Dear colleagues,

I write to bring news of an initiative that has emerged from the Monash-Warwick Alliance.

In May 2013, Monash and Warwick Universities will jointly host the first Monash-Warwick Conference of Undergraduate Research. The notion of undergraduates publishing and presenting their research has a longer history overseas, especially in the United States. But it is still fairly new to Australian universities, and this conference will hopefully be part of a series of events and opportunities that will build up a culture of researching, publishing, and presenting among our undergrads.

The conference will be a one day event staged concurrently at Monash and Warwick Universities. It is a conference where current undergraduate students across disciplines will be invited to showcase the fruits of their research experiences, and presentations may come in the form of a 20 minute oral presentation, or via a poster.

What is particularly exciting about this conference is the fact that the conference presenters will be linked not just by themes, but also by technology. It will feature sessions in the afternoon where students from both Monash and Warwick will present papers in joint panels, to audiences from both universities. Three Monash students and two Warwick students will also be selected to receive a full stipend to fly to the UK and Australia respectively to present in person. These stipends are competitive (see below on how to apply).

Over in the Australian campus, the best oral presentation will receive a cash prize of $200 and an award certificate, while three runner-up papers will receive cash prizes of $100 each. There is also a separate award category for the best poster presentation, and a cash prize of $200. Successful presenters will also be approached to submit their papers for publication in the refereed undergraduate research journal Reinvention.

Being an undergraduate research conference that hopes to include all sections of the university, the theme of the conference is a necessarily broad one. Papers and posters should consider, as a starting point, the theme “Current research issues in your discipline or area”. Students are encouraged to identify existing areas of neglect, controversy, or innovation in their fields and present on topics accordingly.

How to apply

Abstracts for paper and poster presentations are now being accepted, and there is a registration fee of $10 for presenters. Students wishing to form their own panels may also do so (panels should comprise three to four students) but panels are not necessary.

Please email a 250 word abstract to the conference organising officer, Jessica O’Leary at jessica.oleary@monash.edu. The application must include the name and degree program of the student.
For students who wish to be considered for the stipend to present at Warwick, please further include the students’ academic transcript, and to be prepared to be called in for a brief interview.

Presenters must be enrolled as undergraduates at Monash as of Semester 1 2013, and Honours students are considered undergraduate students for the purposes of eligibility. **The closing date for the submission of abstracts is Friday 15 March 2013.**

I would greatly appreciate it if you could advertise this initiative among your students, especially through Moodle by copying and pasting this announcement in its entirety.

If you or your students have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at ernest.koh@monash.edu.

Best wishes,

Ernest