



Award for the Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year 2003

WINNER:

Tracey Hodgkins
Program Director, *Curtin Advantage*
Curtin University of Technology

The Minister for Science, the Hon Peter McGauran, presented the Award at a gala dinner at the Sheraton Towers Southgate, Melbourne on Tuesday, 25 November 2003.

Purpose

To recognise the importance of education in the process of developing and nurturing entrepreneurs; and to showcase best practice in entrepreneurial education.

Criteria for Assessment

1. Effective involvement of industry in the design, implementation and evaluation of entrepreneurial educational activities.
2. Encouragement of students in the practice of entrepreneurship.
3. Is the educator's work a model for others?
4. Demonstrable outcomes of the educator's work – development by students of new products, processes or services.
5. Has the educator's work made a difference to the attitudes, self esteem, behaviour, life chances, values and employment outcomes of their students?

Note your diary – applications for next year's Award will be called in **May 2004**.

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Professor Ashley Goldsworthy
Executive Director, Business/Higher Education Round Table

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WINNER: Tracey Hodgkins
Program Director, Curtin *Advantage*, Curtin University of Technology

Tracey has worked at Curtin for approximately four years after becoming involved in revitalising the ‘CBS Plus’ program while herself a student at the University’s Business School. Tracey’s motivation, enthusiasm and gift for building teams saw numbers in CBS Plus rise dramatically from 30 participants to approximately 2 500 students after only two years.

Tracey’s work in this program gave her the idea of creating a University-wide initiative that would complement the knowledge students gained through their studies by enabling them to also acquire the skills and work ethic needed in a modern workplace.

Being an entrepreneur herself, she founded, developed and now directs the *Curtin Advantage* program, drawing on her extensive contacts to create relationships with industry and business which have yielded sponsorship, mentors, project partners, internships and pathways for students. *Advantage* brings together staff, industry and students from across the University into cross-disciplinary teams to work on a range of projects created by Tracey or developed from students’ ideas. This was not an easy task to accomplish in a University that is divisionally focussed, but Tracey has overcome this and a myriad of other obstacles to create a program which offers a competitive advantage for students and Curtin alike.

Much of the focus of *Curtin Advantage* is on developing the entrepreneurial skills of the students involved. The *Curtin Advantage Entrepreneurial Initiative* is designed to link students with real business ideas (both for profit and not for profit) into entrepreneur networks within the State, and help them to develop their ideas into working propositions. Examples of Tracey’s work in this area are detailed in the attached nomination and pamphlet and include:

- development of the Curtin Entrepreneurs’ Challenge in which teams of students are required to present an idea, write a business plan and pitch the final plan to a panel of judges;
- development of not for profit projects to benefit Western Australian communities;
- development of a structured series of seminars and guest lectures to encourage and assist students participating in the Curtin Challenge and similar competitions; and
- establishment of a ‘business incubator’ process to assist and support students aiming to start a business.

Tracey Hodgkins initiated and established *Curtin Advantage* and has managed the program since its inception. She leads a team of three staff which has achieved an impressive amount in a short period of time: a number of successful companies have been developed through the program from students’ ideas; strong and ongoing links with industry have been established which benefit students in numerous ways; *Advantage* students and teams consistently win State and National awards; and, student numbers have grown to around 1 300 solely through enthusiastic word of mouth. Even more impressively, all of this has been achieved while Tracey has been studying for her Master of Business Administration degree.

Professor Lance Twomey AM
Vice-Chancellor
Curtin University of Technology