



Editorial

Welcome to Volume 8 of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*.

In the debate about the relationship between higher education and the world of work, the concepts of employability, graduate capabilities, work readiness, work experience and life-long learning are recognised as significant in enhancing graduates' competitiveness in the employment stakes. This is certainly supported by the view of employers who in the recent Times Higher Education Global University Employability Rankings (2016) survey identified professional experience and employability skills as being the most important in predicting employability and the qualities they would seek in graduates.

However the transition from selecting a course of study to displaying these employability capabilities and finally selecting a career may prove quite difficult for some students. Emeritus Professor John Brennan of the Open University UK suggests that studying different subjects and preparation for different jobs require different things. Some of these might be known at the time of study, but others will not.

It is not surprising then that while higher education students commence their studies expecting that graduation will lead to a career eventually, many don't make a conscious effort to explore career options. It might be that the delay in considering a career is related to how they view the purpose of their higher education. For some it may be an opportunity for a well-rounded education; learning how to think critically, reason analytically and reflect on personal growth. Others may be interested in campus life and the social opportunities that prevail, while others might indeed have a definite career route in mind. The rising popularity of business degrees does seem to indicate that many students see the vocational role of higher education with the goal being to get a job rather than to 'experience' an education. However for those who commence their higher education with a more liberal view of their education the question of when and how to make a career choice may be challenging.

The Graduate Careers Australia GradStats Report 2015 revealed that only 11 per cent of graduates visited their institutions' career service and just four per cent attended a career fair or information session. The most common sources of information regarding careers were the internet or friends. It would appear that there remains some work to be done in better understanding how to assist students to make connections between their studies and career opportunities. A recent report out of Bond University, 'Global graduate employability research: A report to the Business20 Human Capital Taskforce' identified seven strategies most frequently identified by stakeholder groups (employers, graduates, students and higher education personnel) as being valuable. These were: work experience /internships/ placements; engaging in extra-curricular activities; careers advice and employment skill development; part time employment; attending networking or industry information events; volunteering/community engagement; and professional association membership/engagement, confirming the importance of career advice in tandem with work experience opportunities.

The first paper for our 2017 Issue by Shelley Kinash, Linda Crane, John Capper, Mark Young and Ashley Stark, *When do university students and graduates know what careers they want: A research-derived framework*, reports on research which explored how university students and graduates subsequently employed, made career decisions. Notably, students and graduates in the study appeared to unconsciously subscribe to a largely vocational model of

university education with a nearly unanimous belief that career preparation was the main, if not sole, purpose of a university. The paper provides a 'University student and graduate career-knowledge framework' and a set of recommendations for universities on how to better support students to make career choices.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee and Deputy Editor Beatrice Tucker I commend the first paper to you and invite you to engage with the forthcoming papers throughout the year as we seek to promote scholarly communication and debate, and scholarship in learning and teaching for graduate employability.

Beverley Oliver

Editor