



To	Senate
From	Warden, Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM
Date	27 January 2023

WARDEN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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Introduction

During 2023, the activities of Convocation Council have been guided by our Strategic Plan 2023-26, which was developed following a detailed internal review, conducted over the previous two years. Following consultation, we set our mission as 'to inspire and engage Convocation members', working toward our vision of 'a widespread, committed and enthusiastic membership who make a significant contribution to the advancement of our University, Convocation, higher education and our community'. This report is

structured around the four major strategies of our Strategic Plan – to revitalise, inspire, engage, and contribute.

Until recently, our aims could only be achieved through the commitment and support of volunteers — Warden, Deputy Warden, and Convocation Councillors. All are graduates of UWA, elected by the members of Convocation. The present Council includes academics, accountants, architects, economists, educationalists, engineers, lawyers, and scientists. Each Councillor serves on at least one of Council's eight sub-committees, their focus being guided by the Terms of Reference of each sub-committee. The deep commitment and service of Councillors to the University and its community, particularly those who chair sub-committees, is very much appreciated.

The establishment of the Chancellor's Joint Committee of Convocation Council and Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) in 2020 signalled a new era in which Convocation and DAR began to work together. This has been particularly valuable to Convocation Council, as we have gained access to DAR's expertise and their advice, as well as administrative support for Council-led events. We especially appreciate the support of Fiona Allen, Chief Advancement Officer, Keiran Hargreaves, Associate Director, Alumni Engagement and the input of all DAR staff particularly those serving on the Chancellor's Joint Committee.

Council remains confident that with the implementation of its Strategic Plan and its productive relationship with DAR, engendered in large part by the success of the Chancellor's Joint Committee Convocation, Convocation can make a significant contribution to the success of our university in the years to come.

Revitalise our Council

Governance

The Governance Committee of Convocation Council, ably led by Graham Goerke (BJuris LLB UWA) in 2023 and with the assistance of Greg Calcutt AM (BJuris LLB UWA), retired Parliamentary Counsel, Ministry of Justice, has completed a draft of proposed changes to the Statute to revitalise our Council. It was intended to submit the draft changes to the University's Director of Governance and General Counsel in December 2023 for ultimate consideration by the Senate. This has stalled as the Senate has now established a Convocation Review Working Group to consider and report to Senate on the governance of Convocation.

Amongst the major changes to the Statute proposed by Convocation Council was a plan to reduce Council from 23 (21 elected Councillors, the Warden, Deputy Warden, and past Warden) to a maximum of 17 members (10 elected, 2 elected members of Senate and up to 5 co-opted). The majority would continue to be elected. It is proposed that all Councillors will be limited to three 3-year terms. The Deputy Warden would be appointed by Council to complement the skills of the Warden elected by Convocation members under the Act. We also proposed that the anachronistic appellation 'Ordinary' to describe the General Meetings would be deleted from the statute.

Other changes resulting from Convocation Council's Strategic Plan, which do not require statutory change, have already been implemented:

- Council meetings reduced to six p.a. with reserve dates for special meetings.
- Executive Committee formed.
- Meeting agendas structured to assist in implementing the strategic plan, with procedural matters accepted en bloc.

- Warden’s monthly report to Councillors.
- Each Councillor began to be required to be a member of at least one Convocation Committee.
- Annual 360° peer performance feedback meetings for all Councillors.
- Guests surveyed for their feedback after Convocation functions.
- Councillors with relevant expertise now forge connections with staff and students of UWA Schools, clubs and societies. To date this applies to the Guild of Undergraduates, Schools of Design, Humanities and Engineering, Reid Library, UWA Sports, and Friends of the Grounds.
- Council activities reviewed and efficiencies and cost savings made.
- Work underway to increase Convocation resources, by developing fundraising protocols with DAR and engaging in low-risk commercial enterprises.

Finance

The Convocation Finance Committee is led by Matt Budge (BCom Accounting and Finance UWA, Taxation UMelb). In summary, the 2023 year for Convocation was another year in which Convocation lived within its means. Subject to confirmation of the level of unclaimed prizes and prior year adjustments, Convocation is forecast to deliver small operating surplus for the year. Slightly higher donations and savings made in respect of the awards ceremony have led to a better than predicted outcome (although it remains to be seen whether this savings measure resonates with the members of Convocation). A budget for 2024 which again projects a small operating surplus has been accepted by Council.

During the year Convocation worked with the University’s Financial Services to simplify and integrate our two accounting systems. If the changes to the Statute proposed by Convocation are made, then there can be a full integration and Convocation will be able to transfer the bulk of its funds to the University Long Term Investment Pool and materially increase its discretionary funding.

Chancellor’s Joint Committee of Convocation Council & Development and Alumni Relations

The Joint Committee, established in 2020, has continued to meet regularly, chaired in 2023 by the Deputy Warden, Dr David Griffiths (BEcons Hons UWA, MEcons ANU, DEc (Hon) UWA).

Its procedures are guided by its Terms of Reference. The chair is jointly nominated by the Warden of Convocation and the Chief Advancement Officer for appointment by the Chancellor. The Committee includes four representatives of DAR including the Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) and four representatives appointed by the Convocation Council including the Warden or nominee. Membership is reviewed annually in March each year. Membership from DAR is dependent on the representatives continuing in their appointed positions and the (elected) membership from Convocation Council is dependent on the representatives continuing in their elected positions.

The Joint Committee has become the key point for information sharing and promoting and co-ordinating joint Convocation/DAR initiatives. The development of this relationship has also been further improved by having the DAR CAO as a permanent invitee to Council meetings along with other DAR members attending for specific topics of joint interest. Many of the initiatives undertaken by Convocation sub-committees and noted in this report have benefited from this productive relationship.

During 2023, the Joint Committee engaged in the following issues:

- Convocation and DAR activities have been integrated into a 12 month forward looking Calendar of Events.

- The Joint Committee is considering the audience reach of the various publications and where communications might be combined or linked.
- Discussion leading up to Convocation Council agreeing to work with the University Library in a fund-raising initiative which will be overseen by DAR. This is seen as a pilot for future joint initiatives.
- A “Celebrate our Graduates” Working Party has been formed with Convocation and DAR membership and has arranged for the Chancellor to host a reception in March 2024 for those accorded Australian Honours during the period 2022-2024.
- DAR Events team continues to assist in the administration of Convocation Day and other Convocation events. Convocation and DAR have also shared their thoughts on the future of reunions and general meetings.
- Convocation and DAR have shared their respective Strategic Plans with DAR making comment on Convocation’s plan and the proposed changes to the UWA Statute required to implement the plan.
- The Joint Committee oversaw the simplification and integration of Convocations financial system with the University’s accounts.
- The Joint Committee also oversaw the updating and streamlining of the Convocation website to eliminate the need for costly external consultants.
- As the result of the issue being raised in the Joint Committee, Convocation Council and DAR representatives have established a ‘Working Group to advocate for the maintenance of the University’s Campus Art Collection.
- The Committee, acting on a request to the Warden, is linking the University Regiment, which has now has few connections to the University, to Student Life.
- Progress on Convocation plans of linking into UWA Mentoring and Internships has been shared with the Joint Committee but put on hold until 2024 when it is expected that UWA will be ready to roll out an integrated plan.
- Graduate and Alumni engagement statistics are now being shared by DAR with the Joint Committee to monitor progress the success of member engagement initiatives.

Inspire our Members

Graduation ceremonies

These are powerful reminders that the fundamental aim of our university is to inspire the seeking and getting of wisdom. As Warden, I was very pleased to again welcome new graduates to Convocation formally, with the assistance of the Deputy Warden and Councillors, through the Warden’s address at the Graduation Ceremonies held at Crawley in July and December. Dr Moira Maley (BSc MSc PhD GradDipEcot UWA), a Convocation Councillor based in Albany, undertook this role at the Albany Graduation Ceremony in December.

Awards

Convocation has been providing awards to undergraduates and postgraduates since at least the 1950s. These awards make a difference for the recipients and competition is intense. To have an award listed on a graduate’s CV is not only a recognition of their abilities, but also gives them an immediate advantage in the employment stakes. The Awards Committee is led by Nee Nee Ong (BEng MBA UWA, FIEAust).

In alignment with other UWA awards, Convocation has hosted Awards Ceremonies to present and celebrate the winners, with their family, friends, supervisors, award donors etc in attendance. The Award Ceremony has generally been held in August in the Prescott Room, UWA Boat Club or the University Club

with a presentation of the awards, a past Post Graduate Research Training Awards (PGRTA) winner speaking, refreshments, and networking.

In 2020 there was no ceremony due to COVID19, but the winners were acknowledged appropriately at the Convocation Spring Ordinary meeting and invited to the 2021 Convocation Awards Ceremony at the University Club. In 2022, to minimise rising costs, the Convocation Awards Ceremony was held online, but feedback indicated that an in-person event was preferred and is more appropriate as a celebration and acknowledgement. Hence, in 2023, the awards were presented at the Convocation Spring Ordinary Meeting, following the model of a graduation ceremony. While this saved the cost of a separate Awards Ceremony and provided a broader exposure to the audience of Convocation, feedback from award winners and donors was there was not sufficient time to provide sufficient emphasis on the winners or adequately describe their projects.

The number of PGRTAs presented in 2023 was reduced by seven, as the Graduate Research School ceased their annual funding support. This meant that only fourteen PGRTAs, the Matilda Award for Cultural Excellence and the Convocation Indigenous Undergraduate Prize could be presented.

Convocation also provides Convocation Sports Bursaries to the top UWA male and female sportspersons and contributes to the Convocation UWA Sports Star of the Year. These were presented at a separate UWA Sports event.

The purpose of the number and range of Convocation awards is to reach and support a broad range of UWA current students across different stages of study, schools and sectors. Some are named awards but, all but one, are now funded entirely by Convocation. While Convocation 2023 has started to look at fund-raising initiatives this has yet to produce adequate sustainable funds to replenish the awards or for new awards.

Honours

Convocation Council's Honours Committee, led by Adjunct Professor Senator Warren Kerr AM (BArch UWA, MHP UNSW), facilitates the recognition of members of Convocation and the University community by submitting nominations for Australian Honours and for other awards both within and external to the University, including Honorary Degrees, the Chancellor's Medal and the Convocation Medal.

Because of the confidential nature of the Committee's deliberations, this report cannot indicate the individuals being considered for or nominated for Australian Honours or other confidential awards. However, it can report on the outcomes achieved during the 2023 term of Convocation Council.

Australian Honours

In the 2023 Australia Day Honours List the following members of Convocation were recognised for their contribution to the Australian community:

Member of the Order of Australia:

Dr David Hope Denton RFD KC AM (PhD '20)

Mr Walter John Edwards AM (BE '72)

Ms Susan Jane Hunt PSM AM (MA '85)

Professor Edwin Philip Kirk AM (MBBS '90)

Dr Michael David Levitt AM (MBBS '81)

Professor Helen Milroy AM (MBBS '83)

The late Professor Peter John Noonan AM (BA '76, BEd '80)

Emeritus Professor John Stewart Pate AM (DSc '05)
Emeritus Professor Ian Bruce Puddey AM (MBBS '76, MD '87)

Medal of the Order of Australia:

Ms Christine Anne Allbeury OAM (BSc '84)
Dr Bernard John Chapman OAM (MBBS '86)
Dr Ernest Patrick Evans OAM (BE '57)
Dr Katherine Margaret Leeming OAM (BPEd '88, GradDipEd '89, DEd '16)
Mrs Mary Margaret McComish OAM (LLB '72)
Mr Gerard Joseph McGann OAM (BSc '71)
Mrs Elsma Merillo OAM (BEd '75)

In the 2023 Kings Birthday Honours List the following members of Convocation were recognised for their contribution to the Australian community:

Companion of the Order of Australia

The Honourable Colin James Barnett AC (BEC '73, MEC '83)
Emeritus Professor Caroline Isabel Bower AC (MBBS '71, PhD '91)

Officer of the Order of Australia

Professor Kingsley Dixon AO (BSc '76, PhD '82)
Dr Cassandra Goldie AO (BJuris '86, LLB '87)

Member of the Order of Australia

Clinical Professor David James Blacker AM (MBBS '92)
Associate Professor Rosanna Capolingua AM (MBBS '83)
Dr George Michael Galvin RFD AM (BSc '65, MBBS '73)
Professor Warren John Harding AM (BSc(Agric) '79)
Mr Terry Hill AM (BSc(Agric) '80)
Ms Joanna Elizabeth Horgan AM (BA '89, DLitt '17)
The Late Mr Robert John Meadows KC AM (LLB '64)
Emeritus Professor Robyn Anne Owens AM (BSc '75)
Professor Josephine Anne Ward AM (BSc '76)

Medal of the Order of Australia

Mr Nicolo Catania OAM (BEC '71)
Ms Vanya Alexandra Cullen OAM (BSc '83)
Dr Andrew Paul Davies OAM (MBBS '97)
Mr David Maurits De Vos OAM (BA '66)
Mr Norbert Fandry OAM (BScEd '76)
Ms Susan Hayes OAM (BA '93, MPhil '94)
Ms Eugenie Anne Jelly OAM (MEdMan '92)
Ms Kathleen Patricia McGurk OAM (BA '86)
Mrs Esme Shirley Moulds OAM (BSW '98)
Mr Stephen Benedict Reynolds OAM (BSc '86, GradDipEd '97)

In accordance with the practice initiated by the Honours Committee in 2013, the Chair of the Committee prepared congratulatory letters for the Warden of Convocation to send to those Convocation members who had been recognised with Australian Honours during 2023.

In addition, through the Celebrating UWA Graduates Working Party, arrangements have now been made for the Chancellor to host a reception in March 2024 for those accorded Australian Honours during the period 2022-2024.

Convocation Medals

On Monday 11 September 2023 arrangements were made for the presentation of the 2023 Convocation Medal to Professor Ted Snell AM CitWA in the Palliative Care Ward of Bethesda Hospital. The presentation of a certificate recognising Professor Snell's contribution was also made to his family at the Spring Ordinary General Meeting of Convocation held on 21 September 2023.

At the same meeting, the 2022 Convocation Medal was presented to the family of the late Dr Bruce Hartley in recognition of his contribution to UWA and the UWA Rugby Club.

Chancellor's Medals

On Wednesday 1 November 2023 arrangements were made for the Chancellor of UWA the Honourable Robert French AC to present the Chancellor's Medal to the Immediate Past Warden of Convocation Clinical Professor Lesley Cala in Sutton Centre of the Juniper Rowethorpe Retirement Village in Bentley.

On Friday 15 December, long-serving Convocation Councillor Dr Fran Pesich (BArch MBA DBA UWA, FAICD) was also awarded a Chancellor's Medal for her outstanding service to the UWA Historical Society and Convocation.

Engage our Members

An aspect of our Strategic Plan that will require a change to the Statute is the expansion of membership, beyond graduates and members of the Senate, to include all long-term stakeholders of the University so it is more inclusive of the University community. An expanded membership will assist Convocation to become an engagement hub for members.

Advocacy and Communication

Council's Advocacy and Communications Committee were combined in 2023 and was led by the Warden, Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM (BA Hons PhD UWA, FRHS).

The Committee's Advocacy role is to advise Council on issues related to existing and emerging tertiary education policy and practice particularly those concerning UWA, its staff and students. Amongst its functions is facilitation of an informed discussion on issues of state and national significance relating to education and education policy and to keep Convocation members informed of matters relating to the future well-being of UWA, including matters of potential threat to UWA, to 'support the intellectual, cultural and financial prosperity of the University'.

In view of this, following the announcement by the State Government of the WA Universities Sector Review, an email bulletin from the Warden was sent to all members on email (79,807 members) in August to provide them with background information, to ask for their comments, and invite them to a panel discussion on the subject hosted by the UWA Academic Staff Association. This was opened by 39,117 members, a high open rate of 49%, indicating intense interest in the subject. Approximately twenty members sent in their comments to the Warden, who responded to each. A further email will be sent to all members once the Report of the Government's Review Panel is released.

There have been very encouraging discussions with UWA's Institute of Public Policy (IPP) about collaborating to host events to inform members of issues affecting the university. As a result, Convocation and IPP will co-host a panel on 'The Future of Universities' at the Autumn General Meeting in 2024.

A Higher Education e-bulletin which will focus on issues in higher education is also under development. It has been under discussion since 2022, when the concept was approved by Council. To ensure continuity and avoid overreliance on voluntary effort, it is necessary to appoint an editor, however, there has been concern about ensuring the quality of content and the cost. As a result, a Code of Conduct and a detailed Project Plan, which provided for the appointment of an editor on a trial basis for 6 months, was developed. This was approved by Executive in September and Council in October 2023. The search for an editor is presently under way.

The Advocacy and Communications Committee's role is also 'to promote the roles, functions, activities and initiatives of Convocation via written and electronic communication with members in co-operation with the University'.

Under the Act, a roll of members of Convocation is kept. This is now held in UWA's REX Customer Relationship Management platform and is the means by which Convocation members can be contacted.

Three issues of the Convocation Connecting e-bulletin (May, August, October) are published each year. Several years ago, the number of Convocation members to which the e-bulletin would be sent was reduced from approximately 74,000 to 2,500, the number who were considered 'engaged' (i.e. attended events). As a result, the number of recipients who opened the e-bulletin increased from approximately 24% to 50%. While this appears impressive, the percentages are misleading (i.e. 24% of 74,000 is 18,000 people, 50% of 2500 is 1200 people). Hence, Convocation Council has been concerned that it cannot possibly grow readership of its e-bulletins or interest in its activities, if information is sent to such a small number.

Following discussion within the Joint Committee, we were advised by DAR that from mid 2023 the audience would include;

- Past and present members of the UWA Senate
- Past and present members of the Convocation Council
- Active and lapsed (i.e. membership finished within the last 12 months) paid members of Convocation
- Voters in Convocation Council elections from 2021 onwards (note: when this data was first consistently recorded in REX)
- Convocation event registrants since 2015 (incl. ordinary General Meeting registrants)
- Donors to Convocation since 2015.

As a result, the August and October 2023 *Convocation Connecting* issues were each sent to approximately 6,800 members, with an open rate 63% and 40% respectively. As well, each *Convocation Connecting* is now included as a news item/tile in all *Alumni Connect* e-newsletters, which are sent to the whole alumni body that is contactable by email. It is gratifying that this has increased the number of recipients of *Convocation Connecting* and Council is grateful for DAR's response to our concerns.

The Warden's Page in *Uniview* continues, with articles on the Matilda Convocation Awards in the Summer 2022/23 issue, on Convocation Day in the Winter 2023 issue, and on the Centenary of the Park Ave Building in the Summer 2023/24 issue.

Information Technology

During 2023 the IT Committee, led by Winthrop Professor Marc Tennant AM (BDentSc PhD UWA, FRACDS(GDP) FICD FADI), incoming Chair of UWA's Academic Board, has made major improvements to our website which will assist in marketing Convocation to its members and others by strengthening and updating Convocation's image, provide easy access to content, event registration forms, and news and will enable members to find information more easily. Much material that was superfluous to a modern website has now been archived.

Prior to this the Committee monitored the usage of web consulting spending to make substantial savings. It was responsible for the transitioning of the Convocation website to its new university-wide system, with four people trained to maintain the new website without the need for consultants.

It has also completed the movement of document management to the core University infrastructure of SharePoint and has provided training for SharePoint where needed (with a small number ongoing).

Council meetings have been transitioned to enable a more effective use of Teams within better-prepared venues. In consequence, Council meetings previously held in the Irwin St Building are now held in the Senate Room.

The Committee has also provided ongoing advice on more effective and efficient IT approaches that it looks to make core to the operation of Convocation through 2024. It has been a highly effective group making substantive contributions without impacting on members greatly.

Events

Engagement with our members is one of our key activities through the annual Convocation Day and 50th Reunion lunches as well as our two General Meetings and our annual Senate Dinner. All are organised by our Events Committee (led by Dr Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis (BA GradDipEd MEd (Hons) EdD UWA) which makes a major contribution to our activities throughout the year.

Convocation Day

Every year since 2013, the first meeting of Convocation on 4 March 1913 has been celebrated by the planting of a tree on campus by the Warden and the Guild President followed by a sundowner. As well as an oak tree and a red flowering gum, a row of white jacarandas have been planted which will eventually form a spectacular canopy along Convocation Walk on the Saw Ave side of James Oval. Gradually the number who attend has grown from a small to a very large group. While primarily for Convocation members and continuing to be organised by our Events Committee and the Convocation Officer, DAR's recent administrative and funding support has enabled us to expand the number of guests invited to include donors to the university.

The 2023 Convocation Day was held on Sunday 26 February, between 5:30 and 7:30pm in the Sunken Garden, and was attended by 195 members and other invited guests. The event included the annual tree planting near the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Guests were welcomed by Professor Alexandra Ludewig, Head of the School of Humanities representing the Vice Chancellor, the Guild President, Geemal Jayawickrama, and the Warden who MC'd the event.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first play performed in the Sunken Garden — Socrates' Oedipus Rex — guests then moved into the garden, where Associate Professor Lara O'Sullivan of UWA's Classics & Ancient History gave a short talk on Oedipus Rex. This provided an excellent context for an impressive

performance of an excerpt from the play by two members of the Graduate Dramatic Society. A sundowner followed with high quality Guild catering and sponsored wines.

General Meetings

Convocation's two Ordinary General Meetings in Autumn and Spring each year are a means of connecting with graduates and keeping them in touch with developments at UWA through reports from the Vice Chancellor, Guild President and Warden. Over the last decade it has also become the practice to invite a well-known guest speaker to encourage attendance. Prior to the pandemic, in meetings held between 2017 and 2019 the number of attendees averaged about 230 per meeting. However, the impact of Covid when meetings had to be cancelled and the establishment of hybrid meetings reduced in person attendance at meetings as experienced by many other organisations. Hence our Strategic Plan recommended that we refresh the format of Convocation's General Meetings.

In consequence, we have been reviewing the mode (now hybrid), location and format of Convocation's General Meetings. Different venues evaluated to introduce members to different parts of the campus and determine which is most likely to encourage attendance, were the Wesfarmers LT in the Business School, the Indian Ocean Institute and the UWA Club. Those who attended in person were surveyed after each meeting. It is difficult to ascertain whether the lingering impact of the pandemic, the choice of guest speaker, or the venue has the most affect.

The Indian Ocean Institute was the venue in Autumn 2023. UWA Senator Professor Emerita Jane den Hollander, well known for her supportive and very popular leadership as interim Vice Chancellor in the early panic-charged months of the pandemic, gave a thought-provoking speech about the university sector on that occasion, but numbers only reached around 100. A survey of attendees showed that while most respondents believed the speaker exceeded or met their expectations, 50% found the venue average and some complained about parking.

The UWA Club Banquet Hall was the venue in Spring 2023. Hon Madeleine King, Federal Minister for Resources, graduate and past employee of UWA, was the guest speaker. The meeting attracted approximately 265 attendees (150 in person and 180 online), higher than immediate pre-pandemic levels, although it must be noted that the Convocation awards were also presented at this meeting, attracting about 25 attendees who would not normally attend. The survey of attendees found that most respondents believed that the speaker met or exceeded their expectations and 94% believed the venue was above average and indicated their preference for the UWA Club Banquet Hall.

To refresh the format of Convocation's General meetings we are instituting a major change in 2024. The Autumn meeting will become a panel discussion on issues affecting the university sector and the Spring meeting will be a formal AGM with reports from the Vice Chancellor, Guild President and Warden. As previously mentioned, the Autumn 2023 meeting is to be co-hosted by both Convocation Council and UWA's Institute of Public Policy and, in view of State and Commonwealth reviews of the University sector, will focus on 'The Future of the University'.

There are two other points that the analysis of recent Convocation General Meetings reveal. Firstly, the advent of hybrid meetings has enabled members from all over the world to attend, with the number of countries represented rising from 9 to 20 over the last three meetings. Secondly, a very large number of Convocation members send their apologies when unable to attend General Meetings. This has doubled from an average of 350 pre-pandemic to an average of 725 apologies for the two meetings in 2023, despite increased attendance. What does this mean? It appears likely that it signifies the interest these

members have in Convocation, the strength of their sense of connection to UWA and their desire to maintain that connection.

50th Reunion

In 2023 a High Tea was held for 1973 graduates in the restaurant of the University Club in November. 1973 graduate and former Premier of WA, Hon Colin Barnett AC, joined us as guest speaker, regaling guests with tales of his years at UWA and his political life. Our survey of guests revealed that his speech was greatly enjoyed and that the event had exceeded their expectations. They had enjoyed all aspects of the occasion including a prior walking tour of the campus.

This was another of many successful 50th Reunion events that have been held each year by Convocation. We have, however, become increasingly concerned by the fall in the number of attendees, to 47 in 2022 and 36 in 2023. This partly relates to the pandemic and then increasing travel when WA opened its borders. It may also have been affected by increasing costs which must be passed on in registration fees, which we reduced in 2023 by holding a high tea rather than a formal lunch. However, it has become clear that it also relates to the increasing size of the graduate cohort. In 1963, there were 520 degrees conferred at UWA compared with 1,457 in 1973 and this number increased rapidly after the abolition of tuition fees in 1974. As a result, the connection of students with peers in their discipline or faculty cohort became more focussed than in earlier years. Yet it has continued to be the practice to invite all graduates from a year group to their reunion. As one guest said to me at the 2023 High Tea, 'I don't know anyone here'.

In consequence we are in the process of rethinking our approach to reunions. Our surveys of attendees in 2022 and 2023 included a question asking for respondent's preferences and providing suggestions. Approximately 25% of those who attended responded on both occasions. Both groups indicated a slight preference for a formal lunch with guests paying for their wine or an informal sundowner with guests buying their own drinks, over a formal lunch with increased registration price, a reunion with other years every second or third year, or informal Faculty reunions. Discussion at the Joint Committee has indicated that DAR does not have sufficient staff to organise reunions, instead they provide advice if approached by a discipline group or school, who then organise their own reunion.

Senate Dinner

The Senate and Convocation jointly host a dinner for Senators and Councillors each year. In recent years this has been held in the Private Dining Room of the University Club. It is always a very pleasant, convivial occasion, providing the opportunity for the Chancellor to address guests and the Warden to report on Convocation activities and for all to mingle and discuss matters of mutual interest.

Contribute to the advancement of our University, Convocation, higher education & our community

Mentoring/Internship Working Party

Led by Raj Kurup (MEngSc (UWA), MEng (Delft), PhD (Murdoch), MBA (Melbourne), FIE Aust), this working party began meeting in 2022 to develop a plan and process for the most feasible way for Convocation to become involved in mentoring, work integrated learning (WIL), and internship. However, after meeting with staff involved in these areas, it became clear that there were at least 18 sections of UWA involved in mentoring, that limited coordination existed, and that DAR had a Student Career Support and Alumni Connections Working Party underway.

Following discussions with the DVC Education we were also advised that, in the light of UWA's decision to increase its focus on the employability of students, a taskforce had been set up to investigate this area. It was decided that we should await the results. A Director, Education Innovation and Enterprise, was appointed early in 2023 and some restructuring appears to have taken place. Our intention is to meet with the DVC Education and the Director, responsible for the implementation of the recommendations of the taskforce, early in 2024.

In the meantime, during 2023 Councillors were involved in mentoring through the Graduate Research School and DAR's Get Industry Connected project, DAR'S Young Alumni Group, and the DVC Research's Mentorloop programme for Early Career Researchers.

Associated with this, one of the favoured proposals in the Strategic Plan relating to revitalising our Council, was for individual members of Convocation Council to be encouraged to develop a closer working relationship with the graduates, staff, and students of one UWA School with which they have a close affinity. Hence it was decided, with the agreement of the Senior DVC Professor Tim Colmer and the College of Schools who saw the long-term potential of the proposal, that we should initially develop a pilot programme. As an initial result, Councillors have held meetings with the Heads of the Schools of Design, Engineering and Humanities during 2023 and these will be developed further in 2024.

Resources

The purpose of Convocation's Resources Committee (led by Adjunct Professor Senator Warren Kerr AM) is to investigate and make recommendations to Convocation Council regarding the development of sustainable sources of income for Convocation and if approved to implement and monitor the operation of these initiatives.

Memorabilia

The Committee has been investigating the sale of Convocation memorabilia to UWA graduates. At present, there is no easily available avenue for UWA graduates to purchase Convocation memorabilia. Not only would Convocation merchandise have the potential to 'spread the word' about the existence, roles and functions of Convocation, but it could also provide a sustainable source of income to fund Convocation's on-going commitments such as additional scholarship and travel grants.

The aim is to complement the memorabilia successfully sold to students and staff-members, both on campus and online, by the Guild at its shop and by UWA at a store in the Guild Village managed by Craig Mackenzie (UWA's Manager for Campus Operations). Merchandise is mainly aimed at students and staff members.

Discussions with both the Guild and the UWA store indicate that there is an untapped market for sale of memorabilia to UWA graduates which could provide a sustainable source of income for Convocation. Both stores are willing to sell Convocation memorabilia and the UWA store has kindly offered to fund the purchase of the initial items of memorabilia, so that no Convocation funds would need to be invested to commence operations.

The Committee is now deciding what items should initially be offered for sale so that a definite recommendation can be presented to Convocation Council.

Fund Raising

For several years, Convocation's possible involvement in funding raising opportunities has been discussed by the Joint Committee. In 2023, the Resources Committee investigated an opportunity for Convocation to facilitate fundraising for the Reid Library as suggested by the University Librarian, Jill Benn, and the Associate Director, Development DAR, Kamyra Laurenson.

After due consideration, Convocation Council has enthusiastically agreed to support the Reid Library Reading Wall project for the purpose of establishing a Creator-in-Residence in the Reid Library and with the opportunity for Convocation to have naming rights. Support will be provided through a fund-raising campaign, managed by DAR, which will enable donors to have their name inscribed on one of the 140 shelves of the Reading Wall. Details are to be developed further by the Resources Committee in association with the University Librarian.

Conclusion

In summary, 2023 has been a year of revitalisation for Convocation Council.

- Our IT has been reinvigorated through the updating and streamlining of the Convocation website, the implementation of SharePoint for document management, and increasing use of Teams for meetings.
- Our accounting system has been simplified in preparation for its better integration with the University finance system.
- Our two General Meetings each year will have a revitalised structure and content in 2024.
- Our relationships within the university have been strengthened through the Warden and Deputy Warden's regular meetings with the Vice Chancellor and Executive and our pilot programme linking Councillors with UWA Schools.
- Our communications circulation has been increased and building on the response to the Warden's email on the State Government's review of WA universities, a Higher Education e-bulletin has been initiated which will roll out on Convocation's LinkedIn site in March 2024.
- Our highly successful Awards programme continues to support a broad range of UWA students.
- Our nomination of members for Honours continues and their success will now be celebrated each year at a Chancellor's reception to be inaugurated in March 2024.
- Our engagement with our members has been increased through the development and augmentation of Convocation Day.

We await implementation of

- Our proposed changes to the Statute which are intended to revitalise Convocation's governance and fully integrate our accounting system with the University system.
- Our mentoring and internship initiatives which await the University's roll out of an integrated plan.

A significant success story has also been the development and expansion of Council's relationship with DAR through the Chancellor's Joint Committee of Convocation Council and DAR. Elected Convocation Council representatives have been able to raise issues, make suggestions and offer a graduate perspective on activities. In turn, limited only by its resourcing level, DAR has been able to provide Council with expert advice, administrative support for our events and most recently support for a fundraising initiative.

My thanks to the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, the Executive team, and other members of the University, and particularly DAR and the Joint Committee, for their support of Convocation Council and its role in

supporting undergraduates and postgraduates, engaging with graduates, and contributing to the university. Special thanks are due to the Convocation Officer, Juanita Perez, whose expertise in the administration of Convocation is much appreciated.



Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM
Warden of Convocation