

## PROFESSOR JAMES ARVANITAKIS



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

### DISCIPLINE

Humanities

### RESEARCH AREAS

Hope  
Trust  
Future of Universities  
Piracy  
Citizenship

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### CURRENT ROLE

Professor Arvanitakis is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Graduate Studies) at Western Sydney University (Western) though has just accepted 12-month Fulbright Fellowship to be the Milward L. Simpson Visiting Chair at the University of Wyoming.

In his current role as the Pro Vice Chancellor, he works to assist researchers – including PhD candidates, early career and more established academics – to plan their professional trajectory. James is passionate about bringing together research and teaching and promote a academic scholarship.

### WHAT THE AWARD HAS MEANT

Exciting | Fulfilling | Surprising | Hilarious as it was “*unbelievable they chose me*”

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2018 Appointed Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Graduate Studies)
- 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 while he no longer regularly teaches classes, 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.