

## Inaugural \$5000 Deloitte Scholarship Awarded

**Carly McDonald is the winner of the 2004 Commerce Alumni Chapter and Deloitte Scholarship for Excellence and Leadership.**

Carly is the first to receive the Scholarship which will be awarded annually for five years from 2004 through to 2008. The Scholarship is



Carly McDonald being awarded the Scholarship by Alex Brown, 2004 Chapter President (left), and Robert Di Monte from Deloitte's at the Commerce Awards Dinner.

awarded based on academic merit and leadership roles. Other conditions include continuing study in the School of Commerce at either undergraduate, honours or masters level.

Carly is currently completing the final year of her Commerce degree, majoring in International Business, Marketing and Management. The scholarship provides with the opportunity to continue her studies in this area by commencing a Masters of Commerce, majoring in Marketing, at the University of Adelaide next year.

In addition to her university commitments, Carly is the Business Coordinator and a piano teacher at Immanuel College's Novar Music Learning Centre. She is gaining valuable management experience

through a cadetship with AusBulk and is involved in Rotary's Youth Leadership Awards. Carly also enjoys sport and spending time with family and friends.

Carly is passionate about business development, international trade, marketing, travel and Japanese language and culture, having gone on a Rotary Youth Exchange to Japan for a year.

In regard to the Commerce Chapter, Carly says she is, "looking forward to meeting more Alumni members at future functions, getting to know you and the paths you have taken since graduating."



## Meet SA's Young Entrepreneur of the Year

**Stefan Ahrens, Managing Director of Ahrens Engineering and the winner of the South Australian Young Entrepreneur category in the 2003 Entrepreneur of the Year awards, will be the guest speaker at the Chapter's first "Meet the Chairman" seminar for 2004.**

During his presentation on Tuesday 30 March 2004, Stefan will explain how he turned a small family business into one of the country's fastest growing companies.

The origins of Ahrens Engineering date back to 1905 when W Ahrens & Sons was established as a black smith. Over the years the business gradually grew into a small regional manufacturer of agricultural products.

Stefan joined the business as a factory worker in 1988. By 1990, the business was losing money. Stefan, aged 22, realised tough decisions had to be made and subsequently closed down the company's loss making silo operation.

Stefan took over responsibility for the family business in 1995 and formed Ahrens Engineering with his parents. Since then, the company has experienced exponential growth. Ahrens Engineering was included in BRW's Fast 100 for five successive years between 1996 and 2000, and again in 2003. Last year the company had a 36% growth in turnover to \$74 million, and employed 175 people.

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## Meet SA's Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Stefan Ahrens.

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However, such growth has not been without challenges and risks. In 1996, Stefan negotiated the company's first mining project. At the time the value of the contract was equivalent to 75% of the company's annual turnover and his father was reluctant to take on the risk of such a big contract. However, Stefan pushed ahead, believing the project, if successful, would drive Ahrens Engineering to the next level of growth. He was right.

Today, Ahrens Engineering is two to three times more profitable than its competitors. Stefan believes that "building a superior product and offering high levels of client service has given Ahrens a strong reputation and an enviable referral system from satisfied clients". He also believes in providing a one-stop, one contact, one contract service to clients.

Although the company has grown significantly, the culture of the business is still very much family orientated. Stefan encourages everyone to be involved in the company's innovation, and ensures staff are cared for and treated with respect.

To learn more about this inspirational young entrepreneur and the business he drives, make sure you attend his presentation at **5.30 for 5.45pm on Tuesday March 30 in the Equinox, the Union Building, University of Adelaide**. Tickets, \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members, are available from the University of Adelaide Alumni Office on (08) 8303 5800 or email [alumni@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:alumni@adelaide.edu.au) (RSVP Friday 26 March 2004). Attendance contributes to CPE hours for CPA and ICAA members.

## 'Thought provoking' AGM and Cocktail Party

The Chapter had its first Annual General Meeting on Friday 21 November 2003. The meeting elected the first formal committee and agreed to change the constitution to enable the election of a vice president.

Guest speaker, Emeritus Professor Scott Henderson discussed differences in the structure and culture of tertiary education between the United States and Australia. In particular, he compared the difference in the bonds between students and the educational institutions, and how this impacts on relationships. His thought provoking comments were very relevant and timely to the Chapter, and left the new committee with a lot to ponder.

Scott's presentation was followed by an informal cocktail party, which was enjoyed by all.

### Get involved!

In addition to the formally elected committee, a number of alumni attend committee

meetings and are involved in the Chapter's projects and activities. If you would like to become involved, please email President, Alex Brown at [alex.brown@bigpond.com](mailto:alex.brown@bigpond.com).

Committee meetings are generally held in the Bernie Mills Room, Level 2, Security House, 233 North Terrace, Adelaide at 5.45pm on the third Wednesday of the month. The Chapter also has an informal get together in the first week of each month. For details please visit the announcements page of the Chapter's website at [www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni](http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni)

### Elected Committee

President:	<b>Alexander Brown</b>
Vice President:	<b>Llewellyn Jones</b>
Secretary:	(position vacant)
Treasurer:	<b>Joseph Barry</b>
Committee Members:	<b>Ryan Both</b>
	<b>Michael Hua</b>
	<b>Cheryl Wenham</b>
	<b>Sri Yordkaew</b>
Faculty Representative:	<b>Chris Medlin</b>

## Strategic Planning Day sets future direction

The Commerce Chapter Committee held a strategic planning day on Saturday 31 January. Professor Lee Parker and his wife, and business partner Gloria, donated their precious time to facilitate this session. Professor Parker, lecturer of Strategic Management III, is a professional strategic management consultant. He commented afterwards that he was impressed and that the day provided significant professional development. He was also keen enough to talk to colleagues about the session and offer future assistance.

Thank you to everyone who attended. We had a very constructive day, covered a lot of ground, and formulated a realistic plan that will see the Chapter grow in size, strength and purpose.

Attendees: Alex Brown, Llewellyn Jones, Joe Barry, Sri Yordkaew, Ryan Both, Cheryl Wenham, Mikey Lee (Chapter Member), Chris Medlin (School of Commerce), and Kim McBride (Alumni Association).

## Membership Benefits

As a member of the Commerce Chapter of the University of Adelaide Alumni Association you have the opportunity to receive members prices to professional development functions held by the following organisation:

- The Australian Institute of Management
- The Australian Marketing Institute
- The Market Research Society of Australia

Details of upcoming events held by these organisations will be posted on the announcements page of the website at [www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni](http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni)

When booking to attend the events, all you need to do is advise that you are a registered member of the Commerce Chapter. It is that simple.

## The Chapter's Value and Purpose

An incident this week brought home to me the value and purpose of the Chapter. I received an email from the Alumni office, explaining that a member of the University's Alumni currently living in Canada had a family member in Adelaide doing a post graduate. The family member was having difficulty with some of the concepts in the course and wanted to engage a final year student or recent graduate as a tutor. Repeated advertisements on notice boards had failed to raise any response, and in desperation the relative in Canada sent us an email. Within half an hour of the Chapter receiving the email, a graduate responded, and offered her services.

Although there is nothing unique about this story, it highlights the value of networks and the alumni as a community. As the chapter builds relationships with alumni in Adelaide, interstate and abroad, the value and rewards of being a member of the chapter will grow. This month, representatives of the Alumni Office are traveling to Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong to meet with members of the chapters in those countries/cities. They will be discussing the potential ways the Commerce Chapter can build relationships and contacts with alumni from their chapters, some of whom are very influential people, such as the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore.

As the Chapter grows, emails we may come from an alumni or business contact in Asia, looking for assistance in importing a new product into Australia, or specific expertise in a particular industry to fill a need in an emerging market in Asia.

Closer to home, Joe Barry, a member of the committee, is currently working to build closer relationships between overseas and local students through a series of informal networking sessions. These sessions, beginning in May, will

provide an opportunity for students to get to know each other, share ideas and hear the experiences of South Australian business people who have entered export markets. The future potential of such sessions cannot be underestimated.

The benefits for alumni of registering as members are already real and tangible. As you would have read on page one, on 30 March we have Stefan Ahrens coming to share his experiences as a very successful entrepreneur. Ahrens Engineering is a shining example of how a small family business can be transformed into a rapidly growing multi-million dollar company. With this and other events later in the year, our aim is to provide an opportunity for you to meet successful South Australians who are keen to share their knowledge, experiences and ideas. We can all learn and gain something from the experiences of others.

The website is another very useful tool for networking. Its directory enables you to search for alumni according to graduation year, industry, country and more. Once you have found a person you would like to contact, it enables you to contact them through blind email, a system that protects the privacy of the recipient's email address. The online forum, although still in its early stages, provides an opportunity for alumni to share thoughts and ideas through an open, online forum. Registering on the website also entitles you to various benefits as discussed on page 2.

The Chapter is also keen to build contacts in the wider community. Last month I contacted the alumni associations of our fellow South Australian universities, Flinders University and the University of South Australia. I explained the activities of the Commerce Chapter and indicated that we were keen to develop stronger ties between the alumni of each

university's commerce/business faculties. Although neither have active Commerce Chapters, they support the idea and are keen to look at various opportunities for building relationships. At this stage we have extended an open invitation for alumni to attend our professional sessions and selected networking events. This not only benefits them and increases the value of the networking at our events, but it also sends a strong message to the business community that the universities are working together to build opportunities for their students and alumni. In the long term, this is an opportunity for the alumni of three universities to jointly hold high profile events.

The Chapter also has a lighter side. Many of us made some great friendships at University. While some of these have been maintained, many have slipped as we have taken different career paths. The Chapter provides the opportunity for you to renew these friendships, and we will be encouraging you to do this at some more relaxed social events later in the year, where you can relive the fun you had during your days at "uni".

So what is the Chapter really about? Put simply, it is building a community of business professionals and students in similar professions but pursuing a broad range of careers who are keen to:

1. meet each other; and
2. learn from each other by sharing their ideas, knowledge and experiences.

Henry Ford once said:

"Coming together in the beginning  
Staying together is progress  
Working together is success."

To that end, I encourage you to become involved in our events and activities.

**Alexander Brown, Chapter President**

## Michael Hua's 2003 President's Report

The Commerce Chapter is one year old. This first annual report is a wonderful account of the significant contributions made by our volunteers and friends and their growing desire to become more actively involved in the affairs of our Chapter.

The Chapter was successfully launched in October 2002. Since the launch, we have 180 members registered and over 1,500 people on our mailing list. We have secured the fund to award a \$5,000 annual scholarship for the next three years. We have established a website that provides information on our Chapter as well as advanced functions such as member registration, alumni search, and discussion forum. We

have held high profile professional development and networking events. Some of our event speakers included Mr Jeffrey Lucy, Deputy Chairman of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) and Mr Jim Robinson, Managing Director of leading Adelaide Marketing Firm, Leo Burnett Robinson and the South Australian Chairman of the Advertising Federation of Australia. We have published our own newsletters and through our contacts, and we received good media coverage from the Advertiser.

In our initial year of existence, we have become one of the most active alumni chapters in the University of Adelaide. The Chapter's initial growth

and success is the result of the combined effort of our volunteers, friends, the University and some high profile South Australian organisations. On behalf of the Chapter I would like to thank everyone involved. We look forward to working with our existing and growing number of supporters to strengthen the bond between the School of Commerce, the University of Adelaide and our Alumni and friends in the wider community.



Michael Hua,  
2003 President

### Networking BBQ

On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February we had a small, jovial gathering of young professionals for our first networking barbecue. The balmy summer weather provided the perfect setting to relax, meet new people and enjoy the food and drink. It was great everyone mingled together and we saw new friendships in the making, hopefully long lasting ones. Making lifelong friendships is an important aspect of being part of the Commerce Alumni.

We hope to see more of you at our future events, and who knows, you might even

see your next business partner amongst the growing crowd in the Commerce Alumni.



This newsletter has been produced by the Commerce Chapter of the University of Adelaide Alumni Association. For more information on the Chapter, please visit [www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni](http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/alumni).

### Positions available website co-ordinator and communications manager

Two opportunities exist to join the Committee of the Commerce Chapter.

The position of website co-ordinator requires an individual to:

- plan and manage website content,
- liaise with web services to organise uploading content to the website, and
- facilitate and monitor discussion on the online forum

An understanding of website design and operation would be beneficial, but is not a prerequisite.

A position is also open for an individual to manage the preparation of communication material including the newsletter and promotional flyers for the Chapter's events. This position requires an individual to:

- co-ordinate the production of communication material
- assist with the design and layout of communication material
- liaise with committee members and other parties

- organising distribution of the communication material

This position requires experience with desktop publishing software and some artistic flare.

The Committee currently contains a group of young enthusiastic commerce alumni who are committed to developing a network of successful young professionals within Adelaide and further afield. A recent graduate or student with experience or education in the use of desktop publishing software and website maintenance is likely to get the most out of this honorary position.

Benefits of this role will include:

- exposure to the operation of an active Committee;
- improving your network; and
- gaining experience in performing an autonomous IT or communications role

For more details, please email Alex Brown at [alex.brown@bigpond.com](mailto:alex.brown@bigpond.com).