Welcome to the Bachelor of Health Science Newsletter for 2009.

As the year is fast drawing to a close we hope that you have enjoyed your year of study and that it has been productive.

Exams and final assignments are fast approaching and we wish you well at this stressful time of the year.

We will be moving later in the year, in December, to our new location. We will be located in our new offices in the South Wing and look forward to continuing our service to you in our new location.

The School of Medicine has now restructured as we previously advised you last year and there are now 5 Cluster groups. Social Health Science belongs to the Flinders Prevention, Promotion and Primary Health Care Cluster, a mouthful I know but this change better reflects our position in the School.

The Department would like to congratulate one of our International students, Mr Zheng Nana Shan pictured. Zheng represented all Flinders University International students in September at a Conference in Canberra. He presented Julia Gillard with a gift shown in the above picture. What a great honour, well done Zheng.

The Department would also like to congratulate three of our graduates who have been successful in securing employment with the Government in the newly formed roles for the OPAL program. Marissa Brouwer, Rebecca Harvey and Sophie Porter were students last year and Marissa is currently completing her honours.

The Government will be advertising 4 more positions in the OPAL program for 2010 so if your interested make sure you are on the database.

To be on the database you must registering onto the Government Graduate Program website. Something
we encourage all of you to do. If you are unsure about how to go about this contact the Careers Office and they will only be too happy to assist you.

Next year we will be running a new program to the Department, a Peer Mentoring Scheme. The aim of this program is to mentor first year students for the first 8-10 weeks of their first year with us. Many of you can remember how daunting that first semester is and we hope that you will be willing to assist in this program.

You will be trained by the University’s First Year to Higher Education Coordinator and there will be ongoing support from Tanya Tamm.

This is an excellent opportunity to develop leadership skills that will enhance your CV when it comes to obtaining employment. So please consider assisting with this worthwhile program. Recognition of your contribution will be in the form of a certificate and a gift. Not to mention new friends and some excellent opportunity for networking.

Please contact Tanya for an application form if you are interested in participating.

Another one of our initiatives for next year is a Mentor program for Second year students. This program been developed to assist you with identifying the skills required to obtain employment in your chosen field. We will match you with a graduate who is out there in the field, they will be able to discuss with you how they were successful in obtaining employment and what you need to do yourself to be successful when you complete your degree. You will meet with your Mentor 3-4 times throughout next year. This is a great opportunity if you are unsure about what career path you wish to take this program will be a great way of clearing up those doubts and finding out what the industry is all about. If you want to be involved with this program contact Tanya Tamm on tanya.tamm@flinders.edu.au and she will register your interest.

The idea is to identify the skills you may be missing that will be necessary to obtain employment. This will give you time in your final year to develop these skills and improve your chances. It will also give you time to decide exactly where you want to direct your career.
The School of Medicine has increased its support for students in relation to travel and conference grants. For further information regarding this please contact Tanya Tamm.

Also if you would like to apply for a scholarship go to http://www.flinders.edu.au/scholarships-system/main-display-undergraduate.cfm to see if what is available and if you are eligible.

Here are a couple of steps that you need to do:

- Figure out where you want to study
- Check the list for a “partner university” at that location. The list of more than 80 partner universities listed on the university web site http://www.flinders.edu.au/international-students/study-abroad-exchange/partner/partner_home.cfm
- Search that university for like topics, what is easiest is to find similar topics to those in the core program, such as sociology, psychology etc.
- You will need to make time to speak with A/Prof Eileen Willis about your equivalent topics to determine if they are sufficient for equivalency in the first instance. (Don’t forget to make the appointment through Julia)
- Get in touch with Kate Lowry at the International Office as she is responsible for study abroad programs. There are a number of other steps that follow after this, but this will get you on your way! Check out this website: http://www.flinders.edu.au/international-students/study-abroad-exchange/study-overseas.cfm

Already we have had students abroad in Canada and the UK. For those paramedic students, you may wish to consider undertaking your placements overseas, what a great opportunity!
Hi my name is Marissa and I am a BHlthSc Honours student. I completed a BHlthSc last year, majoring in health promotion/education. During my final year I developed an interest in research and wanted to experience the process of conducting research first hand. I also didn’t really feel ready to get a job and felt like honours was a great way to keep learning and improving my skills. I also thought that, if I am going to be a health promoter in the future it is easy for me to go into a community and say “breastfeeding your baby is the best way” and this is how you can.... We as health promoters and health professionals know that there is numerous health benefits associated with prolonged breastfeeding but yet the literature is still telling us that the rates and duration of breastfeeding is well below national guidelines in Australia. Therefore, I thought it so important for me (as a future health promoter) to find out, well ‘WHY’ are many mothers not choosing to breastfeed despite of its health benefits for example?? As we have learnt at uni, the only way we can find out what the why factor is, is through research so I took up the research challenge of trying to find out “WHY”!!

My honours study is currently titled: “A qualitative study using Goffman’s theory of self to explore first time mother’s attitudes and consequent decisions towards infant feeding”. My research is an explorative study focusing on how and why mothers decide to feed their baby via the method in which they have chosen with a focus on feeding in public. In short, my research is attempting to understand the mechanisms through which social factors interact to determine mother’s infant feeding decisions.

I have recruited 11 first time mothers from the Flinders Medical Centre and have conducted 2 in-depth interviews with each participant. The first interview was conducted roughly 10-14 days after birth and then when the baby was 3 months old.

Honours has been a major challenge but in saying that I have LEARNT SO MUCH!!!! Having to follow through the research process from designing the research, to gaining ethical approval, to recruitment of participants, to data collection, to data analysis and now to the thesis write-up has really enhance everything I learnt in my undergrad years (as original as that sounds!!) and has given me great experience which I have been able to easily relay in job interviews. Honours is a real hands on learning experience to teach you how to do research properly. We are lucky enough to have great staff in our Social Health Science department here at Flinders so there are plenty of academics to lend a helping hand when you need it.

If you’re up for a totally rewarding challenge and a uni experience which undergrad does not provide then I suggest you have a serious think about doing honours- it’s so worth it!!! ☺️