



Industry Links – an initiative of the RACI NSW Branch

Improving academic-industry linkages is a common theme arising from the Future of Chemistry Report commissioned by the RACI in 2005 [1]. More specifically, recommendations 3, 7 and 10 emphasise the importance of collaborative frameworks between the university and commercial chemical sectors. Once it is agreed to pursue academic-industry linkages, the question from both sectors and the students interested in such programs may be how? The November 2007 edition of *Chemistry in Australia* provided some background information for effective knowledge transfer initiatives in chemistry, including some case studies on how these may be performed [2].

The RACI NSW Branch has commenced a survey of academic and industry partners in linkage schemes to communicate the benefits of such programs to RACI members and students. We trust that you will find the forthcoming information entitled **Industry Links** useful in designing knowledge transfer activities for the benefit of your university, business or personal career. The RACI NSW Branch would welcome the participation of your organisation in **Industry Links**. Please contact the NSW Branch coordinator, Edwina Hine (RACINSW@chem.unsw.edu.au or (02) 9663 4960) for more information.

- [1] Future of Chemistry Study: *Supply and Demand of Chemists*. Royal Australian Chemical Institute, **2005**.
For a copy, please contact the NSW Branch Office (RACINSW@chem.unsw.edu.au).
- [2] Cawley, A; Besley, L; George, A; Hibbert, B. Knowledge transfer in chemistry: Improving academic-industry linkages. *Chemistry in Australia* **2007**, 74, 6-11.

Do You Receive our Weekly E News email?

Each week we send our NSW members a weekly newsletter - keeping you up to date with all the upcoming events. Each week there are a number of emails returned to the office – since some of the email addresses on the RACI are not current. Could this apply to you? If you haven't heard from us for a while via the email – please let me know!!! Contact the NSW branch office on racinsw@chem.unsw.edu.au and your details can be updated.



School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, University of Sydney Major Industrial Practice Placement Scholarship

The first of our *Industry Links* series describes the Major Industrial Practice Placement Scholarship (MIPPS) program organised by the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering of the University of Sydney. This offers the school's top 10 third-year students the chance to spend six months of their fourth year working full-time in an industrial placement. The MIPPS program is the brainchild of Emeritus Professor Rolf Prince whose passion was to see the school maintain a vocational role with industry.

A key feature, important in the success of the scheme, is that the school shares supervisory responsibilities through an academic as an associate supervisor. Examples of MIPPS projects undertaken by students in recent years include:

- Optimisation of a Mineral Leaching Process (BHP Billiton, Newcastle)
- Cleaning of Aluminium Cryogenic Heat Exchangers (BOC, Sydney)
- Sulphur Oxide Dispersion from Stacks (Caltex, Kurnell)
- Computerised Batch Scheduling (DuPont, Sydney)
- Management of Odours from Sewage Treatment Works (Sydney Water, Sydney)
- Starch and Quality Control in Recycled Paper Production (Visy Pulp & Paper, Sydney)

The outcomes of MIPPS projects have been seen by their sponsoring industry partners to be highly valuable. As well as bringing major educational benefits to the students, the scheme has therefore maintained its attraction to industry partners, who contribute \$22,500 to the Scheme to cover the scholarship and School overheads and contribution towards supervision. At present a MIPPS scholarship is worth \$12,000 (tax-free) – good money for six months work by a third-year undergraduate – and is available to both local and international students. Typically, the placement starts in January and ends in July. The selection of students begins in early Semester 2 of the previous year with announcements made to the third year students calling on interested students to apply for the program. Short-listed students are selected first on the basis of their academic results. Interviews with potential MIPPS scholars are then held in the middle of semester 2 to determine the suitability of the applicants for an immediate role in industry.

Issues such as insurance and intellectual property rights are negotiated between the school, student and industry partner on a case-by-case basis to ensure that potential problems concerning these areas can be avoided where possible. Typically, the work conducted by MIPPS students will be covered by University insurance. Depending on the nature of the project, intellectual property rights may reside with the industry partner, although in many cases the University of Sydney IP Rule applies that provides the rights to the student.

An important outcome of the MIPPS program is the “real life” industry training for students. It has also become common for some companies to retain MIPPS students for further employment on a part-time basis after they return to University. These students often have the opportunity to continue



academic studies with a collaborative Masters or PhD research project linked to the industry partner, followed by full-time employment in a research and/or management role.

The MIPPS program is administered by the school's Chemical and Biological Foundation to support two of its key objectives in fostering good communication with industry and assisting graduates with reference to industry-related projects. In addition to the school sending students out into industry, there is a genuine attempt for knowledge transfer with industrial partners provided with access to the facilities of the school – from analytical and computational services, tailored short courses and consultancies, to the provision of expert witnesses who speak with the voice of authority in their field. The school is keen to hear from any company interested in joining this highly successful partnership program. For further information on the industry programs of the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Sydney, please contact the Executive Assistant of the school's Chemical and Biological Foundation, Skender Bregu (s.bregu@usyd.edu.au or 9351 5284).

2008 RACI NSW Presidents Awards Dinner

Saturday 16th of February saw our annual Presidents Awards Dinner which was held at the Ranch in Epping. This event was enjoyed by almost 40 of our members as we got together at the conclusion of our very successful Chemistry Education Forum to celebrate the achievements of several of our members.

Fellowships were presented to Janice Aldrich Wright and Robert Geyer for their active involvement in the RACI NSW. Associate Professor Janice Aldrich –Wright Associate Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright (pictured right with our President Mary Collins, is a senior member of the academic staff of the University of Western Sydney. She is highly research active, for example, she has contributed 14 research papers in international chemistry journals over the last 2 years



Robert Geyer, (pictured left with our president), currently works for Workcover NSW where he is Manager of the Chemical Analysis Branch, he has over 30 technical publications and 25 years of experience in the analytical chemistry area. Robert has been active with NATA where he is Chair of the Occupational Hygiene Technical Group and also Chairs the Committee CH-031 (Examination of Workplace Atmosphere) for Standards Australia.

Associate Professor Charles Fogliani (AM), and Dr Chris Fellows were both recognised for their significant contributions to Chemistry Education.



Charles Fogliani (pictured left with our President) has been a long serving RACI member - best known for his The Australian National Chemistry Quiz. In 2007 the Quiz was conducted in all Australian States and Territories, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Zealand, Western Samoa, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Brunei, India and for the first time entries

were also received from England

Chris Fellows (pictured right during the Chem Ed forum) an active RACI member in the New England section and the Polymers Group works tirelessly each year for the Science in the Bush Program, which provides an insight to high school students in regional areas as to what chemists actually do.



This year the Presidents Award was presented to Professor Barbara Messerle from the UNSW (Pictured



left). The award recognised the sustained and continuing support of the RACI in NSW that she and the School of Chemistry at UNSW has provided.

We were fortunate enough to have Prof .Robert Lamb-Director of the Surface Science and Technology Group, at the University of Melbourne, as a guest speaker who enlightened us on the Australian Synchrotron Research Program (ASRP). The evening was enjoyed by all who attended. Thanks must go to all our RACI members who attended and made the night so sociable, and

especially Neil Gailbraith who captured some terrific photos from the night.



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