



Future directions

Directions for the future of U3A Dunedin have now been decided.


At a recent Board meeting, the report of the Policy Sub-committee on the returned forms of the 2005 Survey was accepted and discussed. In accordance with the wishes expressed by members in their survey forms, the Board intends to effect the following:

1. To organise, as at present, three to five lecture courses in each series for a maximum of about 50 people in each.
2. To organise, with the help of the general membership, small study / discussion groups on a variety of topics, both academic and practical.
3. To arrange, when appropriate, occasional single lectures catering for a larger audience.
4. To continue to limit the membership of U3A Dunedin to 500, with a waiting list if necessary.
5. There is no plan at present to initiate a second group.
6. To maximise course offerings by repeating over-filled courses.
7. To give priority in the ballot to those members who missed out on their first choice in the previous series.

The Board thanks all those who returned their survey forms, saying these have been most helpful in planning for the future. It also stressed the importance of continual communication between the Board and the general membership of U3A and urged members to fill out their evaluation forms for each course they attend, even if they do not wish to add much detail.

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

Address: C/o The Secretary,

 5a Fifield St, Roslyn, Dunedin

email: graysinn@clear.net.nz

Chairman: Wilson Daniel. ph: 488 6322

Secretary: Judith Gray ph: 467 2619

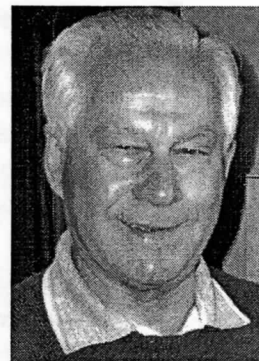
IN THIS ISSUE:

Looking Ahead (to Series 3)	2
Our gift to University Library	2
Summary of 2005 Survey results	3
Course reports	4
University Update	4

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Our growing pains are treated as important decisions made

From modest beginnings, U3A Dunedin membership has increased substantially over the past 12 years. Recently it has experienced growing pains. These have prompted your Board to make important decisions for the future, based largely on members' responses to questions and issues raised in the Survey conducted towards the end of 2005.



Wilson Daniel

Serious efforts have been made to carry out members' expressed wishes as closely as possible. Whereas the January 2006 Newsletter contained sample comments on U3A programmes to date, this issue [page 3] includes a full and detailed summary by the Policy Committee of the Survey results. I invite you to read and reflect on this carefully. The Board will always welcome additional input from members.

The phrase 'Variety's the very spice of life' comes from the 18th-century English poet, William Cowper, and could well be applied to the wide range of topics in course offerings for Series 2 described in the enclosed brochures. Enjoy selecting from this interesting and appetising smorgasbord!

— Wilson, Daniel, Chairman.

ADMINISTRATION

Choose courses for Series 2

Brochures for the Series 2 courses for 2006 are enclosed with this newsletter. There are five full courses, covering a broad range of topics, and in addition the Book Discussion Group is offered again this year.

Please remember when completing the enrolment forms that although you are free to submit several application choices, each person may only apply for **one first choice**. Keep a note of the order of your preferences. Your cheque should accompany your application forms. The closing date for applications is Wednesday, 10 May 2006. If you have not received a letter from Rodgers and Associates by 22 May advising that your application has been unsuccessful, you may assume that you have been accepted for your first choice course.

Should you have any questions about your acceptance or otherwise after 22 May, you should contact the Secretary, Judith Gray (telephone 467 2619 or email to <graysinn@clear.net.nz>) as all enrolment and course material will have been passed on to her by Rodgers and Associates.

If you find before a course begins that you are unable to attend at all, please get in touch with the Secretary as there is likely to be someone to take your place. Absences from single sessions should be reported to your Course Organiser.

Donation to University Library

As members will be well aware, since April 2003, U3A Dunedin has been part of a formal agreement with the University of Otago to provide short, non-credit courses. Many of the course presenters have in fact been current or retired members of the staff of the University. The arrangement has been of mutual benefit, and the Board of U3A has greatly appreciated the association between the two bodies.

In recognition of this partnership the Board decided during 2005 that it wished to make some tangible acknowledgement and resolved to donate the sum of \$5,000 to the University of Otago Library for the purposes of enhancing the collection of library material in areas of need, with the hope that this might become an ongoing donation. After consultation with appropriate people it was agreed to target the gift to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. In addition, the Board also wished to recognise the large contribution made to U3A by Dr Albert Moore, a former member of the staff of that department.

— Judith Gray, Secretary

LOOKING AHEAD

Plans for Series 3

Planning for Series 3 is now well under way. The Russian course will continue with Part 2, which focuses on the social and political life of the post-Stalinist era. Literature is represented by Professor Alan Horsman, who will lecture on *Hamlet* and other plays of that period written by Shakespeare; various speakers (including Professor Lawrence Jones, Professor Jocelyn Harris and Dr Chris Prentice) will present a course on 'Contemporary New Zealand Fiction'; and the members of the Book Group will continue their discussions.

To balance this predominantly arts fare, we hope to have a science course, possibly on evolution, but planning for this is in the very early stages. It would also be good to set up another small study/discussion group and the Board would welcome any suggestions for topics and help in organising one — just contact a member of the Board if you have any ideas suitable for such a group.

— Jenny Laws, Programme Co-ordinator

EDITORIAL

To be . . . filled in . . . or not to be?

The Board of U3A Dunedin appeals for evaluation forms to be returned at the end of courses. Feedback helps to improve topics and their delivery to members. Please do not undervalue your comments.

From a class of 47 who attended 'The Culmination of Shakespeare's Career' only 19 forms were given back. All these gave a most enthusiastic response, and it seemed from oral comments that those who didn't provide their personal views concurred — but they didn't fill in forms because they had no criticisms of the course. (Similarly, only 37 forms were returned from 53 members who attended the re-run last year of the course on justice in New Zealand.)

The board wants to receive all your views, congratulatory or critical, or else it risks occasionally making skewed appraisals of the majority opinion. ('Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows,' as the Bard observed in *The Tempest*.)

Your assistance filling in forms may enable the Board to design future courses 'like a barber's chair that fits all buttocks.' (*All's Well That Ends Well*.) Please don't treat those forms as junk mail or just an unnecessary chore near the end of a course. Agreed? Fine! — 'Exit, pursued by a bear.' (*Twelfth Night*.)

Summary of members' views

THAT 2005 SURVEY

A summary of all the comments made by U3A Dunedin members in last year's survey has been discussed by the Policy Subcommittee of the Board. Jenny Laws, its convenor, reports the following points that emerged on each of the questions.



Question 1. *Would you like to have more lecture courses of the type already offered?*

- a. Not surprisingly, most members would like as many lecture type courses as possible. But there was a widespread recognition of the difficulties of providing more than 5 or 6 per series because that would put too much strain on our resources, particularly those of the University.
- b. There were pleas that popular courses should be repeated.
- c. Most members were very satisfied with the variety of courses now offered, but a few wanted more rigorous academic ones, whereas others expressed a wish for more general topics.

Question 2. *Would you like to have more small discussion / study groups?*

- a. This question tended to polarise members. Clearly small groups do not appeal to everyone, but it was encouraging to note the number of members who were prepared to support them.
- b. Several people would like to join such a group if the topics were to be widened to include more practical subjects, such as photography.
- c. When appropriate, small study groups could follow large lecture courses.
- d. Small groups could meet in members' houses, rather than at Knox or Salmond.
- e. There should be more effective advertising of study/discussion groups to encourage those who might feel intimidated. The Newsletter could help here.

Question 3. *Would you support the idea of occasional day-time single lectures?*

- a. There was overwhelming support for the idea of single lectures to a large audience.
- b. However, a few members thought that these would

not be in the spirit of U3A as member participation would be difficult.

- c. The point was also made that by organising large single lectures U3A could be in competition with several other groups in Dunedin.

Question 4. *Would you support the idea of limiting the numbers in the present U3A group?*

- a. Although there was a general reluctance to see the numbers capped permanently, most people realised that this was probably the only practical solution to the problem of growing numbers.
- b. There was a strong feeling against splitting the present set-up into 2 or more groups. And some members thought that the formation of a second group would inevitably lead to that one being less prestigious than our present one.

Other Suggestions and Comments

It is worth noting that throughout nearly all the returns there was a warmth of feeling towards the Board and a realisation of the difficulties involved in planning for the future. Other suggestions included:

- o There should be a limit on the number of courses that individuals can attend.
- o Those who miss out on their first choice in one series should be given priority in the next series.
- o The technical equipment should be up-dated.

Literary Competition

The U3A Central Coast (New South Wales) is running its 12th annual Australia and New Zealand Literary Competition, with entries closing on August 25, 2006. There are prizes of \$200, \$100 and \$50 in two sections: Short Story (fiction). 500 - 2,000 words, and Article (non-fiction), 550 - 2,000 words. Winners will be notified by December 31, 2007. All entrants must be financial members of U3A. [Other conditions and entry form available by request to the Secretary, Judith Gray.]

Newsletter edited by Geoff Adams

Phone: 467-2278

Email: hgadams@slingshot.co.nz

Elizabeth Timms — U3A Dunedin Board Liaison

U3A Dunedin is grateful for the assistance from Dr Claire Matthewson (Director, Summer School and Advisor, Distance Learning and Continuing Education, University of Otago) in producing this newsletter.

COURSES REVIEWED

Medieval World

Clearly, from the few members taking part in all our small study/discussion groups, there is a reluctance by many to join such courses, reports Jenny Laws. 'But given time and persistence, I hope such reluctance will diminish.'

Her optimism is based on the enthusiasm shown by the study group on 'The Medieval World' in the last term of 2005 — an enthusiasm that increased as the course proceeded. 'Near the end some members admitted that this course had not been their first choice but that they were then delighted that they had taken the plunge and hoped there would be more such courses in the future.'

What most appealed was the challenge of doing research on a subject of their own choice related to the title of the course, organising the material and presenting a paper (40 to 45 minutes in length.) For some of the group this was an entirely new experience, but all the contributions were of a high standard. This gave rise to another satisfying aspect — the opportunity to learn from others and have time for questions and discussion. The friendliness and informality of a small group was much appreciated and soon dispelled any nervousness.

Is our justice just?

In the last term of 2005 the popular 2004 course 'Is Justice in Aotearoa New Zealand Just?' was repeated. There were three changes in presenters: William Wright, former Crown Prosecutor (replacing David Robinson), Family Court Judge Mary O'Dwyer (replacing District Court Judge Stephen O'Driscoll) on the judicial perspective, and Moya McConnell, Re-storative Justice Co-ordinator, and Judy Logan, Victim Adviser from the Dunedin District Court (replacing Assoc. Prof. Geoffrey Hall) giving perspectives on victims and sentencing.

The presenters from 2004 had amplified their offerings, which were very well received. All speakers were of a uniformly high standard and delivered skilfully informative presentations, which generated lively interaction and discussion.

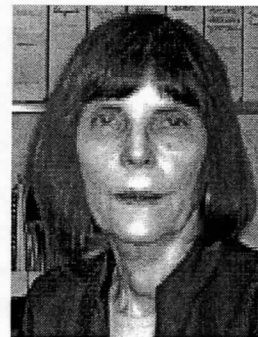
The 37 evaluation forms received contained unanimously positive responses and expressed appreciation of the speakers' enthusiasm and thoroughness and care of presentation. Special mention was made of their ability to combine and share personal and professional experience and practice as well as theory, as experts in their individual fields of law; to stimulate and hold attention and interest of the course participants and to deal with their material in a thought-provoking way, liberally spiced with humour and informality.

— Wilson Daniel.

UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Gift for Library

The University Library was delighted to receive the generous support from U3A of funds to purchase library books. Theology and religious studies have been selected as the subject area to benefit from this substantial gift.



Dr Claire Matthewson

In consultation with Professor Paul Trebilco, books will be selected in the areas of Biblical Studies, Christian Thought and History, Pastoral Theology and Religious Studies. The focus will be on very recently published books of broad interest, rather than those that relate only to very specialised research interests.

— Claire Matthewson

Shakespearean delights

As expected, 'The Culmination of Shakespeare's Career' course (October 6 – November 10 2005) was a most successful course — vintage Alan Horsman. It was attended by 47 members. All the evaluation forms [19] gave a most enthusiastic response.

A few people mentioned the lack of time for discussion, but with the showing of two-and-a-half Shakespeare plays it would have been very difficult to fit this in. Any other criticism was directed at the poor technical quality of some of the recordings borrowed from the University Library — a point worth noting by any future course organisers. The films themselves were excellent, especially *King Lear*.

— Jenny Laws

NOTICE OF AGM

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held at Salmond Hall, Knox Street, Dunedin, on Thursday, 6 July 2006, immediately following a luncheon which will commence at 12.15pm.

Nominations for membership of the Board for 2006-7 will be welcome and nomination forms are available from Judith Gray (tel. 467- 2619 or email.) Nominations close with the Secretary on Friday, 23 June 2006.

If you wish to attend the annual luncheon, please complete the form enclosed with this newsletter and return it to Rodgers & Associates, PO Box 6200, Dunedin North (with your cheque made out to Rodgers & Associates) no later than Friday, 23 June 2006.