



# In Touch

## From the Principal



Greetings to students of SOCS completing second semester units and commencing third semester. Our great concern is that your studies will indeed stimulate your learning and help equip you to serve the Lord and the communities and churches where you live and work. As you know SOCS is rather unique as a specialist educator of lay people for their life, work and varied ministries in church and community organisations.

SOCS continues on an exciting trajectory of change and growth, as it must to survive as a functioning organism in a changing and growing world. There are many people who have contributed to this growth. Prior to my appointment, Kara Martin as Director and Peter Armati as Administrator had already begun a fine work in steadying SOCS after a period of uncertainty. I am deeply grateful to them for their dedicated work. Grant Maple has brought both theological and educational depth to his appointment as Director, to the change of focus towards degree and postgraduate programs, to academic quality control and to the creative stimulation of distance educational modules. Distance programs have reached to most parts of Australia, bringing an Evangelical theological education within reach of people with many church

affiliations. I am regularly impressed by new entrepreneurial ideas coming from Grant. Aaron Rose has brought his considerable IT skills into the support of student learning as well as further developing the new role of Registrar. Central to SOCS are our experienced and well qualified lecturers. I am deeply grateful to them and to our volunteer staff team, including Thomas Smith and Ian Walker, for the consistent participation and expertise they have provided again this year.

The Australian College of Theology, with whom SOCS is affiliated, is also undergoing substantial changes. ACT now has self-accrediting status and is moving in the direction of recognition as a specialist theology university. ACT has also recently rationalised its Diploma and Advanced Diploma requirements, bringing them into line with international expectations for degrees and diplomas.

I will be retiring as Principal of SOCS (and Master of Robert Menzies College) at the end of 2011 and this will be my last contribution to *In Touch*. A high point for me each year has been the SOCS graduation ceremony at which we have learned about the life, work and ministry of SOCS students. It is exciting, encouraging, challenging and humbling to learn about the many and tremendously varied ways in which SOCS students are employing their theological education to the glory of God in local communities in cities and country areas across Australia. This is what makes the endeavours of SOCS most meaningful.

My successor as Master of Robert Menzies College, Mr Bruce Pollard, takes up his appointment in January 2012.

Chris Bellenger

## DECEMBER 2011

From the Principal	1
Important Changes	1
2012 Lecture program	2
Library Progress	2
Fundraising	2
Enrolment dates	2
AUQA audit	3
Gap Program	3
Accommodation	3
Semester 2 results	3
From the Registrar	3

## Important changes to ACT Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses

The following changes have been made by the Australian College of Theology to its awards in order to bring them into line with the Australian Qualifications Framework:

- The Diploma of Theology & Diploma of Ministry have been revised from being a 64 credit point award to a 48 credit point award.
- The Advanced Diplomas of Theology and Ministry have been revised from being 96 credit point awards to a 64 credit point awards.
- A second pathway has been introduced to the Diploma awards to give accelerated progression. This involves 32 credit points of degree level studies for a Diploma and 48 credit points for an Advanced Diploma. These also form early exit points from degree-level studies.

These changes have led to a reduction in the number of units required for the

completion of these awards and to a revision of the award structure. (See the New Regulations insert in this newsletter.)

The Australian College of Theology has announced the following transition arrangements:

- Students are not to be disadvantaged by the changes in course structures. All candidates have the opportunity to transfer to the new version of their course. Students who have 64cps of 200 level units may wish to consider the combined DipTh/DipMin under the new regulations.
- Students taking up studies after a break of 12 months or more (except for those under suspension of candidature) will come under the new regulations immediately.
- Those who have failed to complete an award in the maximum time and who are granted an extension of candidature will come under the new regulations.
- Students commencing in 2012 will come under the new regulations.
- Students wishing to transfer to the Undergraduate Diploma (Pathway 2) and Undergraduate Advanced Diploma (Pathway 2) will be dealt with under the existing arrangement for credit transfer between 200 and 300-400 level units (see the Credit Transfer and Recognised Prior Learning Policy on the Australian College of Theology website at [www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au)).

If you have any questions concerning how you should complete your Diploma or Advanced Diploma, please do not hesitate to contact either the SOCS Academic Dean, Grant Maple (Tel: (02) 9936 6021) or the SOCS Registrar, Aaron Rose (Tel: (02) 9936 6020 or Email: [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au))

## 2012 lecture program

In the light of the changes to the Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses, the following changes are to be introduced into the lecture program from next semester:

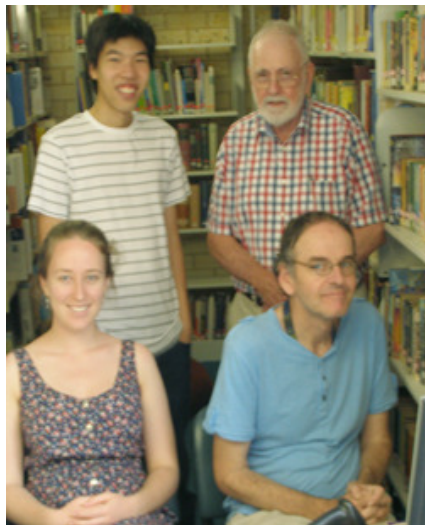
1. In future SOCS will provide lectures only for degree and graduate-level

units, unless there is a 200-level cohort that reaches an economic level (4-5 students). This is made necessary by the ACT rule that prohibits three cohorts in the same class group and our need to provide a 25% differentiation between 300-400 and 500-600 cohorts.

2. Diploma-level students will be encouraged either (a) to study online, or (b) to follow Pathway 2 (300/400-level units), or (c) enrol in 200-level units and have access to 300-400 level lectures as well as 200-level online material.
3. Additional learning assistance will be provided for Diploma-level students studying in any of the above modes.
4. Because this involves a cost saving, the 200-level fees will be reduced from the ACT recommended level of \$1104 to \$999 (a 9.5% discount). This will also make the cost of Diploma pathways 1 and 2 almost the same.

For details of the lecture program for 2012, visit the SOCS web site – [www.socs.org.au](http://www.socs.org.au)

## Library progress



Honorary Librarian Ian Walker (front right), RMC Librarian Belinda Bosward (front left) with assistants Evan Williams (back right) & Long Vu (back left) recataloguing the library.

## Searchable catalogue

SOCS has installed new library software which will provide a searchable database of our 11,000 single titles and our journal holdings. At present the former MCSI collection is being re-catalogued and integrated with the SOCS/RMC collection. For the benefit of the RMC Members the cataloguing system is also being changed

from the Dewey classification system to the Library of Congress to correspond to the Macquarie University Library system. This process will continue into 2012.

From February 1 next year, the new Liberty catalogue will be available online for all our students. It is anticipated that, by then, most of the MCSI collection and all recent acquisitions will have been re-catalogued. For the time being, the SOCS catalogue will continue to be available in spreadsheet form. All SOCS students will be kept informed of progress.

## e-books

During 2012 it is anticipated that SOCS will also begin to introduce e-books. This will enable books and other material to be delivered simultaneously to multiple PCs, MACs, Kindles, iPads, tablets and other digital devices. This will be of particular benefit to students studying in more remote parts of Australia and overseas.

Once we have this in place, we will have online sessions on how to use these new facilities.

## Fundraising

To enable these library developments SOCS is seeking support from its community for an additional \$5,000 to enable us to employ additional library assistants over the summer period to accelerate the progress in re-cataloguing and integrating the two library collections (see the enclosed appeal letter). We would really appreciate if you could see your way clear to assisting us in this in order to help our students gain the most from their studies. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

## Enrolment dates for 2012 units

*January 6 for the following January-February intensives:*

### DM214/414/614 Chaplaincy in

**Educational Settings:** Drs Thomas Smith and Grant Maple – 16-20 January 2012.

**IN432 Science and Christian Belief:** Dr Frank Stootman – 6-10 February 2012

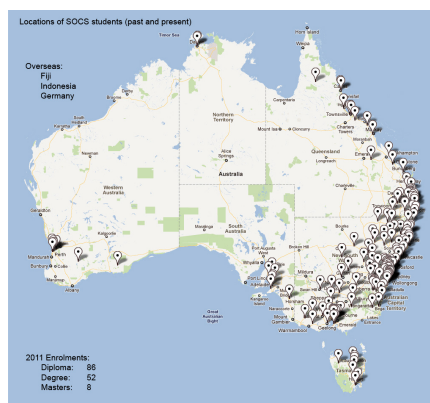
**PE403/603 Christian Social Ethics:** Rev Greg Burke, Dr Grant Maple and Rev David Sandifer – 6-10 February 2012.

February 10 for all semester 1 lecture and online units

Please note: Lecture units with insufficient enrolments at the closing date for enrolments are likely to be cancelled. So enrol early to avoid disappointment.

## AUQA audit

As an affiliated college of the Australian College of Theology, SOCS was part of the Australian Universities Quality Assurance (AUQA) panel audit in mid-October. The panel appeared impressed by the extensive reach of SOCS through the distance program (see map) and by the steps that are being taken to provide a sense of community, stimulating online learning and ready access to resources through the web site and library.



Overall, the panel was very complimentary about the standard of the ACT courses which are being delivered by the eighteen affiliated colleges and about the advanced planning that will take the ACT to specialised university status in the near future.

## GAP program

As part of SOCS' mission to equip God's people for life, work and ministry, SOCS is offering a GAP year program for young people who have left school and are deferring tertiary studies while remaining at home in regional Australia. The program leads to the Diploma of Theology or Diploma of Ministry. It will be run

online over three semesters between February 2012 and January 2013.

A special SOCS tutor will assist students adjust to tertiary level studies and offer

ongoing help over the eight units. Although the Diploma may be completed in one year, those wishing to study only part-time or to take a break will be able to complete this award any time up until 2020.

The advantage to the students will be a mentored exposure to the demands of tertiary studies. The advantage to regional churches will be to have an enthusiastic young person who is well versed in the Old and New Testaments and in Christian Thought.

More details are available from [socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:socs@rmc.nsw.edu.au).



## Residential accommodation



The new accommodation at Robert Menzies College is available for theological students. There are now four levels of accommodation ranging from a self-catering shared bathroom option through to a fully catered en-suite room in the new buildings.

It is now possible to enrol as a full-time live-in student at SOCS for any of the diplomas and degrees. Lectures will be offered weekly in the evenings or by online study. You can be part of a vibrant international community on the Macquarie University campus.

For further information visit [rmc.org.au/welcome/accommodation/](http://rmc.org.au/welcome/accommodation/)

## Semester 2 results

It is again pleasing to see the excellent results achieved by SOCS students. When the fact that 70% are studying by distance, often in places where access to study materials is not easy, it is a credit to the determination of our people that they have done so well.

You may also be interested to know that there also continues to be a shift in enrolments towards higher level awards which are more demanding. The results in Biblical Languages continue to be truly outstanding.

## From the Registrar

We will be starting to standardise examination practices as some ACTH moderators now prefer to receive correspondence electronically. A number of exams in Semester 2 were done on non A4 paper which resulted in the reporting processing being slowed down considerably. New guidelines regarding what type of paper to use for examinations will be included in next semester's instructions to examination supervisors. Also the examination questions MUST be included with your answers so ensure the marker and ACTH moderator knows the questions you are answering. Again, this will be included in letters to examination supervisors.

SOCS Students and Friends can now 'like' us on **Facebook**. Search for 'School of Christian Studies' and click 'like'.



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Twitter: @SOCSONline Skype: SOCS.Registrar

## New Regulations

### Diploma of Theology

#### Pathway 1: 200 level units

48 credit points over 1.5 years F/T or P/T equivalent:

- 4-8 cps Old Testament introduction (either OT200; or OT201 and OT202)
- 4-8 cps New Testament introduction (either NT200; or NT201 and NT202)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH201, CH202 or one of CH205-209)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH210 or TH211)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps in Theology
  - 4 cps in Church History
  - 8 cps minimum in Electives.

#### Pathway 2: 300-400 level units

(to follow this Pathway, students must meet degree level entry requirements)

32 credit points over 1 year F/T or P/T equivalent

- 8 cps Old Testament (OT301 and OT302)
- 8 cps New Testament (NT301 and NT302)
- 8 cps of Christian Thought (TH/CH/PE) at 300-400 level
- 4 cps from LA, OT, NT, TH, CH or PE at 300-400 level
- 4 cps Elective from any unit field at 300-400 level.

### Diploma of Ministry

#### Pathway 1: 200 level units

48 credit points over 1.5 years F/T or P/T equivalent:

- 4-8 cps Old Testament introduction (either OT200; or OT201 and OT202)
- 4-8 cps New Testament introduction (either NT200; or NT201 and NT202)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH201, CH202 or one of CH205-209)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH210 or TH211)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis
  - 8 cps in Ministry and Practice
  - 8 cps minimum in Electives.

#### Pathway 2: 300-400 level units

(to follow this Pathway, students must meet degree level entry requirements)

32 credit points over 1 year F/T or P/T equivalent

- 8 cps Old Testament (OT301 and OT302)
- 8 cps New Testament (NT301 and NT302)
- 4 cps of Christian Thought (TH/CH/PE) at 300-400 level
- 8 cps in Ministry and Practice (EM/PC/DM)
- 4 cps Elective from any unit field at 300-400 level.

### Advanced Diploma of Theology

#### Pathway 1: 200 level units plus 300-400 level units

64 credit points over 2 years F/T or P/T equivalent, 16 cps of which must be completed at 300-400 level:

- 4-8 cps Old Testament introduction (either OT200; or OT\*01 and OT\*02)
- 4-8 cps New Testament introduction (either NT200; or NT\*01 and NT\*02)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH\*01, CH\*02, CH\*05 or CH206-209)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH210, TH211, or TH410-414)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps in Theology
  - 4 cps in Church History
  - 24 cps minimum in Electives, including a maximum of 8 cps Type B Electives.

#### Pathway 2: 300-400 level units

(to follow this Pathway, students must meet degree level entry requirements)

48 credit points over 1.5 years F/T or P/T equivalent at 300-400 level

- 8 cps Old Testament (OT301 and OT302)
- 8 cps New Testament (NT301 and NT302)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH301-305)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH401-404)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis at 300-400 level
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis at 300-400 level
  - 4 cps in Theology at 300-400 level
  - 4 cps in Church History at 300-400 level

- 8 cps Electives at 300-400 level, including a maximum of 4 cps Type B Electives
- 4 cps Guided Spiritual Formation (PC249/PC429)
- 12 cps minimum in Electives, including a maximum of 8 cps Type B Electives.

## Advanced Diploma of Ministry

### Pathway 1: 200 level units plus 300-400 level units

64 credit points over 2 years F/T or P/T equivalent, 16 cps of which must be completed at 300-400 level:

- 4-8 cps Old Testament introduction (either OT200; or OT\*01 and OT\*02)
- 4-8 cps New Testament introduction (either NT200; or NT\*01 and NT\*02)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH\*01, CH\*02, CH\*05 or CH206-209)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH210, TH211, or TH410-414)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis
  - 16 cps in Ministry and Practice (EM/PC/DM)

(to follow this Pathway, students must meet degree level entry requirements)

48 credit points over 1.5 years F/T or P/T

equivalent at 300-400 level

- 8 cps Old Testament (OT301 and OT302)
- 8 cps New Testament (NT301 and NT302)
- 4 cps of Church History (CH301-305)
- 4 cps of Theology (TH401-404)
- Additionally the following units are required:
  - 4 cps of Old Testament exegesis at 300-400 level
  - 4 cps of New Testament exegesis at 300-400 level
  - 12 cps in Ministry and Practice (EM/PC/DM) at 300-400 level (may include PC449)
  - 4 cps Electives from any field at 300-400 level.