

NCPO Students Receive Academic Awards

Seven NCPO students were recently presented with awards in recognition of their 2003 academic achievement. The awards were presented at the La Trobe University Annual Presentation of Awards and Prizes ceremony. Recipients of awards were:

Emily Graham – Australian Orthopaedic Association Prize; awarded to the most outstanding second year student.

Evanthios Tamas – Australian Orthotic and Prosthetic Association Inc. (Victorian Section) Prize; awarded to the most outstanding first year student.

Wesley Pryor – E.H. Armstrong Prize for services to Lower Limb Amputees; awarded to recognize contributions to amputees through a research project.

Lee Brentnall – Hans Georg Nader Prize; awarded for the highest overall result in honours year.

Rachel Imison – International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) Prize; awarded to the most outstanding third year student.

Maree Heritage and Renee Downie – joint recipients – Robert Gardner Memorial Prize; awarded for best result in the third year subject independent study project.

The university gratefully acknowledges the support of all the prize donors and would like to especially thank Mr. Kevin Harrison (representing Otto Bock) and Mr. Gavin Burchall (representing AOPA) for their attendance at the ceremony. Congratulations to these students upon their outstanding achievements.



Mr. Kevin Harrison, left, representing Otto Bock Healthcare, and Ms. Lee Brentnall at the NCPO Awards Ceremony

New NCPO Workshops

External Partners are invited to participate in the NCPO workshop program. These workshops are held once per month at the Health Sciences Clinic Building.

They are held during students' lunch period at a time when all year levels are available to attend. Companies are invited to present their products, review professional issues, research, or arrange other activities that may be of interest to P & O students.

Student's attendance is not compulsory and will vary according to their perceived relevance of the presentation.

If desired, lunch can be arranged by the University for these sessions along with audiovisual and display materials. There is no charge to organisations wishing to present in these sessions however all costs associated with delivering the session are the organisations' responsibility.

To express an interest please contact NCPO Head Mr. Rod Cooper 03 9479 5862, or email: rod.cooper@latrobe.edu.au. Places are limited and will be offered on a first come first served basis.



Tim Jarrott from Australian Orthotic Technologies demonstrated casting for an Ossur Knee Orthosis during the first seminar.

NCPO teaching in Japan

In June the Head of the NCPO, Mr. Rod Cooper was invited to Kobe College of Medical Welfare, Japan to present lectures and practical teaching to P & O students.

Mr. Cooper delivered a series of lectures on Orthotic Fracture Management, an area which had not previously been taught in detail at the Kobe School.

“It was interesting to see how different orthotic practices are in this area in Japan” reported Mr. Cooper. “In many ways it would seem that Japanese practices are very conservative and that other medical professionals dictate the orthotic management process”.

When discussing his teaching of the Japanese students Mr. Cooper commented “It was challenging to try and teach Japanese P & O students about developments in orthotic fracture treatment practices as their thinking seems confined to how they should prepare themselves to undertake their role within the Japanese system.” “It was pleasing to note that towards the end of the three week class students began to ask more questions and challenge some of their previous teaching in this area.”

Practical teaching involved manufacture of various fracture orthoses using both Australian and Japanese methods. “I was most impressed with the technical abilities of the Japanese students” commented Mr. Cooper. “Their finishing and attention to detail is definitely superior to



NCPO head Rod Cooper advises a Japanese P & O student at Kobe College of Medical Welfare.

that of our NCPO students and would rival that of experienced practitioners.”

In addition to his teaching at Kobe College Mr. Cooper also presented seminars to professional groups on Australian P & O education, Orthotic fracture management and foot orthosis provision.

This visit further strengthened the relationship between Kobe College of Medical Welfare and La Trobe University. It is anticipated that more collaboration with other areas of the University such as Physiotherapy and Orthoptics will be developed in the near future.

Curriculum Corner: Developments in 1st Year

In recent years the NCPO curriculum has evolved dramatically, which has resulted in changes in the way students are taught in first year as part of the Introduction to Prosthetics subject.

The initial part of this first semester subject orients students to university facilities and conveys expectations regarding assessment as well as introduces students to the profession; including the professional role and associations. Practically, students learn to utilise laboratory equipment safely by undertaking a variety of small projects such as the manufacture of a Northwestern ring harness.

Upper extremity prosthetics is now being taught at first year level. This module of the subject conveys a variety of clinical and theoretical concepts ranging from: issues of fitting upper extremity amputees, client assessment, manufacturing techniques and assessment of function

at prosthesis acquisition. In acquiring these attributes students assess, cast, manufacture and fit a transradial training prosthesis in addition to their upper extremity prosthetic theory which focuses largely on transradial prosthetics. A number of sessional staff contribute expertise in key areas such as myoelectrics and upper extremity prosthetic training.

Student feedback to this introductory subject has been positive.

This year will be the last time upper extremity prosthetics will be delivered as part of the third year curriculum, as has been done in the past.

If you would like to know more about the Introduction to Prosthetics subject, please contact Michael Dillon on 9479 5889 or via e-mail: Michael.Dillon@latrobe.edu.au



Clinical Education News

1st year.

First year students completed their one week placements between July 5-9 or July 12-16. Students travelled to facilities in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Launceston, South Australia and Sydney. Students were well presented in the new NCPO Clinical uniform.

4th year.

4th year students completed their second eight week placement on June 25. Students were located at facilities in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Albury, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Tasmania, Leeds (U.K.) and Houston (U.S.A). By all reports every student enjoyed their placement, having seen lots of different prosthetic and orthotic cases and management, which increased their skills as Prosthetists/Orthotists.

Students returned to the NCPO for a mid-placement Symposium Day where the Honours students presented their Literature Reviews for their projects. The students also participated in a discussion/debrief regarding their placements, hopefully learning about how to maximise their learning in their next placement.

4th year clinical exams were held on June 29, 30 and July 1 with a final Symposium Day on July 2. Along with receiving their exam results presentations were delivered by ISPO and AOPA, A lunch was held with the staff.

Placement availability survey.

All facilities should have received paperwork regarding the coming Clinical Placement year July 2004 – June 2005. This includes a Letter of Exchange (agreement), Survey of Placement Availability and updating the information the NCPO has on file. Please return this information ASAP. If you have not received this information please contact Kaisha Gurry.

Hong Kong Students.

We had a request from the Clinical Education Coordinator at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to help place six B.Sc (Hons) program students in Australian facilities between July and August. A number of facilities expressed an interest but were unable to assist this year. Two students have been offered placements – one at Royal Children's Hospital and one at Caulfield General Medical Centre. If you are interested in offering a placement to these students next year, please contact Kaisha.

Well-earned rest.

The mid-July to end-October is a quieter time for Clinical Education and we hope that facilities enjoy a well-earned break from students.

Further information about P & O Clinical Education can be obtained from the Coordinator, Kaisha Gurry, phone: (03) 9479 5864 or email: K.Gurry@latrobe.edu.au

New Donations to the NCPO

Otto Bock Healthcare have generously pledged to supply low temperature thermoplastic material for use by students in fabricating fracture orthoses.

Students were given information packs on the various materials available, and then went on to fabricate below knee fracture orthoses with Braceform plastic donated by Otto Bock.

The NCPO would like to thank Otto Bock Healthcare for their generous support of our Orthotic Management of Fractures program.

This donation exposes students to some of the highest quality materials available for fabricating low temperature orthoses.

In addition to the below knee fracture orthoses, students will also use the material to fabricate humeral fracture orthoses later in the semester.



Second Year NCPO students making below knee fracture orthoses with material donated by Otto Bock healthcare



A Strong Showing by the NCPO at the ISPO World Congress in Hong Kong

A large contingent of NCPO staff and students had a significant impact on the 11th World Congress of ISPO in Hong Kong. Held from the 1st to the 6th of August, the World Congress offers a chance for P & O and interested professionals from all over the globe to gather and hear the latest scientific research in the field. In all, five staff members, three recent honours graduates and 14 current undergraduate students joined a large Australian contingent at the triennial meeting. NCPO staff and students presented 12 papers, three posters and one symposium during the five day forum.

NCPO lecturer, Margaret Hodge, was awarded the prize for the Best Clinical Paper presented at the Congress. Ms. Hodge acknowledged the contributions of her co-authors, Denise Nathan and Dr.

Tim Bach. "It's wonderful to see that the research we are doing at La Trobe University is being recognized at a world forum like this" she said afterwards. "We have high quality staff and students doing high quality research and the rest of the world is taking notice."



NCPO Lecturer and ISPO ANMS Chairman Margaret Hodge delivers her paper "Plantar Pressure Pain Thresholds in Rheumatoid Arthritis." This was awarded the prize for the best Clinical Paper at the ISPO World Congress in Hong Kong

Other delegates were clearly impressed with the presence of the NCPO. Anita Helmbring, Dean of Health Sciences at Jönköping University in Sweden, said that "La Trobe should be very proud of their students and their graduates."

POSS News: NCPO Students Attend World Congress

Fourteen second and third year students from the NCPO made the journey to the ISPO World Congress in Hong Kong during August this year. The students were looking forward to gaining an international perspective of the profession and interaction with many of the leaders in the field. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and feel they have benefited greatly from the exposure. The costs of travel, registration and accommodation for students were met partly through sponsorships and fund raising activities. Sydney based Advanced Prosthetic Components provided sponsorship of \$3000 and included students in a dinner reception for Australian delegates. DBS Medial Supplies, also of Sydney, contrib-

uted a further \$500 to students' costs, for which we are deeply grateful. "It was an eye-opening experience for all of the students who went," said Amy Eamons, a third year student in the NCPO. "We learned so much from our interactions with other delegates and the contacts we made in the profession are very valuable."

With a group of sixty delegates, eleven of the students furthered their international journey travelling to Beijing for five days. This tour enabled the students not only to see the sights but also gain exposure to the prosthetic and orthotic practices of mainland China. We would like to again thank our sponsors and La Trobe University for their support.



NCPO Clinical and Technical Case Study

Mrs. X presented to the NCPO Clinic for orthotic management of her left lower limb prior to hip joint replacement surgery on her right limb. The management plan was to stabilize the left limb in order to allow full weight bearing safely on that side while rehabilitating from the right hip surgery.

Mrs. X suffered polio as a child and wore a KAFO which was discarded as a teenager. She has had a fractured patella on her left side and has marked M/L and A/P knee instability. Mrs. X has a fixed plantarflexion deformity of her left ankle. She has also developed a large lumbar lordosis. Mrs. X ambulates with crutches and a circumducting shuffle gait. She is also partially blind.

The clinic faced some routine alignment management issues with Mrs. X which were overcome with the fitting of a KAFO consisting of plastic thigh shell and solid ankle foot sections, Fillauer low profile aluminium drop locks and left shoe height modifications. (See Fig. 1) Further to this it was necessary to enable Mrs. X to be able to don and doff the brace herself. In order for her to successfully unlock the drop locks for sitting whilst managing the crutches a lateral clip was placed on the upright to hold the lock up. (See Fig. 2) Due to her blindness it was also necessary to place a pull up tab on the drop lock itself to enable her to locate the lock and perform the locking/unlocking function. (See Fig 3)

During first fitting Mrs. X managed quite well and walked with increased balance, decreased circumduction and her recurvatum was controlled. Her foot clearance was improved also. We replaced her crutches with a walking frame and found that her stability and walking speed also increased. It is hoped with ongoing physiotherapy in her post operative phase that Mrs. X will improve even further.

The NCPO clinic treats a variety of prosthetic and orthotic patients and is happy to receive referrals of complex cases. Bookings can be made by phoning 9479 5831.

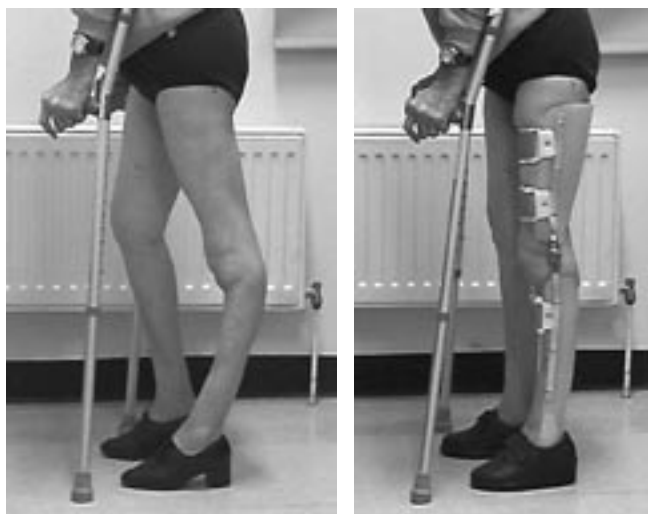


Figure 1: The image on the left shows Mrs. X in an untreated condition. Note the excessive hyperextension of the knee. On the right, her limb is stabilised with a Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis.



Figure 2: A clip was attached to the lateral upright to hold the drop lock temporarily. The clip was made by heating, cutting, drilling and bending a spring steel tool holder, and attaching it to the upright with a 4mm bolt.



Figure 3: A pull tab made from dacron webbing was riveted to the drop lock to aid in lifting.

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