

Editorial

The theme of this issue of the journal—*From Aspiration to Action*—forms a bridge from last issue's theme—*Aspiration-Access-Achievement*—to that of the next issue—*Design for Student Success*—and highlights the movement from building aspirations to taking institutional action for commencing students within the widening participation context. In this issue, as the *Feature*, we are fortunate to be able to present edited highlights of a wide-ranging interview with Professor Jane den Hollander of Deakin University, who at the time of the interview, was the newest Vice-Chancellor in Australia. Professor den Hollander, whose own university experiences parallel those of many of the students currently being targeted by the widening participation agenda, discusses the challenges of implementing an optimal first year experience within both the context of that agenda and the constraints of an ever-reducing resource base.

The *Articles* address student diversity through a focus on student expectations, the role of first year advisors and interpreting good practice principles for English language proficiency. The article by Scutter and colleagues provides multi-institutional data on the important aspect of student expectations. Such a comprehensive database provides institutions with a valid corpus of information against which they can evaluate their transition and FYE programs. The article presents an initial analysis of data from an ongoing project. Burnett and Larmar explore the application of the First Year Advisor approach to improving first year engagement and retention, providing concrete examples of how to improve the student experience in a sustainable way. The essentially theoretical article by Harper and her colleagues—but one that still converts theory into practice—builds on the work of Murray published in the inaugural issue of this journal. It provides further

insights into interpreting the DEEWR report on *Good practice principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities* aimed at facilitating discussion within institutions as they attempt to translate this complex report into practice.

The *Practice Reports* demonstrate how an assortment of activities, involving a diverse range of students, can all contribute to the common outcome of improving sustainable transition programs. Benske and colleagues support widening participation using an approach underpinned by the forming of sustainable partnerships among key stakeholders facilitated by multiple communities of practice. Elnager and colleagues report on how providing students with leadership development opportunities can inform the design and implementation of transition programs. Gill and her colleagues demonstrate that, by adopting a *just-in-time* and *just-for-me* approach to a peer and academic support program, it is possible to achieve a smooth transition into university.

In the *Articles* and *Practice Reports*, the authors have taken aspirations, converted them, or provided opportunities for institutions to convert them, into actions, reporting these innovations in ways that make them accessible to the sector. What is important for the healthy development of meaningful research and scholarship in FYHE activities and pleasing for us to see is not only the institutional level focus of nearly all of the contributions but also the emphasis on the provision of sustainable processes. What is also pleasing at this early stage in the life of the journal is to see an international flavour with contributions from New Zealand and Scotland.

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The next issue of the journal will draw on the *Refereed Papers* and *Nuts and Bolts* presentations at the 14th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference 29 June-1 July, 2011 in Fremantle, Australia.

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