

**PROFESSOR**  
**JAMES ARVANITAKIS**



**AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2012**  
**WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY**

**DISCIPLINE**

Humanities

**RESEARCH AREAS**

Hope  
Trust  
Future of Universities  
Piracy  
Citizenship

▶ [linkedin.com/in/james-arvanitakis-a815662](https://www.linkedin.com/in/james-arvanitakis-a815662)

**CURRENT ROLE**

Professor Arvanitakis is the Dean of Graduate Studies at Western Sydney University (Western). He was responsible for establishing the Academy program at Western Sydney University based on the 'citizen scholar' concept he has developed. Professor Arvanitakis has developed a number of innovative approaches to assist 'at-risk' students through difficult times. Students' feedback, and his teaching practices, have resulted in various awards confirming the success of his approach: his naming as Eminent Researcher by the Australian Indian Education Council is just one example.

**WHAT THE AWARD HAS MEANT**

Exciting | Fulfilling | Surprising | Hilarious as it was "unbelievable they chose me"

**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 2016** Promoted to Dean of Graduate Studies;
- 2015** Published a sociology textbook – Sociologic – on developing innovative teaching methods (Oxford University Press);
- 2015** Named an Eminent Researcher by the Australia Indian Education Council;
- 2014** Established international L&T collaboration network with South African and Canadian colleagues that is being replicated in India and Indonesia;
- 2013** Promoted to Professor.

**NETWORKS**

Informal

**BACKGROUND**

Professor Arvanitakis has worked as an academic and activist in the humanities for over ten years. Prior to his university career, he worked as a human rights activist throughout the Pacific, Indonesia and Europe working with organisations such as Oxfam, International Youth Partnerships, Oxfam Hong Kong and Aid/Watch. He continues to work on issues confronting Australia's democracy with the Whitlam Institute. His philosophy of teaching involves three main areas: working with students as agents for change (rather than 'citizens in waiting'); bringing theory to life; and promoting a sense of agency and active citizenship – the core of the citizen scholar program. He believes that this is best achieved through developing innovative teaching materials such as using online media platforms to engage students in his theoretical concepts. His programs promote active citizenship by bringing together students and non-government organisations. This is driven by his underlying philosophy that educators must exhibit the attributes they expect in their students.

**IMPACT ON LEARNING & TEACHING**

The Award propelled James into a strategic and managerial role and he no longer regularly teaches classes, however he chooses to continue to provide regular guest lectures (12 lectures per semester). His new role as Dean of Graduate Studies has led him to mentor other teaching colleagues, contributing to the 2-day teacher training program. He also plays a strategic L&T role within the University, having been invited to sit on Award Panels and Learning and Teaching Committees.

**IMPACT ON CAREER**

Prior to the Award, James was an early career academic who had been teaching for 5 years. This Award provided him with the evidence to successfully apply and be promoted to Professor. The Award legitimised his innovative practice and gave him permission and assurance to push the boundaries further. In his new role as Professor, he was tasked with setting up the Academy and was then promoted to Dean of Graduate Studies. As a result of the Award, he has become highly visible locally and internationally. His willingness to engage in promoting good teaching and his engaging presentation style has led to dozens of keynote and plenary invitations.