

Editorial

This issue of the Global Journal of Engineering Education (GJEE), Vol.14. No.3, completes the second full volume of the journal (three issues) since its change of publisher. Formerly published by the UNESCO International Centre for Engineering Education (UICEE) that was based at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia (1994-2008), the Journal is now published by the World Institute for Engineering and Technology Education (WIETE), located a few hundred metres from Monash University. This issue consists of seven peer-reviewed original research articles coming from authors representing Australia, Finland, Taiwan and the USA.

The article entitled *It's a man's world: the academic staff gender disparity in engineering in 21st Century Australia* by our own Associate Editor, Dr Ian R. Dobson, who presently wears two hats (one Finnish, one Australian), is particularly recommended to our readers, as it examines the academic staff gender disparity in engineering through an analysis of Australian university staff statistics. We have to recognise and acknowledge, with regret, that engineering is still a heavily male-dominated profession, and this is also reflected in the low proportion of female to male engineering academics. In the final paragraph of this article, Dr Dobson draws a number of interesting conclusions, which may be of particular interest and relevance to those colleagues who hold managerial positions and are responsible for recruitment of new staff.

Contemporary academia has changed very much due to the recent global financial crisis, with a further erosion of ever diminishing budgets. Much is said by politicians about international cooperation and the future impact of emerging economies in the Asia-Pacific region. White papers on the importance of Asia in the 21st Century are mushrooming, but this importance is not being reflected in university budgets. In particular, significant funds should be set aside for international cooperation and international travel. On the contrary, international travel by academics has gradually been reduced to a pitiful level. I have written on this topic on many occasions in the past, emphasising the notion that there is no better way to realise international contact than a face-to-face interaction between academics. Over the last 25 years, I have organised tens of international conferences all over the globe, and almost every conference resulted in many international research and development projects due to personal contacts established at those conferences.

As a rich country, Australia should put its money where its mouth is in the promotion of academic contacts, because academics are the best suited to establish working contacts - contacts which are usually followed by business activities. And yet, according to recent statistics, Australia was ranked only 10th in the world in 2011 for the number of international meetings organised on its soil. There has been an outcry in Australia about the critical situation of its tourism industry, and yet there are no subsidies for international cooperation to be realised on Australian soil. Further, beautiful Australian cities, such as Sydney and Melbourne are ranked 15th and 16th respectively as the top meeting cities in the world in 2011. This situation must be remedied immediately if we really want to be in the game.

In releasing this issue, I wish to thank our contributors for their excellent articles and the international referees who contributed their time by reviewing these articles. It is our hope that this issue will become a valuable reference source, with a compendium of useful information. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Dianne Q. Nguyen and Dr Ian R. Dobson for their invaluable contribution to the release of this issue.

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