

## Ramsay scholars to meet a dazzling galaxy of stars

The first scholarship students to embark on ACU's Bachelor of Arts (Western Civilisation) were celebrated in a scholarship presentation ceremony in North Sydney on Tuesday 16 March. The new degree is offered in partnership with the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation, which has generously provided funding for the academic program, academic hires and scholarships over a period of eight years.

Members of the Ramsay Centre, including CEO Professor Simon Haines, and Chairman the Hon John Howard OM AC, ACU Vice-Chancellor Professor Zlatko Skrbis, Director of the BA Western Civilisation Program Professor Robert Carver, and Acting Provost Professor Meg Stuart led the formalities at a presentation for the inaugural scholarship students in North Sydney last night.

Professor Carver welcomed the scholars and their families and guests and spoke warmly of the opportunity to discover the rich dialogue and interdisciplinarity of a genuine liberal arts program. Mr Howard and Professor Skrbis presented each student with their certificates and a biography of benefactor Paul Ramsay.

In his address, Professor Haines remarked that the scholarship gave recipients access to “a dazzling galaxy of star thinkers from multiple fields of thought and art ... from Homer to T. S. Eliot, Machiavelli to the Federalist papers, Burke and Mill and Marx and de Tocqueville, Dostoevsky, Austen, Orwell, and Woolf, Michelangelo, Picasso or Darwin, Einstein and Newton, Plato, Kant, or Wittgenstein.

“The real magic of the thing, we hope, for you, is that by meeting these stars in the company of these very gifted teachers and your small group of fellow students, you will have an experience few others can have, of direct contact with the greatest minds of our shared past, not as if they were distant inaccessible mountain peaks or buried monuments or weird dead celebrities, but as real thinking people speaking to you, who have thoughts you can actually understand and work with yourself, that you can respond to, making their thoughts your thoughts.”

Professor Skrbis thanked the Ramsay Centre for its generosity in partnering with ACU to provide scholarships in the name of benefactor Paul Ramsay and bring to reality the vision of creating a place for scholars to draw on history as a foundation for the future.

“As a specifically Catholic institution, we are part of an intellectual tradition that goes back almost two thousand years to St Paul, and the theologians and philosophers who succeeded him. But as an Australian university, we inevitably draw on the intellectual capital of the classics – we are reliving their legacy on a daily basis, even when we are not consciously aware of it.

“As one of our mottoes puts it: ‘It’s your future. Make an impact. Welcome to Australian Catholic University, where tradition sparks new beginnings.’

“The establishment of this new degree program in Western Civilisation is one of those ‘new beginnings’.”

Mr Howard reiterated the theme that it is vital to have a true comprehension of those who came before us in order to understand our own world.

The degree covers a structured and integrated humanities curriculum from antiquity to the present and includes an optional honours year.

Learn more about ACU's Bachelor of Arts (Western Civilisation) [here](#).

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