



## 2016 Australian Awards for University Teaching Feedback on successful nominations

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Institution:</b>                      | <b>University of South Australia</b> |
| <b>Total number of nominations:</b>      | <b>2</b>                             |
| <b>Number of successful nominations:</b> | <b>1</b>                             |
| <b>Successful nominees:</b>              | <b>Dr Peter Balan</b>                |

### Background

The Australian Awards for University Teaching recognise quality teaching practices and outstanding contributions to student learning. Recipients, with the support of their institutions, further contribute to systemic change in learning and teaching through ongoing knowledge sharing and dissemination.

The *Awards for Teaching Excellence* celebrate Australia's most outstanding university teachers who have made significant contributions to the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. The Awards recognise teachers who have demonstrated excellent leadership through their commitment to innovation and delivery of quality teaching. The recipients have shown sustained dedication to enriching and improving student learning outcomes in higher education.

The *Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning* recognise learning and teaching support programs and services that make an innovative and outstanding contribution to student learning outcomes and the student experience of higher education. The program recipients have set high standards for ongoing quality in learning and teaching activities in Australian higher education institutions.

| <u>AWARDS OVERVIEW</u>  |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of nominations in 2016:  | 85 |
| Total number of nominating institutions in 2016:                                | 33 |
| Total number of successful nominations in 2016:                                 | 30 |
| Total number of successful institutions in 2016:                                | 18 |
| <u>TEACHING</u>   |    |
| Total number of nominations for 2016 Awards for Teaching Excellence:            | 62 |
| Total number of successful nominations:   | 18 |
| <u>PROGRAM</u>  |    |
| Total number of nominations for 2016 Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning: | 23 |
| Total number of successful nominations:   | 12 |

## **Feedback for successful nominations - 2016 Awards for Teaching Excellence**

Dr Peter Balan

Law, Economics, Business and Related Studies

### **Synopsis**

Peter Balan OAM has taught entrepreneurship to undergraduates and postgraduates since 2000. He uses Team-Based Learning to create a strong collaborative learning culture in the classroom, and builds on this effective and efficient teaching method with a number of original innovations. He practices systematic evaluation and reflection on each innovation in a process of continuous improvement to enhance student engagement in learning. Over many years he has demonstrated leadership in course and program development and improvement. He actively disseminates his teaching innovations through national and international conferences and university workshops, and his materials are used by more than 100 educators around the world in entrepreneurship and other disciplines. He has papers in a leading education journal and active research collaborations in education in Australia and other countries. The relevance of his teaching is supported by his long-term engagement with industry, government and the community, and he was recently recognised by the award of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) "for service to tertiary education, and to the community of South Australia". He is a peer reviewer of teaching, an OLT Assessor, and has received university and national awards for teaching.

### **Approaches to teaching and the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn**

The nominee has provided a compelling presentation of his teaching approach, well substantiated by the educational literature, which has a clear focus on empowering students to be active learners. The key aspect of systematic implementation of team based learning for teamwork and collaborative learning is well described and defined. It is also well evidenced from students feedback and how it has organically grown and improved over a period of time. The TBL approach also seems particularly appropriate for entrepreneurship education, as articulated by the nominee. The adoption of the pre-learning seminar outside the nominee's institution provides strong evidence of the efficacy of the approach. This section could be strengthened by providing evidence of the student's experience, particularly their motivation, based on the relevant student evaluation questions (either formal or informal). The overall satisfaction figures are perhaps not the best measure to present. The strengths of collaborative learning can be more explicitly described, as students feedback is rather generic.

### **Development of curricula, resources or services that reflect a command of the field**

The nominee provides a strong case for both the development and dissemination of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field, in terms of teaching practice and particularly the TBL approach. He is no doubt a leader and expert in this area. There is good evidence of the dissemination and recognition of innovations through presentations and workshops in international conferences with accreditation as a trainer and consultant in TBL. There is also evidence of self reflection from feedback to further enhance and improve the process with apparent success. However, this section could be enhanced by also focusing on the development of resources that demonstrate a command of the nominee's field of discipline, entrepreneurship and how resources have been developed that reflect cutting edge learning experiences in that domain.

*This feedback is a compilation of assessors' comments on award nominations. It has undergone only minimal editing so may contain typographical errors and other anomalies.*

### **Evaluation practices that bring about improvements in teaching and learning**

The nominee has demonstrated a thorough approach to evaluation of teaching and learning using both student and peer feedback and incorporating peer evaluation for students. Further, the nominee has described some innovative ways in which to enhance learning outcomes. The approaches are novel and innovative and showed good evidence of bringing improvements in teaching and learning. The four areas of poster plans, gallery walks, peer reviews and revised team assignments are well described. However, it would strengthen this section to include some form of quantitative evidence demonstrating how these improvements actually improved these outcomes. In addition, some of these ideas should be introduced in criterion 2 as it does show innovation - probably a better fit or at least an introduction.

### **Innovation, leadership or scholarship that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/or the student experience**

The nominee has demonstrated some outstanding achievements relating to innovative teaching approaches, demonstrating leadership in his institution as well as nationally and internationally, and has a strong record of scholarship in the area of entrepreneurship education and teaching practice more generally. Further, the achievements of the nominee in terms of activities and initiatives that reach the broader education community are to be commended. Also, there is a good report on research and scholarship to enhance teaching, which is a well documented and structured approach towards this criterion. However, some of the claims around innovation are somewhat overstated, particularly the first three areas on the single innovative business idea, online survey as a resource and seating plan. While these are well described, they are commonly used.

### **Extent to which the claims for excellence are supported by formal and informal evaluation**

The nomination includes strong support from peers, student comments and the references, and recognition in the form of an OAM is very impressive. More evidence could be provided through quantitative assessment of the impact of the nominee's initiatives on student learning to supplement the excellent qualitative feedback. Further, given the nature of the business context, industry endorsement of the learning resources and curricula would strengthen the nomination.

### **Extent of creativity, imagination or innovation, irrespective of whether the approach involves traditional learning environments or technology-based developments**

The nominee has provided a compelling overview of the innovative approaches undertaken in his teaching practice. Reflecting on criteria 2 and 3, the nominee has demonstrated a very innovative approach towards developing resources and showing evidence of their success. Criterion 4 could have been developed more strongly in relation to this attribute.

### **Information contained in student data or institutional student surveys, references, and selected teaching materials submitted by the nominee**

Overall, the nominee has provided very strong, relevant and insightful information to support his nomination. Table 1 is helpful in showing the improvements through the years in line with the descriptions of the four criteria. There is also evidence of a strong publications record in the area of learning and teaching. The conference presentations also add to this impressive list. There was also strong support provided by referees as well, which are aligned to the nomination. They are very helpful in understanding and elaborating on the contributions of the nominee. As previously highlighted, more information from student surveys or other forms of feedback that were mentioned, would strengthen the nomination and provide additional evidence to substantiate improved learning outcomes.

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## **Overall Feedback**

Overall, this is an excellent nomination by an impressive nominee who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to teaching and learning in a variety of roles and contexts, and been sustained over a considerable academic career.