ITS BULLETIN

ITS welcomes new director to the helm

Two years of weekly commuting between Brisbane and Sydney have taught new Information Technology Services director Nick Tate one thing – airline food cannot replace a home-cooked dinner.

On the job just a month, Nick says he is busy talking to ITS staff and department heads about future directions.

"All the ITS staff I've met are excellent IT professionals and there are many good internal initiatives going on," he said.

"But I need to see how we can integrate ITS with the whole university and I have to talk to our users to do that.

"Future projects will be user-driven, but with a clear strategic goal."

Nick began his professional life as a computer scientist when he graduated with a physics degree from University of St Andrew in Scotland almost 25 years ago.

Armed with a Masters degree in computer science from the Open University in England, he worked for a number of banks in London before coming to Australia two years ago.

With Australian wife, UQ music graduate Barbara, and their two young sons, the family set up house in Brisbane while Nick took a position as director of Macquarie's Bank's infrastructure technology services in Sydney.

"After a while you get fed up with the commuting – and then I saw an
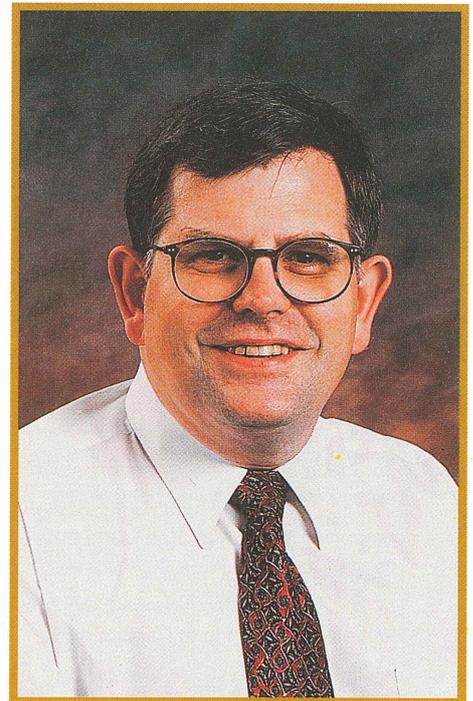
New ITS director Nick Tate.

advertisement for the position here and realised it was an opportunity to work on what will be the future IT strategies for the university," he said.

Experienced in change management, Nick says although it's too early to specify new projects, he is convinced staff and ITS clients are ready for change.

University Secretary and Registrar Douglas Porter said last year the University adopted an Information Technology Services Framework which redefined the role of the Prentice Centre.

"The centre had been a pioneer in the provision and use of information technologies and had served the University well," he said.

ITS raises new standard in business excellence

ITS has received certification from the International Organisation for Standardisation's ISO9002 Quality System Standard for most of its services.

The few remaining services will be incorporated at the six-monthly audits.

ITS Quality Manager Vern Bawden said the certification process began two years ago and culminated in the granting of the certificate late last year.

He said ISO9002 certified organisations had business processes and benchmarks to help ensure quality outcomes for clients.

"It also requires that measures be put in place for improvement of those processes," he said.

Vern said feedback from ITS clients would help the organisation continue to improve its services.
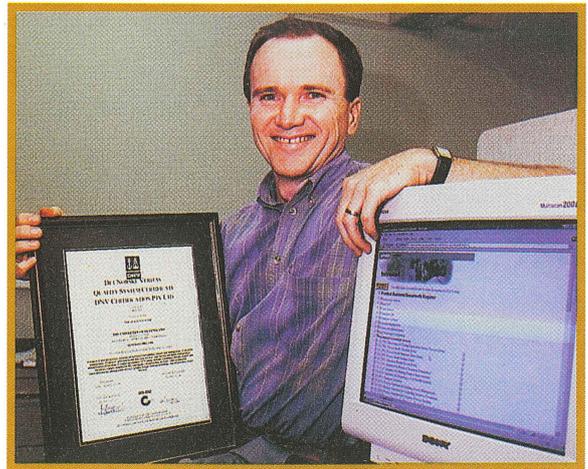
Justifiably proud ... Vern Bawden.

After three years in the top job, Graham's heading for the greens

After more than 25 years at Information Technology Services (formerly the Prentice Centre), director Graham Rees is shopping for golf clubs.

Graham was farewelled on March 5 and plans to start a computer consultancy company with his wife, Kay – and take some golf lessons.

But before that, a trip to Canada and Alaska with his son is on the agenda.

Graham joined the Prentice Centre as a senior systems engineer in 1972 and was acting director from 1996 until recently.

"One of the great joys about working at Prentice was that we were always doing really advanced things – it was great fun" he said.

ITS had grown into a large organisation which provided computing services that departments could not provide for themselves, he said.

"When I started, there was one computer at The University of Queensland and we had it," he said.

"There were just 30 people working in the basement of [this] building, but now there
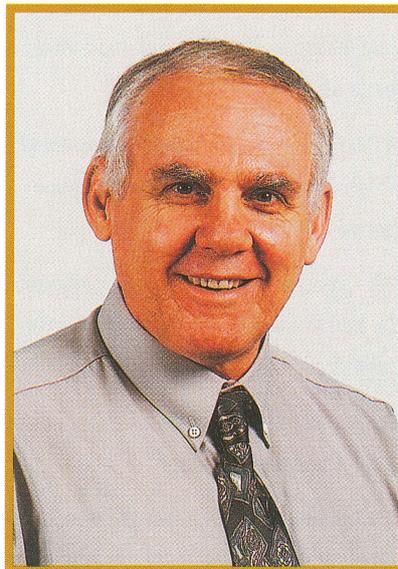
Proud of major achievements ... Graham Rees.

are 140 people and at one stage we occupied almost all of the Prentice Building."

He said he was proud of the major achievements of ITS in the past three decades, which included the establishment of AUSCERT, an internationally recognised computer security developer, the AARNet Mirror Project and facility management service level agreements.

"The work has been exciting and the people have been wonderful," he said.

SETTING NEW MARK
From page one

"However, the speed of technological change, lack of leadership continuity and the University's devolved management structures had all created problems."

He said the IT framework integrated central services and supported all digital technologies – including networks, telephones and satellite services.

To reflect the framework, the Prentice Centre has become Information Technology Services (ITS), and is now a core central service, working with the Information Technology and Services Policy and Planning Committee on policy direction.

Information Technology Services

http://its.uq.edu.au

ITS clients at the Ipswich campus are being well catered for with audio visual and facilities management staff on site.

ITS audio visual coordinator Kevin Dalton said the new campus was equipped with the latest technology, including nine data projection screens and AMAX touch screens.

"Staff can contact the academic help line after hours on 3365 9111 if there are any problems, but because this equipment is so reliable we don't expect too many after hours calls," he said.

Audio visual technician Tom Pettersson is available on 3381 1094 for help with any AV equipment in the 17 teaching spaces.

Extending their St Lucia campus service, Tom is available for one-on-one training sessions, and TEDI also runs courses on AV.

For help with computing at the Ipswich campus, phone the IT support desk on 3365 4329.
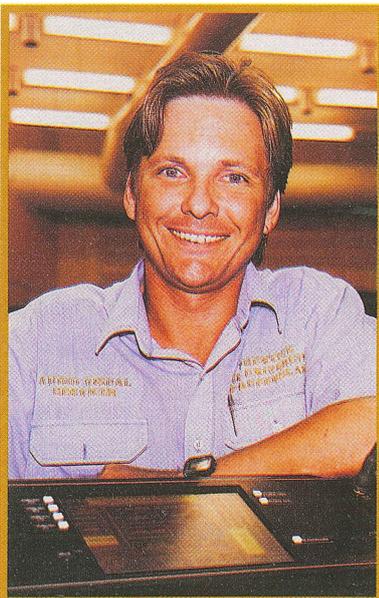
Audio visual technician Tom Pettersson.

Design and technology forge ahead in University website

ITS web development team (from left) Patricia McMillan, Hank Szeto, Sue Gray and Cameron Just.

The University of Queensland's new website – http://www.uq.edu.au/ – has broken new ground in web design and technology.

Almost a year in the planning, the site went live on February 1 after a team of ITS web designers, a graphic artist, content editors and indexers worked with UQ website enhancement project manager Helen Darch for six months.

Helen said the integrated web page achieved its goal of a single authoritative interface to University information.

"This web page is a huge step forward from the previous site," she said.

She said focus groups – consisting of students, staff, business and government professionals and community members – found the key focus for users was timely, correct, comprehensive information.

The ITS website enhancement technical leader, Hank Szeto, said the new site used the latest UNIX and Windows NT servers in a novel, multi-layered approach.

"It's quite unique because both creative and technical elements work together to create a functional and user-friendly website," he said.

The new site has links to seven major information streams, and utility buttons on the top of all pages provide new facilities like search, frequently asked questions, contacts and library access.

Representing a significant step forward are the integrated databases of information – Departments, Maps, Services, FAQs, News & Events, Courses, and Controlled Vocabulary – which allow the user to search and access detailed information.

"For example, you can search the departments database for a department or centre, then link to the map and a red circle locates the department on the map," Hank said.

Helen said the team could not have achieved a whole of UQ approach to web development without the support provided by the project's reference group, Prof. Ted Brown, Douglas Porter, Prof. Trevor Grigg and Prof. Andrew Lister.

Recently the Vice-Chancellor approved funding for a further stage of development.

Managing a new vision

Presentation Services unites diverse technologies under one banner

As part of the process of streamlining Information Technology Services' range of client services, Derek Powell has been appointed to the newly-created position of Manager, Presentation Services.

Presentation Services brings together the former departments of photography and VideoVision, as well as incorporating graphic design and desktop publishing services.

"Convergence of technologies leads naturally to grouping these services together," Derek said.

"We have found that our clients now have multiple uses for visual resources – as video, in print, and on the web.

"That's occurring in the production of flexible delivery material, promotional material and in research publications."

His commercial background has given Derek a strong client service orientation.

Trained initially in broadcast TV and radio, he has spent the past 15 years in the fields of audiovisual and video production and presentation.

More recently, he was general manager of ProCam, a major Brisbane video production house and facilities provider.

Derek credits Expo 88, where he managed the installation and operation of AV displays in five pavilions, as being a seminal influence.

"At Expo, I recognised that the challenge was to create presentations that can address a number of audiences using various media for their own strengths," he said.

For Derek, applying that philosophy in the University setting means services must be
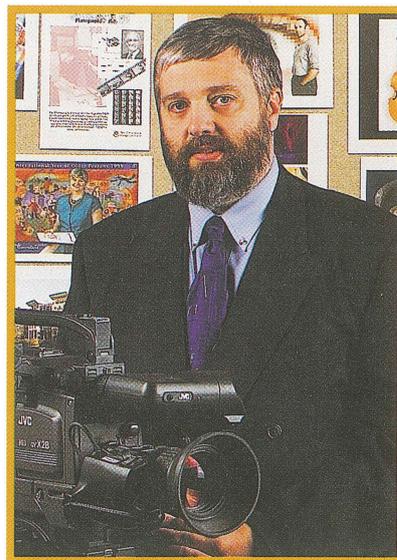
Meeting the need for presentation is Derek Powell.

flexible and make use of the most cost effective technology.

Derek's initial objective is to meet as many people as possible within the University to learn more about their needs and their uses for presentation tools.

Contact Derek at the Prentice building via email at d.powell@its.uq.edu.au or on 3365 1027.

# Web-based course nets ITS staff accolades from students

A web-based course developed by Information Technology Services and the University of Queensland Graduate Medical School has won a prestigious technology award.

The Queensland IT&T award in the education category is the culmination of three years' collaborative work that has received outstanding student acceptance.

The Medical School's Deputy Head responsible for IT, Associate Professor Zoltan Endre, said after two years of student trials, IT delivery of the problem-based learning program had achieved an acceptance rate of about 90 per cent.

"A survey of last year's first years found of the 147 students, 122 said using the site was either a very positive or useful experience," he said.

The site delivers PBL tutorials, clinical
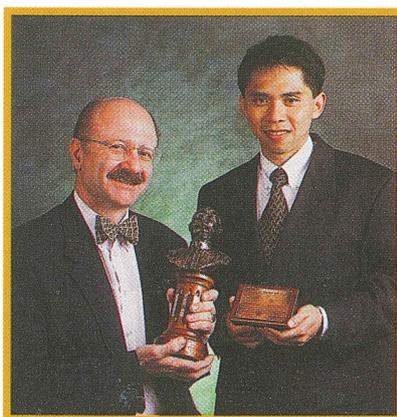
Awarded ... Hank Szeto and Assoc Prof Zoltan Endre.

videos, departmental links, library resources, electronic journals, databases, bulletin boards and links.

Benefits include student feedback through the bulletin boards.

Zoltan said the development work done by ITS and medical student George Pang had produced an innovative program,

Intrabase, which incorporated text, multimedia and just-in-time editing.

An NT version of Intrabase was developed by the ITS web development unit team leader, Hank Szeto.

More than 50 per cent of the medical course is now on the web – streets ahead of the only other medical school in Australia using this delivery method.

He said the site also had been given rare outside access to the Iowa Medical School's virtual hospital.

"They were impressed with our enthusiasm and commitment to IT delivery, so they gave us the second mirror site in the world of the virtual hospital," he said.

Hank said the award reaffirmed the design approach used and the development of Intrabase were the right choices.