

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen today (**Friday, 16 September 2016**) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego).

The MoU contains agreement that the universities – both world leaders in particular research fields – will work together on a range of fronts, including student exchanges and research internships.

Professor Rathjen, pictured with UC San Diego's Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr Juan González, said the agreement was born of an enduring, growing friendship between the institutions – a friendship based upon reciprocal visits and a mutual interest in research with global implications.

“Through our Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), the University of Tasmania shares interests with the UC San Diego, particularly in areas such as ocean science, climate and the environment,” he said.

“This aligns with the activities and focus of UC San Diego’s Scripps Institution of Oceanography, with which IMAS already has strong ties.

“That an academy of global standing, like UC San Diego, chooses to work together with us shows that we are among a handful of organisations which is truly at the upper echelon of the worldwide research community.”

UC San Diego was recently placed by the highly regarded international ranking system, ARWU, as one of the best institutions in the world, based on a range of measures including research and graduate quality.

The MoU will lead to consideration of a range of initiatives including the creation of virtual classrooms and laboratory programs, joint degrees and summer programs.

The UC San Diego signing is one of a number of stops on an itinerary which included Europe and the US, during which University leaders examined a number of world-leading institutions and systems. Delegates to the party included Chancellor Michael Field AC, Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen and academic and professional leaders from a range of discipline areas critical to the University’s future planning and success.

Chancellor Field said investing in such study missions were core to maintaining a world-class, internationally competitive university.

“Universities are part of a global community and, if we are to be among the best in the world, we need to be an active part of that community, establishing partnerships that enable an exchange of knowledge,” Chancellor Field said.

“We have an obligation as the State’s only university to forge these relationships for both our benefit and Tasmania’s more broadly.

“Just last year the University had research collaborations spanning 88 countries which resulted in 1762 publications, something which underpins our position as an institution of world-standing and renown.

“We invest every year in international travel, the majority of which is for academic pursuits funded by external grants and which informs an essential part of our international research collaboration. Along with our international student recruitment, this helps deliver a return of more than \$200 million year on international education for Tasmania, a market we intend to grow in partnership with the State Government to \$400 million.

“We see a future in which a core pillar of the Tasmanian economy is the export of high quality, world-leading higher education at associate degree, undergraduate and post-graduate levels.”

Similar visits have been key in informing the thinking behind the University of Tasmania’s bold \$300 million transformation plan, which includes the implementation of a new type of curriculum which is more affordable and regionally relevant.

“The ability to come and look at some of the very best working models of these principles in the US and elsewhere, has allowed us to progress to the point of being able to deliver our transformation plans at a rate that would not have been possible otherwise,” Chancellor Field said.

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