

## NCPO Student Perspective of Swedish University

*Third year P&O student Ms Lauren Fortington attended the Hälsohögskolan (University College of Health Sciences), Jönköping University, Sweden for first semester this year, as part of an exchange program between Jönköping University and La Trobe University.*

### **What subjects did you study in Sweden?**

At first, I did Orthopaedic Technology 2, focused on AFO's and footwear, because it allowed me to work with the class and to understand how the problem-based learning (PBL) subjects were organised. This was really helpful later in my main focus, transtibial prosthetics, which included:

- Aetiology, anatomy, biomechanics, materials, components and alignment
- Fabrication of two check sockets with different suspension for a voluntary patient, and lamination, fitting and alignment of one prosthesis.
- Lectures and demonstrations on prescription principles, partial foot, Symes amputation, congenital disorders, research methods, and current developments from different companies

I also studied Kinesiology, based on different case studies.

*Lauren Fortington (left) and Swedish student, Cissi, aligning transtibial prostheses for a volunteer patient at Jönköping University.*



### **How did the PBL subject delivery work?**

Each topic began with one or two introductory lectures to highlight key areas. We then had a learning seminar, in which we worked in groups to discuss key areas based on clinical examples. Then practical work began and it was expected that we would also undertake our own theoretical study. At the end of the learning time, an exam seminar took place. The exam was structured around case studies and we worked in groups through the prescription process, to complete a total evaluation and management plan for the patients. We presented the case to the class, with discussion and questions from other groups. Assessment included the student's individual knowledge, active participation in the group's prescription and involvement with other groups by asking relevant questions.

Getting used to this style of working was difficult, as it requires intense focus on one topic for a short time, rather

than studying several subjects spread over a whole semester. Both LaTrobe and Jönköping's teaching styles have advantages and disadvantages. I prefer having more time in each subject as we do at LaTrobe, but I also found the focus on group discussion in Jönköping to be an effective way to learn and understand the topics.

### **What were the highlights?**

The best thing was meeting different people from Sweden and all over the world. More than 250 exchange students from 40 countries attended the University, mostly in the Business, Engineering or Communication schools. International and Swedish students lived in the same area, which helped us to learn about and appreciate different countries and cultures.

Other highlights included: Wednesday's at Kären (student night); walking from the bus to uni in the snow; amazing hospitality; 24-hour daylight in summer; ice-hockey; Australia winning more gold medals than Sweden in the Winter Olympics; finally understanding some of the language and being able to translate things that I didn't know I knew.

### **What were the main challenges?**

The language difference, mainly. Although the English skills of the staff and students were very good, there were times when they were too tired to think, forgot I was there or things were just easier in Swedish. Many lectures and demonstrations were in Swedish, so my language dictionary was always open and I appreciated translation help from my classmates. The language was difficult and at times very frustrating, but the differences were manageable and challenging.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

I would like to thank the LaTrobe University International Office, Tim Bach and the NCPO teaching and administrative staff for giving me the opportunity to exchange and for managing my exchange. Tack så mycket to the staff at Hälsohögskolan in Jönköping, especially Sofi Almers. A huge thank you to my Swedish class and friends

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## Curriculum Corner

Detail about the P&O curriculum can be found in the 'Course outline and subject descriptions' section on the NCPO homepage: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ncpo/>

### Third Year P&O Subjects in 2002

To allow us to teach efficiently, we have divided the students into three groups of 10 students for applied subjects. This allows us to provide assistance and support as students need it.

Each student must complete the following four transfemoral prosthetic projects in POR31TFA.

- Quadrilateral check socket on endoskeletal components (cast using Hosmer Brim)
- Quadrilateral Laminated socket on endoskeletal components (from modified check socket)
- Quadrilateral ISNY socket on endoskeletal components.
- Ischial Containment Cast.

Third year students are also required to complete the following upper limb orthotics and prosthetics projects:

- Transradial training arm
- Polyethylene functional Wrist Hand Orthosis

The final section of the third year program involves research subjects. Students are heavily involved in their independent study projects, which will be presented at the NCPO Research Symposium Day on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October. More information about third year curriculum can be obtained from the Third Year Coordinator, Mr. Les Barnes on phone: (03) 9479 5847.

## Michael Gurry appointed as NCPO Clinician

The NCPO is pleased to announce that Mr. Michael Gurry has been appointed to the recently advertised NCPO Clinician position allowing the NCPO to provide full time clinical services to patients in our region. Michael was selected above a high calibre field of applicants and has extensive experience in orthotic service provision and clinical management. In addition to his BPO, Michael has completed studies in Marketing and Commercial Law.

Michael assumes the title and responsibilities of NCPO Clinic Manager and will manage the majority of the increasing NCPO patient load. He will also be responsible for clinic promotion and will be involved in developing NCPO continuing education programs.

Michael can be contracted on phone: (03) 9479 5037 or via email: <M.Gurry@latrobe.edu.au>.

## Staffing Update

Semester two NCPO consultants include Mr. Paul Stoney from Cybernetic designs, who is assisting in teaching transfemoral prosthetics and Mr. Marcus Wood from St. Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, who is assisting in teaching transtibial prosthetics.

## Dr. Edward Lemaire visits the NCPO

Dr. Edward Lemaire, keynote speaker at the ISPO Australia Annual Scientific Meeting in Alice Springs, visited the NCPO on his way home to Canada from the Alice Springs meeting.

Dr. Lemaire is a Research Associate at the Institute for Rehabilitation Research and Development in Ottawa Canada and an associate professor at the University of Ottawa. He is also the president of the Telehealth Association of Ontario and the president of ISPO Canada. He has had significant research and development experience in the areas of Telehealth and Telemedicine systems, biomechanics, prosthetics, orthotics, gait analysis and gait simulation.

During his visit to the NCPO, Dr. Lemaire visited the Health Sciences Clinic and the biomechanics and gait laboratories, and discussed a number of potential areas for research collaboration. One area in which NCPO staff are particularly interested is a project which would utilise emerging internet-based technologies to link prosthetics and orthotics educators, scientists and clinicians in a global e-learning network.

## P&O Clinical Education

The NCPO first year students recently completed their first block of clinical placement. Feedback from the placements was very positive with students commenting on high standards of supervision and organisation of placements. Second and fourth year students are in the process of choosing their preferences for their next clinical placements. Thank you to all the facilities that returned the *Survey of Placement Availability* and *Facility Agreements* so promptly. Placement allocations are expected to be confirmed by the end of September.

A reminder to all facilities that, due to curriculum changes including the shift of transtibial prosthetics into second year, second year placements can now focus on prosthetics or orthotics. This should help to accommodate the 33 students that require placement at the end of the year.

The Clinical Exam working party will meet again in September to finalise changes to the fourth year clinical exams. Once final, a copy of the new exam structure will be sent to all clinical facilities so that adequate preparation for fourth year students can be provided. The new structure will also be updated in the Clinical Education Guidelines, which can be accessed via the NCPO web page: <<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ncpo/>>. Any comments about changes to the exam structure should be made to NCPO Lecturer, Mr Tim Jarrott, on phone (03) 9479 5889.

The next Clinical Supervisors meeting is scheduled for **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2002 AT 4.30PM**, in the Health Sciences Clinic at La Trobe University Bundoora Campus. Please put this in your diary and let the Clinical Education Coordinator, Ms Danielle Bonett know if you can attend. Danielle can be contacted on phone: (03) 9479 5864 or e-mail: <D.Bonett@latrobe.edu.au>.

# NCPO at 2002 Prosthetic & Orthotic Educators Meeting



People interested in P&O University-based education travelled from 13 countries to attend the 2002 Prosthetic & Orthotic Educators Meeting at Jönköping University, Sweden. Most POEM delegates are pictured here. The NCPO Head, Mr. Rod Cooper is in the front row, fourth from the right. NCPO Lecturer Ms Margaret Hodge is in the front row on the right.

The inaugural Prosthetic and Orthotic Educators Meeting (POEM) was held during August at Jönköping University in Sweden. Structured as a workshop, the meeting was designed to encourage P&O educators and academics from around the world to discuss some of the major issues facing University-based P&O education.

NCPO Head, Mr. Rod Cooper, was pleased to represent the NCPO as a POEM delegate, and Lecturer, Ms Margaret Hodge, was an active member of the POEM convening committee. The meeting hosted an international field of around 40 delegates from 13 different countries, representing more than 20 P&O educational institutions.

Keynote addresses and discussion focused on topics such as:

- Professional identity
- The balance between technical, clinical and theoretical components within P&O curriculum
- Educational modes of delivery
- Base grade or entry-level curriculum requirements
- Post graduate Education
- Collaboration in P&O education

Social and cultural activities, sponsored by the County Governor and the Municipal Council, encouraged delegates to get to know each other sufficiently for lively debate to occur during the workshops. At times the discussions were very intense as central issues, such as P&O core competencies, academic workloads and the value of research, were passionately debated. Although many

countries were represented, all seemed to face similar challenges and are striving towards the achievement of similar goals. It appeared that the NCPO is a world leader, particularly in research and higher degree productivity, in graduate output per staff member, and in offering the flexibility of part-time enrolments. A summary of the POEM discussions will be published during October.

Most delegates were extremely open in providing information about their courses and were keen to learn about the NCPO activities. It was very useful for the NCPO staff to meet other P&O academics and develop links with them to facilitate future collaboration. Indeed, the highlight of the meeting was the tremendous feeling of good will and willingness for collaborative efforts in P&O education. Gratitude must be extended to Jönköping University for hosting the POEM, to the sponsors for supporting the meeting and to the convenors who worked to put the POEM together. Further information can be gained from Margaret Hodge, phone: (03) 9479 5778, email: <M.Hodge@latrobe.edu.au>.



**NCPO Student  
Research Symposium  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2002**

**9am – 4.30pm**

**Szental Lecture Theatre**

**Bundoora Campus, La Trobe University**

The NCPO cordially invites interested people to attend the 2002 Student Research Symposium. Projects will be presented by current P&O Honours students and 3rd year students. A program can be accessed on our homepage:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ncpo/>

To organise parking in the Visitors Carpark and to assist with catering, please let us know if you will attend by contacting School of Human Biosciences Receptionist, Rita Van Breda on phone: (03) 9479 5787.

In March 2003, the NCPO will have about 30 students in the Transfemoral Prosthetics program and we do not have enough volunteer patients.

## **The NCPO desperately needs Transfemoral Amputee Volunteer Patients**

Could each clinician who is involved in the provision of prosthetic services in Melbourne please draw the enclosed **Volunteer Patient brochure** to the attention of appropriate amputees. Thank you in anticipation of your help.

**We Need Your Help!**

## Donations to the NCPO

*The following companies made donations to the NCPO during 2002.*

Ossur, through Advanced Prosthetic Centre, generously donated more than 70 ICEX kits for both second and third year Transtibial Prosthetics classes. They also donated extra locks and catalogues for all prosthetics students.

Otto Bock donated a used dust extraction unit retrieved from their Paralympic workshop. They also donated catalogues for student use.

The Queen Elizabeth Centre in Ballarat donated some excess used prosthetic components for student use. This was the only facility that responded to our requests for used components!

We wish to thank the companies and facilities who donate items for student use. Without them, the NCPO teaching program would be poorer.

## P&O Student Society News

*The Prosthetic and Orthotic Student Society (POSS) unites La Trobe University P&O students in educational, social and community service activities. Past endeavours include fundraising for landmine awareness, negotiation of relevant issues with the NCPO, the annual design and distribution of a POSS shirt and the staging of occasional events.*

### POSS Annual Ball

The annual POSS ball for 2002 was a cruise on Port Phillip Bay, held on Friday the 16th of August. Students and staff from the NCPO, members of the P&O profession and many friends attended the ball. Drinks were well on their way when the *Spirit of Tasmania* left the dock at 8:30pm, and continued flowing throughout the night. The DJ entertained the crowd with the usual mixes, however, it took a rendition of Grease to get the third year students up on the dance floor.

The *Spirit of Tasmania* put on a fine show for us and the Captain stopped the boat to let us view our fireworks display. Some seasickness was apparent as the night progressed, it seemed that some of us required dry land. The cruise ended at the respectable hour of midnight and many of the revellers continued on to the after-party at Retro, a nightclub. A fantastic night was had by most, except those who fell ill. Thanks go to everyone who attended, to those who helped with the organisation, and a special thank you must go to Advanced Prosthetic Centre for sponsorship of the event.

## NCPO in the Community

*La Trobe University staff are expected to contribute to community and professional activities. Recent activities are listed here.*

### NCPO papers win awards at ISPO Annual Scientific Meeting in Alice Springs

In June, the NCPO was very well represented at the ISPO Australia Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) in Alice Springs. Staff members Les Barnes, Tim Bach, Margaret Hodge and Wes Pryor attended the meeting, as well as 25 NCPO students. NCPO staff chaired some sessions of the meeting, fourteen papers were presented by NCPO staff and/or students and two NCPO papers received prizes.

The prize for the best poster presentation was awarded to Ben Kettle, Les Barnes and Margaret Hodge, for their poster titled "The provision of transtibial check sockets in Australian prosthetic facilities". The George Carter New Investigator Prize was awarded to Katrina McGrath, Stephen Hughes and Tim Bach for their paper: "Reliability of free-hand estimation of the optimal knee joint axis for orthotic application". Ben Kettle and Katrina McGrath are current P&O honours students.

Many of the NCPO students travelled to Alice Springs on a bus that was sponsored by ISPO Australia and the Advanced Prosthetic Centre, Sydney. The students assisted the audiovisual technician during the meeting, participated in the scientific and social activities, and contributed to the collegial atmosphere. The ASM provided an excellent opportunity for them to get to know the Australian P&O profession while learning from the speakers.

The keynote speaker, Canadian bioengineer Dr. Edward Lemaire, presented insightful papers on the application of electronic communications technology in P&O service provision and in P&O education. The NCPO hopes to apply ideas learned from Dr. Lemaire during the next couple of years. NCPO staff at the ASM welcomed the chance to discuss issues with meeting speakers and delegates and to develop valuable links with the profession.

Three NCPO staff members were heavily involved in ISPO Australia business activities during the meeting. Margaret Hodge is the Chairman of ISPO Australia, Wes Pryor is the Secretary and Tim Bach is an executive committee member. As the executive is made up of people from most Australian states and territories and usually meets via teleconferencing, the ASM provided an opportunity for face-to-face meetings of the executive and sub-committees.

The NCPO will host the next ISPO Australia ASM at La Trobe University in November, 2003. Associate Professor

Tim Bach will convene the meeting, and most NCPO staff will contribute to organisation of the ASM.

The NCPO NEWS is produced in March, June, September and December by the National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics, La Trobe University, 3086, Victoria, Australia.  
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