

Women's Executive Development

Where are they now?

The Clare Burton Scholarships from 2002 to 2008

Lynette Browning

University of South Australia

Background

The Clare Burton Scholarship was established by the five ATN universities (Curtin, QUT, RMIT, UniSA, and UTS) to honour and continue the work of Dr Clare Burton, a pioneering Australian researcher, into aspects of gender equity. The Scholarship provides funds to support post-graduate research into gender equity. The six Scholarships of \$10,000 have been awarded to students enrolled or intending to enrol in an ATN university, in either a post-graduate coursework or research degree, where the major piece of work is focussed on gender equity.

The recipients of the six Scholarships awarded since 2002 are:

2002	Sarah Wendt	UniSA
2004	Robyn North	UniSA
2006	Phoebe Hart	QUT
2006	Alice Stoakes	RMIT
2007	Valerie Adams	UniSA
2008	Nombasa Williams	UniSA

To gauge the value and impact of these scholarships, recipients were contacted and asked to complete a survey. Four of the six recipients were also personally interviewed, with two being overseas at the time of the review.

Summary

All of the recipients said the Scholarship assisted them in their course of study. Most said that because the Scholarship funds provide money to cover living expenses they did not have to work as much and could focus more on their research. All six have undertaken a PhD – two have completed, one has submitted, two are still working on their PhD's, and one is on maternity leave. Five studied full time and one studied part time. All six women have been presenting at conferences and writing papers for publication. Two of the six have full time positions as academics at senior lecturer level, one at UniSA, and one at Coventry University in the UK.

Scholarship funding

All six recipients stated that the Scholarship assisted them in their course of study. The funds were spent on a range of items including:

- new computer
- travel to interstate and international conferences
- transcription assistance and editing of manuscripts for journals
- books related to their area of study
- quantitative workshops
- materials for the creative practice
- child care
- day-to-day living expenses.

The funds assisted the recipients in a range of different ways, allowing many to work on their doctorates full time and, for one, complete early. Assistance with day-to-day living expenses meant that less time was taken up on paid work and more time could be devoted to writing their thesis. The ability to travel to conferences, in particular overseas travel, provided opportunities to meet others in the same field and build strategic networks, one of which led to a full time tenured position overseas. This comment was typical of the responses:

It gave me the freedom to concentrate on my project rather than having to find additional work which would have distracted me and delayed my progress.

Course of study

All six Scholarship recipients have undertaken a PhD, mostly in social sciences, with one in psychology and one in film and television. Three have completed their course of study, one in 2005, and two in 2008. Of the remaining three, one has submitted, one expects to submit in 2009 and one in 2010. Five of the recipients studied full time and one part time.

Research projects

Below are the titles of the research projects undertaken for the Clare Burton Scholarship:

Grapevines, Church Steeples, Family History: Stories of local culture and domestic violence in South Australian wine country, feminist poststructural understandings – Sarah Wendt

You can join the game but the rules won't change: The illusion of Heterosexual relationships as a level playing field – Robyn North

Orchids: Intersex and Identity in Documentary – Phoebe Hart

Relationship Dissolution and Pathways of Adjustment in Housing and Employment for Single Females and Single Males – Alice Stokes

Nurses' Caring Labour in Residential Aged Care: A Feminist Economics Analysis – Valerie Adams

Establishing the Boundaries & Building Bridges, South Australian Child Protection in the New Millennium: Research into the Ecology of the Refugee Parenting Experience – Nombasa Williams

Research outcomes

All six Scholarship recipients have been presenting at national and international conferences, writing, and publishing. One has a book contract with Federation Press and is now a reviewer for a leading international journal in her field. Another has published a section in a book, and collectively they have published 13 articles in a range of national and international peer reviewed journals.

Contribution of research

There has been a range of contributions made by all of the Scholarship recipients and their individual comments are reproduced below:

I believe it has made a contribution to debates around community, masculinity, femininity, and violence in rural areas. It has engaged people to think beyond the stereotypes of rural domestic violence and to recognise the importance of difference and local knowledge when forming responses to violence and abuse.

My PhD research contributed an empirical project which tested the emerging feminist economics theory of caring labour with a study of nurses' work in residential aged care facilities.

Very little is known about the refugee parenting experience in pre-resettlement contexts. This study was part of a larger study seeking to examine the ecology of refugee parenting experiences prior to resettlement which will inform why refugee families are presenting in the South Australian system of child protection. The outcomes of this research will provide insights into the need for development of culturally appropriate and relevant child protection policy, practice, and services to these families, parents, and carers. – Nombasa Williams

One of the most significant issues to have come out of my research so far is that very little is known about the post-relationship circumstances of women and men who are from failed de facto relationships. Early indications in my research suggest that a significant proportion of this group actually own a house when in a de facto relationship, when it is generally assumed that cohabiting couples are renters. Consequently, the breakdown of this relationship results in difficult decisions about the division of property. Another issue is that women may not necessarily remain in the matrimonial home after relationship failure. My research will investigate further whether this is because the man has remained in the home, or neither party can afford to retain the home after relationship dissolution.

New understandings of cultural studies, creative practice and the revelation of the intersex voice.

Showing up how women's employment and economic dependency still runs secondary to men's; the financial, employment and personal impacts of divorce and separation; and the centrality of intimate relationships in women's lives

Research impact

For most recipients, it is too early to identify the impact of their research, however one was able to say that she has attracted four PhD students, with related topics, requesting to be supervised by her; she has won a book contract as little has been written exclusively on the topic of domestic violence in rural areas internationally, and nationally; and she is publishing in a range of journals, for example for practitioners and theorists to advocate for interest in this topic. All recipients are currently undertaking research in their chosen fields.

Support

The support provided by host institutions varied for participants, with some receiving practical assistance in the form of editing and binding of the thesis, some travel costs, and additional scholarships from their division and school, and others reporting they received no support. Two reported having mentors, two had very supportive supervisors, and two received no mentoring support. One of the supervisors was reported as 'outstanding and devoted' and won the Supervisor of the Year Award during the candidature.

Research interruptions

The women experienced a variety of interruptions to their research, some of which had significant adverse effects, and some had little impact. The interruptions reported include birth of a child, a medical condition, death of a husband, controversy within a school, and relocation overseas.

Final comments

All six women expressed their appreciation of having received the Clare Burton Scholarship:

Receiving the Clare Burton Scholarship made completing my PhD more 'do-able' as I am supporting a daughter who is a full time undergraduate student. Being able to manage financially while working less hours greatly assisted the completion of my PhD.

I am very grateful for being a recipient of the Clare Burton Scholarship.

The scholarship was fantastic in financially helping me during my first 18 months of study. It allowed me to really focus on developing a good research question and undertake a literature review without having to succumb to the financial pressures faced by many other postgraduate students and seek extra teaching work to supplement my income. The money assisted me in attending some important methodological workshops/conferences that were vital in bringing me up-to-date with longitudinal methods in the social

sciences. It also provided much needed additional support with living expenses, especially as my partner was also undertaking full-time postgraduate studies.

Being awarded this scholarship was an achievement of which I am proud. I have met people in the UK who are aware of Clare Burton's work, and it has been a great honour to be acknowledged in the context of her work.

It is an outstanding scholarship and I highly support its purpose. I strongly believe in feminism, gender and equality and therefore support what Clare Burton was advocating for. Supporting women to research related topics is such a wonderful contribution to knowledge and how we think and live in society.

Thank you very much. I am honoured to have received the Clare Burton Scholarship

Current situation

Four of the Scholarship recipients are currently employed and working in their chosen fields. One is on maternity leave from study, and one is a full time student. Of the four who are working, two are full time continuing academics, one a Lecturer and one at Senior Lecturer. Of the other two, one is a sessional academic planning to apply for a position as a lecturer and one is a research assistant looking for a postdoctoral position. The following table lists the current situation for all six women.

Year	Name	Host	Progress	Current position
2002	Sarah Wendt	UniSA	Completed 2005	Lecturer, UniSA
2004	Robyn North	UniSA	Completed 2008	Senior Lecturer, Coventry University
2006	Phoebe Hart	QUT	Submitted 2008	Sessional Academic, QUT
2006	Alice Stoakes	RMIT	To submit in 2010	On Maternity leave
2007	Valerie Adams	UniSA	Completed 2008	Casual Research Assistant, UniSA
2008	Nombasa Williams	UniSA	To submit in 2009	Full time PhD student



Sarah Wendt



Robyn North



Alice Stokes



Phoebe Hart



Valerie Adams



Nombasa Williams