Our consistent high rankings for teaching quality underline the University’s commitment to provide our students with the best possible educational experience. We were again awarded the highest ranking for overall graduate satisfaction by the 2014 Good Universities Guide, as well as high rankings for teaching skills, staff-student ratio and generic skills. We upheld our top 400 ranking in the Academic Ranking of World Universities and were placed in the top 75 for Physics, making Swinburne the only Australian university outside the Group of Eight to achieve a top 75 rating in a science discipline. These outstanding results are a tribute to our academic staff who are increasingly making Swinburne a university of choice for students and researchers.

In the online learning space, Swinburne continued to be an industry leader. Since it began three years ago, Swinburne Online has grown rapidly in response to student demand. By the end of the year, it was reaching more than 6,300 students and we were pleased to graduate our first group of online students. Swinburne Online has allowed us to offer high-touch online education to students who would never have found their way to a Swinburne campus, including a high proportion of regional students and many students who are the first in their family to undertake university study.

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Professor Linda Kristjanson
Vice-Chancellor and President

In 2014, Swinburne continued to make good progress towards its objective to be Australia’s leading university of science, technology and innovation.
We were thrilled to be able to open our new $100 million Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre (AMDC) to students and staff at our Hawthorn campus in May. The AMDC is now supporting inter-disciplinary research and teaching across the fields of engineering, design, ICT and business. With the Factory of the Future within the AMDC expected to open in 2015, there are exciting opportunities ahead for strong collaborations between students, research and our partners in business in areas which support Victoria’s advanced manufacturing industries.

In 2014, the University commenced a major process of systems change with the implementation of a new Faculty structure, an Integrated Services Model for the support services provided to our students and staff and the launch of a new student management system, Student One. The guiding principle behind this work has been the need to create systems that better serve our students.

Our partnerships and collaborations continued to be an area of focus at Swinburne. We held our first two Industry Open Day events, showcasing the University’s strengths to local businesses and building opportunities for further collaboration. We partnered with NICTA to open a new software innovation lab, which will foster a connection between industry, teaching and research in the area of information and communications technologies.

Internationally, we continued to work closely with several Chinese universities, as well as strengthen our teaching partnership with Northeastern University in Boston. The Swinburne Design Factory also remained active, with projects at Aalto University in Finland and Stanford University in California. Our campus over in Sarawak continues to flourish, with more than 80 students graduating last year.

Research at Swinburne also celebrated a number of great funding successes, particularly through Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council funding rounds. Our total research income in 2014 was $24.3 million, a 24% increase since 2011 and an outstanding result given the current state of research funding.

Work continued on a number of important initiatives that underpin Swinburne’s culture of achievement and inclusion. During National Reconciliation week, we launched our Reconciliation Action Plan, an important step towards improving the way that we, as a University, engage with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and history. The University adopted a new Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan, committed to achieve gender pay equality for all employees by 2020, and was recognised by the Workplace Gender Quality Agency as an employer of choice. We also launched the Pride@Swinburne initiative to ensure that we support students of all sexual orientations and gender expressions.

In 2014 we said farewell to Chancellor Bill Scales AO after nine outstanding years of leadership. Dr Scales oversaw a period of tremendous growth, innovation and progress at Swinburne. The contributions he made to the development of Swinburne as a world-class university cannot be overstated and we were pleased to recognise his achievements by awarding him an honorary doctorate in December 2014.

Graham Goldsmith, who has been part of Swinburne’s Council since 2010, was named the new Chancellor. Mr Goldsmith brings with him significant experience from the financial services industry as well as a passion for education and I am confident he will help steer Swinburne to a successful future. He was installed at the end of 2014 in a ceremony overseen by the Governor of Victoria, His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC.

The whole community at Swinburne was saddened by the sudden passing of Professor Collins, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Development) in late 2014. George was a true gentleman and an individual deeply committed to collaboration. George was excited by the research Swinburne was undertaking. His passion and engaging nature will be deeply missed.

Although the entire tertiary education sector has undergone a period tremendous change and will continue to face challenges in 2015, we remain confident and focused on our vision and our commitment to our students and research endeavours. In particular, I expect that 2015 will see some significant opportunities for us to grow in the online education space, drawing on the accumulated knowledge and expertise we now have from several years of the operation of Swinburne Online. We will also continue to foster the high-quality research programs for which we have become internationally recognised.

Going forward we must learn more than ever to listen to our students, to our industry partners and to each other. We will focus on working collaboratively and harnessing the power of the collective energy, drive and perseverance of the staff and students who make Swinburne great. I am confident that in 2015 and beyond, we will continue to be a university that is transformational for our students and a university that continues to make a substantial contribution to solving the world’s problems.

Professor Linda Kristjanson
Vice-Chancellor and President