The Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy recently held this year’s presentation of awards to the Bachelor of Accountancy (Hons) 2011/2013 graduate group. In his introductory speech, the Head of Department, Mr Peter J. Baldacchino, outlined the various departmental developments over the past year and spoke about recent advances in research trends. He also thanked all the sponsors for making the activity possible. Visiting lecturer Dr Andrew Higson of Loughborough University Business School then spoke of his experience as external examiner.

Fifteen different awards and one journal sponsorship were announced by the Dean of FEMA, Professor Joseph Falzon. Award winners were congratulated by Pro Rector Professor Joe Friggieri and then presented awards by the following sponsors: the Malta Institute of Accountants, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the National Audit Office, the Central Co-operative Fund, and seven international accountancy firms. Each award winner presented a copy of the study to the sponsor.

The Malta Institute of Accountants Best Student of the Year Prize was awarded by the President of the Malta Institute of Accountants Ms Maria Micallef to Mr Daniel Pule’, who spoke about his experience in the professional accountancy course.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) prize for the best dissertation was awarded to Ms Margaret Magro for her dissertation ‘The Relationship between the Executive Secretary and the Local Government Auditors in Maltese Local Councils’.

This year’s CIMA prize was awarded to Ms Annabel Bonavia for her dissertation ‘The Application and Relevance of Sustainability Management Accounting, Sustainability Reporting and Assurance in the Local Market: An Investigative Study’.

Ms Nadya Buhagiar won the Deloitte prize for best dissertation in Taxation ‘The Effects of Tax Management on Corporate Governance in Maltese Listed Companies-An Analysis’. The other Deloitte prize, that for best dissertation in the Professional Issues in Accountancy, was won by Mr Justin Borg for his dissertation ‘The Development of Audit Fees in Malta: An Analysis’.

This year, EY again awarded two prizes, one on Accounting Standards and one on Information Technology. The former was won by Mr James Psaila for his dissertation ‘The Valuation of Property in Malta: Practical Implications of Applying IAS 40 – Investment Property’; the Information Technology Award was won by Mr Matthew Caruana for his dissertation ‘A Post-implementation Analysis of ERP systems in Maltese Companies’.

The Grant Thornton prize for Law related to Accounting was awarded to Ms Natasha Bugeja for her dissertation ‘Article 5 of the OECD model: The Concept of Permanent Establishment with Special Reference to Malta’s Double Tax Treaties’.

The KPMG Financial Accounting prize was won by Ms Daniela Marie DeBono for her dissertation ‘Shifting from the Incurred Loss Model to the Expected Credit Loss Model: An Impact Analysis on Listed Maltese Banks’. The other KPMG prize was in Internal Auditing and...
Control, this was jointly awarded to both Ms Kristina Caligari for her dissertation ‘Barriers to Maltese Internal Audit Units and their work: An Analysis of Public Limited Liability Companies’ and Mr Bernard Zerafa for his dissertation ‘Controls at Point of Sale Systems in Selected Maltese Restaurants’.

The RSM Malta prize in Finance was also a joint award to both Ms Josianne Abela for her dissertation ‘The Management of Working Capital in Maltese Cooperatives: An Evaluation’ and Mr Steve Gruppetta for his dissertation ‘Developing a Valuation Framework for an Illiquid Security’.

The External Auditing prize sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers was jointly awarded to both Ms Rosalene Caruana whose dissertation was ‘The Significance of Selected Behavioural Factors in Client-Initiated Auditor Changes’ and to Ms Loraine Grech for her dissertation ‘An Analysis of Audit Report Lags in Maltese Companies’.

The other PWC prize was in Corporate Governance and was won by Mr David Muscat for his dissertation ‘Separation of Ownership and Control in Non-Bank Maltese Listed Companies: An Analysis’.

The Co-operative Societies prize sponsored by the Central Co-operative Fund, was awarded to Ms Daniela Burlo’ for her dissertation ‘Co-operative or Limited Liability Company? A Comparative Analysis in a Maltese Setting’.

Finally, the National Audit Office Public Sector Accounting and Auditing prize was won by Ms Deborah Abela for her study on ‘Public-Private Partnerships in Maltese Healthcare: An Evaluation of the Financial Aspects’.

Mr Karl Cini, Partner of Nexia BT, presented the Department of Accountancy, for the second year, with a journal sponsorship in Financial Accountability and Management for use in public sector accounting studies.

Five of the award winners Ms Daniela Burlo’, Mr James Psaila, Mr Justin Borg, Ms Margaret Magro and Mr Daniel Pule’ also presented an interesting synopsis of their studies to the audience present.

Following the presentation of awards, Pro-Rector, Professor Joe Friggieri spoke about the significance of the occasion.

Presentation of Albert M. Cassola Papers to the University Library

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Albert M. Cassola’s death, his only son, Professor Arnold Cassola, donated his father’s papers to the University of Malta Library. These consist mainly of newspapers cuttings from 1929 onwards, the publications Europe-wide authored by Albert M. Cassola and various handwritten or typewritten texts.

Albert M. Cassola was born in 1915 and died in 1974. Next year will be the 100th anniversary of his birth. Cassola was a playwright, novelist, poet, translator and the writer of many song lyrics as well. His songs are still broadcast today. His works have been published in various languages. He was awarded the ‘Cavaliere Ufficiale al merito della Repubblica Italiana’ by the Italian President Giuseppe Saragat. For many years he was a teacher of Italian and Maltese at The Lyceum, Hamrun, and he is remembered by many of his former students as a ‘true gentleman’.

A bust of Albert M. Cassola, the work of Chev. Emanuel Borg Gauci, sculpted in 1947, was also donated to the University.

During the event, Dr Bernard Micallef, Head of Department, spoke about the Department of Maltese. In his address, Professor Oliver Friggieri described Albert M. Cassola the writer, while Professor Arnold Cassola spoke about his father Albert M. Cassola, the person. Mr Kevin Ellul, Director of Library Services, thanked Professor Cassola for the important donation to the University Library.
2nd International Workshop on Biometrics and Forensics

More than 80 participants from 30 different countries attended IWBF 2014 held at the University of Malta Valletta Campus at the end of March which was opened by the Commissioner of Police.

It was organised by the European Co-operation in Science and Technology (COST) Action IC106 ‘Integrating Biometrics and Forensics for the Digital Age’ and the International Association for Pattern Recognition (IAPR) in collaboration with the Malta Council for Science and Technology, the University of Malta and the Malta Police Force.

The workshop was co-sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), International Association of Pattern Recognition (IAPR), Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), European Association for Signal Processing (EURASIP) and European Association for Biometrics (EAB).

Sessions included Forensic Fingerprint Identification, Biometric Analysis of Crime Scene traces and their interpretation including palmprints, Audio Biometrics for Forensic Examination including speaker recognition and Physical Biometrics for Forensic Examination including iris recognition and gait.

Keynote speakers included: Prof. Sargur Srihari (University at Buffalo) who discussed the quantification of uncertainty in forensic identification of fingerprints and hand written documents; Prof. Joaquin Gonzalez-Rodriguez (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) who gave an overview of the NIST series of speaker recognition evaluations and technologies; and Prof. Didier Meuwly (Netherlands Forensic Institute) who discussed validation of computer assisted methods for forensic evaluation of biometric traces; Dr Andrzej Drygajlo (Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne) who spoke about the ENFSI 2011 Monopoly Program: Improving Forensic Methodologies Across Europe (IFMAE).

A panel session ‘Biometric Evidence Today and Tomorrow’ was chaired by Dr Andrzej Drygajlo. A poster session included posters about facial imaging and recognition, ear pattern detection and biometric applications. The workshop provided an international forum to develop synergies between biometrics and forensic science.

Malta-based game research comes first in European funding proposals

A University of Malta research project was recently ranked first from over one thousand EU research proposals from all disciplines in the Marie Curie strand of the EU’s FP7 programme. The AutoGameDesign project, directed by Prof. Georgios N. Yannakakis of the Institute of Digital Games, aims to investigate how machines can automatically design complete playable games that are novel and surprising to humans. The project will also investigate the relationship between human and computational creativity, placing Malta in a prominent position on the world map of research into computational creativity.

Transmedia Storytelling leads to International Markets

People of all ages like to tell stories and to have stories told to them. Evenings on Campus is again exploring this world of the storyteller by organising the 2nd Transmedia Storytelling Competition. Participants are invited to write a story, which will then develop into multiple storylines according to the various media platforms used. An information meeting is being held on Friday, 25 April at 1700hrs at (Gateway Building Hall A). More about the Transmedia Project may be found on Facebook, Evenings on Campus page. Submissions are to be handed in by noon on Friday 1 August, 2014 to: Room 133, Administration Building, University of Malta, Msida Campus.