

9th Annual Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) Doctoral Students Conference, Russia

Report compiled by Alana Mann (Arts)

Conference Attendees: Alana Mann, Rundian Zain (Arts), Sebastian Kinne (Economics and Business), Suzanne Egan, Heath Rose, Indunil Wettasinghe, Andrew Bennie, Miriam Stevenson (Education and Social Work); Naomi Malouf (Nursing and Midwifery); Caroline Howe, Abdalvahed Razaghi (Health Science)

An eclectic and enthusiastic group of post-graduate students proudly represented University of Sydney at the 9th Annual Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) Doctoral Students Conference at Far Eastern National University (FENU) in Vladivostok, Russia from 14 – 18th of July, 2008.

The theme of the conference, “Leading Research for a Better Future: Pacific Scope, Global Impact”, was reflected in a diverse range of sessions showcasing doctoral research in fields including linguistics, engineering, health, business, international law, globalisation, communication, chemistry, migration, philosophy, economics and crime. Over 60 papers were accepted from the Pacific Rim region for presentation at the Conference, which attracted hundreds of abstracts.

University of Sydney was very well represented thanks to the financial support of the Dean of Graduate Studies and our various faculties. Our strong presence boosted recognition of Sydney’s high standing within the APRU, while enabling us to cultivate international research networks within our disciplines.

The Conference provided a supportive environment within which to share experiences of doctoral research with fellow candidates at varying stages of completion, and provided the opportunity to see the impact of one’s own research within the global context. One student observed “ *the conference was an invaluable forum where I could present my ideas to an audience wider than my own discipline. While I am comfortable speaking at conferences to other nurses and health care professionals and where there is a common understanding of the issues affecting the profession, I was somewhat apprehensive about how my work might be received by other disciplines. I was rewarded with some insightful comments from fields as far reaching as economics, philosophy, business management and environmental science and was pleasantly surprised by the depth of questioning and serious consideration given to my work.*”

Some students gained additional experience moderating sessions while others were invited to present their research at other conferences. One University of Sydney student commented on the “honesty” of the conference and its impact on research futures - *we were allowed to merely to “be” PhD students, honestly recounting the successes and challenges of our journeys and delighting in our emergence as the next generation of intellectuals and academics. These networks continue beyond the confines of the Conference permeating our personal and professional lives.*

The academic strength of the Conference was complemented with a busy schedule of sightseeing and entertainment. Highlights included tours of historic landmarks such as defense post “Fort 7”, traditional dance and song performed by FENU students and an authentic diet of borscht, cabbage rolls and seafood, the latter for which Vladivostok is famous. No effort was spared to make our stay in this fascinating city enjoyable and safe.

Our sincere thanks go to Conference Chair Anastasia Kouznetsova and her hard-working team for their highly efficient organisation and warm hospitality. We are also indebted to the Dean of Graduate Studies and our various faculties for their financial support and encouragement to participate in such a worthwhile event.

The APRU Doctoral Students Conference provides a very welcoming and supportive environment for anyone the early stages of doctoral research and we recommend it unreservedly. The next Conference will be held in Kyoto, Japan, in June 2009.