

BSW SINGAPORE

NEWSLETTER

SEMESTER 2, 2006

Welcome to semester 2, 2006. It is hoped that your studies are progressing well. We, at Monash, had a busy time around the commencement of semester 1 but things have since settled back into a routine.

In the last newsletter we reported on the graduation of our first cohort of students from the BSW Singapore. It has now become known that they all have moved into the workforce and have commenced their professional life. They will formally graduate at a Monash graduation ceremony to be held in Singapore on Saturday 9 September 2006.

There was a graduation ceremony held at the Clayton Campus on 18 May 2006. A number of students graduated with their BSW and our first Honours students also graduated. Kathryn Voutier and Kate Lawson shared the Honours Prize. At MSW level the Jacobsen Family Prize went to Mary Ann Vella and Vernon Keegan.

We have two of your student colleagues undertaking their final year on campus in Melbourne. Lynette Chan and Jessica Chan write that:

“Making the transition of studying from a distance learning mode to that of an on-campus student in Monash (Caulfield campus) is demanding, interesting and challenging!

Amidst many adjustments to the weather, food and cuisine, missing our loved ones, the political perspectives, an increase in the expenditure column of our finances which reaches deep into our pockets, there is also the difference in the learning and teaching styles.

New concepts and ideas were introduced, some of which seemed akin to Greek to both of us. Thankfully, with the aid of the lecturers and some kind course mates, we have managed to grasp a better understanding to the topic. It is also a bonus to have course mates hailing from different cultures and countries – their experiences and insights has definitely widened our perspectives and added to our learning curve.

No doubt, the gap between the two perspectives (Singapore and Australia) is evident. Nevertheless, it is our hope to extract the best of both worlds to make this learning experience an enriching one and to equip ourselves to be better people-helpers.”

On May 1, 2006, social work staff attended a launch of the new book *The Truth is Longer Than a Lie*, written by Dr Neerosh Mudaly and Professor Chris Goddard. This book, published by Jessica Kingsley, profiles the child's perspective on the experience of child abuse and neglect. The book outlines how children make meaning of their experiences of abuse and offer feedback about the systems designed to protect them.

At the same function, the National Research Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse was also launched. The vision of this Centre, located within the Monash Social Work Department and a joint initiative with the Australian Childhood Foundation, is to create a collaborative culture of inquiry that will assist in preventing child abuse and inform better policy and practice responses once child abuse has occurred. The research aims to resource change for children and young people. For further details of current activities you can check the website www.nrcpca.monash.org. Email contacts are via nrcpca@med.monahs.edu.au.

On the fieldwork front, Peiyi has been working throughout semester 1 to ensure that Block 1 placements are set up for June and final placements for September. The fieldwork team based at Monash welcomes two new faces – Mr Chien Vu and Ms Andrea Evans. Both bring to the fieldwork team a wealth of practice experiences – Chien in the field of drug and alcohol abuse and Andrea from child protection and child and family welfare. They are both enriching the fieldwork perspective.

In late May a fieldwork workshop was held in Singapore attended by all students undertaking placement in 2006. On the day before this workshop, a workshop on supervision and managing performance was offered to field supervisors. This is becoming a regular activity and helps to forge the links between Monash and the Singapore field of practice. In the fieldwork workshop we spent time covering the development of the Learning Agreement for placement. Peiyi did a very helpful presentation about the SMART framework as a guide for learning agreements – if any student missed this presentation they should contact Peiyi directly for information.

Accreditation continues to be the main focus of our work on the BSW Singapore and of the collaborative dialogue between Monash and SSTI, our intent being to achieve full accreditation of the BSW Singapore in 2006. One aspect of this process has been the establishment of a Board of Studies for Singapore. A Board of Studies acts in an advisory capacity to the Department, and the Singapore Board will be a fully convened sub-committee of the Monash Board of Studies. Dr Ng Guat Tin, from Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore, has accepted the position of Chair of the Board. Members have also been appointed from VWOs, SSTI, tutors and students. The inaugural meeting is scheduled for July 2006.

Another major focus of our collaboration is the development of the Honours programme from 2007. Planning is underway for the Honours programme to be offered from 2007. SSTI will keep you updated regarding progress of this programme and also of the entry prerequisites.

A reminder that the July workshops will be held on Friday July 14 and Saturday July 15. All students are required to attend the workshop for subjects they are enrolled in. Exemptions from the workshop must be obtained **in advance** through the co-ordinator. A preview session for the BSW Singapore will be held at SSTI on Wednesday evening, July 12 – details will be available from SSTI.