

Annual Report, 2008



Introduction

I am pleased to report a productive year of positive change for Ascilite. Following another successful conference in Singapore in late 2007, the Secretariat moved from its long-term base at the University of Wollongong in early 2008. Dominique Parrish now manages Ascilite business from her home office premises. The new arrangement is working extremely well. Dom is now a fully established member of the Executive Team, and has worked tirelessly to upgrade our financial and administrative processes.



Further positive development saw the introduction of an institutional membership scheme designed to simplify the subscription process and offer cost savings to members. Along with focus on sponsorship and three-year memberships, this initiative helps to ensure long-term financial stability for the society. Four institutional memberships have been taken up so far.

Progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2008 - 2011 has continued during the year. The plan that addresses performance in six key areas of business is available in summary form on the website.

Amendments to the constitution are proposed to allow earlier presentation of the annual budget and financial reports, and to streamline the AGM and election of Executive Committee members. Feedback from 2007 said members want more opportunity to discuss Society business at the AGM. The proposed solution is to present documentation ahead of the meeting so informed discussion can happen on the day.

Finally, there will be significant changes to the Executive Committee following this year's AGM as a number of long serving members, including myself, retire. Sincere thanks for contributions of time and expertise are extended to all retiring members. Continuing members ensure a strong team going forward.

Eathy Gunn

President, November 2008

Executive Portfolio Summary Reports

The portfolio of services managed by the Ascilite Executive Committee offers a range of opportunities and benefits to members, and through Ascilite members, to the wider professional community. This kind of voluntary service to institutions, government departments and individual members may not always gain high visibility, but its value cannot be underestimated by those who know what is involved on the provision side. I want to thank all current and past Executive Committee members for contributing to the work of the Society. The following summary of portfolio activities acknowledges effort and achievements of the Committee members in 2008.

AJET

AJET 24(4), published in August 2008 was the journal's fourth online only issue, following the retirement of the print version at the end of 2007. The decision to cease print production was based on many factors, including increasing costs and 'time to print.' Some positive outcomes are increased access, the ability to clear a backlog of accepted articles and to get each edition to our readers within a shorter timeframe.

Ascilite Awards

Website information and Awards documentation was updated early in the year and the call for proposals went out in March. Members of the international judging panel all agreed to continue in the role in 2008. A smaller number of entries were received than in previous years, making a lighter workload for the Executive Committee and the judging panel. The quality of entries for the Awards remains high.

Campus Reps

During 2008, Diane Salter was seconded to the executive to facilitate the Campus Reps network. Reps were invited to submit local news for publication in the bi-monthly ascilite newsletter. Diane also worked with Reps to generate the following description of their roles and responsibilities: *Campus reps are self-appointed ascilite members who offer to take on a role in the promotion of ascilite aims and objectives at the local level. Campus reps provide a valuable service to proactively support members at their local campuses by raising awareness of key ascilite initiatives.* The network continues to make a valuable contribution to promotion of the Ascilite community.

Community Mentoring Program

Four successful mentoring partnerships were supported in 2008. Each received a \$500 contribution to support the partnership and the mentees also received a free registration to the conference. This program bases its success on the outstanding contribution of long standing members who offer to mentor each year, and to the mentees who challenge themselves throughout the program.

Conference updates

Ascilite 2008 at Deakin University, Melbourne received a record number of submissions (216) topping last year's total by more than twenty and ensuring a successful event. The program features a fine variety of topical issues addressed through concurrent paper sessions, pre-conference workshops, symposia and top international keynote speakers. A breakdown of submissions, acceptance rates and reviewer statistics provided by Roger Atkinson is at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/procs/index.htm>

Ascilite 2009 will be co-hosted by The University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology and Manukau Institute of Technology in the beautiful harbour side city of Auckland, New Zealand. The University of Auckland's new Business School complex offers an ideal location for a city centre event. The committee, chaired by Richard Elliott, is already working at full speed to ensure a top quality event.

Elections 2008

This year has been remarkable on the election front. Along with high profile national (US, NZ) elections, the Ascilite Executive will see significant change at this year's AGM when long-standing members of the committee retire. Gerry Lefoe served for eight years in roles including Vice President and originator and manager of the highly valued Community Mentoring Program. Bob Corderoy managed the prestigious International Awards Scheme for five years. Joe Luca served for four years contributing to the website and many other tasks. Barney Dalgarno and co-opted members, Diane Salter and Gregor Kennedy also stand down. I am retiring after nine years, the last four as President, confident in the knowledge that future management of the society is in excellent hands, and that new Executive Committee members will bring fresh ideas for moving forward in this changing environment.

Newsletter

Six editions of the Newsletter published in January, March, May, July, Sept. and November of 2008 maintained contact within the Ascilite Community throughout the year. Work is progressing to produce future editions in HTML format.

Sponsorship

Considerable effort went into developing and maintaining relationships with sponsors during the year. A survey of sponsors of the 2007 conference provided valuable feedback for 2008 and future relationship management. Documentation in the form of a Sponsorship Opportunities Brochure has been produced and can be easily updated to suit local conditions for each annual conference. The value of sponsorship to the conference is considerable, and the presence of our sponsors guarantees delegates are kept up to date with developments in industries that partner with tertiary institutions in the delivery of elearning options.

Research Grant

The Ascilite early career researcher grant continues to be sponsored by Black Board allowing an award of up to \$5000 in 2008. Barney Dalgarno looked after the portfolio this year and refined the criteria and guidelines with assistance from co-opted Executive member Gregor Kennedy. The submission date was brought forward to allow time for additional information to be sought from applicants after this was identified as a problem during the 2007 grant review process. Seven eligible applications were received. The review panel consisted of Barney Dalgarno (chair), Charles Sturt University, Gregor Kennedy, University of Melbourne, Sue Bennett, University of Wollongong and Lina Markauskaite, University of Sydney. Applicants were provided with written feedback to assist them with future grant applications.

Secretariat

The new arrangement for the Secretariat is working extremely well, and as always, the bulk of the work is in managing member subscriptions and services, finances and Executive business. Dom Parrish does an exemplary job on all fronts, and has brought high levels of initiative, business acumen and foresight to the role. The arrangement has reverted to a part time one and will continue to be reviewed going forward.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship has been a key area of focus during 2008. A significant proportion of Ascilite's income is generated through the conference, and the opportunity for sponsors to participate in this annual event is of benefit to all concerned. The variety of products, sectors and services represented at the conferences adds a valued dimension to the event. The ability for sponsors to interact with Ascilite members and other delegates is good exposure and feedback for their organizations. A survey of sponsors conducted in 2007 informed plans going forward.

Strategic Planning

Work has continued to develop and implement the Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2011 to provide focus for key areas of activity. In summary, the aims are to create opportunities for members to participate in communities of practice and professional development; to foster strategic alliances with complementary organizations such as our renewed MOU with the UK Association of Learning Technology (ALT); to improve communication with members and associates; to maintain high standards in publications and conferences; to provide opportunities for research and for the scholarship of teaching and learning and to provide effective and transparent administration and management. Details of the strategic plan are available on the website.

Website

Considerable work has been done to revise and update the Ascilite website. This is an ongoing task that requires frequent review of the design, underlying software systems and content.