Biography

Award-winning Senior Lecturer, Dr Prashan Karunaratne, from Macquarie Business School, is well-regarded for his innovative approach to driving student success through developing an active learning culture.

Prashan Karunaratne is an inspirational and innovative teacher of economics and business analytics at Macquarie University. His enthusiasm for teaching, and passion for improving student outcomes, have inspired and engaged tens of thousands of students for more than a decade. He nurtures students to develop a desire to engage and is a firm believer that the learning journey can benefit both teachers and students. Inspiring students to want to learn – by emphasising the ‘why’ of learning, and empowering students to navigate their own learning journey – by focusing on the ‘how’, creates valuable experiences in his classroom and beyond. This highlights the ‘wow’ moments that students will remember in years to come.

Prashan Karunaratne began as a student at Macquarie University in 2000, teaching at the University in 2003, and lecturing in the Macquarie Business School’s core economics in 2006. He has somewhat of a cult following among students, with his well-known catchphrase “#EveryoneSayWow!”.

Prashan says his focus is on developing an active learning culture, which is particularly important when teaching more theoretical subjects: “Learning business and economics can appear to be dry, so it’s often challenging for a lecturer to engage students,” he says. “I redesigned the curriculum to instil the ‘why’ of learning, using threshold concepts, and the ‘how’ of learning, utilising learning taxonomies.”

Prashan is engaged in a number of projects across Macquarie University – from helping design a brand new unit for MQ2020, to using his research in the area of learning and teaching in business education to run workshops for staff. Prashan has also been integral to taking the Macquarie Business School’s knowledge and reputation well beyond the university, with his enthusiastic utilisation of online learning platforms: “I upload my lectures to my YouTube channel Prashan Economics, which has amassed more than 72,000 views and over 440,000 minutes of watch time,” he notes. Prashan is also heavily involved with Macquarie’s Widening Participation Unit – LEAP via LEAP Roadshows and LEAP inROADs. This year, he leads a team of Macquarie Business School L&T champions in partnership with Macquarie’s Widening Participation Unit – LEAP, to launch the National Equity Program for Business Education – to create aspirations in equity students for higher education. These unprecedented times of 2020 present an even greater urgency to address equity groups regarding their aspirations to higher education.

Prashan is also a part of the team that designs, develops and delivers the University’s award-winning Excel courses on the Coursera platform – reaching more than one million learners globally. He is also the course instructor for these Excel courses which are utilised by international organisations such as the UNDP, UNICEF, and it has also been translated into Arabic by the government of the UAE.

Prashan Karunaratne received a 2019 Australian Award for University Teaching – Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning Award – the Australian government-endorsed, national university teaching awards. The citation was his award was: "For excellence in engaging, equipping and empowering students and lecturers to achieve transformative and equitable outcomes in Economics and Excel – in classrooms, boardrooms and beyond."

Prashan also received the inaugural Australian Business Deans Council Network Award – Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning in 2020: “The strength of Prashan’s application is that it covers three innovations in the Beginning in a core first year course, Microeconomic Principles, Widening Participation – in Australia and overseas, and the MOOC on Excel Skills for Business, and has numerous impressive awards.”

Prashan has travelled extensively across South Asia running workshops for students and teachers across high schools and universities – equipping students with the importance of economics and empowering teachers with best-practice teaching methodologies. He has published in The Lighthouse – commenting on the business and economics landscape during the global pandemic. During the pandemic, Prashan’s expert commentary was also sort by the BBC, The Sydney Morning Herald, Smart Investor, AusBiz and several industry magazines.

Prashan is currently the Course Director for the Bachelor of Commerce as well as the unit convenor of the Bachelor of Commerce Capstone unit – where students in mixed-major teams work towards addressing a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal – collaboratively, sustainably, and profitably - using the knowledge and skills of commerce and their major.

In 2021, Prashan has been invited to present his work in the United Kingdom and the European Union to showcase his latest innovations in the teaching and learning of economics and business.

You can get to know more about Prashan here.

Employment

Senior Lecturer (Teaching and Leadership)

Senior Lecturer

Department of Actuarial Studies and Business Analytics
Research outputs

Data analytics and the healthcare market: a book review of moneyball medicine — thriving in the new datadriven healthcare market

Transformative learning and teaching in economics: the why of learning and teaching economics using threshold concepts : the how of learning and teaching economics using learning taxonomies

Transforming the economics curriculum by integrating threshold concepts

Transforming the economics curriculum by integrating threshold concepts

An Import demand function for the Australian economy using Vector Autoregression techniques

An Import demand function for the Australian economy using vector autoregression techniques

Microeconomic policy

Prizes

Australian Awards for University Teaching - Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Students Learning
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 2019

Australian Business Deans Council Award for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 2020

Macquarie Business School Educational Leader Award
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 22 Aug 2019

Macquarie Business School Teaching Excellence Award
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 22 Aug 2019

Macquarie University Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning
Breyer, Yvonne (Team leader), Timothy Keighley (Recipient), Philip Goody (Recipient), Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient) & Nathan Sollars (Recipient), 31 Oct 2018

Macquarie University Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 1 Nov 2017

Outstanding Educator Award for Transformation
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 19 Apr 2018

Macquarie University
1 Jan 2021 → present
Student-led Award for Excellence in Teaching
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 1 Nov 2017

Impacts
Transformation Learners’ Lives on a Global Scale: Excel Skills for Business
Yvonne Breyer (Participant), Prashan Karunaratne (Participant), Timothy Keighley (Participant), Leonie Tickle (Participant) & Philip Goody (Participant)