Festival of Learning Main Event, Wednesday 12 March 2014
Deputy Vice Chancellor Education Professor Jill Downie

Thank you Professor Terry

Today marks the official launch of Curtin’s plans for Learning for Tomorrow and our goal to reach one million global leaners by 2017.

It’s an ambitious, but we believe, attainable target that can be achieved by understanding that our students will not accept a one size fits all approach to education.

Today’s student is an active and agile learner. They read from a laptop, an iPad or a smart phone, they use a keyboard more than a pen and they will search the virtual globe to find the best course at the best price.

Why settle for a text book-, when the internet connects you to the world.

Connectivity is key for today’s student - the digital native. The more connected they are, the more engaged they are, and when they are engaged they are interested, and when they are interested they learn and want to share what they learn with their friends.

At Curtin, we understand this is the student of tomorrow. To remain competitive and relevant we must be bold and adopt a flexible, agile, progressive approach to learning, technology and partnerships.

This is an exciting time in education. Curtin is at the forefront of a transformation in teaching and learning. It is our intention to capitalise on the opportunities it presents both as an educational institution and as a business.

Our goal is for Curtin to be the most sought after provider of education, providing an innovative, richly interactive, personalised learning experience. Students will choose Curtin because employers choose Curtin graduates.

Learning for Tomorrow builds on the 30,000 on-line student enrolments at Curtin. We already have more than 50 online courses available to students worldwide. Among these are BA Fine Arts and Undergraduate and Masters Architecture courses – unique nationally.

Today we launch the transformation of our top 200 courses, enabling them to be available to students from anywhere in the world.

Flexibility is replacing traditional, lecture-style and tutorial formats with immersive technologies incorporated into the student experience.

For students wanting an exceptional on-campus experience we have refurbished more than 40 classrooms with technology designed for collaboration, and distributed
learning using telepresence technology. This means Curtin will be able to take its courses to the world and share its teaching and research expertise.

We will also seek out international experts to be part of our new global classes.

Flagship courses in business, engineering, health sciences and humanities will lead our expansion into new international markets from 2016.

The list includes first-year foundation programs in Engineering, HS and Commerce, courses in marketing, subsea engineering, computer systems and software engineering, visualization technologies and a three-year fully on-line psychology degree to be available in 2015.

Already, we are distributing one of our nursing courses to Western Australia’s remote north-west.

The inter-professional first year Health Sciences course will be distributed to the Pilbara and other parts of regional WA this year.

Students from the School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts already collaborate in real time through a virtual classroom with peers from Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China to produce a creative web documentary – a true Global Classroom.

Our timezone, GMT+8, is home to more than one billion internet users. We have extraordinary opportunities to offer richly interactive, synchronous learning using proven technologies.

Learning for Tomorrow is already here.

Our new educational model will enable students to engage and learn through collaborative face-to-face classes, interactive on-line activities, virtual classroom workshops, the use of open education resources such as MOOCs, or a mixture of all.

Gaming, second life, 3-D technologies and even holograms will be used to actively engage students.

Technology enables flexible, scalable and meaningful learning experiences. It is an integral part of how we engage learners, so they have the skills demanded by future employers.

Three weeks ago we announced our partnership with UNESCO as the organiser of participants in the Eco-Challenge 2014 for students aged 11 to 17.

In the first two weeks more than 1500 students enrolled, we had 2,000 FB likes and 300 Twitter followers, 2^nd tier Twitter followers numbered no less than 4 million! – Curtin is going viral.
We will also partner with UNESCO on our own Curtin Global Challenge game, aimed at Leadership development, which we will launch later this year.

While our goal is to engage one million learners by 2017, we want to ensure all our students enjoy a personalised experience and know they are a highly valued member of the Curtin community, regardless of their location or choice of study method.

Learning analytics are already playing a vital role in helping us to understand what assists our students to succeed.

We can predict which students will actively seek help to succeed, those who will only ask for help when faced with poor results and those who will need the University to take the lead in offering support.

The most sought after graduates will demonstrate personal initiative, community responsibility, leadership, teamwork and cross-cultural awareness, in addition to academic strength.

Our Curtin Leadership Centre is ramping up to give all our students leadership development opportunities in self leadership and team leadership. More advanced development opportunities are available through mentoring and community projects to those students who demonstrate strong leadership qualities.

It’s important that we align our graduates’ skills and knowledge with the expectations of tomorrow’s employers. This is being achieved through Work Integrated Learning for all students – either through their curriculum or with fieldwork placement opportunities.

Today we also launch the Curtin Extra Certificate that will complement students’ academic qualifications. This will formally list and recognise significant accomplishments of students in Leadership and Work Integrated Learning outside the course requirements.

In Learning for Tomorrow…

Curtin recognises students now have unprecedented choice and they want to learn on their terms, anytime and from anywhere. Curtin is responding to this challenge.

In launching our Flagship programs, and the fleet to follow, our goal is for Curtin to be the most sought after provider of education, providing an innovative, richly interactive, personalised learning experience.

We are responding to industry demands for well-equipped graduates with leadership and work integrated learning opportunities for all. Students will choose Curtin because employers choose Curtin graduates.
With new ways of thinking about learning we will engage one million learners globally, and achieve our strategic vision to be a recognised international leader in education and research.

In many respects the future has already arrived at Curtin.

Let’s take a look at the future: and see what Learning for Tomorrow already looks like at Curtin.

Thank you.