



November 2004 Edition - a newsletter for RAMUS Scholars and their mentors

From the Manager....

You must be as pleased as I am that 2004 is drawing to a close. Our thoughts and best wishes go to those scholars who have been, are, or soon will be in the throes of final exams.

In review, for RAMUS Team, the year has been one of consolidation. As soon as I say that our computer system, OSCAR, is meeting our needs and the data is accurate I expect that that some of you will point out some work that needs to be done. Bring it on I say!!

For the most part, scholars and mentors will be grateful for the currency and integrity of OSCAR in terms of timely contact about RAMUS. This will not be the case with some scholars though who had payments cancelled during the latter part of the year for failing to meet acquittal requirements. It is important that scholars uphold the terms of their Scholar Agreement and meet their acquittal requirements. This is the means by which scholars further develop their rural connectivity to the practice and delivery of rural health services. Through rural health club activities and the Rural Doctor Mentor Scheme, scholars are exposed to different aspect of rural medicine. This is the structure through which RAMUS goes about achieving its goal, i.e. to increase the number of rural GPs.

About acquittal requirements for 2004 – scholar reports are the topical requirement at this time of year. While for us, the variation in quality and content of reports as they come in makes interesting reading. More importantly though such stark comparisons highlight the qualitative reports from the rubbish. To draw together the elements of the Scheme – scholars' reports should address the content of their learning plans i.e. what was achieved and how and what was not achieved and why, plus some qualitative feedback on experiences with your mentor. We have developed a template for you to use in your report if, at this time of year, you are bereft of literary inspiration. The proposed template is included in this newsletter. Let us know if you think the template is useful.

I am delighted to let you know that the RAMUS Alumnus web site will be operational very soon. The potential of the Alumnus to facilitate information sharing between present and past scholars and mentor GPs is enormous. I am will let you know shortly how to access and participate in the Alumnus.

I also take this opportunity to thank publicly the rural GPs who mentor RAMUS scholars. Your role in the Rural Doctor Mentor Scheme is imperative to the successful operation of the Scheme. I look forward to any feedback from you about the mentor program, either direct to me or through the report on your scholar

Finally, our best wishes to you all for the festive season and for a peaceful and successful 2005.

Carmel

Farewell Helen...

You will, more than likely, have spoken to RAMUS project officer, Helen Rogers over the past year.

Helen has recently left the RAMUS Team at the NRHA for 2 reasons: first, she is about to give birth to her first born any day now and secondly, to relocate to Charters Towers, Qld, with her school teacher husband who takes up a deputy principal position there.

Helen goes with our best wishes for these two life-changing events and with our thanks for the hard work she put into administering RAMUS.

In This Issue!!!

- Your Acquittal Requirements
- Scholar Reports
- RAMUS Alumnus
- Staff Profile
- A dose of Chicken Joke

Next Issue!!!

**A Scholar's Story:
When Hannah Went Fishin'**

RAMUS Acquittal Requirements

CONTINUING SCHOLARS

Due 31/12/04:

- 2004 Academic Results
- 2003/04 Income Tax Details
- 2004 Mentor Report
- 2004 Scholar Report
- 2005 Scholarship Agreement
- 2005 Confirmation of Enrolment
- 2005 Recipient Details Form
-

Due on 31/03/05:

- Rural Health Club Membership
-

Due on 01/06/05:

- 2005 Learning Plan

(Scholars returning from overseas prior to the commencement of the 2005 academic should get their papers to us as soon as they can.)

COMPLETING SCHOLARS

Due 31/12/04

- 2004 Academic Results
- 2003/04 Income Tax Details
- 2004 Mentor Report
- 2004 Scholar Report

Congratulations!!! Our best wishes for your career in rural medicine.

We hope you'll keep in touch and let us know what you're up to through the RAMUS Alumnus. Read more about the Alumnus on page 4.

Letters containing information for completing your acquittal requirements have been posted to you. Please contact a RAMUS staff member on 1800 460 440 or email ramus@ruralhealth.org.au if you haven't received these documents and we will arrange for them to be sent as soon as possible.

For Ongoing Scholars, please remember that your RAMUS payments for 2005 will commence only after we have received your acquittal requirements. Scholars who meet the due dates for the required documentation will receive their payment on the following dates:

PLEASE NOTE

- 14 January for ongoing graduate scholars.
- 6 March for ongoing undergraduate scholars.



RAMUS APPLICATION 2005 ROUND

Tell your friends!!! RAMUS Applications are now OPEN!!!

The 2005 RAMUS Application and Guidelines are now available. Spread the news to others who may qualify for a RAMUS Scholarship. Tell them to visit www.ruralhealth.org.au or contact the RAMUS team for more information.

Applications close on 24 January 2005, 5:00pm

The Scholar Report: Think R A M U S

We continue to receive enquiries about the length and content of a RAMUS scholar report.

We have finally come up with a framework that may be used as a guide in writing annual reports. The format is very much draft and would benefit from some practical use and your feedback. Please feel free to use your own narrative should you wish to do so. The important thing is to make your report personal and reflective of your experiences over the last year, addressing the components on the Learning Plan. Use your report to pass on any feedback about your experience with the operation of the Scheme and its component parts, particularly the Rural Doctor Mentor Program.

When you come to preparing your report, keep in mind that the goal of the Scheme is to increase the number of GPs in rural and remote Australia. Use your report to show how the component parts of the Scheme and your medical undergraduate study have developed (or not) your interest in rural medical practice.

Reports are to be between 500 and 1000 words.

Be sure to put your name, university and the date on your report.

RAMUS SCHOLAR REPORT

Name..... Date..... University.....



Reality

Give an overview of the year, remembering that this report relates to your rural health experiences and issues. Write about your rural experiences and the situations that you were in.

Analysis

Given the situations you were exposed to, identify specific factors that you feel have developed your interest in and affected the way you think about access to and delivery of services in rural Australia. Address questions such as:

- What important decisions did you have to make over the last year?
- What factors influenced you to come up with such decisions?
- How did this contribute to and/or develop your understanding of rural health practice?

Milestones

Report on the milestones you included in your 2004 Learning Plan. Show how they contributed (or did not) to the achievement of your Learning Plan goals. There may be other milestones such as projects, activities or actions that you should report upon.

- How do your experiences reflect the content of your Learning Plan?
- What were your strategies in achieving the goals that you specified in your Learning Plan? Talk about activities, events and challenges that indicate progress towards achieving those goals.

Understanding

Now that you've put last year's experiences into perspective, report on

- How your rural experience developed your understanding of general practice in a rural area?
- What significant observations did you gain from your rural experience? How and/or why were you touched by these observations?

Summarise and Speculate

Given the experiences that you've had this year and the new things that you've picked up, focus on the steps you can take next year to develop your relationship with and learning about rural health service delivery.

- How did these experiences inform your understanding of rural health issues?
- How did your academic studies complement your rural experience?

Finally, use the content of your report to inform the development of your Learning Plan for next year.

THE RAMUS ALUMNUS

The RAMUS Alumnus will build and maintain contact between current and former scholars, in order to support their decision to 'go rural'. International evidence indicates that a person who has spent the majority of their early years in a rural area is more likely to return to a similar environment during their adult career. The Alumnus will also collate information about postgraduate career choices of graduate RAMUS scholars to examine the situation in Australia.

The Alumnus provides an opportunity for scholars, ex-scholars, mentors and other stakeholders to exchange information, through a special website, about the rewards and challenges that RAMUS scholars face once they complete their university studies. It will build and maintain a network that will support individuals' decisions to go to rural and remote areas.

The Alumnus collects and assembles information about RAMUS postgraduate training location choices so that, over time, the career paths of ex-scholars can be mapped and analysis undertaken of the relationship between rural life experience and rural career practice.

Things to look forward to:

- **The Website**

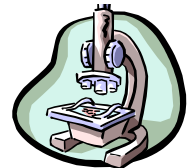
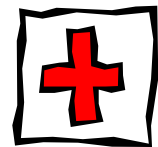
Visit www.ruralhealth.org.au and follow the scholarship link to the RAMUS site. Here you will find information about the Alumnus, information about postgraduate career choices of graduate RAMUS scholars and links to other rural and remote health initiatives.

- **A Web-based Forum**

Share and debate the pros and cons of specific placement locations, the positives and negatives of particular work experiences, the influencing factors on career development and placement decisions, as well as some tricks and traps that may help others with their choices about placements.

- **Individual Career Progress**

Provide details of your postgraduate placements, career choices and any background to those decisions.



An Excerpt from a Mentor Report

Mentored Activities:

Spent time at your surgery

Visited to discuss activities/learning plans/ career path and plans, etc.

Spent supervised time with the patients

Huge input by scholar here. She has excellent clinical exposure, procedural skills and ability to liaise with GP's, specialists and allied health works.

Other comments:

She is an outstanding student and is fully committed to ongoing rural training work.

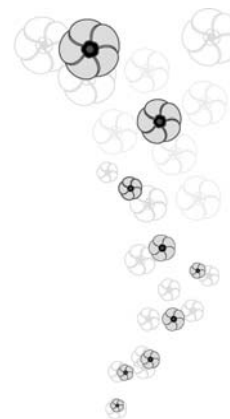
She is aware of and appropriate with the confidentiality and implications of working in small communities.



Registration now open for the

8th National Rural Health Conference

10 – 13 March 2004, Alice Springs, NT



www.ruralhealth.org.au



STAFF PROFILE

Meet the newest addition to the RAMUS Team... Denisse!

Denisse commenced work with the National Rural Health Alliance in early November and assumed the role of Project Officer for the RAMUS Scheme. She will be one of the people you talk to when you inquire about different issues concerning your scholarship.

After having spent 21 years of her life in the Philippines, Denisse came to Australia through an international work exchange program. Denisse has a degree in Management Information Systems and was fresh out of university when she arrived in Canberra last year. She worked in the area of Program Measurement and Reporting in a large government organisation that delivers a range of services to the Australian community.

In the course of 1 year, Denisse took it upon herself to adapt to the new culture and travel as much as she can while in the country. She has probably seen more of Australia than some Australians have. She counts Uluru, King's Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef and Whitehaven Beach as the most beautiful places that she's been to so far.

Denisse loves the richness and diversity of different cultures and this drives her passion for a lot of things. Apart from travelling and seeing new places, she also spends a lot of her time taking photos and editing them online. Denisse enjoys trying out new food as well. This appreciation for food often leads to copying nice dishes that she's tried and attempting to make them in her own kitchen. When asked about her favourite ingredient, she can only think of 1 thing: the company of good friends to share engaging conversations and a relaxing time with.



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