.usyd.edu.au

What I have learnt from 18 years teaching medical students:

1. A good lecture is like an enjoyable evening at the theatre. There should be drama, humour, visual engagement, a polished performance by the protagonist and a surprise ending.

2. Most students will only remember the humour.

3. Try to think of your students as future colleagues. It’s not difficult—they will be in 4 years time.

4. Always try to imagine each of your students as your own physician in the future. What attitudes and knowledge would you like them to have as they go about treating you, or undertaking a sigmoidoscopy on you?

5. Don’t try to be your students’ friend. You’re their teacher, not their friend.

6. If, at the end of the day, you can instil some humility and uncertainty into your students then it’s been a good day.

7. Few things are more pleasant than a lecture where all the students are engaged. The students’ comments and questions are focused.

8. Always get favourable student feedback isn’t necessarily a good thing. You may be being too easy on them.

9. You’re privileged to have contact with students during a few, precious formative years of their lives. Don’t waste their time.

10. Encourage students both to work hard and to enjoy themselves. Especially the latter.

Dr Roger Pamphlett  
Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine
**Professor Terry Carney**  
Faculty of Law

Good supervision of law theses involves cultivating a strong ‘collaboration’ between an experienced researcher/supervisor, and the novice producer of major original writing. Research and supervision are the defining activities scholarship. Both must share ‘top billing’. So ‘thesis business’ must have real priority over all other academic duties. Senior colleagues/administrators must wait, not vice versa. Because it is only through writing that law theses take form. My mantra is ‘write early, write often’. Good supervision involves many other things: a ‘real passion’ for the project, serving as a strong advocate and ‘broker’ connecting candidates with the academic community; encouraging conference presentations and publications; insisting on meeting when things do not go to plan; and by ‘managing expectations’ to balance encouragement with scholarly critique. Law theses are individual and often quite unpredictable. So supervisors need to constantly tangle their own experience, and that of colleagues and other candidates in order to locate the techniques/support needed by particular candidates at the particular time. Above all else, however, it means prompt feedback (14 days), regular meetings (ideally 6 weekly) and engagement.

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**A/Professor Tony Masters**  
School of Chemistry  
Faculty of Science

Almost all scientists begin their research training as PhD students. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. The days of the gifted technician (or bookbinder like Michael Faraday) becoming a professor have probably gone. 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The Faculty of Medicine Summer Research Scholarships offer an opportunity for undergraduate students studying a science-based degree to obtain an undergraduate research experience prior to decision on their future career. The student chooses from a list of projects devised to produce a research outcome in the 8 week scholarship period. They are trained in the techniques required for the project and supervised throughout by well-established researchers, in high quality medical research facilities. They have the opportunity to work independently and in a one-to-one relationship with a senior researcher. This helps to develop their self-confidence and their problem-solving skills. The program gives them an insight into undertaking research which is not available elsewhere.

The Panel felt that the Summer Research Scholarship program not only supported and affirmed the University's professed goal of Research-led Teaching but also provided undergraduate students with the valuable experience of undertaking real research in a working laboratory with staff as colleagues. The program also provides benefits to the University through encouraging the enrolment of quality graduate students who have already been inducted into the research experience.

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Further information regarding the 2006 awards will be available at http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/awards.

Acknowledgements: thanks to Barbara McLean in the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching for providing panel comments.