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# Exceptional staff awarded Curtin's highest academic honour

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 1 November 2021

Curtin University has recognised the work and service of 17 outstanding staff with the highest academic honour the University can award.



The prestigious title of John Curtin Distinguished Professor has been bestowed upon:

- Faculty of Business and Law Professors Fran Ackermann, Mark Griffin, Sharon Parker, Alan Duncan, Marylene Gagne and Ian Phau;
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Professors Boris Gurevich, Iain Murray, Andrew Rohl, Kate Trinajstic, Craig Buckley and Tele Tan;
- Faculty of Health Sciences Professors Donna Chung, Phill Della, John Mamo and Zhonghua Sun; and
- Faculty of Humanities Professor Rod Ellis.

John Curtin Distinguished Professors are academics with exceptional teaching expertise, research skills, or scholarly, creative or artistic achievements, a significant record of public service and an established national or international reputation.

Curtin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Harlene Hayne said this year's academics were truly deserving of the prestigious title, recognising their academic commitment.

“Since the titles were introduced in 2005, they have been awarded to those that have gone above and beyond to achieve exceptional results that will have substantial benefit for the community,” Professor Hayne said.

“I would like to commend each recipient for their distinguished contribution in their field of expertise, which has helped Curtin build a formidable national and global reputation as a leading institution for education, and for research.”

Due to COVID-19 disruptions, this year’s ceremony included academics granted a John Curtin Distinguished Professorship from 2019 to 2021.

**(Awarded in 2019)**

**Professor Fran Ackermann** is a Research Professor in the School of Management and Marketing. Her research interests include complex decision-making and stakeholder management. Her current research focuses on stakeholder engagement in substantial public projects.

**Professor Mark Griffin** is Director of Curtin’s Future of Work Institute. His research examines the link between individual and organisational capability. His professional profile boasts a range of large-scale collaborative projects within different industries.

**Professor Boris Gurevich** has been a Professor of Geophysics at Curtin since 2001. He is globally renowned for his research with over 100 journal publications. He was presented with the prestigious Reginald Fessenden Award from the Society of Exploration Geophysicists earlier this year and is currently a Fellow of the Institute of Physics.

**Professor Iain Murray AM** is a computer science engineer who has worked in the field of assistive technology for nearly 30 years, both as a practitioner and researcher. He founded the Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired in 2002 to deliver ICT training to vision impaired people across the globe.

**ARC Laureate Fellow Sharon K. Parker** is Director of the Centre for Transformative Work Design. In 2019, she was named among the world’s most influential scientists and social scientists in the Web of Science Group’s list of Highly Cited Researchers. Her research has attracted funding worth over \$40 million. She has published over 150 academic articles and is the author of two books.

**Professor Andrew Rohl** is a distinguished researcher in computational science and the Head of School of Electrical Engineering, Computing and Mathematical Sciences. He is also the director of the ARC Centre for Transforming Maintenance through Data Science. Andrew was instrumental in establishing the \$100 million Pawsey Supercomputing Centre.

Palaeontologist **Professor Kate Trinajstic** was awarded the Malcolm McIntosh Award for Physical Science in 2010, for her work in the discovery and preservation of fossilised tissue in ancient fish. As Dean of Research in Science and Engineering, Kate develops and implements strategies to improve research success, with an emphasis on career development for women.

**(Awarded 2020)**

**Professor Craig Buckley**, who leads the Hydrogen Storage Research Group at Curtin, is recognised internationally for his work on hydrogen storage materials. Craig has been involved in energy research for the past 33 years. He has been a lead/co-investigator on over \$100 million of research funding, is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Physics and has published over 200 scientific papers in peer reviewed journals.

**Professor Donna Chung** from the School of Allied Health works closely with industry partners to reform legislation, policy and service design to increase the safety and wellbeing of women and their children. She also collaborates with Aboriginal colleagues and community members in developing and applying her research. Donna's expertise has led to her involvement in a number of state and national committees.

**Professor Phillip Della AM**, the Head of the School of Nursing, has had a distinguished nursing career spanning more than 40 years, during which time he has led legislative and policy changes to advance nursing practice. His research has led to improvements in patient handover and care. Phill has been recognised by an Order of Australia award and a Lifetime Achievement Honour.

Throughout his career, economist **Professor Alan Duncan** has worked to alleviate disadvantage amongst the most vulnerable sections of society through public policy design. As Director of the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, his behavioural economics research provides new insights into how we can improve family and community wellbeing, widen access to education and training and enhance work opportunities.

**Professor Rod Ellis**, a Research Professor in the School of Education, is a prize-winning linguist with more than forty years' experience in language teacher education across the world. His most recent research is focused on the use of task-based activities in teaching a second language. He is currently compiling a book on second language pragmatics from the research that he undertook for a recent ARC Discovery grant.

**Professor Marylene Gagne's** current research at the Future of Work Institute examines how organisations, through their structures, cultures, rewards, tasks, and management, affect people's motivational orientations towards their work. Much of her research has been produced in collaboration with industry, leading to the production of practical tools and resources. She is currently exploring how team motivation develops in work teams and how organisations can promote this.

**Professor John Mamo** of the Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute is a physiologist with primary interests in vascular biology in chronic disease conditions. John's team recently identified a major risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and potential restorative treatments. His team's previous research in this area attracted the NHMRC's prestigious Marshall and Warren Award. John's vascular biology research also encompasses other neurodegenerative diseases including migraine and endocrine disorders such as diabetes.

**Professor Zhonghua Sun** leads medical radiation science research at the Curtin Medical School. He is recognised for his research into the use of novel 3D visualisation techniques, 3D printing and diagnostic tools for assisting clinical diagnosis of cardiovascular disease and improving patient care and management. His current research is focused on creating 3D printed physical heart and vascular models to improve health students' understanding of anatomy and disease.

**Professor Tele Tan AM** is a strong advocate of cross-disciplinary research. As an electronics engineer, he is passionate about using technology to help people with health, developmental or socio-economic challenges to actively participate in society. He co-founded the highly successful Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance in 2015 to harness the special talents of young people on the autism spectrum.

**(Awarded 2021)**

**Professor Ian Phau** is the Marketing Discipline Lead and the Director of the Luxury Branding Research Cluster within the Faculty of Business and Law. He maintains a strong profile in a wide range of industry sectors and is a frequent keynote speaker and panellist at international conferences. His research has focused on country image, luxury branding, brand counterfeiting and piracy, consumer animosity and advertising appeals. Ian established the Consumer Research Lab at Curtin.

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