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for higher education



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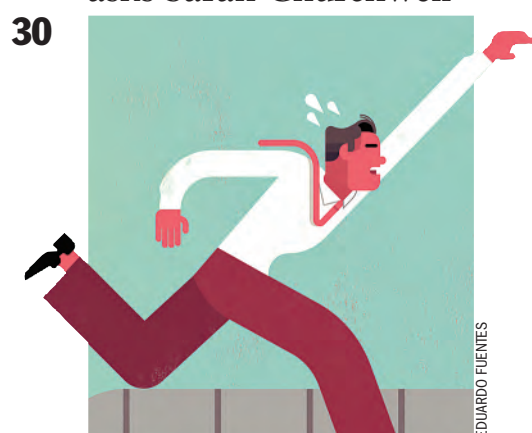
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## THE WEEK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

● ● ● Research from University College London that suggested migrants from the European Union had made a net contribution to the UK of £20 billion over the course of a decade was never likely to go down well with the *Daily Mail*. And sure enough, on 6 November, the newspaper poured scorn on the report's co-author, professor of economics Christian Dustmann. Beside a picture of him "sporting an earring", the *Mail* ran a headline about his previous involvement with research that said only 13,000 migrants a year would come to the UK from Eastern Europe – when the eventual total between 2004 and 2009 exceeded 1 million. Despite noting that he has made clear that the estimate assumed labour markets like Germany's were also open to migrants, there was an obvious implication that he was not to be trusted. Whether the paper would have taken the same approach to a researcher named Chris Smith, we will never know.

● ● ● In the same week as an academic study suggested that sending sexually explicit "selfies" to would-be partners is a normal part of teenage courtship, we learned that Harvard undergraduates are upset that they were secretly photographed sitting (fully clothed) in lecture theatres. The *Boston Globe*

reported on 5 November that 10 lecture theatres were automatically photographed every minute earlier this year so computers could calculate how many seats were filled. Peter Bol, Harvard's vice-provost for advances in learning, said the attendance study was kept secret to avoid biasing results and did not identify individuals. But he ordered all images to be destroyed and aims to contact each one of the 2,000 students photographed. That was still not enough for some. One student described the study as "strikingly hypocritical" given the university's adoption of an honour code requiring "academic work of integrity".

● ● ● A Swiss university has conjured up artificial "ghosts" so successfully that two participants in an experiment asked for it to be stopped part-way through. Researchers at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne allowed volunteers to control the movements of a robot arm with their finger, *The Times* reported on 7 November. The arm was placed behind them, touching their backs, and when its movements coincided with their own, all was well. When the back touching was out of sync with their movements, however, the volunteers felt as if they were being touched by a ghost. Two

of the 12 participants were so freaked out that they asked for the experiment to be halted. The researchers said the experiment suggested that "feelings of presence" often interpreted as spirits, angels or demons were actually in the mind.

● ● ● Harold Macmillan described the debates at the Oxford Union as the "last bastion of free speech in the Western world". In 1933, it passed perhaps its most famous motion: "This House will in no circumstances fight for King and Country", prompting Winston Churchill to describe the debate as "that abject, squalid, shameful avowal". Fast-forward 81 years and the Union is still tackling the hot (and delicious) topics of the day: is it acceptable to serve Yorkshire puddings with chicken? The debate, the *Daily Mail* reported on 4 November, was prompted by research from pudding producers Aunt Bessie's, which found that the English now eat more of the batters with chicken than they do with beef. There was no vote, so no victory could be claimed, but it is understood there was a "decidedly pro-chicken" mood in the chamber.

● ● ● Meanwhile, another well-known University of Oxford insti-



tution has insisted it will not "pander to the hype" by changing its name. For years, Isis was best known as the reserve team representing the university in the annual Boat Race. But unfortunately in recent months the name has also come to be associated with the jihadist group marauding its way across Syria and Iraq. Despite this, *The Daily Telegraph* reported on 6 November that the Oxford rowing club is not planning to ditch the name. Jon Roycroft, the university's director of sport, told the newspaper that he would be raising the subject at this month's boat club committee meeting. "But I would seriously doubt that changing the name of the reserve boat would be considered," he said.

# THE

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# Doors open as others swing shut

Policies on immigration often conflict with sector ambitions regarding overseas students and signal a turbulent spell ahead



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Which country sent the most students to the UK each year between 1996 and 2001?

No, it wasn't China or India – their rise has been a noughties phenomenon. A clue is to be found, pleasingly, in the opening lines of Pulp's Britpop classic *Common People*: “She came from Greece, she had a thirst for knowledge/ she studied sculpture at St Martin's College...”

That Jarvis Cocker's lyrics are such an accurate portrayal of the international student scene of the time comes as something of a surprise in 2014. Greece may have topped the charts in 2001, sending 26,000 students to the UK, but it has long since been toppled by China, which sent 80,000 in 2012.

Much else has also changed – India, now the second largest “sender”, wasn't even in the top 10 in 2001, and the overall volume of students has almost doubled. Universities that were sampling international students are now pumping them directly into their bloodstream.

But domestic politics suggest that we are entering a particularly fraught period on this front.

There's the pledge to reduce net migration, launched with a “no ifs, no buts” guarantee from David Cameron that was this week downgraded to a mere “comment” by the home secretary.

There's the decline in students coming from India, which has prompted yet another envoy (Greg Clark, the universities minister, has been in India this week repeating the mantra that there is no cap on international student numbers – something of a red herring since there never has been a cap).

And back in Westminster all the talk is about how we might restrict free movement within Europe, as part of Cameron's attempt to renegotiate the UK's contract with the European Union. Thinking purely of student mar-

kets, it might seem that the attempts to fall out with (or should that be out of?) Europe are less crucial than relations with India, since EU students pay only domestic fees.

But, as we report this week, the importance of Europe as a recruiting ground is growing.

A demographic downturn at home means there are fewer 18-year-olds to go around, and the decision to scrap the student numbers cap has ramped up competition. It was striking that universities filled only 15,000 of the 30,000 additional student places made available this year.

There are, however, obvious perils on this course – the prevailing political weather is one and the fact that EU students are less likely to repay their loans is another.

There's also a point made by the Higher Education Policy Institute earlier this year that by increasing the incentives to recruit EU students, the government's policy of scrap-

**It was striking that universities filled only 15,000 of the 30,000 additional places made available this year**

ping student number controls directly contradicts its policy to reduce immigration.

It looks like yet another coalition contradiction, but viewed another way both policies are in keeping with the wider political picture: both are intended to woo Pulp's “common people” at the ballot box next May, the first by expanding opportunity for those “hard-working Britons”, the second by closing the door on opportunity for others from overseas.

And anyway, they're both Tory policies, coming directly from George Osborne and Theresa May – so if they do cause a policy pickle it's no good blaming the Lib Dems.

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# Drive for EU recruits may crash loans system

**Study Group says universities are 'proactively' seeking EU expansion. John Morgan reports**

English universities are targeting the European Union for extra student recruitment when the cap on undergraduates is lifted next year, prompting critics to warn about the additional pressure on the student loans system.

James Pitman, managing director for higher education in the UK and Europe at Study Group, which runs centres preparing overseas students for degrees at 14 UK universities, told *Times Higher Education* that in preparation for the removal of caps in 2015 "some university partners...have proactively approached us and said 'what can we do together in the EU?'"

Mr Pitman said the motivation for universities to recruit EU students was "volume, obviously; it's revenue; it's diversity in nationality".

The number of EU undergraduates coming to English universities

fell immediately after the introduction of £9,000 fees in 2012.

But numbers had already bounced back even before the removal of caps, rising 8 per cent this year, according to Ucas figures. That outstripped the rise in English-domiciled entrants to English universities, which rose by 4 per cent.

Many in the sector will welcome an increasingly international mix at English universities, but there will also be concerns.

Sir David Watson, professor of higher education at the University of Oxford, said a "very significant group" within the student loans system is "the EU recruits who will prove difficult – and in some cases impossible – to track down as they begin to earn".

EU students are entitled to government-provided loans to cover the cost of tuition fees.

According to figures released by



**Increasingly international mix** the number of EU undergraduates coming to English

the Student Loans Company in June, 11 per cent of EU students liable to repay income-contingent loans, and who are resident overseas, have not provided details of their income and have been "placed in arrears", while a further 19 per cent are defined as "not currently repaying – further information being sought".

The amount of outstanding debt among EU students with income-contingent loans grew five-fold from £46.8 million in 2009-10 to £257.7 million in 2012-13. Outstanding debt among UK and EU students overall grew from

£20.7 billion to £33.5 billion over the same period.

Mr Pitman said that, in the past, universities had "positively dissuaded us from accepting EU students on to pathway programmes", traditionally used for non-EU students.

Given that English universities do not have a history of recruiting from EU countries, Mr Pitman said it was "quite difficult for them to step up really quickly, which is why they are talking to us and no doubt, I'm sure, to Kaplan and INTO [two other private pathway providers] and others

## UCU accepts end to final salary scheme but row ov

The first sign of a potential thaw in the dispute over pre-1992 university pensions has emerged after the University and College Union put forward proposals accepting the end of the final salary scheme.

The union described its offer as a "sensible and sustainable alternative" to those put forward by employers, who promised to "consider seriously" the details, but experts remain sceptical about whether the two sides are significantly closer to agreement.

Tensions remained high as union negotiators were expected to meet with Universities UK representatives

on 13 November, with branch members at the University of Liverpool voting in favour of striking until management rescind their decision to dock 100 per cent of the pay of employees taking part in a marking boycott. As *Times Higher Education* went to press, union members at Liverpool were awaiting authorisation from the national office before giving official notice of strike action.

Liverpool is among at least eight institutions that have announced plans to deduct full pay over the boycott, which started on 6 November. Some institutions have chosen

not to dock pay at this stage, while others have chosen to deduct 20 or 25 per cent.

The boycott was triggered by the proposal to move higher education staff who pay into the Universities Superannuation Scheme's final salary scheme on to the career revalued benefits scheme that was introduced for new entrants in 2011. This triggered warnings from the union that staff could receive up to a third less from their pensions.

The UCU accepts a move to a career revalued scheme and says it is also prepared to negotiate around

a possible increase in employee contributions, perhaps up to 9 per cent.

However, the UCU wants scheme members to continue to receive specified monthly benefits after retirement under a "defined benefit" plan, and for these benefits to be more generous than they are under the existing career revalued scheme.

Employers, in contrast, want to specify benefits only on payments made on salary up to £50,000.

Payments made on salary above that level would be on a "defined contribution" basis, under which actual benefits are dependent





ALAMY

dents is no longer a zero-sum game – each EU student no longer displaces each home student” and because “it is a potential mechanism to keep student numbers up, especially in particularly vulnerable courses, as demographic changes [in the UK] and the market take hold”.

He added: “I think the sector is taking its time to realise the opportunity but it is happening and is likely to take off properly when agents, alternative providers and pathway providers grab the opportunity with both hands.”

Nick Foskett, vice-chancellor of Keele University and co-editor of the 2010 book *Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education*, said: “I think it is inevitable that UK universities will see the removal of the cap as a good opportunity to grow EU students.

“It has always been a frustration to most universities that they have been prevented from growing EU student numbers at undergraduate level significantly as part of their internationalisation agenda because of the limits of student number control.”

But he added: “Government will need to decide whether an increase in EU students suggests that a different approach to fee recovery is necessary.”

Sir David pointed out that the economic downturn had contributed to a lowering in forecast loan repayment rates of UK-based graduates.

He added that the EU graduate repayment issue “all adds to the precariousness – and in my view the unsustainability – of the system we have...and the ‘OMG what have we done?’ conversation I predict will occur inside whatever kind of government we form after the next election.”

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Wendy Purcell the conditions of the v-c's return remain unclear

## V-c is back but is it a Devon fudge?

**Purcell returns to Plymouth but ‘will have to regain confidence of staff’. John Morgan writes**

Uncertainty still surrounds Wendy Purcell’s future at Plymouth University, after the institution was unable to answer questions about her return as vice-chancellor with reduced powers, and any costs associated with the deal.

Professor Purcell, who was suspended in July, began work again as vice-chancellor on 10 November.

But the university has stated that David Coslett, the deputy vice-chancellor who has led Plymouth in her absence, “is confirmed as the university’s interim chief executive and accountable officer and will have overall responsibility for the running of the university”.

Professor Purcell, meanwhile, will have a “strategic portfolio” focused on “external and sector relations, and the university’s wider enterprise agenda”. It remains unclear whether this is a permanent return for Professor Purcell, whose pay and pensions package was worth £330,000 in 2012-13, or the first step in a negotiated exit at a later date.

*Times Higher Education* asked the university whether Professor Purcell would return on her previous salary, what the total of legal fees incurred by the university was, whether the university would pay her legal fees in whole or part, whether any other financial compensation had been awarded to her as part of the settlement, and whether she would be leaving the institution at a later date.

As *THE* went to press, the university had been unable to provide answers to any of those questions.

The university has never disclosed the charges against her. But *THE* understands that they included a complaint by a senior member of staff about her management style and allegations about her spending.

Professor Purcell was suspended by William Taylor, chair of governors at the time but who has since stepped down. After her suspension, claims emerged in the media that Mr Taylor had sexually harassed female staff and students.

The allegations against Mr Taylor, which he denies, have been the subject of an independent investigation led by barrister Simon Cheetham. *THE* asked the university what the findings of this investigation were. The university again did not provide an answer.

Last month, University and College Union members at Plymouth backed a vote of no confidence in Professor Purcell.

Philippa Davey, UCU regional support official in the South West, said: “The vice-chancellor will return knowing that, with governors and management, she will have much to do in order to regain the confidence of the academic staff.” The union “welcomes the opportunity to create an open, honest and transparent university”, she added. [john.morgan@tesglobal.com](mailto:john.morgan@tesglobal.com)

## er alternative rumbles on

on investment returns.

While employers have proposed a 2 per cent rise in their contributions, taking them to 18 per cent, the UCU wants them to go higher, to 20.9 or even 22.4 per cent.

Pensions consultant John Ralfe, a former head of corporate finance at Boots, said the benefits for members would be “at least 15 per cent more generous” under the UCU offer. “They are not even playing the same game,” said Mr Ralfe.

But Sally Hunt, the UCU general secretary, said the scheme had to remain “affordable and

attractive to members”.

“It’s in everyone’s interests to reach an agreement as soon as possible, but it’s now up to the employers to address the serious concerns we have raised,” she said.

A UUK spokesman said an “intense” series of meetings would now be held. “We are committed to seeking a joint proposal for reform that offers an affordable, attractive and sustainable pension scheme, for both current and future members,” he said.

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## Making Moocs social is the next challenge

Massive open social learning and “nanodegrees” are among the trends in teaching and learning set to shake up higher education, according to a report.

*Innovating Pedagogy 2014*, the third annual report about the technological trends that could revolutionise education, produced by The Open University, says that finding ways to effectively engage thousands of people in productive discussions while learning together online is a key challenge for educationalists in the next couple of years.

So-called massive open social learning is the next step in the development of massive open online courses, or Moocs, the report says.

“Recent Moocs have taken an instructivist approach, with course materials created by a university and delivered by video and text...it can be a lonely experience,” it says. “There is more that can be done to engage people as active learners, sharing their ideas and discussing their different perspectives as they learn online.”

The report acknowledges that this approach harks back to “early Mooc experiments”, or C-Moocs, which were based on a pedagogy of connectivist learning – however, it adds that these were “difficult to manage at large scale”.

Mike Sharples, chair in educational technology at The Open University Institute of Educational Technology and co-author of the report, said that finding out “what sort of pedagogies get better as you scale” was the big question that universities were asking.

“If you can manage learning so that people are really connecting with others’ perspectives, then the more people there are, the better the learning gets,” he theorised.

Another development related to Moocs is the emergence of nanodegrees.

“Nanodegrees are at the other end of the scale from the traditional university degree,” Professor Sharples said. “For a degree, you spend three years gaining all the skills you need from a broad area. Nanodegrees are focused on what skills you need to learn for a very specific task.”

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● Visit [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/in-numbers](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/in-numbers) for a rundown of the 10 trends identified in the report.



**Crash course** students were critical of the university's decision not to offer the module 'Bubbles, Panics and Crashes'

# Economics course drops 21% in NSS

**Manchester students criticise programme's lack of alternative perspectives. Chris Parr reports**

A “flagship” economics programme at the University of Manchester has seen student satisfaction levels fall by more than a fifth, which campaigners claim is due to its failure to reflect alternative economic perspectives.

According to results and comments from the 2014 National Student Survey, shown to *Times Higher Education* by the University of Manchester Post-Crash Economics Society, overall satisfaction with economics at Manchester has slipped by 7 percentage points compared with last year. For the bachelor of economic science programme, described by the university as its “flagship degree programme in modern, quantitative economics”, levels are down 21 per cent. Economics courses at the institution now rate 12 percentage points lower than the Russell Group average.

The PCES is a student-led pressure group that campaigns for changes to economics education. It said the results demonstrated how disappointed students are with the university's decision not to offer a module entitled “Bubbles, Panics and Crashes”, which the society felt would have incorporated the alternative economic perspectives that they wish to see included. In March, the PCES called on students to “hold

fire on filling in their NSS” until the university had decided whether it would offer the module. It opted not to, and a lecturer who had taught the course as an optional out-of-hours module last year did not have his temporary contract renewed.

A number of comments submitted as part of the NSS, seen by *THE*, reflected this disappointment. “There have been no instances of alternative economic theories being presented other than neoclassical,” said one. “This means I feel unable to understand the way the economy and agents behave outside of mathematical models.”

“Thinking outside of the box is not encouraged,” wrote another, with a third saying: “The university has merely taught me how to take exams.”

One said they were “very disappointed in the way the university has dealt with requests from students to change the way economic science is taught at university”, while another added that they “do not appreciate...such a broad subject being taught in such a mind-numbing and narrow way”, adding: “To put it simply, I used to really enjoy economics before I came to university and now I do not.”

One student described the uni-

versity's decision not to offer the Bubbles module as “breathtaking arrogance and ignorance”, while another said it demonstrated “that it is not listening to my voice on the matter of teaching alternative schools of economic thought”.

A Manchester spokesman said the NSS results relating to the BEconSc were “a concern, and a puzzle” given that other programmes that shared many of its modules had improved on overall student satisfaction.

It was disappointing, he added, that the PCES had campaigned for students to use the NSS “strategically” – something that “may have adversely affected last year's results”.

He said the university had responded by working with all its current students “to understand their real concerns so that we can improve the student experience”.

This has resulted in changes to assessment practices and the imminent introduction of changes governing class sizes and enhanced contact time with academic staff.

He added that the economics department had taken “a number of steps to enhance its curriculum”, including the introduction of new modules in economic policy and behavioural economics, and that the university was conducting a “wide-ranging curriculum review of our core economics programmes”.

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## LOOKING INTO IT: CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

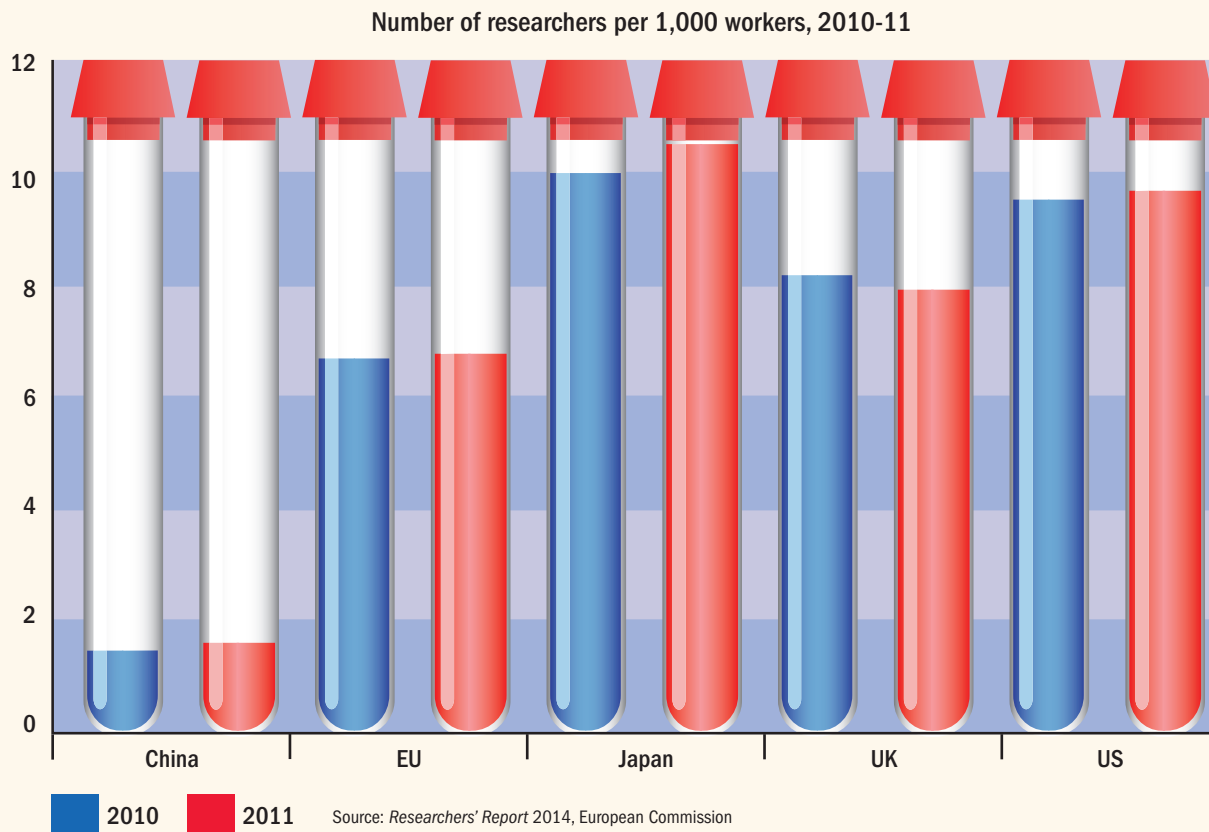
The UK has a lower share of researchers in its labour force than the US and Japan, according to an EU Commission report.

In 2011 there were 7.95 researchers in every 1,000 full-time workers in the UK, less than the 10.47 per 1,000 workers in Japan and 9.63 in the US.

The UK had a slightly higher share of people working in research positions than the EU at 6.75, according to the director-general for science and innovation's *Researchers' Report 2014*. It was also ahead of China where there were 1.63 researchers per 1,000 workers.

But the share of researchers in the UK labour force declined by 2.8 per cent between 2010 and 2011, while increasing by 5.2 per cent in Japan, 1.3 per cent in the US and 1.1 per cent across the EU as a whole.

Holly Else



# Regulators risk 'sleepwalking' into a repeat of drug trial disaster

Overhaul of NHS regulation may fail to prevent another Northwick Park incident. Holly Else writes

Health research regulators could be "sleepwalking" into an incident like the Northwick Park drug trial disaster that left a number of people in intensive care, according to a barrister and former ethics committee member.

An overhaul of the system designed to reduce red tape is in fact "cutting corners", claims Christopher Roy-Toole in written evidence to a House of Commons committee.

But the Health Research Authority, set up by the government in 2011 to streamline the regulation of research in the health service, said the new approval process will "never compromise" patient safety.

In March this year the Department of Health awarded £4.5 million to the HRA to make the assessment and approval of research in the NHS more efficient. Changes to be brought in under the new

scheme include taking legal decisions on clinical research at a central level, rather than by individual NHS Trusts, as is the case at the moment.

Earlier this year academics warned that the plan risked falling short of its goals of reducing bureaucracy and speeding up research approvals. Now Mr Roy-Toole, who is on a sabbatical after sitting on an NHS research ethics committee for six years, is raising concerns about the safety of the process.

"We are sleepwalking into something comparable to the Northwick Park disaster," he told *Times Higher Education*, referring to a clinical trial at the north London hospital eight years ago that left six men in intensive care with organ failure. It was dubbed the "Elephant Man" trial because of the horrific side-effects experienced.

"Just because there hasn't been a major safety accident reported in the UK since 2006 doesn't mean there won't be one in the future. What concerns me most is the unknown risk from clinical trials of licensed drugs in new dosages or new combinations...recent risk-adapted approaches to research regulation may under-estimate the possible harms from these," he added.

In evidence to a legacy report on clinical trials being produced by the Commons Science and Technology Select Committee, Mr Roy-Toole said that the HRA's assessment and approval scheme has a "critical safety weakness", which could increase the risk of an accident. "[It] is not cutting 'red tape' in research governance, rather it is 'cutting corners'," he said.

The weakness is caused by the HRA failing to supply research ethics committees with adequate support to assess the science and safety issues of research, he said.

"Unless those failings are rectified...The HRA [assessment and] approval will not be worth the paper it is written on."

The HRA said its role is to protect the interests of research participants. "HRA approval will never compromise patient safety. In fact it will strengthen the safety of research," it said in a statement.

It added that it will be employing suitably trained and experienced staff to undertake the assessment of studies, based on standards that are being agreed with the NHS.

"These assessments will be undertaken alongside and integrated with the research ethics committee review that will continue to provide independent ethical scrutiny," the HRA said.

"This new process will ensure that those legal and practical considerations that are outside the remit and capacity of research ethics committees inform the committees' deliberations," it added.

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# Environmentalism urges sector to take fossil fuels off the back burner

**Institutions 'disappointingly slow' at divesting of non-sustainable energy sources. Chris Parr writes**

Universities have a duty to stop “trying to pay for current operations in a way that it is completely clear will wreck the planet”, a leading climate change campaigner has said.

Bill McKibben, the American environmentalist and scholar in residence in environmental studies at Middlebury College, Vermont, visited the UK last week to urge universities to follow the lead of the University of Glasgow, which announced last month that it will divest of fossil fuels.

Despite this breakthrough, Mr McKibben conceded there is “not yet the will” to move away from investing in fossil fuels within large sections of the higher education sector.

He said it was “disappointing” that so many universities had been slower to withdraw funds than the heirs to the Rockefeller oil fortune, who announced in September this year that they are to divest.

“If [the Rockefeller heirs] think it is imprudent and immoral to be investing in this stuff, what board of trustees elsewhere is going to explain why it is OK for them to do this,” he told *Times Higher Education*.

Universities will change only “once they see that students, faculty and alumni are demanding change”, he said.

“It’s the same with politicians – if left to their own devices will they do anything about climate change? There’s a 25-year record that suggests they will not.”

Mr McKibben said it was “inspiring” to see the growth in the number of universities across the world now moving towards divesting of fossil

fuels, giving the Australian National University as an example of how it could be achieved in difficult circumstances.

Last month, the ANU announced that it had agreed to a proposal by vice-chancellor Ian Young to commence divestment of stocks in seven companies including Newcrest Mining, Sandfire Resources and Oil Search.

Joe Hockey, treasurer of Australia in the current government, told the *Australian Financial Review* that the university was “removed from the reality of what is helping to drive the Australian economy”, while

assistant infrastructure minister Jamie Briggs said he would write to Professor Young to ask him to reconsider the decision to withdraw investments from coal seam gas company Santos.

“To publicly denigrate the reputation of one of South Australia’s finest companies is a disgrace,” Mr Briggs is reported to have said.

“Half the Australian cabinet started attacking the ANU, going after them as traitors to the coal industry of Australia,” said Mr McKibben, adding that it was a “very brave” decision by the university.

“This movement is building now, and fast. It’s inspiring to see it all over the world, and to see the push-back that comes.”

He also raised questions about a number of financial arrangements between universities and oil companies, arguing that even when interests are declared – such as the five-year £5.9 million collaboration between Shell and the University of Oxford announced in 2012 – such projects were not healthy.

“The real problem is that universities should be choosing what to research based on what needs to be researched, not based on who gives them money,” he said.

“If you do this, then you are simply a contractor.”  
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**Protest** ‘not yet the will’ for universities to move away from investing in fossil fuels

## Welcome the bill without remuneration, says v-c

The vice-chancellor who led a review of Scottish university governance has welcomed planned legislation that would require governing bodies to have elected chairs and to include student, staff and union representatives.

Ferdinand von Prondzynski, the principal of Robert Gordon University, said the Holyrood government’s proposed higher education bill “addresses the key issues that remained to be addressed”.

The bill would implement key recommendations of Professor von Prondzynski’s review, which reported in 2012, but publication of a consultation on the proposals divided opinion last week, with Universities Scotland arguing that a new governance code agreed by institutions had

already prompted major strides towards increased transparency and accountability.

Pete Downes, the association’s convenor and the principal of the University of Dundee, questioned whether some of the Scottish National Party administration’s proposals were “appropriate subjects for government policy or legislation”.

NUS Scotland, meanwhile, highlighted the absence of certain outstanding recommendations, including the suggestions that remuneration committees dealing with senior managers’ salaries should include staff and student representatives, and that senior staff including principals could be included in the national pay spine.

Professor von Prondzynski told *Times Higher Education* that the legislation would “further protect” institutional autonomy and academic freedom while supporting the goals of transparency and wider engagement in decision-making.

“My impression of the document is that it addresses the key issues that remained to be addressed from the report my panel produced,” said Professor von Prondzynski.

“The code of governance produced by the Scottish chairs made major improvements but some issues could not be dealt with that way.”

Professor von Prondzynski acknowledged the importance of the remuneration issue raised by the NUS but argued that this was “prob-

ably not a matter for legislation”.

Announcing the consultation, Scottish education secretary Michael Russell said he was seeking the transfer of powers from Westminster to enable him to enact a further key recommendation from the review – a requirement for 40 per cent of the membership of governing bodies to be female.

Other proposals in the consultation include legislation that would require academic boards to be the final arbiters on academic matters, and for elected members to be in the majority on the panels.

Meanwhile, the bill would all but end the role of the Privy Council in Scottish university governance.  
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**Lightening the load** concerns were raised about the robustness of metrics as well as their relevance outside science

# Light dose of metrics could ease REF pain

**Some submissions call for less onerous approach to research assessment. Paul Jump reports**

The next research excellence framework should be used to test the potential for a light-touch metric-based assessment exercise to complement a less frequent version that also incorporates peer review.

That is the suggestion included in one of the submissions to the Higher Education Funding Council for England's independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment.

The majority of the 153 submissions – including 67 from universities or departments – are hostile to the idea that metrics could play a larger role in research assessment than they currently do.

According to Hefce's summary of the responses, many respondents, including the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, raised concerns about metrics' robustness, relevance outside the sciences and potential negative effect on early career researchers and women.

Many also worried that citation counts were easily "gamed" by techniques such as excessive self-citation.

However, some institutions were more open to metrics. Imperial College London suggested that, provided the equality issues were dealt with,

a "lighter touch" REF could make use of a "basket of metrics" normalised for disciplines and "contextualised through expert peer review".

Imperial's submission also suggests that analysis of the impact element of the 2014 REF – which it describes as a "particularly significant burden on the academic community" – could "reveal to what extent the information could have been captured by metrics".

"A metrics-based exercise has the additional benefit of assessing the whole research output of an institution or of a subject area within an institution, which also makes it easier to identify 'gaming'," it says.

The University of Southampton goes even further, suggesting that while the current REF "adds value", it does not do so "in a commensurate way with the effort expended". Southampton's submission suggests greater use of metrics could both improve "cost-effectiveness" and be seen as "a fairer and more objective method of assessment" than the current reliance on peer review.

Metrics relating to research income, PhD numbers and awards of doctoral training centres and

scholarships "could readily replace most of the qualitative assessment of the research environment element of the REF, which currently requires a disproportionately large element of time for preparation by institutions", it says.

Meanwhile, the use of bibliometrics to assess the quality of outputs should also be increased where analysis suggests that metrics correlate closely with the quality profiles determined by the peer review panels – likely to be in "the majority of STEM subjects". The submission says that where large volumes of outputs are examined, the effects of gaming, age and gender profiles and intra-disciplinary differences in citation patterns are reduced.

Southampton suggests that a "metrics-based assessment, say every five years, at institutional or departmental level...could provide an interim check on performance, with a more balanced quantitative and qualitative assessment [taking place] at longer intervals".

Running such a metrics-based exercise instead of another full REF in 2020 would "allow for the re-evaluation of the use of bibliometrics in the future, when data are likely to be more reliable across a larger number of disciplines".

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## Visa rules no bar to post-study work, says Clark

The chair of the Russell Group has warned that immigration "rhetoric" in the UK is damaging universities' ability to attract overseas students.

Sir David Eastwood, the University of Birmingham vice-chancellor, part of a delegation to India this week on a government visit, also said that UK universities should focus on "mature, partnership relations" overseas rather than simply on student recruitment.

Greg Clark, the universities and science minister, meanwhile said he would use the trip to "clarify some of the misunderstandings" about the UK's immigration policy.

UK universities have seen a dramatic fall in Indian student numbers, which many in the sector attribute to the government's decision in 2012 to abolish post-study work visas.

Sir David said that Birmingham had "bucked that trend", with Indian student numbers at the institution "up 5 per cent this year".

But asked if government immigration policy was to blame for the fall in Indian student numbers more generally, Sir David said post-study work visas were an issue "and we need to move towards a more permissive position there".

"In terms of the realities for study, it's not more difficult to get a visa to study in the UK than, say, in Australia. But we haven't been helped by some of the rhetoric which surrounds our visa position, as distinct from the reality."

He said that it was also important for UK universities to talk "about partnership, about development", not just recruitment.

Mr Clark was expected to announce collaboration agreements for education and science during the three-day visit, and to give a speech to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry that would "address some of the concerns" about government policy.

He told *Times Higher Education* that stricter visa rules were not an obstacle to post-study work, arguing that Indian students who had found a reasonably paid job would find it "straightforward" to stay in the UK.

"There may be a perception that that's difficult and uncertain, but I want to send a message that they can, with confidence, come and expect to work afterwards," he added.

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Exemplary work promote ethical behaviour in sector and beyond, scholars urged

# Straight talk on crookedness

**Matthew Reisz on a university consortium's call for the academy to join fight against global corruption**

A consortium of universities has called upon higher education to play a far more active part in the global fight against corruption.

The Poznan Declaration was endorsed at the 20th general assembly of the Compostela Group of Universities, a network set up in 1993 to promote international collaboration among institutions. Its impetus, said project coordinator Marcus Tannenberg, who works in the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg, came from Swedish academics Bo Rothstein and Lennart Levi. A political scientist and an expert in psychosocial medicine, they had both become "concerned with the costs of corruption, not only at the financial level but all the way down to its medical consequences".

The document points to evidence that corruption costs European Union states €120 billion (£94 billion) a year and that "the lower the social trust in society, the lower is the willingness to pay taxes, and consequently the lower is state income". Yet universities' curricula, far from offering "training in anti-corruption, ethical and impartial thinking", "typically lack components that would contribute to a 'non-tolerance of corrupt behavior'", while "norms of deception and personal enrichment prevail at several schools".

Turning to solutions, the declar-

ation urges universities to "shoulder their role as key agents of change". They are encouraged to "endorse a cross-faculty approach" to "the promotion of ethical behavior"; "appreciate [their] unique opportunity to shape professional identities"; develop partnerships with "organizations championing the anti-corruption agenda, such as Transparency International"; and ensure that their own degree-awarding, hiring and promotion policies are "based on legitimate, transparent and objective criteria".

Given "relatively low costs of implementation and the possible societal gains", such initiatives could be "extremely cost effective" as well as "the right thing to do".

The declaration has been endorsed by the World University Consortium and the World Academy of Art and Science, and Mr Tannenberg hopes to disseminate it via the International Association of Universities and reach out to other university networks, prominent institutions and academic unions.

"It is all about inspiring others," he said. "We don't have a clear package of policies for universities to adopt but will try to facilitate best-practice sharing. We have mainstreamed environmental and gender issues, even if we haven't solved all the problems. The same could go for non-tolerance of corruption." [matthew.reisz@tesglobal.com](mailto:matthew.reisz@tesglobal.com)

## News in brief

### Student loans

#### Nothing to see here: government

The government has ruled out an "urgent" review of the sustainability of the student loans system despite being advised to do so by a group of MPs. In a July report, the cross-party Business, Innovation and Skills Committee called for a review of the system, citing evidence that a "persistent miscalculation of the department's estimates of the RAB charge" – the amount of money paid out in loans that will not be repaid by students – had resulted in "holes in the budget". But in a response published last week, the government said there was no need for such a review, arguing that projections on graduate repayments "will continue to fluctuate due to numerous macroeconomic variables, and present no immediate pressure on the system". Adrian Bailey, chair of the BIS committee, expressed disappointment at the response, pointing out that the government is currently estimating that it will lose around 45p on every £1 it lends to students. The government did, however, accept some of the committee's recommendations, including a promise to improve debt forecasting and changes to financial modelling around the RAB charge.

### Scottish admissions

#### Numbers from poorest quintile rise

The number of students from the poorest backgrounds attending Scotland's universities has increased. Entrants from the most deprived 20 per cent of communities in Scotland made up 13.3 per cent of the overall intake of the country's universities in 2012-13, according to a report from the Scottish Funding Council. This compares with 12.3 per cent in 2011-12. The improvement was not universal, with the proportion of entrants from the most-deprived quintile of communities shrinking at three of 20 universities year-on-year – and at six of 18 when only undergraduates were considered. Gordon Maloney, the president of NUS Scotland, said: "It is vital that every institution, old and new, now does all it can to...boost fair access even further."

### Innovate UK

#### 'Valley of death' escape plan

An almost £70 million package of funding for innovation has been

announced by the government. The support is designed to help academia and industry bridge the so-called "valley of death" that can hinder the development of promising research into innovative products for the marketplace. Seven new areas of technology are poised to receive a £50 million boost from Innovate UK, formerly the Technology Strategy Board, and £17 million has been earmarked for up to 210 industrial PhD placements as part of the plan. Details of Innovate UK's funding pledge were outlined in the government's emerging technologies strategy unveiled at the Innovate UK 2014 conference in London on 5 November. It lists the seven areas for investment as synthetic biology, energy efficient computing, energy harvesting, non-animal technologies, imaging technologies, graphene and quantum technologies.

### i-graduate

#### Garrett named director of OBHE

A co-founder of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education is to become the research unit's next director. Richard Garrett, who served as the OBHE's deputy director from its formation in 2001 until 2005, will take over from William Lawton in January. Mr Garrett will continue to serve as director of data and analytics for North America for the OBHE's parent company, i-graduate, in addition to carrying out his new role. He said that the study of worldwide developments in higher education had "never been more important to help institutions and policymakers leverage these innovations for the common good".

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A *Times Higher Education* investigation that revealed that as many as 200 applicants are chasing every early career post at top universities caused a stir online. "These numbers scare me," tweeted @leotanczt, while @Sophrosyne\_1 said the story highlighted the "depressing reality for would-be academics". @LucyCraggs said the news provided "another reason to breathe a sigh of relief after securing an industry job", and @bacterioskeptic described the article as "a depressing read". @JFRushworth said she was "feeling grateful that I somehow managed to survive this type of competition".

[www.twitter.com/timeshighered](http://www.twitter.com/timeshighered)



# Non-academic v-cs not welcome

**Oxford's deputy registrar decries the stubborn snobbery of scholarly culture. Chris Havergal writes**

Lecturers can be guilty of "snobbery" towards vice-chancellors who do not have an academic background, according to the deputy registrar of the University of Oxford.

Michael Sibly said he did not think higher education leaders had to be eminent researchers, or even to have worked in universities previously – but he conceded that his institution, which is advertising for a new vice-chancellor, was probably not ready to break with tradition.

Speaking in Oxford on 4 November at the development conference of the Association of University Administrators, Mr Sibly said lecturers' "closed" culture put vice-chancellors who did not have an academic background at a disadvantage.

"In most universities, and certainly ones like this, you're hobbled from the very beginning because of the academic snobbery," Mr Sibly said. "Academics will think 'if this person has only ever run the health service, clearly they can't run a university'."

Mr Sibly said some people felt that the next vice-chancellor of Oxford had to be a fellow of an association such as the Royal Society, but he disagreed. "It helps if you have a strong academic background, but you don't need to be an academic. What you need to do is understand universities and under-



One of us? call to end 'apartheid'

stand the people who work in them," he argued.

Asked about the person who will take over from Andrew Hamilton when his seven-year term ends in 2016, Mr Sibly said he was "not sure if the institution is ready" for a non-academic leader, but he noted that a number of masters of Oxford colleges had been appointed from outside higher education.

Although, beyond Oxbridge, some vice-chancellors have backgrounds in industry, few have been selected following careers as university administrators.

Asked about the treatment of non-academic employees after delivering the AUA's annual lecture on the same day, Janet Beer, vice-chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, said notions of "apartheid that prevail in our institutions about types of staff" had to end.

She said it was "tough" for non-academic staff to progress into very senior jobs, but that administrators "would and do excel" in such posts. "We need to be more open-minded in the sector about where we draw talent from," she added.

Professor Beer's lecture focused on diversity in higher education, and she reiterated her call to introduce quotas for the proportion of women and ethnic minority candidates being appointed to leadership roles. She also said that universities should aim to ensure that their governing bodies are at least 40 per cent female.

Earlier, the conference heard calls for greater protection for students whose courses are cancelled, with the option of a refund or a transfer to another course.

Jim Dickinson, chief executive of the students' union at the University of East Anglia, said current protection was "worse than if you book a package holiday to Benidorm".

He also argued that students should have the right to appeal against the marks they are given, warning that current methods of marking and assurance were not designed for an era of mass higher education.

Mr Dickinson said academic judgement could not be unchallengeable when students were spending so much money on their courses. [chris.havergal@tesglobal.com](mailto:chris.havergal@tesglobal.com)

## SES

### Society for Educational Studies

#### Annual Seminar 2014

The Society regrets to announce that its 2014 Annual Seminar has been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. The Annual Seminar will now take place early in the New Year and details will be announced accordingly.

#### Annual Book Prize

The Society is pleased to announce the Annual Book Prizes for outstanding books on education published in 2013:

##### 1st Prize

Furlong, J. (2013)

*Education – An Anatomy of the Discipline*. Routledge.

##### 2nd Prize – joint winner

Ball, S.J., Maguire, M. and Braun, A. (2013) *How Schools Do Policy: Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools*. Routledge.

##### 2nd Prize – joint winner

Conroy, J. et al (2013)

*Does Religious Education Work?* Bloomsbury.

#### Fellowship of the Society for Educational Studies 2014

The 2014 Fellowship of the Society has been awarded to Professor Katherine Leni Oglesby *OBE FRSA* in recognition of her work in Higher Education and the field of Lifelong Learning. Over the years Professor Oglesby has made considerable contributions to the work of HFCE, QAA and from 1997 – 2000 she was Chair of SES.

#### Pope Francis Honours Fellow

The Society is delighted to announce that Fellow of the Society Professor Gerald Grace *KHS* has been made Knight of the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great (*KSG*) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Catholic Education. Professor Grace is Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.

# An exhibition space of one's own inspires artful thinking

**The incorporation of a modern art gallery into a university will benefit both parties, reports Matthew Reisz**

"We were keen to make the university a hub for culture in the Tees Valley," says Graham Henderson, vice-chancellor of Teesside University. As a complement to its well-established Art on Campus programme designed to attract town as well as gown, the university decided to take over one of the region's leading exhibition spaces, the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (Mima).

A decade ago, as Henderson tells it, "the mayor of Middlesbrough took the brave decision to launch a modern art gallery here in the town". It opened its doors in 2007 and brought together the Middlesbrough Art Gallery, the Cleveland Gallery – long responsible for a biennial international drawing competition (1973-96) – and the Cleveland Craft Centre. The last of these started with Middlesbrough's pottery heritage and went on to develop major collections of 20th-century British studio ceramics and contemporary jewellery.

Mima's main strengths lie in these two areas and in post-war drawing from the UK and the Americas. As time went on, however, pressures on local authority resources made Mima's future look increasingly insecure. Options such as an independent trust were considered, but eventually Henderson and his team determined that "the best model would be if Mima were incorporated into the university", predicting "many synergies if the two teams became one".

The institute offers "a venue for business engagement and outward-facing activities" as well as for conferences and events linked to exhibitions. There are also plans to



**Unexpected gems** Mima's collection includes striking contemporary jewellery

build courses around the collection in areas such as fashion and conservation. The School of Arts and Media has already doubled in size under its current dean, Gerda Roper, so there is plenty of scope for further expansion.

Mima officially became part of Teesside in September. It has long had an ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions in two separate galleries. Those currently on

display focus on the designer Wendy Ramshaw and (in collaboration with Tate St Ives) on *Modern Art and St Ives*. Coming up in December is an exhibition of fine art by the film and television director David Lynch first seen in Los Angeles.

Last month the first permanent exhibition space opened, with the support of almost £300,000 from Arts Council England. This has allowed Mima to bring out of storage its complete collection of bold, eye-catching, witty and sometimes "pervy" contemporary jewellery. One of Kepa Karmona's necklaces is made of concrete and shards of green glass. Caroline Broadhead's bracelets look like spiderwebs into which one inserts a wrist. Sigurd

Bronger's brooches feature balloons, sponges and bars of soap. Other jewellery on display was created from plastic, Perspex or "found objects" an artist came across in the corridor outside her studio.

Last month also marked the arrival of Alistair Hudson, formerly deputy director of Grizedale Arts in Cumbria, as the new director of Mima. He welcomes the tie to the university, he says, not only because "it brings in a whole new user group" but also for "its research capacity and the backbone that allows us to be a little bit braver or more experimental".

At the core of his vision is rethinking the balance between cutting-edge design, the international art circuit and the needs of local communities and the university. He hopes to return to "the early ambitions of modern art, which are about making art useful, art having a function in society, rather than just taking great art to people and saying: 'This is good for you to understand'," he says.

"Art is a very fundamental component to being creative generally, in business and in society," Hudson adds. "Art is a mechanism that allows you to evolve and change." Furthermore, companies such as Apple and Volkswagen owe much of their success to their aesthetic sense and "artful thinking", so he is keen for Mima to keep exploring "what art can do in daily lives – for industry, for business, for well-being agendas, healthcare and education".

In July 2014, the Arts Council announced funding of just over £500,000 for each of the next three financial years, giving Mima a firm footing from which to take such ideas forward.

Hudson says he is determined "to be involved with the university in rethinking aesthetics as being fundamental in how we reshape society. These are very big questions that somewhere like Mima should be addressing and advocating for."

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## In numbers

**£500,000**

**funding for Mima from the Arts Council for each of the next three years**



## University of St Andrews

Scotland's only female MEP has been appointed rector of the University of St Andrews. Labour politician Catherine Stihler, who was first elected to the European Parliament in 1999, is the second woman to hold the position, and succeeds the writer Alistair Moffat in the rector's chair. Ms Stihler will be officially installed next year after the traditional "drag", when students take the new rector on a six-hour tour of student halls and local pubs.



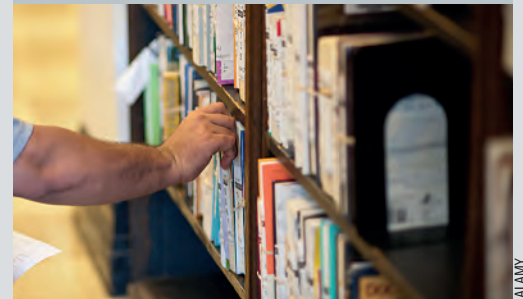
## University of York



A spin-off company hopes to use computer modelling to make drug design quicker and more efficient. SimOmics, launched by the University of York, aims to use software to study the effects of new drugs on autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, removing the need for animal testing. The company's first contract will involve it in a project to create a "virtual laboratory" to study the parasitic disease leishmaniasis.

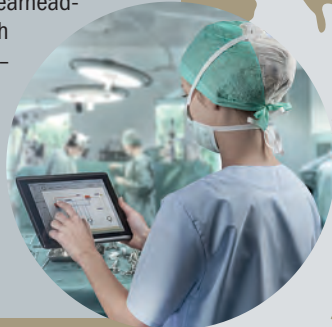
## University of Sheffield

A university has become the first in the UK to scrap library fines. Loans on books borrowed from the University of Sheffield's libraries will be automatically renewed until someone else requests them. Students will be given two days to return them, and if they miss the deadline they will be barred from further borrowing until the books are returned.



## University of Bradford

The forthcoming 50th anniversary of the University of Bradford will be marked with 10 new chairs. The academics will be charged with spearheading the aim of the university – which received its Royal Charter in 1966 – to be a "world leader in cutting-edge research, knowledge transfer...and [production of] graduates who will make a difference". They will focus on healthcare, engineering and manufacturing, and supporting sustainable societies.



## University of Birmingham

A collaboration agreement with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre has been signed by an English university. The University of Birmingham signed the deal with the JRC, the commission's in-house science service, which provides the European Union with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support. Birmingham said the pact would bring "an increased research power" and "the capacity to shape future research, policy and programmes at a European and international level".

## University of Roehampton



A PhD student is preparing to become the first person to row solo 3,000 nautical miles around Great Britain. Sarah Weldon, who has just started a doctorate at the University of Roehampton, will monitor her blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and mental condition throughout the 14-week journey and use the data to examine the stresses on the body caused by extreme endurance. The 38-year-old, who is aiming to retrace the route of Viking seafarers, is to set off in May 2015.



## Goldsmiths, University of London

Two computer scientists have released an album of jazz compositions written as part of research into creativity. Mark d'Inverno, professor of computing at Goldsmiths, University of London, worked with François Pachet, director of Sony Computer Science Laboratory, to record *Count on It*, which debuted at London's Pizza Express Jazz Club on 1 November. The pianist and guitarist alternated as creator and editor, filming composing sessions to examine the conditions required for creativity.



## London School of Economics

A new £25 million student centre has won a major design award. The Saw Swee Hock Student Centre – the first new building commissioned by the London School of Economics in more than 40 years – picked up the best education building at the Concrete Society Awards on 29 October. It was also a finalist for this year's RIBA Stirling Prize.

## United States



### Free tanning beds available at colleges despite health risk

Almost half of the top ranked universities in the US (48 per cent) have tanning beds on or near campus, according to a study in the journal *JAMA Dermatology*. Of the 42 per cent that have tanning beds in off-campus housing, nearly all offered free unlimited use despite the risk of skin cancer associated with overuse. "We encourage universities to adopt a tan-free campus," said lead author Sherry Pagoto, associate professor of medicine at the University of Massachusetts.

## Republic of Ireland

### Technological university plans announced

Ireland's minister for education and skills, Jan O'Sullivan, has announced plans to reinvigorate the project of creating a technological university in the southeast of Ireland. Such institutions, she said, "add to the economy and social fabric of [their] regions" while also "providing excellent education opportunities". The minister announced a consultation on the project with the governing bodies, staff and students of the Waterford Institute of



Technology and Carlow Institute of Technology, as well as other local stakeholders.

## Russia

### Steve Jobs memorial removed; 'sodomy' fears cited

An iPhone-shaped memorial to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs has been removed from outside a Russian university after the firm's chief executive, Tim Cook, announced he is gay. The 2m high statue was placed outside St Petersburg's National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics in January 2013 by West European Financial Union (ZEFS), a Russian group of companies. "After Apple CEO Tim Cook publicly called for sodomy, the monument was taken down to abide by the Russian federal law protecting children from information promoting denial of traditional family values," ZEFS said.



## Mexico



### Strike for 43 missing trainee teachers

Mexican university students staged a 72-hour strike in support of 43 missing trainee teachers who are now feared dead. The students, from a teacher-training college in Ayotzinapa, failed to return from a protest against discriminatory hiring practices in Iguala on 26 September. Media reports suggest that their bus was stopped by the police, who shot dead three students. The city's mayor has been arrested for allegedly ordering officers to confront the students. Suspected gang members have now confessed to killing the students and claimed that they were handed to them by police, according to Mexican attorney general Jesús Murillo Karam.

## Ethiopia

### Africa needs more 'quality' degrees, says economist

Many graduates of African universities find their degrees are "useless", an economist has warned. Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, acting chief economist and vice-president of the African Development Bank, said despite expansion in Africa's higher education sector, at some institutions "quality is usually not thought about". In comments made at the African Economic Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he urged governments to work with the private sector to invest in infrastructure and facilities to develop "international standard" universities.



## Australia



### Higher education reforms may miss 2016 target

Australia's higher education reforms may not complete their passage through Parliament in time to be implemented in 2016, education minister Christopher Pyne has admitted. The changes, which include deregulating university fees, cutting the teaching budget by 20 per cent and charging a real interest rate on student loans, are stalled in the Senate while negotiations continue with the minority parties that hold the balance of power. The legislation must pass this year for implementation in 2016.



# Germany eyes import-export model

**Aim to send 50% of students abroad by 2020 and boost foreign cohort at home. Jack Grove reports**

Sending half of Germany's university students abroad for part of their studies by 2020 will give the country a major competitive advantage over other export-driven nations, a leading sector figure has claimed.

Sebastian Fohrbeck, director of internationalisation and communication at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which promotes German higher education abroad, dismissed fears that its plans for "a massive movement of students abroad" represented an "organised brain drain".

About a third of German students now undertake some of their degree study in another country, but ministers are keen to increase this to 50 per cent within six years, Dr Fohrbeck told a conference in London, which was jointly organised by the UK HE International Unit, the Institut Français and the DAAD, on 4 November.

In contrast, only 6 per cent of UK

students will study abroad at some point, which is well below the European Union's goal of having a fifth of all students undertaking study outside their country by 2020.

On the rationale for investing millions of euros in study-abroad schemes, Dr Fohrbeck said it was a key part of Germany's industrial strategy, which requires highly skilled graduates to be able to operate across the world.

"The German economy is dependent on exports, which once made up 30 per cent of our economy, but now make up 50 per cent," he said.

"That is why we want to qualify our manpower and we are trying to make sure [graduates] are internationally qualified," he said, adding that "it is important to have political and economic networks worldwide".

About 118,000 German students receive funding to go abroad each year, of which only 36,000 are recip-

ients of EU-funded Erasmus+ grants, he said.

Extra funds are provided for 36,000 low-income students to study abroad, while universities are given money to award as scholarships to a further 10,000 top students, he added.



New vistas overseas study on the rise

"Germany is putting a lot of money into this. This massive movement of German students abroad is funded," he said, acknowledging that the 50 per cent target was "ambitious and we are not sure we are going to make it".

Germany is also seeking to increase the number of foreign students studying in its country by 50,000 to 350,000 by 2020, despite charging no tuition fees for most courses, Dr Fohrbeck said.

"The aim is to gain long-term friends of Germany throughout the world," he said.

About 50 per cent of foreign graduates remained in Germany, which helped to fill a shortfall in skilled labour. A recent study had found that even if only 30 per cent of foreign students remained in Germany and paid tax over five years, the cost of their tuition fees would be recouped, Dr Fohrbeck added.

"This is why we are doing it – we do not view international higher education as an industry in itself," he said.

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Image: Dr Tony Brain/Science Photo Library

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# Quality assurance is Brazil's main concern, says adviser

**Drop in standards is blamed on the growth of private institutions. Donna Bowater reports from Porto Alegre**

Brazil is facing a major challenge in guaranteeing quality across its higher education sector as the number of private and technical courses grows, a senior adviser has warned.

Two per cent of programmes in Brazil lost their credentials last year for failing to meet standards, according to Rita Barata, consultant for evaluation and coordinator in public health with Capes, the Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education. Speaking at the British Council's Quality in Higher Education conference in Porto Alegre on 5 November, Dr Barata said the majority of those that lost their credentials were private institutions let down by their research quality.

"Private institutions don't have the research or they don't do good research. There are some exceptions but normally, the good research is [done] by the public universities," she said.

"There are good institutions in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais but there's a lot of very fragile institutions with a lot of problems with the quality of the personnel; the professors are not so prepared, they don't have money to research."

During the one-day conference at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazilian and European academics discussed the importance of quality assurance to internationalisation, along with methods for benchmarking.

One of the difficulties, Dr Barata said, was developing a way of testing new technical and professional courses.

"We have a lot of programmes in professional subjects," she added. "We need another kind of evaluation for this type of programme; it's totally different from research papers and books. There isn't an international standard for that. We



**Better, not just bigger** minister Henrique Paim noted drawbacks to rapid growth

need to develop some indicators and standards."

Earlier this year, the closure of some universities was blamed for the first drop in graduate numbers in a decade.

Henrique Paim, Brazil's education minister, said at the time that guaranteeing the quality of courses was as important as expansion. "[The closure of universities] is not worrying because there is a greater concern about quality," Mr Paim said.

Stephen Jackson, director of reviews at the UK's Quality Assurance Agency, said the UK had also faced difficulties in maintaining standards after growth in the number of private colleges.

But he said that since the introduction of Tier 4 visas and changes to immigration regulations, 160 private institutions had had to engage with the QAA.

Asked how robust Brazil's qual-

ity assurance procedures were, Dr Jackson said: "It's different. The real concern is with private institutions, which have really grown in number."

## International comparisons

"Quality is becoming increasingly internationalised," he added. "As we move forward, there are inevitable questions about international benchmarking, about comparing higher education systems in one country with another, about providing public assurance."

"We are a long way from a generally accepted set of common standards, particularly in the professional areas," said Dr Jackson. "There's a lot to be done in a European context to ensure we have genuinely comparable standards. I don't think national systems are going to be sufficient."

Among the participants at the

conference was Malcolm Press, pro vice-chancellor at the University of Birmingham, who said quality assurance was important for potential academic partners as well as students.

"It's a very, very busy marketplace," said Dr Press, whose institution shares an office in Brazil with the University of Nottingham. "What we need to think about is which universities to collaborate with, which areas [to work in] and what is right for each of these international institutions."

"We can't work with everybody but we need to work with the people who deliver the best outcomes both for education and for research."

The conference was organised as part of the British Council's Global Education Dialogues series. A source at the council said the ultimate aim was a bilateral agreement that recognises British-Brazilian academic standards.

One of the British initiatives aimed at fostering relationships between the two countries is the Newton Fund. Brazil will be the third-biggest beneficiary of the scheme, which was launched in May and is intended to increase academic partnerships with developing countries.

Meanwhile, the UK is the second most popular destination for scholars on Brazil's Science Without Borders exchange programme, the second phase of which has just been announced.

But in Dr Barata's opinion, higher education in Brazil still needs fundamental domestic improvements.

"In Brazil, the idea is that a university has to do everything in every area and I think this is a problem – we lack focus," she said.

"Second, we have a very precarious infrastructure in Brazil to welcome students and to welcome professors."

"Finally, our teaching process is extremely traditional. Unless we change the way we work with our standards, we won't be able to take this leap forward. We need to truly transform our universities. Without implementing these basic changes, we will not get there."





## What will be the impact of the new European commissioners?

The 2010-14 European commissioners have been moving out recently, with the 2014-19 vintage coming in under new president Jean-Claude Juncker. Incoming commissioners are given responsibility for policies they haven't negotiated and a budget on which they have had no input, running up to 2020. But the changing of the guard has implications for research and higher education.

The best commissioners make their mark by assembling commission-wide and ministerial support in cross-sectoral conflicts, or by implementing "their" policy. The outgoing research commissioner, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, has been praised for her drive. Education's run has been modest. But even an education commissioner can make the history books. Take the *bon mot* of Manuel Marin during the negotiations for the Erasmus proposal in 1986: was it acceptable for Europe to spend four times as much on a single cow as on a student? In terms of law, the commissioner for social affairs,

education and employment at the time didn't have a leg to stand on, but it helped to get the Erasmus Decision on the books.

Today's commissioners are more constrained than in the past. The tighter integration of economic policy coordination since the eurozone crisis requires the Commission to make country-specific recommendations (ie, not binding) on policies including education and research. In part it is Mr Juncker's choice to avoid dealing with all 27 commissioners. They must work primarily through six vice-presidents who coordinate policy areas, including the euro and social dialogue; jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness; and the digital single market. But the commissioners have political resources if they want to use them: the officials, the budgets and relations with stakeholders.



Who are the education-related commissioners who might make a difference? Carlos Moedas – the former banker, trained engineer and right-hand man to the Portuguese prime minister – is the commissioner for research, science and innovation. He has the Innovation Union programmes to manage (Horizon 2020, etc) and coordination of the Commission's research activities.

He is asked to focus on applied research with a view to reinforcing industrial leadership.

Belgian Marianne

Thyssen, commissioner for employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility, is bound to impinge on education. Mr Juncker's absolute priority is to reabsorb what he calls the EU's 29th state: the unemployed, particularly the young unemployed. Ms Thyssen's skills brief now includes vocational training and lifelong learning. These are taken from education

and culture, but officials there seem unworried, claiming that intersectoral cooperation works.

Tibor Navracsics, the commissioner for education, culture, youth and sport, is another nominee of special interest. Preceded by a sulphurous reputation as part of Hungary's increasingly authoritarian government, his good speech was not good enough for MEPs at his European Parliament confirmation hearing. So Mr Juncker removed the intended citizenship portfolio. What remains includes the promotion of publicly popular EU activity in education and culture, notably the Erasmus+ programme. It is not a role to be despised. A valuable higher education-related task in a Eurosceptic climate is to show not only what Brussels does for universities, but also what universities do for society as a whole.

Anne Corbett is an associate of the London School of Economics and author of *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge* (2005).

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# The thin line between libel and criticism

Post-publication peer review may mean greater scrutiny but is it legally viable? Paul Jump reports

The legal action launched by a US scientist who claims that anonymous comments questioning his science cost him a lucrative job offer has raised further questions about the potential for post-publication peer review to replace pre-publication review.

Academics' gripes with pre-publication review are well documented. When only two or three reviewers are asked to comment on a manuscript, the potential for acceptance decisions to be skewed by misunderstanding or bias is considerable. Proponents of post-publication review say scrutiny by the whole community increases the chances of errors being spotted and significance being accurately identified. Some even hope that journal publishing – and its vast associated expense – could be dispensed with if there is no longer a need for editors to organise peer review.

Advocates' current darling is Pub Peer, an "online journal club" set up in 2013 by an anonymous group of early career researchers that allows users to comment – anonymously or otherwise – on published papers. The site's rapid rise to prominence was highlighted earlier this year by the role it played in exposing the two now-infamous and retracted *Nature* papers by Haruko Obokata, of Japan's RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology, that claimed to detail a new way to create stem cells.

However, ever since the tendentiously named Science Fraud website – which listed doubts about published papers – was shut down in early 2013 under a barrage of libel challenges, doubts have lingered about whether post-publication peer review is legally viable.

Most pre-publication reviews are never made public, so even one that is highly critical is no threat to a researcher's wider reputation. Post-publication review, by contrast, is necessarily open, so critical reviews are more likely to elicit a robust response – which, in an increasingly litigious society, could involve lawyers. As *Nature* recently admitted in an editorial, fear of legal challenge is one reason why it has "concluded that we cannot usually use retraction statements as a means of highlighting wrong-doing" – even when official investigations have reached misconduct verdicts.

Fears of "lawyered up" academics will be strengthened by the case of Fazlul Sarkar, a distinguished professor in cancer research at Wayne State University in Detroit. As first reported by Retraction Watch, he claims that anonymous comments posted on Pub Peer this summer led to the withdrawal of a \$350,000 (£220,000) a year job offer by the University of Mississippi.

Under US law, Pub Peer is not liable for the remarks of its commenters, but Sarkar has subpoenaed it to demand the identity of those he believes to have libelled him – whom he intends to sue. The site responded by taking down the offending comments but said it will resist the subpoena and will cease in future to hold any information – such as an IP address – that might identify its anonymous contributors.

## Behind the usernames

Some observers have suggested that the anonymity Pub Peer offers is problematic because it offers impunity to those who slip past its moderators and unfairly shred others'



**On the lookout** critics have suggested that if commentators were made to reveal their

reputations. If commenters were required to reveal their identities, some argue, criticism would be fairer, more civil and less likely to come to a lawyer's attention.

One proponent of that view is Philip Moriarty. Earlier this year, the professor of physics at the University of Nottingham had a heated exchange on Pub Peer with defenders of Francesco Stellacci, Constellium professor at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland, over whether Stellacci's belief in the existence of "stripy nanoparticles" is due to basic errors in microscopy. Moriarty says he was not concerned that Stellacci – who has complained of a witch-hunt – might sue him, but he admits that attitude may just reflect his own "combination of naivety and stupidity". But however robust discussions become, he believes critics should never retreat behind anonymity, and should always be compelled to identify themselves – at

least to moderators. "All you need is one disgruntled postdoc or PhD student and anonymous commenting can be really damaging," he says.

But, according to an emailed comment from Pub Peer, its users have rarely abused their anonymity: "Abusive comments with no substance are both ineffective and easily spotted. Conversely, if a comment makes a valid point, the motivation for posting it is irrelevant. The worst we see is misguided comments made because of some misunderstanding – but, in that case, the authors or other users can explain, and it is probably beneficial for such explanations to be available to all."

The email admits that anonymous comments are "often the most critical and may highlight features indicative of misconduct". But it also insists they are important since "the biggest problems matter the most".

Moriarty concedes that having to reveal their identities even to a moderator could put off vulnerable early





identities then criticism may be fairer, more civil and less likely to result in legal action

career researchers, and he suspects that Pub Peer's popularity – in contrast to some previous experiments in post-publication review – is down to the possibility of anonymity. But he suggests that finding a way to make comments citeable – and, hence, count towards scientific prestige – might warm up some cold young feet.

However, Dave Fernig, a professor in the University of Liverpool's department of biochemistry, observes that discussion forums that lack anonymity contain "a lot of hagiography" and rarely provide new insight into a paper: "If we lose anonymity, then many will fear to criticise. The consequence is that work that needs questioning will stand and we will have moved from science to faith," he says.

The UK's notoriously punitive libel law was recast last year to make it harder for claimants to sue. A defence was introduced for websites that take down offending comments promptly, and peer-reviewed papers

were exempted from the scope of the law. However, discourse around papers remains unprotected and the cost of defending a libel action means Fernig's call for "a good test case" to see where the limits lie seems unlikely to attract willing participants.

However, US libel law is weighed more in defendants' favour. So while Pub Peer accepts that further legal "attacks" are inevitable, it notes that, despite Sarkar's actions, its contributors continue to be "active", and it is "optimistic that the robust legal protections for free speech and anonymity in the US will enable sites like Pub Peer to defend themselves and their users effectively".

As for Moriarty, he is crossing his fingers that such confidence is not misplaced: "If you are publicly funded and you put your research into the public domain but no one can criticise you for it without facing legal proceedings, that seems to me to be a very badly damaged system." [paul.jump@tesglobal.com](mailto:paul.jump@tesglobal.com)

## Grant winners

### Arts and Humanities Research Council

#### Science in Culture Innovation Awards

- **Award winner:** Charlotte Sleigh
  - **Institution:** University of Kent
  - **Value:** £63,932
- Metamorphoses: gaming art and science with Ovid

- **Award winner:** Rebecca Ellis
  - **Institution:** Lancaster University
  - **Value:** £63,481
- Dark matters: an interrogation of thresholds of (im)perceptibility through theoretical cosmology, fine art and anthropology of science

### Royal Society

#### University Research Fellowships

- **Award winner:** Jens Chluba
  - **Institution:** University of Cambridge
  - **Value:** £406,979
- CMB spectral distortions as a new probe of early Universe physics

- **Award winner:** Jie Song
  - **Institution:** Imperial College London
  - **Value:** £469,866
- Reprogramming of epigenetic memory during plant regeneration

- **Award winner:** Jacqueline Rosette
  - **Institution:** Swansea University
  - **Value:** £429,914
- Inventory of the vegetated land surface using remote sensing technologies

### Leverhulme Trust

#### International Network Grants Sciences

- **Award winner:** Mark Williams
  - **Institution:** University of Leicester
  - **Value:** £124,846
- Assembling the early Palaeozoic terranes of Japan

#### Humanities

- **Award winner:** Stephen Church
  - **Institution:** University of East Anglia
  - **Value:** £86,044
- New interpretations on the Agevin world

- **Award winner:** Hugh Kennedy
- **Institution:** Soas, University of London

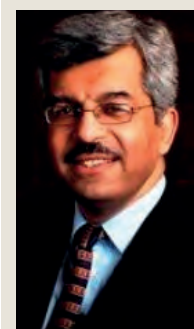
- **Value:** £110,177
- Economic integration and social change in the Islamic world system, 800-1000 CE

- **Award winner:** Nathaniel Coleman
  - **Institution:** Newcastle University
  - **Value:** £109,906
- Imaginaries of the future: historicising the present

#### Social sciences

- **Award winner:** Robert Lord
  - **Institution:** Durham University
  - **Value:** £99,833
- International network of implicit leadership theory (ILT) scholars

## IN DETAIL



### Medical Research Council Clinical Research Infrastructure Initiative: Technologies for Stratified Medicines

**Award winner** Munir Pirmohamed  
**Institution** University of Liverpool  
**Value** £5,000,000

**Applying innovative technologies to improve the benefit-risk ratio of drugs: developing a national resource underpinned by the infrastructure of the MRC Centre for Drug Safety Science (CDSS)**

All drugs are associated with variability in response: some patients do not respond to drugs, while others develop side-effects or adverse drug reactions (ADRs). New state-of-the-art technologies funded by the initiative will build upon this infrastructure at the CDSS by helping to identify the best treatments for patients based on how drug responses vary, how diseases differ between individuals, and how this information relates to variation in clinical outcomes. "With this funding we will look at patient samples using the latest and most sensitive technologies available in different 'experimental' systems," said Munir Pirmohamed, deputy director of the CDSS. "These range from cutting-edge imaging techniques, to experiments on single cells. By combining these data with careful clinical observations of patients, we will ultimately be able to tailor treatments for individual patients so that they are not only effective but also safe."

## Obituary

### Leonore Davidoff, 1932-2014



A historian who pioneered new approaches to gender, women's and social history has died.

Leonore Davidoff was born in New York City on 31 January 1932 and studied for her first degree at Oberlin College, Ohio, switching from music to sociology, followed by an MA at the London School of Economics (1956). She began her career as a research assistant in the University of Birmingham's department of social sciences (1956-57), served as an extra-mural lecturer at the University of London (1959-64) and then transferred to the University of Cambridge as a supervisor in sociology (1965-68).

In 1972, however, Professor Davidoff moved to the University of Essex's department of sociology as a research officer (1972-75). She was to remain there for the rest of her life, promoted to lecturer in social history (1975-89), senior lecturer (1989-90) and finally research professor in 1990, becoming emeritus shortly before her death.

Even while doing her MA, Professor Davidoff boldly set off into uncharted territory with a long dissertation on "The Employment of Married Women", a topic then not only ignored but considered not worth studying. Once at Essex, she focused on domestic service and household management in the 19th and 20th centuries, publishing *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Seasons* (1973) and articles later collected together in *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (1995). *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (with Catherine Hall, 1987) soon established itself as a classic, while *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (2012), published just before she turned 80, was another major contribution to a largely neglected field.

Alongside such scholarly activities, Professor Davidoff was highly active in the London Feminist History Group and acted as founding editor of the highly influential journal, *Gender and History* (1987-94).

"I'd read her work as a graduate student," recalled Pamela Cox, professor of sociology at Essex, "and was so excited to be able to join the university as a young lecturer. [Professor Davidoff] was coming up to retirement then, but she never really retired. I loved the way her historical research pushed the boundaries and made us all rethink concepts of class, gender, work, family and much else."

"One of my best memories is discussing scripts, angles and arguments for my recent television history documentaries. *Servants* [2012] just wouldn't have been made without her pioneering research on domestic work back in the 1970s and 1980s."

Professor Davidoff died of Hodgkin's lymphoma on 19 October and is survived by her three sons.  
matthew.reisz@tesglobal.com

## HE & me

Claude Littner has been chairman and chief executive of Lord Sugar's Amstrad International and was also chief executive of Tottenham Hotspur from 1993 to 1998. Most recently he was chairman of IT company Viglen. He is also well known for interviewing candidates on the BBC's *The Apprentice*. Last month he opened the Claude Littner Business School at the University of West London, where he was a student

● **Businessmen and women often cite experience as crucial to success. How do you equate the importance of the theoretical knowledge of a business degree with hands-on involvement in the industry?**

There is no substitute for relevant experience. Theoretical knowledge has two functions: first, the sheer pleasure of learning from the thoughts and experience of others; and second, to frame your decision-making when faced with the complexities of trying to navigate through business problems in the real world.

● **MBAs at UK universities can cost tens of thousands of pounds. Is this a worthwhile investment?**

The prospect of incurring the expense is a genuine concern and should not be taken lightly, nor should the amount of work required to achieve the qualification. However, there is significant evidence to show that having an MBA will help career advancement, and I would encourage able graduates to make the sacrifice and go for it.

● **Entrepreneurship is an area that is starting to get a foothold in business degrees and beyond. Do you think there should be an element of instruction in entrepreneurship across all degrees?**

In virtually every walk of life and course of study, having an understanding of business is an advantage. Entrepreneurship is an essential part of a business degree course. It brings to the fore not only case studies but also people who have built up businesses, taken the risks inherent in doing so, and are prepared to share these experiences with students.

● **On *The Apprentice* you are notoriously straight-talking in interviews, often resulting in an uncomfortable-looking interviewee. What is your most awkward/embarrassing moment in a job interview?**

The interview is a formal process, and I have very limited experience of being interviewed. I don't think I would like it, and would not tolerate the Claude Littner approach!

● **From someone who knows, what was it actually like to run a big Premier League club?**

Being chief executive of Tottenham Hotspur was a challenge, and I relish challenges. I joined at a time of serious internal wrangling and tackled issues head-on. That might have been fine in a traditional publicly quoted company. However, in football, egos are easily bruised, new ideas are not readily accepted and every thought let alone action was potentially leaked to the press, making progress and harmony rather hard to achieve. Over time, I became more sensitive to the football culture, and there was a recognition that what I was doing was for the benefit of





all who love the club. I am now welcomed on match days with genuine affection – I think!

● **If you were a prospective university student now facing £9,000 fees, would you go again or go straight into work?**

My answer would be an emphatic yes to going to university. I enjoyed the course and those years helped me to mature, decide what career path to follow and enabled me to get a good job on graduation.

● **What keeps you awake at night?**

Nothing much. My thoughts briefly turn to the events of the day, things I could have managed better and how I plan to tackle the day ahead. I think about my children and grandchildren and how very lucky I am, and fall asleep smiling.

● **As a child, what did you want to do when you grew up?**

I am not sure I had a specific career in mind. From a very young age, I was always interested in business and was a keen saver and investor. I wanted to be successful, but did not know what that meant or what sacrifices it might entail.

● **What's your biggest regret?**

That my parents are not alive to share my joy of life.

● **Have you ever had a eureka moment?**

I have had many eureka moments, but these have been borne out of painstakingly going over a problem or situation in my mind and finally working out a way of resolving it.

● **What's your most memorable moment at university?**

Graduating. What a relief!

● **What advice would you give to your younger self?**

Stop worrying, calm down, take it in your stride. You'll be all right.

● **What are the best and worst things about your job?**

I love everything I do, if I didn't I wouldn't do it.

● **Tell us something we don't know about Lord Sugar.**

I don't know what you know about Lord Sugar, so can't answer the question. I will tell you one thing...he's brilliant!

John Elmes

# THE SCHOLARLY WEB

Weekly transmissions from the blogosphere

**"I slowly entered the dimly lit seminar room. I didn't notice before shutting the door behind me: NO COOKIES WERE LEFT!"**

So reads the first tweet to use the #AcademicHorrorStories hashtag, sent by Amanda Yoho (@mandaYoho), a graduate student in the physics department at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. "The only thing left was tepid Folgers...and POWDERED CREAMER." (For those in the dark, "Folgers" is a brand of coffee popular in North America.)

The hashtag appeared, unsurprisingly, a few days before Halloween, and prompted the scholarly Twitter community to start telling their own not-so-scary spooky stories.

Twitter user "Exclamation Snark" (@BadPhysics) also had coffee-related fears. "Walking back to the lecture. Cup in hand. Something nagging. A half caught glance. What did the wrapper say. '...Decaf'."

"Get out!" the editor screamed," begins a tale penned by Robert McNees (@mcnees), assistant professor in the department of physics at Loyola University Chicago. "The negative peer review is coming from inside your dept!" It wasn't his only story.

His second tale featured a familiar scene for many in the scholarly world. "Don't worry. Just relax. The head of her PhD committee smiled, lips curling back to reveal row after row of teeth."

"Dr Magoo" (@drmagoo), who describes himself as a "physics teacher, sports fan...[and] geek", conjured up a truly horrific image. "Softly at first, and then with growing intensity, an emeritus professor began to snore," he tweeted.

Brian Wolven (@brianwolven) had fears of a different type. "Gasps came from all across the room as we realized the entire presentation was typeset in a fixed width Courier font," he tweeted, clearly no fan of the much-maligned typeface.

The scary tale told by Professor Jaded (@ProfessorJaded) lived up to their Twitter name. "The Prof dismissed class early, hoping for an early lunch – when suddenly appeared Mr. 'Let-Me-Tell-You-My-Life-Story'" was their idea of a horror story.

Presentations and conference talks were a popular source of anxiety. "Does anyone have that cable that lets me plug my laptop into the room's audiovisual system. Anyone?" tweeted Andrew Robinson (@AndrewR\_Physics), contract instructor in the department of physics at Carleton University, Ontario, while Linda Quirke (@LindaQuirke), associate professor in the Faculty of Arts at Wilfrid Laurier University, also in Ontario, recalled that terrifying moment when you find the "batteries on [the] clicker...DEAD".

Ross Daniel Bullen (@BullenRoss), lecturer in English at the Ontario College of Art and Design (completing a trio of tales from the Canadian state), chipped in with: "The call for the academic job interview IS COMING FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE. Just kidding, it's not coming at all."

Sean Bartz (@excitedstate), who describes himself as a "physics PhD seeking the Universe's secrets inside a warped 5th dimension", tweeted: "They found her, huddled in a corner, mumbling to imagined students, 'It's on the syllabus, it's on the syllabus...'", while Ms Yoho had one more story, which will doubtless strike fear into any academic who has ever presented a paper. "Are there any more questions?" the moderator asks. "Yes, I have one. Well it's more of a comment."

Chris Parr

● Send links to topical, insightful and quirky online comment by and about academics to [chris.parr@tesglobal.com](mailto:chris.parr@tesglobal.com)

## Careers intelligence

# To maintain a strong mind, develop healthy habits

**Ward off depression during doctoral study by recognising and responding to the warning signs.**  
Holly Else reports

A PhD can sound like a great career move: it challenges the intellect, expands horizons, boosts a CV and offers flexible working hours. But for some the nature of the work involved can take a toll on their mental health.

This may be partly down to the fact that PhD students often have lots of unstructured time to work alone on a research project that, inevitably, does not always go to plan.

Dealing with the fallout when things go awry can be overwhelming, said Rosanna Hardwick, charity and communications manager for mental health organisation Student Minds.

"It can be really important to take time away from the lab or the library to get some perspective and chat to family members and friends," she told *Times Higher Education*, adding that students should keep up with creative activities, sports and societies to relieve some of the pressure.

"PhD students might have a lot of unstructured time so it is quite easy to blur the lines between your personal life and your work life, and start working into the evenings and at weekends," she said. This can



**Symptoms** feeling overwhelmed, tearful and irritable are signs of stress

lead to students feeling guilty about taking time out for themselves, she added.

Ms Hardwick offered some healthy habits that students can put in place to make sure they look after themselves.

They should set up a personal routine to help to structure their days and schedule in some down-

time so that they have something to look forward to. "It might be going for a walk or going to a local café for breakfast," she suggested. Making sure that time is set aside for a "proper lunch break" should also be a priority, she said.

"Make the most of your evenings and weekends...try to have regular commitments that you make time

for every week, [such as] a society or sports club, so that you are not tempted to stop taking time off when it gets busy as it inevitably will at some point," she explained.

She also suggested setting "small achievable goals" for work to help with motivation, while changing your surroundings can also help if working in one place gets too intense.

General signs of stress to look out for are feeling overwhelmed, tearful and irritable. While working, alarm bells should ring if you experience poor concentration and difficulty focusing. Losing interest in life, having low energy levels and irregular sleeping patterns, meanwhile, are signs of depression.

Ms Hardwick was clear that if someone is experiencing signs of faltering mental health they should make an appointment with their GP or university counsellor to discuss their feelings. Encourage a friend to make an appointment if you are worried about them, she added.

Supervisors also have a part to play in helping to protect the mental health of students, she said. "If you [as a supervisor] are concerned, then mention that. Often it is good to have an awareness of what support services are at the university so that you can signpost [them] to those [students who might need them]," she said.

Ms Hardwick said that many self-help guides for students were also available online on the Student Minds website and on that of another campaign, Students Against Depression.

[holly.else@tesglobal.com](mailto:holly.else@tesglobal.com)

## Appointments

The University of Lincoln has announced three appointments. **Paul Squires** and **Claire Hills** have joined the School of Life Sciences from the University of Warwick to continue their joint research into better understanding the

sub-cellular mechanisms that regulate how people with diabetes can end up with diabetic nephropathy (kidney disease).

**Stuart Humphries**, who will be a senior figure in the school's evolution and ecology research group, has joined as professor in evolutionary bio-physics.

**Panos Koutrakos**, professor of

European Union law at City University London's law school, has been awarded a Jean Monnet chair in EU law by the European Commission. The chair is given in recognition of excellence in the field of European Law.

The University of Oxford has made two appointments: **Horst Eidenmüller**, director of the Munich Centre for Dispute Resolution and the Institute of

International Law at Munich University, has been appointed to the Freshfields professorship of commercial law. (He already held a visiting professorship at Oxford.) And **Henrike Lähnemann**, chair of German studies at Newcastle University, has been made professor of German medieval and linguistic studies. Both take up their positions on 1 January 2015.



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The background of the poster is a dark, night-time photograph of a road or track. It features vibrant, multi-colored light trails in shades of orange, red, yellow, and blue, suggesting motion and energy. The University of Southampton logo is in the top right corner.

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# In praise of appraisals

Having your say on employee review sites has the potential to transform workplace cultures, says Alexandra Blakemore

**T**he National Student Survey is widely credited with driving a step change in universities' responsiveness to student concerns. However, recent articles in *Times Higher Education* have highlighted the pressures that can be brought to bear on whistleblowers and the use of gagging clauses to hush up problems ("Attempts to 'gag and silence' are commonplace", 11 September). They suggest that universities still have a long way to go in improving their responsiveness to the concerns of their staff.

The picture painted is that many university managers would rather hush up problems than confront them, and many academics are rightly frustrated about that approach. But tools are already available that, by publicly rewarding positive workplace cultures, could potentially have just as transformative an effect on management priorities as the NSS has had.

Employee review websites such as Glassdoor, Indeed and TheJobCrowd have been around for a few years. In the

**Glassdoor is reportedly used by 48 per cent of job applicants to find out more about potential employers, including salaries**

US, Glassdoor – the market leader – is reportedly used by 48 per cent of job applicants to find out more about potential employers, including typical salaries.

UK universities are working towards improved workplace cultures, including a fairer deal for women and minority groups. In particular, a good deal of effort has been directed towards achieving external recognition of good practice through charter marks – most notably, through the Athena SWAN awards.

Elsewhere, however, any improvements may be superficial and cosmetic. A significant gulf between the external message and the internal realities quickly engenders frustration, cynicism and disillusion among staff.

Most institutions conduct staff surveys but staff are often wary of claims about their anonymity, while early career researchers tend not to engage and the input of former staff members is not sought. So it is difficult to use staff surveys to gain a rounded picture.

THE has begun an attempt to gain a more representative picture through its Best University Workplace Survey. But

employee review sites also offer a new way to capture information on staff members' experiences. Because they are both anonymous and open to outside view, problems cannot be swept under the carpet. Glassdoor, for example, prides itself on not allowing the blocking or editing of reviews by employers.

Efforts have been made to ensure that employee review sites provide a constructive environment for feedback, rather than just a place for the disgruntled to air grievances anonymously. Positive opinions and advice to management are sought and employers have the opportunity to respond to any comments. There is also the facility for reviewers to state whether they would recommend a particular employer. My alma mater, the University of Sheffield, was recommended by 86 per cent of reviewers when I last looked, and scores highly for "culture and values" and "work-life balance" – which gives the impression of an enlightened management style.

At the moment, most universities are represented on such sites by only a few reviews – mostly from early career researchers. But the number of contributions by administrators, professional services staff and established academics is growing. If this continues, it could spark a sea change in the way that UK university "brands" are perceived and managed. Universities need to recruit and retain the best staff as well as the best students so they would have to pay attention to their own and their competitors' ratings. Glassdoor already publishes an annual list of the best US university workplaces.

Bland statements by managers about institutional culture and values will cut no ice if they are not reflected in the self-reported experiences of numerous employees. Issues will have to be addressed head on – even if the managers themselves are the source of the problems.

Wise university leaders will accept this and welcome the feedback, especially if it is fair and constructive. And, having acted on it, they will then be able to bask in the public recognition of the positive work environments they have created – and take advantage of all the benefits.

**Alexandra Blakemore is professor of human molecular genetics at Imperial College London. She is a member of the Athena SWAN advisory board for medical and dental schools.**

• *Have your say in this year's THE Best University Workplace Survey at <http://ow.ly/DUCE3>.*



**T**he renowned scientist E. O. Wilson recently described the humanities as "the natural history of culture, and our most private and precious heritage". The humanities are the study of what makes us human, of what it means to be human. As they penetrate every aspect of existence, they can, and should, intersect with the natural and social sciences, but literature, history, art, music, languages, theatre, film – and yes, television and computer games – are the stories and ideas through which we express our humanity.

We understand ourselves and our world through the telling of stories. Visual dramas teach us sympathy, empathy, pity, encouraging us to break out of our solipsistic shells. They explore ethical issues, ask challenging questions, inform the way we view each other. Today we live in a culture more defined by images and stories than ever before. Given this, it is vital that we approach the media, advertising and marketing discourses that influence and often manipulate us with critical thinking. We need improved communication skills; no one is born with them, and just chatting with your family and friends does not teach the precision of language needed to negotiate and reframe our complicated world. In a global age, we need to understand other societies. Anyone who has ever studied a foreign language knows that different phrases can prompt new perspectives and open our





# Humanities: why the study of human culture still matters

To doubt the value of a swathe of subjects reduces us to consumers who have no purpose beyond industry, says Sarah Churchwell

eyes to cultural values; studying foreign languages also improves mastery of our own. This rule holds by analogy more generally: when we learn about other people, we also learn about ourselves.

The politicians and corporations telling us that the humanities do not matter are, by no coincidence, the same people who think of us only as workers and consumers, not as citizens or individuals, and who strip away our human rights, one by one. It is the wealthy who insist that we should seek only to work: we don't need the humanities, they tell us, all we need is to labour in a marketplace that will enrich them, not us.

If we agree that the humanities do not

matter, or fail to challenge this assessment, we are colluding in the very practices that reduce our humanity, that impinge upon all the other ways in which we can enrich our lives, our abilities to express our creative individuality. Until we reconsider what it means to lead a truly satisfying life, what the ancient Greeks considered the "good life" – who are by no coincidence the people who invented the study of the humanities – we should not be surprised if we have the politicians and plutocrats we deserve. Why should any politician seek to challenge the source of his (rarely her) power?

The humanities conserve and safeguard those aspects of our being that intersect with the meanings of human existence beyond

industry. A certain playwright was said to love humanity as a concept but to have less time for human beings. The same can be said of our so-called leaders, whose lofty rhetoric in support of humanity is belied by their contempt for the study of the humanities. That said, as the historian James Truslow Adams wrote some years ago, it is absurd to think that the powerful will abandon their power "to become spiritual leaders of a democracy that despises spiritual things".

There is a story that may be apocryphal but is illustrative. Supposedly, Richard Dawkins was once visiting an art gallery in Florence, and as he left was heard to ask, "But what's all this art for?" Regardless of whether Dawkins actually said it, this question articulates a widely held view among the instrumentalists and technocrats who decide our society's priorities. Last year it was revealed that scientific studies had "proven" that reading made people more empathetic. At last, some

**When we stopped being citizens and began to think of ourselves only as consumers, we relinquished thousands of years of human development**

book lovers cried, what we always knew has been proven: book lovers are better people! Anyone who has spent time in a literature department might challenge this jolly notion, but I agree with the critic Lee Siegel, who responded by defending his right to love books regardless of whether they "improved" him. Let me answer the question: what's all this art for? It's for us.

When we stopped being citizens and began to think of ourselves – or rather, each other – only as consumers, we relinquished thousands of years of human development. How can we sustain our civilisation if we don't understand how it works? How can we interpret Magna Carta and defend our rights if no one reads Latin? How will we protect our own laws? How can we hope for transcendence in a secular age if we give up on beauty? Even in instrumentalist terms, the humanities represent 5,000 years of free research and development in what it means to be human. I think we should make use of that.

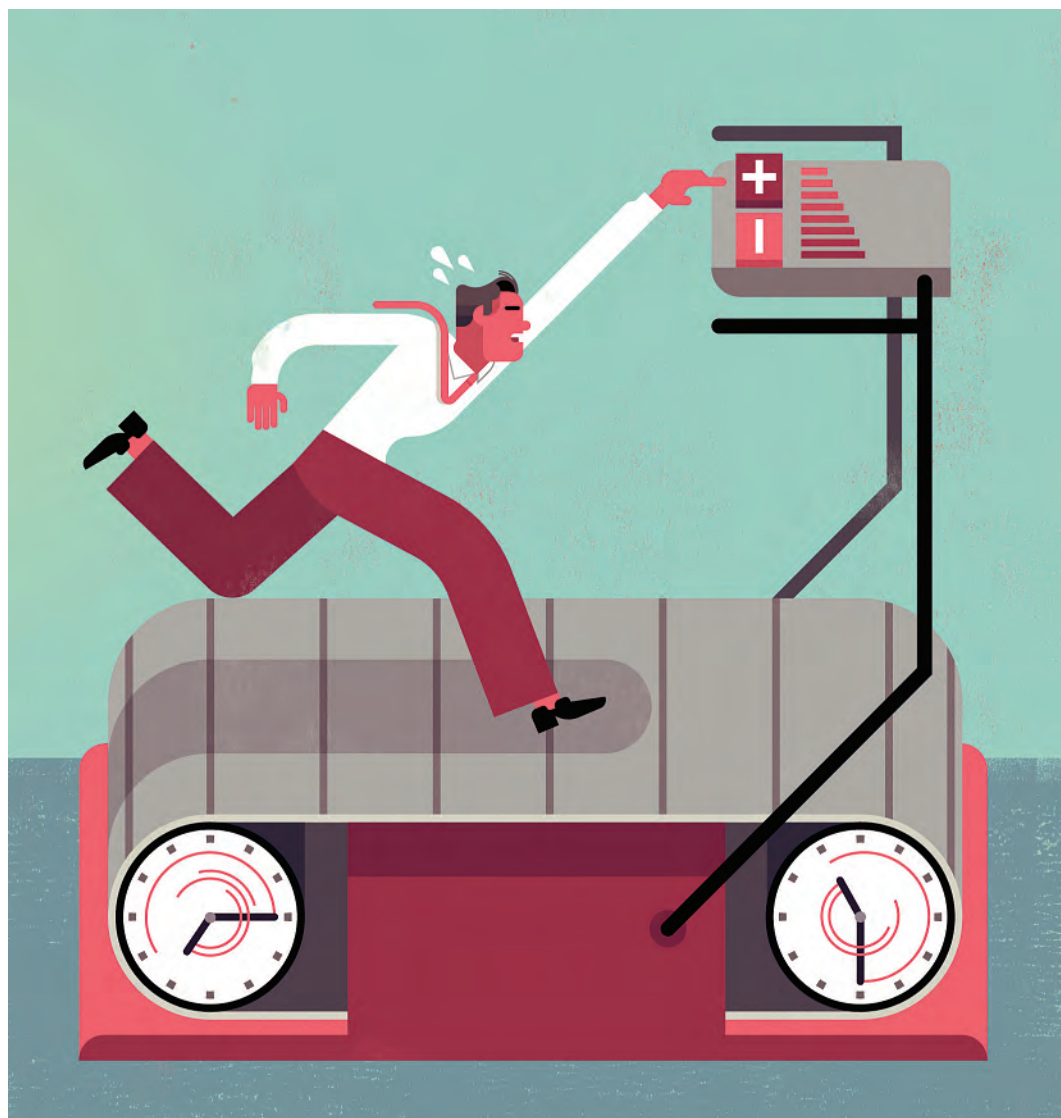
The humanities are where we locate our own lives, our own meanings; they embrace thinking, curiosity, creation, psychology, emotion. The humanities teach us not only what art is for, but what life might be for, what this strange existence might mean. What kind of humans would think that the humanities don't matter? We need the advanced study of humanities so that we might, some day, become advanced humans.

Sarah Churchwell is professor of American literature and public understanding of the humanities at the University of East Anglia. She will be speaking at Being Human, a national festival of the humanities, which runs from 15 to 23 November. <http://ow.ly/DUHWa>.



# Stuck in overdrive

The advance of 'further achievers' means we need coalitions of the sane to lead a debate on realistic workloads, says Doris Ruth Eikhof



**W**ith the new academic year in full swing, we are all well aware that long working hours in academia are an occupational hazard. But they are neither inevitable nor indicators of prolific scholarship.

This summer, an essay in these pages called on individual academics to spend less time at work and devote more time to non-work activity ("Clocking off", 7 August). Since doing so increases rather than decreases productivity, we needn't fear negative consequences for our careers, the article by Patience Schell, professor of Hispanic studies at the University of Aberdeen, suggested.

Unfortunately, things aren't quite that easy. The real problem is that no matter how productive the academic, there is always an incentive to do more work. And not, as Schell suggests, because we love our work or live in a long-hours culture, but because we don't know when to stop. And because nobody tells us when to stop.

Compared with much of the non-academic world, expectations of academics are remark-

ably ill-defined. Most departments and faculties have a workload model that at least details the teaching and administration tasks staff are expected to undertake. Similarly, the research excellence framework provides a reasonable yardstick by which to measure publication expectations. Of course, workload models and REF regulations are always a bone of contention and far from perfect. But at least they offer some guidance as to when one might consider one's job done.

Much more difficult are those areas that, hand on heart, make academic careers. Conference participation; external examining; cross-institutional research collaboration; evaluating for funding bodies; board membership of academic organisations; participation in committee meetings and appointment panels: all of these are crucial for advancement into positions of influence. But they are also time- and travel-intensive, and often require working unsocial hours.

The problem with this amorphous area of academic activity is twofold.

First, it is nigh on impossible to say how much is enough – to fulfil one's contract, to get promotion or to stand out in the labour market. Second, universities as employers have very little power and, at first glance, no incentive to rein in their staff's sector engagement. From their perspective, it is a case of the more the better since it gives the institution more visibility and influence in the sector and beyond.

Inevitably, there will always be those who work faster or more efficiently than others: who can fit more into the day or who are simply adept at putting their names to projects and papers that they have not contributed to. But they are not *über-achievers* because that would imply the existence of a clear sense of what exceeds and falls short of a recognised standard. Rather, they are "further achievers", who constantly push perceptions of what is possible or normal, and thus raise expectations of what an academic should be delivering. The sky is the limit for making your academic CV look good. The sky – or nursery hours, school holidays, physical health or mental well-being. Or simply the conviction that life should be about more than the academy.

Industry-wide standards for recruitment and promotion might be seen to offer a solution, but that would still leave an incentive for employers to hire those who exceed those standards by the largest margin. The uneasy truth is that there is no easy way to prevent recruitment and promotion decisions that reflect and exacerbate the current problem. It will be down to individual leaders – heads of departments, deans, vice-chancellors – to halt the rat race of the further achievers. We need coalitions of the sane to lead discussions about what can reasonably be expected of academics, to recruit and promote accordingly and to mentor younger academics into a way of thinking that says: "Enough is enough. If you want to do extra, we won't reward you for it."

You might assume that institutions run by coalitions of the sane would automatically fall behind those run by further achievers. But think again. Universities vitally depend on academics' ability to productively use their intellect, curiosity and creativity. In business-speak, ensuring a sane working environment therefore safeguards their supply of academic human resources.

A dairy farmer might streamline his delivery routes or negotiate discounts on milk bottles. He won't run the health of his cows into the ground by demanding that they produce ever greater yields. But that, in essence, is what universities are currently doing to their academics. Fingers crossed that voices like Schell's will wake them up to how counter-productive that is – preferably before the cows come home.

**Doris Ruth Eikhof is a senior lecturer in work and employment at University of Leicester School of Management. She is co-editor of *Creating Balance? International Perspectives on the Work-Life Integration of Professionals* (2011) and *Work Less, Live More? Critical Analysis of the Work-Life Boundary* (2008).**



# Mass movements

Alan Ryan on the links between a 1960s creation and a twenty-teen arrival

**S**itting and brooding on the intellectual consequences of a Republican victory in the mid-term elections in the US – more climate change denial, more lunacy about women's biology, less money for science, attempts to destroy the Affordable Care Act piecemeal, since wholesale repeal is impossible, and so unhappily on – I wondered, as one might under the circumstances, why it is so hard to instil an understanding of basic science, social science and logic into the adult population.

Of course, one might blame the usual suspects, including the polluters who have a financial interest in making the facts about climate change look more contestable than they are, social scientists who would rather trade theoretical models on game theory with each other than risk their reputations by trying to explain themselves – admittedly to an easily distracted public who would rather be watching football, not the easiest audience to enlighten.

All of which reminded me of the rise and fall of the hopes that were invested in Moocs. The massive, open, online course was to bring higher education to the multitudes, or at least those multitudes who could find some electricity, a wireless connection, and a device on which to hear and watch superstar lecturers offering high-grade instruction for free – or costing you a small sum if you wanted a certificate at the end of the course. It was a less happy situation for those who faced the prospect of technological unemployment – it was to render professors in community colleges redundant – and gladden the hearts of administrators and accountants who could pile the students even higher and sell their programmes even cheaper.

But it's all gone quiet. Or fairly quiet. Someone who is determined that it shouldn't go too quiet is Jeff Selingo, a former editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and a highly regarded lecturer on everything higher educational. He is a paid-up

member of the “American higher education is broken” school of thought, and an enthusiast for “disruptive” innovation wherever it might be found. Last year, he published *College (Un)bound* to persuade students not to sign up inattentively to institutions that might never see them through to graduation – with an average graduation rate of barely 55 per cent over six years, American higher education is barely more effective than Italy's. *MOOC U* is his new – brief – guide to getting the most out of the proliferation of courses available for nothing or next to nothing. He recently provided an interesting summary in *The New York Times*.

In a way, the history of Moocs in the three years since they burst on to the scene in 2011 mirrors some, but not all, of the history of The Open University. Some of the differences simply reflect the differences between the technology of the early 1960s and that of the twenty-teens; instead of downloading lectures on to mobile phones, tablets or PCs, if you wanted the visuals, as anyone taking a science course surely did, you had to watch – in black and white – when the BBC wasn't broadcasting its regular programmes. The heart of the instruction was in fact written text; the model was old-fashioned correspondence courses, long used by self-improving persons gaining professional qualifications, supplemented by seminars – tutorial groups – and the residential summer schools where marriages came unstuck and, no doubt, were sometimes saved.

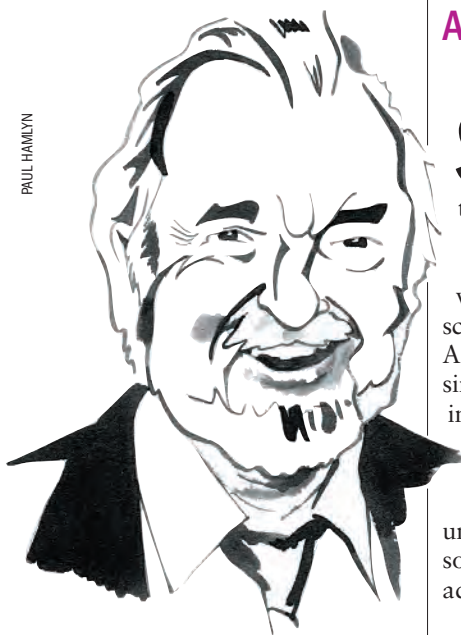
Mention of mature students' marital problems suggests one of the similarities between the audiences for Moocs and the early OU. The hope was that Moocs might provide an economical way of bringing higher education to villagers in sub-Saharan Africa or inland China. The target student was imagined as someone young, bright, needing higher education to get on, a self-improving late adolescent. It turns out that most of the audience for Moocs consists of people who already have degrees, often at master's level, and who already have a job. The

early OU similarly appealed to people who needed to top up their qualifications to make progress in careers on which they had already embarked. The shopgirl and the prison inmate existed, but they were very untypical.

The differences still remain. The OU was set up to give degrees to people who could not get a degree by attending a bricks and mortar college or university. A dropout rate of about 95 per cent, which is characteristic of Moocs, was obviously unthinkable both to students wanting qualifications and governments putting in the money that kept The Open University in operation. Selingo suggests that we should regard Moocs as a success if we see them in the right light, not as substituting for orthodox higher education, but simply providing resources to use as we like. Although he doesn't say so, the model is a library; you aren't obliged to read the whole book if you only need enough of chapter 13 to provide some structure for a seminar presentation – or a TED talk on Moocs. That's very unlike the Open University picture, but it does seem to be how students – “consumers”, “borrowers”? – who are most satisfied with Moocs have behaved.

One last similarity between Moocs and the OU is the experience of the people who provide the courses. I do not expect to construct a Mooc, although I took part in some premature attempts to provide online lectures, and quite enjoyed it. But the real pleasure was writing course units for The Open University. You had to be sure that every sentence was unambiguous, the argument rigorous, and ensure that nobody could get lost in the middle of a paragraph. It was exceedingly hard work, but extremely instructive. And that is exactly what professors who have been creating Moocs have said; you don't, as it turns out, become a superstar, but you do become a better teacher.

Alan Ryan is emeritus professor of political theory at the University of Oxford and visiting professor of philosophy at Stanford University.



PAUL HAMILTON

**“You had to be sure that every sentence was unambiguous and ensure that nobody could get lost in the middle of a paragraph”**

# 100% pay penalty fails to see staff in round

I am writing to complain about how the University of Surrey is handling the University and College Union marking boycott. I am a final-year undergraduate and feel ashamed of the university that I have, up until now, loved attending.

It has come to my attention that Surrey feels it necessary to fully dock the wages of all participating staff and has even suggested that they stay at home or they may be sent home.

To send staff home without pay ensures that I not only receive no marks for work submitted, but also receive no feedback, have no access to their expertise for tutorials and, most importantly, have no lectures to attend.

I understand that the position Sir Christopher Snowden, Surrey's president and vice-chancellor, holds as president at Universities UK would compromise Surrey's ability to publicly condemn the upcoming changes to pensions, and nor would I expect it to condemn them; however, taking such a hard line against those who are participating in legitimate union action is a step too far.

I urge all involved to reconsider pay withdrawal and, if docking pay is deemed necessary, to ensure that it is done appropriately, ie, stopping an amount of pay that correlates with how much time is spent marking versus other roles – such roles are not voluntary and should still be paid as usual.

I will not be complaining about the lack of marking in my module evaluation questionnaires, but will do so in the National Student Survey. I can only hope that doing this will make it clear that I do not hold the lecturers responsible for taking part in valid industrial action, but rather that I hold the university and UUK responsible for not trying to come to an agreement and advocating what is in essence union-busting.

**Milly March**

**Final-year undergraduate, University of Surrey**

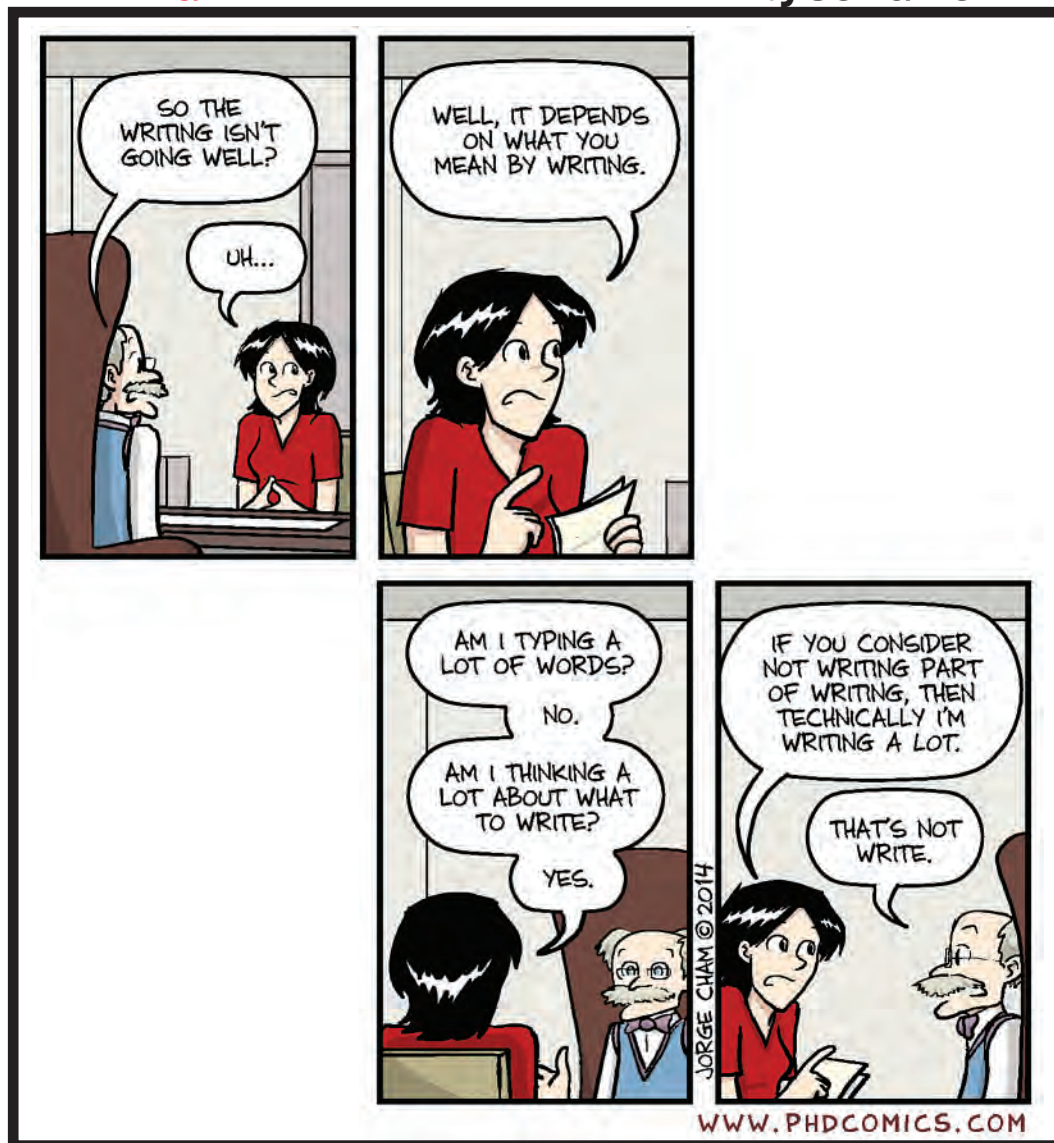
As I come from one of the universities taking a very hard line against staff threatening action short of a strike in protest against pension reforms, I am very pleased to be able to offer a neat solution.

A few simple measures are all it takes: some 10 years ago, our staff common room (the College Club) was converted from a boozy, smoky den to a pristine sandwich bar, offering fat- and gluten-free fayre, fruit and tasty herbal teas. It is now prohibited to serve alcohol at official lunches, and colleagues (even academics!) are banned from drinking during working hours, even off campus. Of course, smoking in public has been banned as well. Life expectancy will no doubt have shot up because of this exercise in social engineering.

It would cost only some tens of thousands of pounds to refurbish the College Club, an expense the university will earn back very quickly in alcohol sales. I would suggest encouraging sales through a happy hour from

## PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER

by JORGE CHAM



10am to 11am, thus setting us all up for a bibulous day. Stalls could be set out for a quick dram between classes, and of course, if the government could be persuaded to remove the unhelpful ban on smoking in public, ashtrays provided in offices and teaching rooms.

Younger colleagues, who don't remember the good old days, may need some initial orientation, but, seeing the stress that they are under to perform about three times as many onerous admin roles as I was at their age, while producing world-class research at a rate of knots, I am in no doubt that they will find these new habits a welcome addition to their stress-management portfolios.

We can all go back to the happy times when it was common for people to retire in bad health and survive their leaving parties by only a few short years. Problem solved!

**Name and contact details provided  
Senior lecturer, University of Glasgow**

We are academics at different higher education institutions who have had a connection with the University of East Anglia or who are actively engaged in collaborative work with colleagues at that institution. We are writing to deplore the UEA's decision to withhold 100 per cent of pay from those participating in

the marking boycott called by the University and College Union in a dispute over pensions. We believe that the UEA's response to this action is disproportionate and punitive. Moreover, we are concerned that the response of the university in this matter will seriously harm its reputation. We therefore call upon the UEA to reconsider its decision as a matter of urgency.

**Ross Wilson, lecturer in criticism  
University of Cambridge**

**John H. Arnold, professor of medieval history  
Birkbeck, University of London  
plus 32 others**

● For the full list of signatories, visit [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk)

## Real pension consequences

Perhaps, rather than being so keen to join in radically diminishing staff pensions, Universities UK might like to think more broadly and more long term about the unanticipated consequences of the unsightly rush to reform pensions.

"USS reforms: gap widens to £21,000 on post-92 v redbrick pensions" (News, 9 October) cited one possible consequence: staff will ask for pay rises to compensate for



sharply diminished pension rights. This will largely be resistible. But there is another consequence to consider, one that will not so easily be avoided: staff forced to carry on working.

Some will doubtless continue to be excellent but think of the stored up ill will. With no set retirement age for staff, universities will doubtless try to performance manage to invent reasons for forcing staff into retirement. More human resources advisers will be called in – as well as lawyers. How much time, effort and money will be spent on each unhappy case? What will it be like to be a student, taught by staff who had planned to draw their careers to a successful close but who are now forced by fear of post-retirement penury to cling on to their jobs?

These may possibly be unintended consequences but they are surely undesirable and they cannot now be called unanticipated. Yet this is the scenario being created by the pension reform proposals, one that will take one or two decades to fully play out.

University leaders: have you fully costed these effects? Younger staff: what effect will this have on your career progression? Future students and/or parents of future students: does this sound like a healthy, supportive and welcoming higher education environment?

The narrowness and short-termism of current thinking is breathtaking. And disgraceful.

#### **Name and contact details provided**

Although there is disagreement on the size of the Universities Superannuation Scheme deficit, there seems to be a consensus that there is a problem and some degree of benefit reduction is needed. The problem is how to make the changes in a way that both employers and employees feel is fair.

I propose that we first seek agreement on the contribution rates, which would be held constant, with the pension benefits to be earned in the next period adjusted at each valuation to fit the cost to the contribution rate. The interests of employers and employees would then be aligned in wanting to deliver the best pension for that contribution rate. They would be allied in resisting USS trustees' desires for an inappropriate timing and amount of de-risking of the investments and for an overly cautious method of calculating the deficit.

For employers who believe in the current USS valuation method and think it will take 15-20 years to pay off the deficit, there is not much difference in agreeing to the proposed employers' contribution rate of 18 per cent for that period and agreeing to it permanently.

For employees who think it is a temporary problem, the promise of constant contributions gives the prospect of benefits soon improving back towards current levels.

If employers are not willing to agree to pay a fixed rate, they will have a very hard time convincing anyone that their goal is not to force a reduction in benefits now so that they can decrease contributions in future. An employers' contribution rate of 18 per cent is not historically unreasonable or even unusual. The employers' rate was 18.55 per cent for

nearly 14 years until it decreased to 14 per cent in January 1997, where it stayed until increasing to the current 16 per cent in October 2009.

**Susan Cooper, professor of experimental physics  
University of Oxford**

## **Another dimension**

The article on the decline in mature students ("Across the ages", Features, 6 November) resonates with me.

I left school at 16 and had a series of uninspiring office jobs. I went to night school to expand my knowledge and qualifications and by my early thirties, divorced and a single parent, found myself with the opportunity to study for a full-time degree in organisation studies courtesy of the University of Central Lancashire and the local authority.

Walking into the lecture theatre on my first day was terrifying – I was convinced that I would not survive the first term and that I was an interloper – but I loved every minute of university and our lecturers brought the subject to life. So much so that by the second year I had decided that a career in education was for me. I just missed out on a first before moving on to a master's and a PhD at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.

I have been very fortunate and have worked in the higher education sector for more than 20 years in a variety of academic roles. Over that time, I have seen a dip in mature students in my tutorial groups. It is a sad indictment of our education system that now focuses specifically on youth as opposed to experience. Maturity adds that extra dimension in a tutorial group and enables younger students to gain an insight into life outside education.

**Linda Higgins, principal lecturer  
Manchester Metropolitan University**

## **Towards interoperability**

Research Councils UK welcomes the Association of Research Managers and Administrators' help in developing better interoperability in relation to collecting information on the outcomes of research council-funded research.

We certainly wish to explore how the reporting burden on researchers can be reduced, and the original decision to adopt electronic systems for gathering information, rather than requiring the submission of final reports, had this aim in mind. Simon Kerridge is a member of the RCUK project board for the councils to harmonise on a single system, and ARMA's involvement in the project has been invaluable.

Issues around interoperability with university systems were a concern for the project from the outset. As part of the tender process for selecting a system provider, we asked bidders to outline their plans for future interoperability. However, the development of robust interoperability is not an easy matter. There is significant variation across the sector in the information systems used, and the implementation of "bulk upload" solutions without adequate controls and data standards simply

introduces duplicate and poor quality data when aggregated nationally.

Researchfish is a system used by about 90 funders and it is the funders that need to be convinced that interoperability of systems can be achieved robustly before we ask the company to develop options. It is vital that the research councils have high-quality evidence to use in making the case for investment in research, but equally we are keen to work in partnership with universities and other funders to understand how to maximise the use (and reuse) of information without introducing unacceptable risks to data quality.

**Ian Lyne, Arts and Humanities Research Council  
and senior lead on the RCUK Research Outcomes  
Harmonisation Project**

## **A little something**

Although female academics who spoke at the Australasian Evolution Society conference spoke for less time than their male counterparts, because more of them spoke, the average female academic attendee (including those who did not speak) spoke for 7.37 minutes as opposed to 7.07 minutes for the average male academic ("They could go on, but they don't", News, 6 November).

It is also possible that the concise females left their listeners hungry for more, whereas the prolix males bored the pants off them.

**Sean Neill, associate fellow  
Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick**

## **Eats shoots and leaves**

Out of interest, why do we need to know where John Gill took Sir Steve Smith to lunch in London ("If you want thanks and love, get a dog", Interview, 6 November)? And why do we need to know what was consumed? Of course, I am relieved to hear that the temptation posed by Black Forest gâteau was resisted.

If I want a restaurant review I can read Jay Rayner.

**Klaus Dodds, professor of geopolitics  
Royal Holloway, University of London**

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A large tiger is illustrated in the background, its head and front paws visible, looking towards the right. In the bottom right corner, a small, curled-up cat is shown, looking towards the left. The background is a solid dark blue color.

# Unknown qualities

Without a system for sharing assessment practice, it is nonsense to pretend that UK universities' degree classifications have a common standard, says **Chris Rust**. Why does the sector so studiously ignore the issue?

**I**s a 2:1 in history at Oxford Brookes worth the same as a 2:1 in history at Oxford?”

Five years ago, this question was posed by a parliamentary select committee to the vice-chancellors of both of those universities. Their rambling and convoluted responses were considered so unsatisfactory by MPs on the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee – which was conducting investigations for its report *Students and Universities* – that they were accused of “obfuscation”, and of giving an answer that “would not pass a GCSE essay”. And the committee’s final report included the damning conclusion: “It is unacceptable for the sector to be in receipt of departmental spending of £15 billion but be unable to answer a straightforward question about the relative standards of the degrees of students, which the taxpayer has paid for.”

The correct answer to the committee’s question was, in fact, a very simple one: we just don’t know. We do not have the necessary systems in place to tell us. The traditional reliance on the external examiner system to mediate standards within the system is misplaced, as a number of studies have shown. However experienced an individual examiner may be, their experience across the sector can only be limited and they have no opportunity to calibrate their standards within their disciplinary community. This was emphatically recognised by the Higher Education Academy’s 2012 document, *A Handbook for External Examining*: “The idea that a single external examiner could make a comparative judgment on the national, and indeed international, standard of a programme has always been flawed.”

The naive outsider might think that assuring comparability of standards is surely the role of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – the independent body set up to monitor standards across the UK sector – and something addressed as a matter of course within its institutional review processes. But in 2007, two years before the select committee hearing, the QAA made the brave public admission, in a *Quality Matters* briefing paper, that: “Focusing on the fairness of present degree classification arrangements and the extent to which they enable students’ performance to be classified consistently within institutions and from institution to institution...The class of an honours degree awarded...does not only reflect the academic achievements of that student. It also reflects the marking practices inherent in the subject or subjects studied, and the rule or rules authorised by that institution for determining the classification of an honours degree.”

In other words, local and contextual

assessment practices make it impossible to make objective comparisons. This should not, in fact, have come as a surprise: certainly not to anyone up to date with the research literature. For at least the previous 10 years, especially through the work of the Student Assessment and Classification Working Group, an informal body of academics and administrators who share an interest in assessment, a series of papers and studies had demonstrated the distorting effects of central university systems that treat all marks the same regardless of the nature of the assessment task or the subject discipline.

It had been shown, for instance, that students consistently score better on coursework tasks than in examinations and in the more numerate disciplines than the arts and humanities or social sciences. Research had also shown that, given exactly the same set of assessment results, students at different institutions could end up with awards that vary by up to a degree classification simply because of the idiosyncrasies of the different institutions’ algorithms.

**“The QAA admitted in 2007 that ‘it cannot be assumed that similar standards have been achieved’. Amazingly, this received little public attention**

Much of this had also been reflected in reports produced in 2004 and 2007 by a government-sponsored Universities UK working group chaired by Sir Bob Burgess, then vice-chancellor of the University of Leicester, that examined how student achievement should be measured. But sadly, the major recommendation of these reports – the introduction of the Higher Education Achievement Report transcript, providing a more detailed account of what students have achieved during their studies – is hardly the solution. Nor will moving to a US-style grade point average system (currently being piloted at a group of universities in concert with the Higher Education Academy) do anything, on its own, to bring about greater comparability of standards.

The QAA’s 2007 paper explicitly spelled out what all this variation in local and contextual factors meant in terms of comparability of standards across the sector: that it “cannot be assumed that similar standards have been achieved” by students graduating with the same degree classification from different institutions, the same classification

in different subjects from a particular institution or the same classification in the same subject from different institutions. Amazingly, however, this startling honesty received relatively little public attention and no obvious action was taken, either by the QAA or government, to address this major shortcoming.

And when the problem was again highlighted by the select committee in 2009, it was greeted with rather a muted and defensive (some might even say complacent) response, as if the respondents actually resented being challenged. The director-general of the Russell Group, Wendy Piatt, said in response to the committee’s critical report that she was “rather dismayed and surprised by this outburst”, while the government was “disappointed that the committee has not reflected in its report the very strong and positive evidence about the UK higher education sector which was given during the inquiry”. So the prospects of any action being taken were already looking scant before the 2010 general election brought a change of government and ensured the issue would be largely forgotten by politicians – if not by the press (and by *The Daily Telegraph* in particular, which has continued to regularly raise the question of degree standards, especially in relation to grade inflation).

**I**t should be acknowledged that, since 2009, the QAA has been developing a UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is much more demanding in its expectations of providers and in the lengthy lists of indicators that reviewers are required to look for in attempting to establish that “threshold standards” are met. But at this year’s QAA conference I heard serious doubts expressed over whether the still predominantly audit-style approach to review would provide sufficient appropriate data to make reliable judgements against many of the indicators. And even if it did, the judgements are still focused on an individual institution in isolation; the QAA does not appear to have given any consideration to how the indicators could be used to make comparisons between different institutions.

Yet it is not as if we don’t know what we would have to do to address comparable standards. In fact, we have known for some time. Back in 1997, the Higher Education Quality Council, the forerunner of the QAA, recognised, in a document called *Graduate Standards Programme: Assessment in Higher Education and the Role of “Graduateness”*, that “consistent assessment decisions among assessors are the product of interactions over time, the internalisation of exemplars,



and of inclusive networks. Written instructions, mark schemes and criteria, even when used with scrupulous care, cannot substitute for these.”

And it recommended that subject groups and professional networks should encourage the building of “common understandings and approaches among academic peer groups” – by maintaining “expert” panels for validation, accreditation, external examining and assessing, for example. It also called for “mechanisms to monitor changes in standards at other educational or occupational levels [as well as] internationally”. But when the QAA took over the council’s functions in 1997, these excellent recommendations were apparently lost or forgotten.

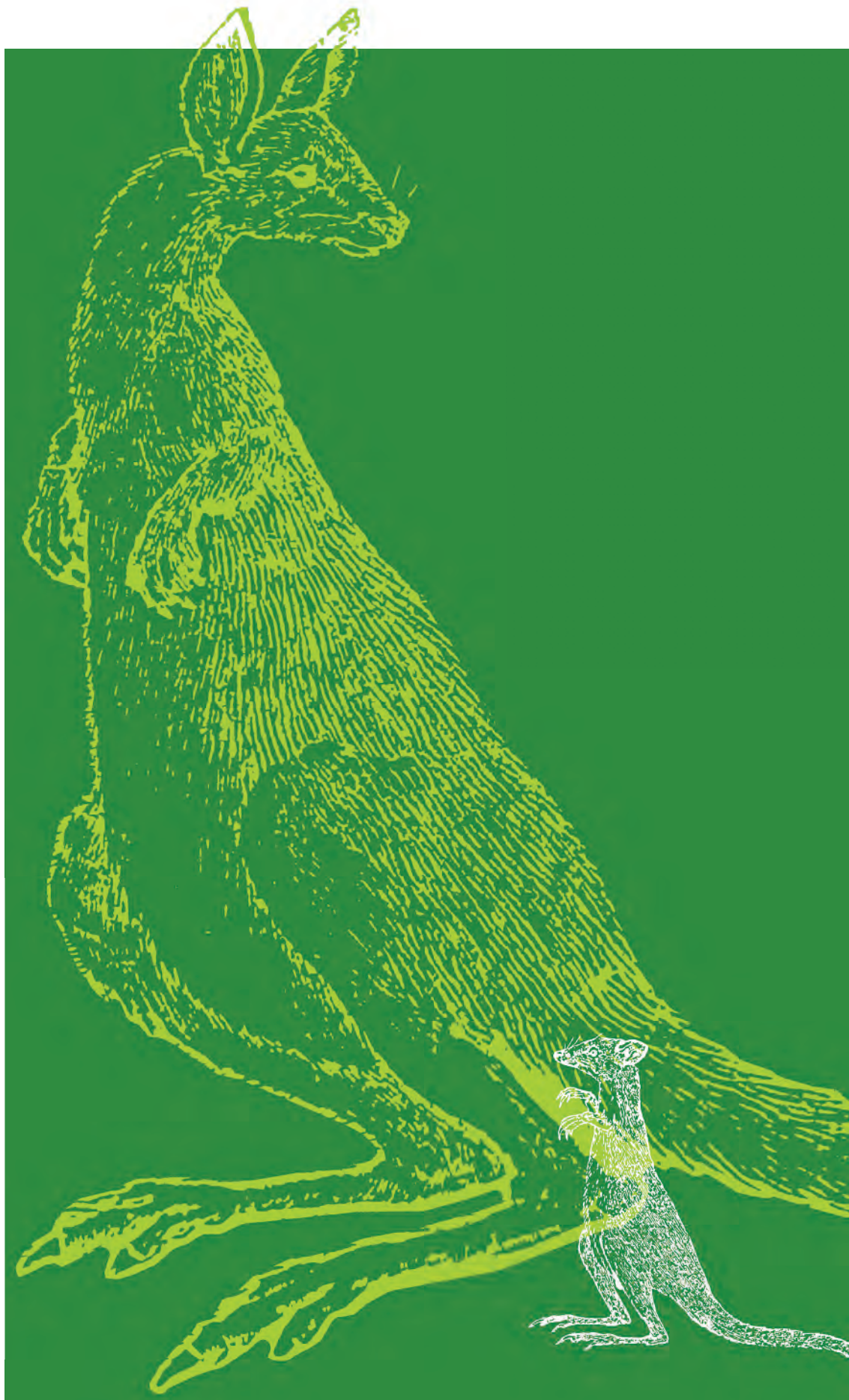
A decade later, in 2008, Paul Ramsden, who was then chief executive of the HEA, tried to resurrect the thrust of what the council had proposed. In a report on university teaching submitted to John Denham, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills at the time, he called for “colleges of peers” to be set up to help establish common stand-

**“It doesn’t have to be like this. Australia, for example, seems to be taking the issue of comparability of standards very seriously”**

ards. As I argue in *Higher Education in the UK and the US: Converging University Models in a Global Academic World?* (2014), these groups of academics would work by “looking at real examples of student work, and discussing each other’s assessment decisions. Without the cultivation of such communities of assessment practice, discussions about standards can only be limited to conjecture and opinion.” But, once again, the call fell on deaf ears.

It doesn’t have to be like this. Australia, for example, seems to be taking the issue of comparability of standards very seriously. Commissioned by the Australian government in 2009-10, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council’s Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project sought to establish national standards, starting with six broad discipline groups.

The discipline of accounting, further funded by a partnership between the professional accounting bodies and the Australian Business Deans Council, decided to continue to use a “cultivated community approach” in establishing shared meanings of their standards. A follow-on project in 2011,





*Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards*, brought together subject reviewers from 10 universities, along with a number of professional accountants. Independently, they sampled student work and submitted their judgement regarding which students met a benchmark standard. Consensus was then achieved through small and whole group discussion of the samples and checked by participants individually reviewing two new samples. In addition, reviewers considered the ability of the assessment task itself to allow students to demonstrate their attainment of the standards.

The academic participants also submitted assessment data for their own degrees so that, immediately following the workshop, two external, experienced academics double-blind peer reviewed the validity of the assessment task (the extent to which it measures what it was designed to measure) and a small random sample of actual student work, with individual results returned only to each participating university. Participating universities could use the results to satisfy external agencies about their standards and, more importantly, to improve their learning and assessment processes to ensure that students achieved the requisite standards.

This “cultivated community” approach to setting discipline standards has also been extended into other disciplines aligned with

business and accounting, and plans are afoot to continue it beyond this year’s scheduled end of the project. It is also due to be discussed this week at the first national conference of Australia’s newly established Peer Review of Assessment Network.

**W**hy is it that the issue of standards is being seriously, and apparently successfully, addressed in Australia, while, despite all the evidence of a problem, the UK government, funding councils, UUK and the QAA are all still dragging their feet? Last month it emerged that quality assurance was being put out to tender (“Watchdog ‘no match’ for a sector in flux”, *News*, 9 October), yet it seems highly unlikely that any of the bodies that might successfully win the contract will address this issue any more seriously.

Simple inertia is one possible explanation. Another somewhat more sinister (and plausible) one is that for some – maybe all – in the sector, it is simply not in their interest to establish transparent relative standards. The government has a vested interest, especially when it comes to the lucrative overseas student market, in rejecting anything that might bring the standards of UK higher education into question.

The Russell Group, which is happy to make general, rather empty, sweeping statements such as “the world class reputation of Russell Group universities depends on main-

taining excellence”, benefit from sustaining the unsupported but commonly held belief among employers, parents and students that a 2:1 from one of its members is better than a 2:1 from others. Even institutions lower down the league tables, with more diverse intakes and greater numbers of less academically qualified entrants, arguably benefit from the status quo: if a rigorous system were developed that could establish common standards across the sector they might have to accept going for years in some subjects without any of their students getting a first – with all the negative consequences for their reputation and recruitment that implies.

But this conspiracy of silence surely can’t go on. As ever greater numbers of £9,000 fee-paying undergraduates come out of ever larger numbers of universities with first-class degrees, it won’t only be *The Daily Telegraph* asking ever more loudly what those certificates are really worth. Won’t students, parents and employers also start to question their value? Or can it be that no one really does care, or that no one cares enough? ●

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Chris Rust is emeritus professor of higher education at Oxford Brookes University. He was deputy director of the Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe) Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning from 2005-10.







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# Global leaders driving world-class innovation

## Leading nurse academic bridges the gap in mental health research

**The University of Newcastle, Australia is delighted to welcome internationally recognised nurse educator Professor Sally Chan, whose research is advancing nursing interventions for mental health and education around the globe.**

Professor Chan, a consultant to government and non-government health organisations and author of more than 300 international healthcare publications and presentations, joins the Faculty of Health and Medicine after making a recognised impact on nursing education, mental healthcare policy and service delivery in Asia.

Her latest work uses innovative web-based solutions and mobile applications that improve outcomes and accessibility of care for people with schizophrenia, women with post-natal depression, and dementia sufferers and their families.

*"I consider myself a global citizen and am driven to help address the huge economic and social cost of mental health to communities around the world. Research shouldn't be considered in isolation. It needs to be collaborative and to influence government policy and practice at all levels and I am excited about the opportunities that exist to continue my research agenda and to be leading the School of Nursing and Midwifery at UON."* **Professor Sally Chan**

For the full story visit [www.newcastle.edu.au/innovate](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/innovate)





Demand for women-only higher education institutions is drying up in the West, but the opposite is true in the developing world. **Jon Marcus** considers the future for all-female academies

# Sister act

**W**hen Mursal Hamraz finished secondary school in her native Afghanistan, she had just one option to further her education: taking up an offer of a place at a public university to study for a fine arts degree, which was not of interest to her.

Six months later, her father told her of a new private university in Bangladesh that would provide her with a full scholarship.

"My dad is really supportive of my education, which is an exception in Afghanistan," Hamraz says. "Most fathers don't want their daughters to go to university or even to do jobs."

But it was other women in her mother's rural home town who sounded the loudest protests about the idea of studying abroad.

"I faced different reactions," Hamraz says. "Some women appreciated it and some other women had the idea that, no, girls can't go abroad and get an education."

When she told them that the university admitted only women, however, she says, "that gave them a little bit of comfort".

Hamraz attended the Asian University for Women in the port city of Chittagong, which opened in 2008. Today, its 500-strong student cohort comes from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria and eight other countries where women face restricted opportunities for education because of politics, religion, caste or culture.

"We tended to empower each other by telling each other you can do anything," says Hamraz, who is now one of 10 women working in the 100-employee Kabul office of the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics.

As for those sceptical women in her mother's home town, Hamraz says, "Education is the only way to open their eyes and make them realise that they can do the same things as men."

All-female higher education worldwide has come to a divide: in the West, where women have unfettered access to co-educational

institutions – and, among the student body, outnumber men at many of them – women-only universities are closing and enrolment is largely declining. But in many developing countries, new all-female campuses are opening and expanding, and enrolment is soaring.

"Maybe women's colleges have become anachronistic in the West, but what you see in Asia is that they have all the force that you can think of – intellectual force, force for social change," says Kamal Ahmad, founder and president of the Asian University for Women, which is housed, for now, in a converted apartment building while a new campus is being built, underwritten largely by British, American and other international donors.

He adds: "It may have to do with the situation of women at large. They are at the margins of society in these countries. The yearning for education is so much greater, and the passion for change."

But if there is a split in the direction of single-gender institutions for women in the East and West, they also have a paradox in common: single-sex universities give women the tools they need to help reverse the cultural forces that put them there in the first place.

"Irony has always been very good for women," says Ana Martínez-Alemán, who chairs the educational leadership and higher education department at Boston College, and who studies the impact of culture and gender on teaching.

"Born of discrimination and the isolation of women in certain sectors, these institutions then give them a toehold. Their graduates become pioneers, and that's how the pragmatic ball starts rolling," she says.

In the West, that momentum has reached a point where few women now see the need for single-sex higher education. In the US, for example, only one in 20 women now even considers applying to an all-female university, according to the Women's College Coalition.

"Once women had access to what were









**Empowerment** 'believe you can do anything'

formerly men's institutions, they began to enrol in them," says Kristen Renn, an associate professor of education at Michigan State University and author of the recently published book *Women's Colleges and Universities in a Global Context*. "Young women now believe the playing field is more than level."

And Western women-only institutions – many of which are liberal arts colleges – are contending with the same pressures facing co-educational universities that focus on the liberal arts, which are out of fashion at a time when students want to study those subjects offering the skills that they think they need to secure well-paying jobs.

In the past 50 years, the number of all-female institutions has plummeted from 230 in the US to 46 – and, with Chatham University in Pittsburgh planning to admit men to its undergraduate college from next

**I saw women come to the campus in burkas, take them off and hang them on a peg. They filled the space with colour and sound and confidence**

year, will soon shrink to 45. In Canada the number has fallen from three to one, and in the UK from 10 to four (three Cambridge colleges and a specialist college in Surbiton remain all-female). Overall enrolment in the US has risen by a third since 2000, but at women-only universities it has fallen during that time by 29 per cent.

By contrast, the all-female Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, which was created in 2004 as Riyadh University for Women out of six all-female universities in the city and renamed in 2008, has grown to 52,000 students. It is now the largest women-only university in the world. Lady Shri Ram College for Women in New Delhi this year had 120,000 applicants for 600 places, the institution says, a level of competitiveness that makes it

12 times more selective than Harvard.

Some of those numbers are the result of the sheer demand for, and scant supply of, quality higher education of any sort in fast-growing countries such as India. But many students who choose all-female institutions "come as very, very shy and docile, struggling with families who are still not convinced that girls need a higher education", says Deepika Papneja, a member of staff at Lady Shri Ram who teaches gender studies and the sociology of education. "Their families feel more safe if the girls are attending an all-women's institution."

These students and other women, however, says Papneja, who is a Lady Shri Ram alumna, "are demanding more education, more quality education". And all-female institutions provide them with "liberating, democratic spaces where they can do something different – where they can change the way society looks at women".

In a region where there continues to be not only discrimination but also much public concern about the levels of violence against women, Papneja says: "I don't think we've reached a point where we can be complacent. The world has not really changed to an extent that we can start talking about equality. There has been change, and a lot of change, but there still is a very, very long way to go. We still need, especially for at least the next couple of decades, spaces like Lady Shri Ram, where women find a voice and realise that they are individuals in their own right and have the right to do what they want to do and the means to do what they want to do."

It's not just a moral imperative. Developing economies are hungry for educated workers, including more women with university degrees, "given that they will be X per cent of the probable workforce in whatever country we're talking about", says Martínez-Alemán.

Yet some women-only universities emphasise traditional "female careers" such as

teaching, social work and nursing, perpetuating rather than reducing inequality, Ahmad and others note.

"Many women's colleges tend to reinforce the traditional values of society," he says. "They're teaching home economics and other things that reinforce the old value structure."

Even for women who graduate from fast-expanding women's institutions such as Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University, "it's not clear to me what their next step is," Renn says. "I mean, they still can't drive cars."

But many women's universities are trying to do what their Western counterparts helped to do: reverse these limitations. The Asian University for Women, for example, purposely seeks out women from places where they have the fewest opportunities, and gives most of them full scholarships. It offers them a one-year programme called the Access Academy, which provides instruction in English, mathematics, world history, geography, computer literacy and other subjects that girls from those disadvantaged areas often aren't taught sufficiently well in primary and secondary schools. Many students also undertake coveted internships at the World Bank, HSBC, Democracy International, the Tata group and other companies and organisations.

"South Asia has a history of women political leaders in virtually every country, but invariably those political leaders, however successful they may have been, rode on the mantle of a family member, whether it was a father or a late husband," Ahmad says. "We want to shift that issue of women's leadership to being based on merit or talent. We think that if we can create an emerging network of young women leaders who have the social commitment and the education to run with it, that can make all the difference."

But it isn't easy, he adds. "Women's education remains a hugely contested matter, not just in societies like Afghanistan and Pakistan, but even in more liberal societies," Ahmad



**Eye-opener** 'education is the only way to make women realise that they can do the same things as men'



## NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE: A PLACE TO TAKE RISKS, NOT A HIDING PLACE



**In the West, many women's colleges were established in the 19th century, when women were still largely excluded from mainstream higher education.**

But as more and more all-male institutions opened their doors to women, that initial rationale melted away, and many women's colleges have also become co-educational.

In the UK, the University of Cambridge's Girton College began admitting men in 1976 and the University of Oxford's St Hilda's did likewise in 2008. At Cambridge, however, Newnham, Murray Edwards and Lucy Cavendish colleges have remained women-only.

According to Dame Carol Black (above), principal of Newnham, her institution – founded in 1871 by Trinity College philosopher Henry Sidgwick – has no plans to change its policy on admitting only female students and fellows.

One reason is that, unlike women-only liberal arts colleges in the US such as Wellesley, Smith and Mount Holyoke, Newnham is home to students who are largely educated in the co-educational environment of the wider university. Nor is the college a “nunnery”, from which students' male friends, or male tutors, are barred.

Dame Carol believes that the justification for all-female institutions in the West resides in essence in student demand for them. And while that demand has flagged at some colleges over the years – accelerating the shift towards mixed-sex admissions in the West – several of the most prominent US institutions are riding the crest of a recruitment wave after “rebranding” exercises that saw them talk up the “added value” they can bring to women's education, in terms of boosting their confidence and preparing them for successful careers.

Newnham also runs programmes – open to women across the university – aimed at boosting confidence and encouraging women to “really aspire” and “make the most of themselves” by improving their networking skills and willingness to take risks, she says.

“I am particularly keen that they learn risk-taking and leadership skills. An all-female college gives them that opportunity because they have to chair everything and develop everything we do.”

And although few students choose Newnham specifically because of these programmes – not least because women enter Cambridge as men's academic equals and often aren't aware at that stage that they lack confidence – they find them “one of the most attractive things about us” when they get there, Dame Carol says.

The admissions and finances of Newnham remain stable. Nonetheless, the college is cur-

rently immersed in some soul-searching about how to better project itself.

“We shouldn't be so reticent about saying we are a women-only college,” Dame Carol says. “It is almost as if people felt there was something bad about it – as if women-only colleges were quirks of nature.”

She also feels that all-female colleges could play a greater role in advocating for women's education globally, and perhaps even speak out more generally on women's issues, although she admits this would be “more controversial”.

But one thing women's colleges should not be thought of, Dame Carol argues, is “havens”.

“I don't think most women's colleges would want to be thought of as just somewhere you retreat to from the fray,” she says. “We like to think we are warm and nurturing, but we are not a hiding place. That is something very different.”

**Paul Jump**

says. “Even in India and Bangladesh, there are struggles that happen within families when a young woman finally says that she wants to go off to college. So at an abstract level you might say that society in general has progressed to such a degree that separate institutions might not have meaning, but what we find is that that's not the case. In fact, we were surprised by the degree to which it's not the case.”

When they graduate, however, says Papneja, “every woman who comes out of this place [Lady Shri Ram] is truly prepared to take on the world”. And the fact that all-female institutions in developing nations are thriving, she says, “is because women do feel that it's important that such spaces are protected”.

Renn visited 13 campuses in 10 countries on five continents to conduct research for her book, including Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University. There, she says, she saw women “come to the campus in burkas, take them off and hang them on a peg. They instantly filled the space with colour and sound and confidence, and that's their life for three years, for eight hours a day, in this place where they're free to live and laugh and learn and fill up the space. That's got to change them.”

**M**eanwhile, in Western countries some all-female universities are responding to their enrolment challenges by reaching out to immigrants whose cultures frown on mixing the sexes.

“Women's colleges are starting to tap into communities that have not put their foot in the door yet,” says Colleen Hanycz, the principal of Brescia University College in Ontario, Canada's only all-female institution.

They are also pushing the idea of empowerment, even in cultures where women face much less discrimination, but where research shows they earn less money than men for the same jobs, and are often less likely to be hired. In higher education, as in other sectors, there also remains a yawning gender gap in senior posts. (Just 17 per cent of vice-chancellors in the UK are women.)

“There is still hidden bias based on gender,” says Lynn Pasquerella, the president of Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. Her university is the oldest continuously operated all-female institution in the US and one of the elite so-called Seven Sisters, a group of East Coast liberal arts colleges for women, which in 2003 helped establish an international networking and support organisation called Women's Education Worldwide.

“Here it's not an issue, because every leadership role is held by a woman. There is an expectation that when you leave, you will lead,” Pasquerella adds. Renn argues that women's colleges and universities are “counter-cultural organisations” wherever they are.

But some day all-female institutions in developing countries may begin to work themselves out of a purpose, just as they've begun to do in the West, some suggest.

“It's conjecture,” says Martínez-Alemán. “But if we were to return to this question 50 years from now, would we see the same things happen there?” ●



## Playing in the background

A musical lecture exploring the links between three individuals connected by the Nuremberg trials has its premiere this month, writes Matthew Reisz

**A Song of Good and Evil**

Directed by Nina Brazier

Written by Philippe Sands

Performed by Vanessa Redgrave, Philippe Sands,

Laurent Naouri and Guillaume de Chassy

Purcell Room at the Southbank Centre, London

29-30 November

Five years ago, Philippe Sands, professor of law at University College London, gave a lecture on genocide and crimes against humanity at Lviv University in the Ukraine.

He has worked for a long time in these areas of the law, most recently acting for the government of Croatia against Serbia in its claim that the events in Vukovar in 1991 amounted to genocide. In Lviv, he was



Philippe Sands the personal and the political

welcomed as “the first international law academic to give a lecture there on such issues in 50 years”. But he also had a more personal reason for wanting to go, since the city was home to his maternal grandfather until he was forced to seek refuge in Vienna and then Paris.

Lviv was indeed at the heart of some of the most ferocious upheavals of 20th-century Europe. Since the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, it has been briefly Ukrainian, Polish, German-occupied, Soviet and then Ukrainian again under the names of Lemberg, Lwów and L'vov as well as Lviv. In any event, Sands became fascinated by the city, the inter-war period “when Ukrainians, Poles and Jews lived together in relative harmony” and the way that was torn apart by history.

And then he discovered something else. His own field of humanitarian law had largely been forged by Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) and Hersht Lauterpacht (1897-1960). It was these two men who developed the concepts of “crimes against humanity” and “genocide” – with their linked but distinct stress on individual and group rights – and lobbied to have them adopted in the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals. Both, it turned out, had studied at Lviv University under the same teachers.

All this has led Sands to embark on a series of linked projects that he calls “the Lemberg Quartet”. At its heart is a book, to be published in 2016, interweaving the story of his grandfather and the origins of his branch of international law.

Lawyers are trained, he explains, “to think of the texts rather than the personal agenda behind them...we tend to focus on the product, what emerged at the end of the process. We don't ask ourselves how the individual reached that point” – why, for example, “Lauterpacht came out in favour of the protection of individual rights rather than the protection of groups”. Neither Lauterpacht nor Lemkin, admits Sands, “reflects on what led them to that area of law and would resist any effort to connect what they were doing with what had come before. Two generations on, it's much easier.” His book will therefore attempt something unusual in academic study



of the law: to re-entangle the personal and the political in even the most abstract areas of legal thinking.

So what is the link between this and the performance piece that will see Sands up on stage at the end of this month alongside Vanessa Redgrave, bass-baritone Laurent Naouri and pianist Guillaume de Chassy? The final piece in the jigsaw is yet another lawyer, the leading Nazi Hans Frank, who in 1939 was appointed governor-general of the occupied sector of Poland.

In 1942, as Sands tells it, Frank comes to what was then Lemberg and “personally chooses the music for the concert, starting with Beethoven, which will unleash the Final Solution. That music is being used to create an environment in which people are killed...”

Quite apart from the scale of human suffer-





**In sync** clockwise from top left: Hans Frank in Lemberg, composer Richard Strauss, Frank at the Nuremberg trials

ing at the time, what Frank did in Poland has echoed down the decades until today, since his deputy set up the Waffen-SS Galicia division, the first to admit foreigners as members. The result, as Sands puts it, was to “unleash and solidify Ukrainian nationalism. And that is incredibly relevant today, because it is their activities which motivate Putin when he says the country is full of Nazis and fascists.” Research for a film he is making as another part of his “quartet” has convinced Sands that “there’s an element of truth in what Putin is saying”.

Like many people, he is fascinated and baffled as well as repelled by the evil of people such as Frank. In September, he took part in a discussion organised by the International Association of Conference Interpreters on “The pioneers of simultaneous interpretation”. The Nuremberg trials are widely regarded as

marking the beginning of interpreting as a proper profession and one of the “pioneers”, Siegfried Ramler, was still alive to discuss his experiences. Although he and his family had suffered greatly under the Nazis, he kept stressing the technical challenges of the work, with Sands trying and failing to get him to describe the emotional impact of looking into the eyes of defendants such as Frank and even ventriloquising their words.

**I**n researching the lives and careers of Frank, Lauterpacht and Lemkin from Lemberg to Nuremberg, Sands discovered that they were “all passionate lovers of classical music”. The breakthrough came when he discovered a letter Lauterpacht wrote to his son shortly after the war “about it all being very difficult, learning that the entire family had been murdered, drafting closing arguments [for the

Nuremberg trials] and listening to the strains of [Johann Sebastian Bach’s] *St Matthew Passion*. One gets the sense that that piece of music played a great role in getting him through a difficult time...”

“At the very same time, Hans Frank is telling the US army military psychologist about the incredible stress of his trial and imagining himself listening to the *St Matthew Passion*.”

“I was pretty bowled over by the idea that two men, in the same courtroom, a prosecutor and a defendant, are connected by the same piece of music and seek to draw solace from the very same piece of music. That blew my mind.”

Sands had already delivered lectures on these themes but now decided to “burn a CD of all the music referred to” by his three

**“Even after Frank had been tried and hanged, Strauss described him to a reporter as ‘a nice guy, a music lover, refined, with a great sense of humour’”**

protagonists, send it to his friend Laurent Naouri and ask “if they are linked and coherent in such a way that they could construct a narrative that interweaves the music and elements of the story”. It was this which became the core of *A Song of Good and Evil*.

With the exception of Leonard Cohen, all the music in the show was either referred to or connected with the protagonists or “contemporaneous pieces that Laurent thought they would have known of”. There is also a highly unusual “premiere” of a piece by Richard Strauss.

Germany’s most famous composer at the time, Strauss was close to 70 when Hitler came to power in 1933 and had a distinctly lukewarm war record, occasionally sticking up for Jewish colleagues and friends but still more than willing to collaborate with the regime. Two of the most damning incidents relate to Frank. Even after Frank had been tried and hanged, Strauss described him to a reporter for a US military magazine as “a nice guy, a music lover, refined, with a great sense of humour”. Furthermore, since Frank helped Strauss’ driver avoid service on the eastern front in 1943, the composer wrote a short piece in his honour, set to the most sickeningly sycophantic text (“Who enters the room, so slender so swank?/Behold our friend, our Minister Frank”). This piece, perhaps unsurprisingly, has since disappeared as it is more than embarrassing for the composer’s reputation. But might it, Sands wondered, be possible to reconstruct it?

Naouri put him in touch with Frédéric Chaslin, the composer and Strauss expert, who rapidly set the ghastly words in a pastiche of the style Strauss was using in 1943. It is this that will be performed in Sands’ remarkable dramatised musical lecture, which raises some crucial questions about both the psychology of the law and the ethics of the arts.



# You're going to get what you give

We all rely on the welfare state, and almost all of us get back what we pay in, says Danny Dorling



**Good Times, Bad Times:**  
**The Welfare Myth of Them and Us**  
**By John Hills**  
**Policy Press, 336pp, £12.99**  
**ISBN 9781447320036**  
**Published 12 November 2014**

**P**ainstakingly produced and eminently readable, *Good Times, Bad Times* takes us through the story of today's Britain. It is essential reading for physicists and medics, schoolteachers and school cleaners, pensioners and students of all kinds. Social scientists will love it and learn an enormous amount from it – even those of us who think we are already well informed. This is an academic book for everyone.

Sir John Hills roundly debunks the myth of shirkers and strivers. He follows the money to get at the truth, and the result is every bit

as revealing as an episode of *The Wire*. Almost all of us use the state as insurance almost all the time. Some of us gain more than others, but over the course of our lifetimes it evens out. Almost all of us also contribute to the state, not just through indirect taxes. Most of those not currently paying in have paid in directly earlier or will do so later in their lives.

To tell his story entertainingly, and to keep the key points simple, Hills follows two fictional families, the Osbornes and the Ackroyds, throughout their lives, over three generations. The Osbornes are a well-off family with accountants and teachers among their ranks. As they are part privately educated, you might think they were paying much more in than they were getting out. They certainly think so – but

they aren't. It is not just what they save from continuously benefiting from the NHS' safety net that balances their contributions, but also the hidden benefits, such as receiving both the state pension and healthcare for far longer, as they usually live longer than most people in Britain.

Giving the rich family of this tale the same surname as the current chancellor, and also making them inhabitants of a Cheshire suburb not far from his constituency, is inspired. Indeed, the fictional family's grandchild was nearly christened George after the new monarch-to-be. You cannot read the book and not keep thinking of the real George Osborne, those who vote most enthusiastically for his party, and what they almost all assume.

And yet even this naming is not contrived: the Osbornes of Alderly Edge first appeared as fictional characters in a 1989 *World in Action* TV documentary, *Spongers*, which aimed to uncover whether the middle classes of the time were being ripped off by having to contribute so much for the upkeep of the Ackroyds, residents of social housing in nearby Salford.

Our current chancellor was a week shy of 18 when that documentary appeared, just about to go "up" to Oxford. He had not long changed his name from Gideon and would soon be donning a Bullingdon Club tailcoat, aping Adam Ant. It is doubtful young George watched *Spongers* or its 1991 follow-up, *Beat the Taxman*, which showed that even then the Osbornes fared so much better than the Ackroyds of their day in what they got out of the welfare state.

The welfare state is very frugal when it comes to the poor. Free school meals cost £290 a year for a child, far less than it costs to feed a dog. Hills shows that over their lifetime almost all individuals in the UK draw just under £300,000 from the welfare state, regardless of their income, with only the bottom tenth drawing a fraction more – about £5,000 a year for 65 years. It is not only the costs of more NHS treatment for the affluent elderly that explains this. Subsidised opera also plays a (very small) part.

With the exception of the poorest tenth, almost everyone else gets out of the welfare state what they put in through tax at other points in their lives. The best-off tenth of the population put in about £500,000 each, but they

can do so only because the existence of the welfare state allows them to pay themselves so much, and others less. Wages at the bottom can be so low only because of state support. The next best-off tenth put in less than £400,000 each, and few people stay in these top two deciles for more than a decade or so. When we are children, pensioners and in between jobs we are "scrounging" off ourselves in the years in which we are working "strivers". The poorest tenth fail to contribute as much as they take only because their wages are so very low when they are in work, too low to pay enough direct tax.

Early on, Hills explains that the

**Hills shows that over their lifetime almost all individuals in the UK draw just under £300,000 from the welfare state, regardless of income**

middle fifth of the UK's families feel squeezed because their share of national income fell from 18 per cent in 1979 to 17 per cent in 1997 and down again to 16 per cent by 2011. Their share fell slightly faster each year during New Labour's tenure than under Margaret Thatcher or John Major.

Families in the poorest fifth did worse under Thatcher than under the preceding Labour government, losing a fifth of their national share of income, which dropped from 10 per cent to 8 per cent under her party's rule. All that New Labour managed to do was to prevent this share from falling even further. The share claimed by the top fifth, which grew rapidly under Thatcher, continued to grow under New Labour, but by then only those at the very top of this group saw great gains. The 1 per cent's take of national income doubled under the Tories, and rose again under New Labour by almost as much as the total they took in 1979.

For a growing number, Hills reveals, there is growing precarity; precarity that makes the welfare state more vital. The number of people on zero-hours contracts tripled between 2010 and 2013, to 500,000. By early 2014, 1.4 million employment contracts did not specify a minimum number of hours of paid work. Job growth has been in self-employment. Far fewer people are long-term unemployed in the UK than in the rest of Europe. More



are willing or forced to take any job going, and more of those jobs end more quickly.

Life at the top is not as rosy as it is often painted. Of all those people who were in the top tenth of earners in 1991, less than a quarter were in the richest tenth 15 years later. There are many reasons why three-quarters of people at the top don't last there, although hardly any of them had fallen into the bottom half of the income distribution by 2006. Almost no one at the top later comes to rely solely on the state pension, which Hills calls the least generous in the industrialised world.

Hills describes inequalities in six-year survival rates in Britain for 65-year-olds according to their wealth as akin to the survival rates of people of different social classes on board the *Titanic* in the six hours after it hit the iceberg. It is a reminder, like much in this book, that no social scientist in the UK employs a wider range of statistics, or uses them as effectively, or accompanies them with as much international evidence, as Hills.

If I had one criticism, it would be that the book pulls its punches a little too often. It ends: "we are

all – or nearly all – in it together". Hills shows that almost everyone uses and benefits from the welfare state, but he has very little to say about the tiny group at the top who never touch any state education or most state healthcare, who can afford to pay university tuition fees upfront and who, if out of work, would never claim jobseekers' allowance because it would not be worth their while – their trust fund is more than enough.

Of course the top tenth of the top 1 per cent hardly feature in surveys. Tax avoiders and evaders by definition are not properly described in tax data. Among them are a group that have profited from the dismantling of so many parts of our still substantial welfare state, and who plan to take so much more. I hope that soon Hills will apply his forensic eye to this group of "thieving winners". We are not all in this together. It is time we were.

**Danny Dorling is Halford Mackinder professor of geography, University of Oxford. He is author, most recently, of *All That is Solid: The Great Housing Disaster* and *Inequality and the 1%* (both 2014).**

## THE AUTHOR



Director of the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion and professor of social policy at the London School of Economics, Sir John Hills was born in Luton and now lives in London with his wife, a fellow academic. He was knighted in 2013 for services to social policy development, and recalls that "on the day of the ceremony everyone is terribly nice to you, whatever you are getting".

How did a privately educated University of Cambridge economics undergraduate become interested in inequality?

"My mother trained as a social worker in Nottingham in the

1960s, including work in the St Ann's and Meadows areas, so I always had some idea that Britain had people living in poverty," he says.

"When I switched to economics at the end of my first year at Cambridge, one of the four books that my director of studies, Mervyn King, said I should read was Tony Atkinson's *Unequal Shares: Wealth in Britain*. In some ways, it is remarkable that so few students of economics become interested in inequality – fundamentally, the subject is about who gets what and why, so you would have thought inequality would be more central to the discipline than it often seems to have become."

Hills served on the Pensions Commission, and has carried out reviews for government on fuel poverty, social housing and inequality.

So whose fault is it that the UK is such an unequal society?

"It has become more respectable than perhaps it was a few decades ago for people to think that just because they can be paid many multiples of what others get, that they should be paid that. That growth in differences in annual flows of income is now congealing into differences in family wealth that represent many more years of income and saving than before."

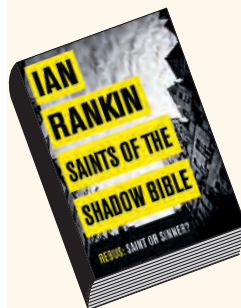
He adds: "As Thomas Piketty has emphasised, this makes it hard to climb the wealth ladder through your own efforts; inheritance and support from parents and grandparents are even more important for people's life chances – but their scale is very unequal."

**Karen Shook**

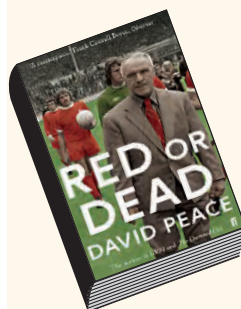
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## WHAT ARE YOU READING?

### A weekly look over the shoulders of our scholar-reviewers



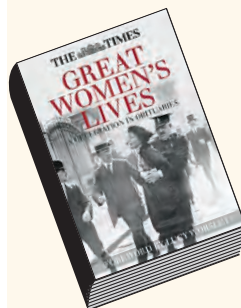
**Megan Crawford**, professor of education and director of Plymouth University's Institute of Education, is reading Ian Rankin's *Saints of the Shadow Bible* (Orion, 2014). "Maybe it's because I have just become head of department, but I particularly enjoyed this book with its plotline of old friendships and discovering where your loyalties lie. Not, of course, that I am expecting to emulate DS Rebus as a role model. Rankin has brought back Rebus very effectively, I think, and I enjoyed every minute of the read."



**Sir David Eastwood**, vice-chancellor, University of Birmingham, is reading David Peace's *Red or Dead* (Faber, 2013). "Good biographies of football managers are rare; novels about them rarer still. Peace here offers us a hybrid: novel as biography. More affectionate than his earlier book *The Damned United*, this improvisation on the life of Bill Shankly is an experiment that largely succeeds. He even finds ways of making team sheets sound lyrical, although the repetition can seem redundant. What lingers is the sadness of success, where a man's identification with club and fans robbed him of the inner life and hinterland that ultimately make contentment possible."



**Mary Ha**, academic administrator, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, is reading Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* (Heron, 1976). "Having watched the films countless times since I was a child, reading the book was not a disappointment. Images of the film versions kept flashing through my mind but it wasn't a distraction. Written quite clearly and with the feel of 'make every scene count', here Christie's Poirot is as much of a tour de force on paper as he has seemed on screen."



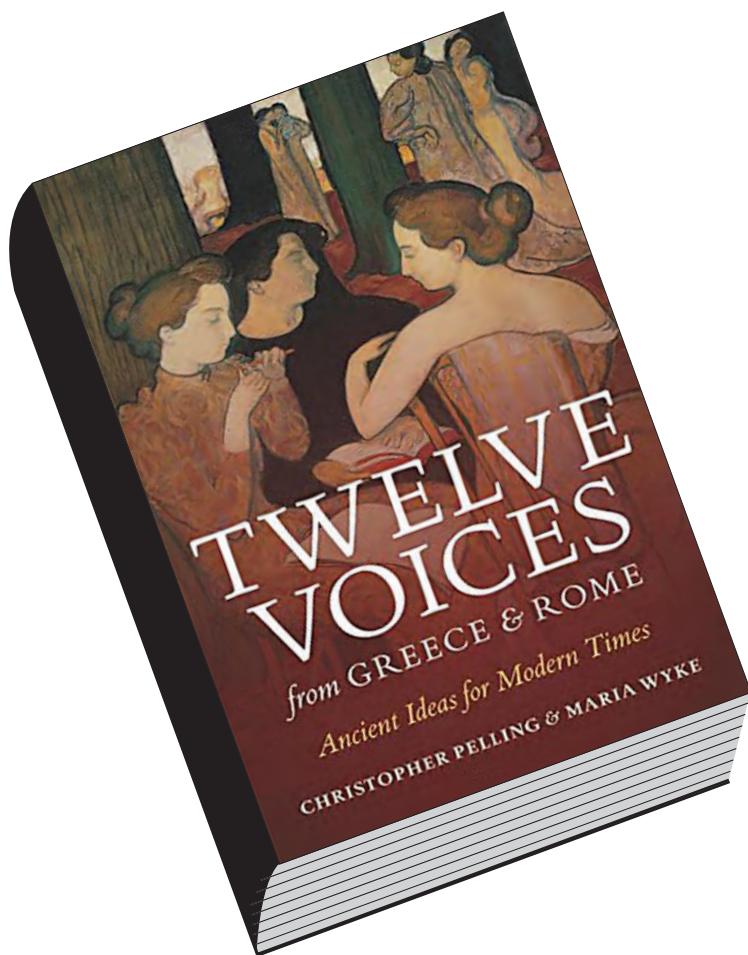
**June Purvis**, professor of women's and gender history, University of Portsmouth, is reading *The Times Great Women's Lives: A Celebration in Obituaries*, edited by Sue Corbett (History Press, 2013). "A wonderful read about courageous women of the past, which tells us much about how a particular form of national biography evolved and changed over time. Apparently, 'good looks' are often important in the greatness of women, at least to obituary writers. And being on the Left politically, struggling for change, helps to achieve greatness. A book to dip into and savour."



**Peter J. Smith**, reader in Renaissance literature, Nottingham Trent University, is reading Graham Joyce's *Simple Goalkeeping Made Spectacular* (Mainstream Publishing, 2009). "Cajoled out of retirement in his early fifties to keep goal for England, Joyce finds himself at the (Writers') World Cup facing Italy. By turns he is autobiographer, pundit and gobshite. The prose is as deft and athletic as the English team is outclassed and knackered. His intemperate raillery is brilliantly facetious: since the 1990s, 'keepers started to appear in shitty psychedelic sweaters that looked like they'd been designed by a depressed LSD casualty funded by an arts council grant'. Withering, hilarious stuff."

# Listen, and let us take you back

Despite a quibble over guides, a personal tour of classical literature delights Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones



**Twelve Voices from Greece and Rome: Ancient Ideas for Modern Times**  
By Christopher Pelling and Maria Wyke  
Oxford University Press, 288pp, £18.99  
ISBN 9780199597369  
Published 30 October 2014

**W**e classicists are party people. And what's a party without games? Our favourite game is "Which surviving ancient author would you dump if you could swap his work for someone else's?" My usual trump card is this: I would willingly obliterate every word of Cicero – that dull, pompous, snobbish proto-Tory – for just one book (out of an original 23) of Ctesias' lost *Persian Things*, a rich compendium of history, fantasy, gossip and travelogue focused on the exotic orient. Surviving ancient testimonies

laud its *enargeia* (vividness) and the *hedonē* (pleasure) derived from reading it. The *Persica* was the world's first page-turner, and it was everything Cicero is not.

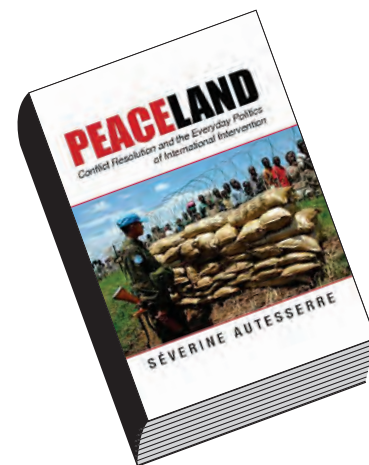
Cicero is one of 12 voices Christopher Pelling and Maria Wyke have chosen to "speak" in this lovely little anthology of writings from the Graeco-Roman past. He wouldn't have made the cut if I'd been in charge, but these choices are personal, aren't they? Pelling and Wyke draw up *their* list of classical greats, opting for Homer (duh! Of course!), Sappho (nice), Herodotus (cool), Thucydides (weighty but worthy), Euripides (something for everyone), Caesar (really?), Cicero (see above), Virgil (of course), Horace (oh, OK), Tacitus (solid, sometimes sexy), Juvenal (lots of in-jokes) and Lucian (comic genius).

Already I hear cries of "Wot!?" No Xenophon, no Sophocles, Plato, Aristophanes, Plutarch? No Greek author after 420 BC? No Suetonius? No Plautus, no Ovid?" I don't envy Pelling and Wyke; theirs was an impossible task – to whittle down to a dozen authors and to explore, succinctly and sharply, their works and their legacy. But this they do supremely well – not surprisingly, as they are two classicists at the top of their game. They also allow us to see these 12 classical greats through more personal eyes; Pelling and Wyke introduce themselves as "the Welsh grammar-school boy on his caravan holiday and the London convent-school girl reading furtively during break", and these personas weave their charms throughout this nostalgic book.

In fact, I got a lot of *hedonē* from this small, polite volume, and (as in real life) I find Pelling and Wyke good company, steering me through the works of (some of) antiquity's foremost figures, reflecting on what impact these authors have had on them personally and on society at large. Herodotus is introduced via perceptive comments on the relationship between the US and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we are reminded of how the Nazis read (or misread) Tacitus' history of Germania. Euripides, that master of emotions, is very well encountered in these short pages, and Homer's deep cultural legacy is introduced to us in the handwritten poem scribbled into a soldier's copy of the *Iliad* dating to the last days of the Second World War.

Within the limitations of a work on this miniature scale, Pelling and Wyke offer an engaging approach to ancient literature. It can be read by those just starting out on an exploration of the past or by those already oh-so-knowledgeable about the literature of classical antiquity. Of course, I'd still like to hear more of the forgotten voices of the past, and I'd like space to be given to the "lost" texts that continue to tantalise scholars: Agrippina's diaries; the memoirs of Olympos, Cleopatra's physician; the *Indian Things* of Ctesias. Oh yes, you see, Ctesias wrote a sequel...

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is senior lecturer in ancient history, University of Edinburgh, and co-editor of Ctesias' *History of Persia: Tales of the Orient* (2010).



**Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention**  
By Séverine Autesserre  
Cambridge University Press  
360pp, £55.00 and £19.99  
ISBN 9781107052109, 7632042  
and 9781139950565 (e-book)  
Published 17 July 2014

**F**rom 2008, eastern Congo came to be known as the rape capital of the world. International projects provided vital medical care to victims of sexual violence, but the focus on the suffering caused by widespread sexual abuse proved counter-productive. It diverted attention (and money) away from other forms of violence, and, tragically, it created incentives for armed groups to use rape as a way to get attention. Although these consequences were unintended, according to Séverine Autesserre they point to how, despite good intentions, peace interventions fail to reach their full potential.

The problem lies with the everyday practices and narratives of the expatriates who make up these missions – the inhabitants of "Peaceland". Interveners' standard responses to the complex realities of conflict environments can render peacebuilding operations ineffective, inefficient and counter-productive – even when peace-builders know that they are.

Recruitment practices favour thematic expertise over knowledge of local context and language. Expatriates, not locals, fill peacebuilding organisations' managerial positions. Foreign peacebuilders are generally based in (provincial) capitals and socialise primarily with other expats; they follow strict security procedures and live in "bunkerized" quarters. Their analyses reflect simple narratives on the causes, consequences and solutions to



violence, and their focus is on short-term solutions and quantifiable results.

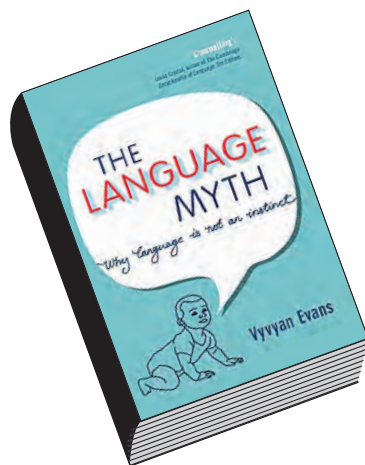
There are benefits to these routines – professionalisation, ability to secure donor funding, safety – but also a downside. These ways of acting and thinking prevent local authorship and ownership, which are widely seen as key to peacebuilding effectiveness. They encourage one-size-fits-all models over a nuanced understanding of what drives local violence. And they foster local resistance to international programmes, in turn reinforcing the practice of overlooking local input.

It's a vicious cycle, and the focus on these dynamics – and suggestions for how to overcome them – makes *Peaceland* a must-read for anyone in the peacebuilding business. It should also make those of us who research and teach courses on conflicts and conflict resolution think about how we do it. Beyond general approaches emphasised in recent decades, the inclusion of area studies and insights from those affected by conflict may be ways forward. Autesserre, no fan of simple narratives, does not advocate abandoning thematic expertise, but she makes the case for a rebalancing.

Herself a long-time inhabitant of *Peaceland*, Autesserre is uniquely suited to uncover the everyday routines she studies. "In my first days as an intervener," she reflects, "I was so concerned about fitting in that I did not stop to question what it was that I was fitting in to." But she goes beyond her own experiences as an insider, drawing on hundreds of interviews and participant observations from a carefully designed ethnographic study. She spent 15 months in the field, primarily in Congo, which she knows well from research undertaken for her first book, *The Trouble with the Congo*, as well as in Burundi, Cyprus, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

Autesserre speaks with authority in a book that is both a harsh critique and a tribute to the individuals and organisations that dare to think differently. It is from these exceptions that she asks that peacebuilders learn.

Kristin M. Bakke is senior lecturer in political science and international relations, University College London.



**The Language Myth:  
Why Language Is Not an Instinct**  
By Vyvyan Evans  
Cambridge University Press  
314pp, £50.00 and £17.99  
ISBN 9781107043961, 9781107043961  
and 9781316121412 (e-book)  
Published 16 October 2014

A linguist whose research focuses on the nature and function of language and mind, Vyvyan Evans specialises in cognitive linguistics. This field has at its core the view that language is not an abstract faculty, but rather develops and is sustained through our daily experiences and interactions and is constrained by our bodies (eg, how we perceive and conceive the world).

In *The Language Myth*, Evans reviews and illustrates these ideas, and in so doing challenges the school of Anglo-American linguistics that argues that language is innate and unique to humans. Such claims, famously made by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s and known worldwide to students of linguistics (and indeed to the general public through popular books), have indoctrinated us into believing that language is a human instinct – the work of nature, not nurture.

There have been countless well-rehearsed arguments put forward to support these "nativist" claims. For example: we don't teach language to our children; it just happens, with ease, because humans are preprogrammed with a Universal Grammar that constrains what we do with language. Or: language is unique to humans; while animals communicate, they lack a sophisticated system like ours, and somewhere along the evolutionary path we separated from our neighbours and acquired this unique language system. For decades this "instinct" account was accepted, but it has

been challenged in recent years, within cognitive linguistics particularly and nowhere better than in this book.

Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, Evans debunks the notion of language instinct, and systematically argues that language emerges from use supported by general mental skills and abilities that, following Michael Tomasello, he terms "species-specific cultural intelligence". He then presents his own "language as use" thesis, and over six chapters dissects statements associated with the instinct approach (such as "language is universal" or "language is modular") and instead offers, drawing on current evidence-based research, a plausible alternative account of the nature and structure of language. He argues that language is achieved by use, children learn it from their environment, animals communicate according to their needs, language is too diverse to be governed by universal principles and so forth.

Evans achieves his intention of offering a reasonably accessible overview of the way language really works. While *The Language Myth* lacks original research, it ably pulls together work from other scholars to build up a convincing explanation of language that contrasts with the instinct approach, which is really a position of faith unsubstantiated by research findings. As a scholar trained in Chomskyan linguistics, at every page turn I tried to come up with a "what about?" question, but in each case Evans offers an explanation and a summary of relevant research to support his stance. His arguments are dealt with clearly and systematically, in an accessible style. In each chapter there are nice examples to support his "language as use" thesis, with study after study diluting the nature claims and furthering those for nurture.

The general reader can read this book from cover to cover and learn a great deal about language that challenges the established traditions. Equally, the more experienced reader will benefit from the alternative perspective it offers, and from the comprehensive reference lists to support the arguments that Evans makes.

Michelle Aldridge is senior lecturer in language and communication, Cardiff University.

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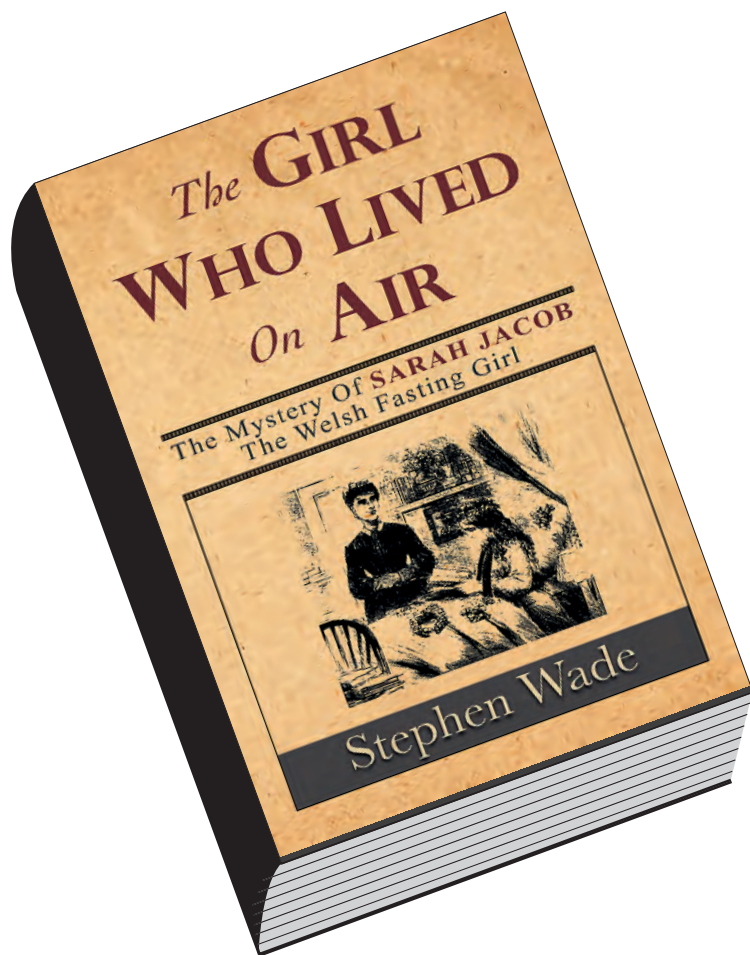


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# Don't we all have a need to feed?

A child's miraculous ability to forgo food raised more than medical questions, Jane Shaw finds



**The Girl Who Lived on Air: The Mystery of Sarah Jacob, the Welsh Fasting Girl**  
By Stephen Wade  
Seren, 180pp, £9.99  
ISBN 9781781720684  
Published 1 September 2014

In February 1867, a 10-year-old Welsh girl named Sarah Jacob became ill in the aftermath of a bout of scarlet fever. She had blood in her mouth, pains in her stomach and muscular spasms or “fits”. She found it hard to eat and by October it was reported that she had stopped eating altogether, refusing all food. But, mysteriously, she appeared rosy-cheeked and “fleshy” as she sat up in bed, reading books in Welsh and English, no longer able to join her siblings in working the family farm.

News of the girl who lived on air, defying the laws of nature, spread around Wales and even England. The new railway lines brought visitors to her bedside. Some left a coin for the family; others – doctors and ministers – attempted to watch over her to see if she was secretly eating or drinking, but their attempts at observation were hampered by her father’s hovering over the proceedings.

Finally, in December 1869, a watch was set up, with 10 local professional men and female nurses from Guy’s Hospital. Everything was examined for traces of food or liquid; Sarah’s bed was set apart; and visitors were limited to her parents who could only take her hand (there being some suspicion that a sister was secretly giving her food and

drink under the guise of lavish affection). On the first day of the watch, 9 December, Sarah was reported to be cheerful, healthy, plump even, with a regular temperature and pulse. She rapidly began to decline. The doctors present urged her father to let them examine her and offer medical care. He refused, saying that he had taken a vow to Sarah two years before not to give her food. She died eight days later, on 17 December.

Many commentators regarded this as the end of an imposture. Did this not prove that she was not a miracle child, but had been smuggled food by her family who wanted to “create a complete show-child”? She had starved to death; but who was responsible? The Treasury brought a criminal prosecution against Sarah’s parents, Evan and Hannah Jacob, who were convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 12 months and six months, respectively, of hard labour in Swansea Prison.

Stephen Wade tells a compelling narrative in his readable book on this case (although better copy-editing on the part of the publisher would have made the read a smoother one, and the addition of endnotes would have been a bonus). He situates the story within the context of mid-19th-century British culture, exploring the tensions between the Welsh and the English, the clash between religious and medical explanations, and the narrow line between pilgrimage and entertainment.

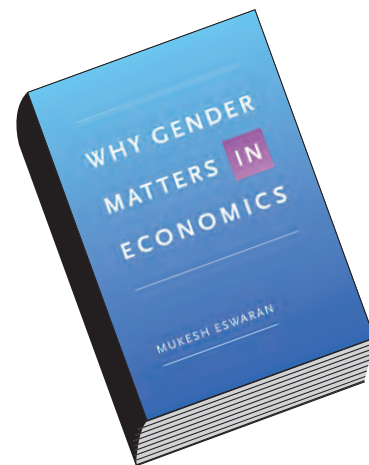
A strength of Wade’s analysis is that he forgoes a simple secularisation thesis and recognises that parallel interpretations co-existed: medical, religious and folkloric.

A glance across the Channel at the exactly contemporaneous development of the shrine at Lourdes would have given additional weight to his hypothesis that Sarah in her bed, surrounded by garlands of flowers and reading pious books, suggested “a deep need for a shrine, for a new nineteenth-century focus for pilgrimage”. And a look at earlier fasting girls – such as Martha Taylor in late 17th-century Derbyshire – would have shown that intellectual tussles about whether these young women were miraculous or medical wonders had been occurring for at least two centuries.

In the end, Sarah’s death, only eight days after she was reported healthy, meant that medical explanations were required. Wade investigates these thoroughly, both in terms of 1860s medicine and in relationship to our greater knowledge of psychological and physiological illnesses with regard to eating. His final interpretation of her own motives perceptively links her understanding of spiritual fasting to what, in just the next decade, would be identified as anorexia nervosa.

Wade begins his book with two recent incidents of parents who were prosecuted for neglecting their children to the extent that their children died. Ian McEwan’s latest novel, *The Children Act*, explores similar themes in the story of a 17-year-old boy who refuses medical treatment on religious grounds. The story of Sarah Jacob is clearly one that still has echoes today.

Jane Shaw is professor of religious studies and dean for religious life at Stanford University. She is author, most recently, of *Octavia, Daughter of God: The Story of a Female Messiah and Her Followers* (2011).



**Why Gender Matters in Economics**  
By Mukesh Eswaran  
Princeton University Press  
408pp, £30.95  
ISBN 9780691121734  
and 9781400852376 (e-book)  
Published 3 September 2014

Love it or hate it, feminism is back. Like the Cold War, just when you thought it was over, it returns – and with a vengeance. Having grown up with the message that men and women are equal, today’s new wave of feminists have reached



adulthood to confront a worrying reality: a society obsessed with women's bodies. With the growth of international connections, we have also become all too familiar with the plight of women in poorer countries. Whether it's the Indian women on what the BBC has termed the "long, dark and dangerous walk to the toilet", the Sudanese mother Meriam Ibrahim sentenced to death for marrying someone of a different faith from that of her father, or Saba Maqsood, a young girl from Pakistan who survived an attempted "honour" killing after

**“One could be forgiven for thinking that equality follows economic development. But Eswaran shows that free market capitalism and economic growth cannot be relied on to resolve the plight of women across the world”**

marrying someone she loved, the stories of mistreatment of women earn regular headlines in the press.

As an economist and a feminist, I regularly find myself pondering the connection between women and the economy. However, turning to the textbooks doesn't provide much help. After all, gender is an issue that has been largely ignored by mainstream economists, whose abstract mathematical models of the world consist of genderless "representative agents". Those who have chosen to look at gender, such as Nobel prize-winner Gary Becker, have done so in a cold and calculating manner that belies the reality of daily life. In such explorations, marriage is, for example, reduced to an economic exchange. Only recently, and in part a response to feminist scholars in the discipline, has gender begun to attract economists' attention.

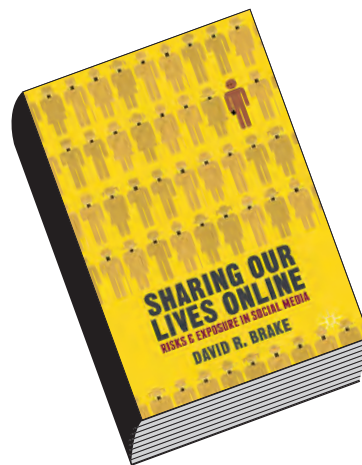
Providing an accessible textbook-style survey of this emerging field, Mukesh Eswaran's *Why Gender Matters in Economics* plugs a gaping hole in the discipline. Drawing on insights not only from feminism but also from evolutionary biology, anthropology, psychology, politics and Marxism,

Eswaran seeks to answer questions of interest to us all. To what extent are women still discriminated against in the West? Does globalisation have different effects on men and women? Why do people marry, and what has been the effect on women's lives inside and outside the household? And how has access to the pill affected women's bargaining power? Among the answers you can find some jaw-dropping facts: 85 per cent of the world's societies have been polygynous; being married has the same effect on our happiness as earning an extra \$100,000 (£62,000) a year; while single women in the rich economies earn 90 per cent or more of single men's salaries, married women earn only 60 to 70 per cent of married men's; if you have daughters, you are more likely to vote for the Left; and, women hold only 10 per cent of seats on boards of directors in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development nations.

Looking ahead, and comparing the lives of women in the developed and the undeveloped world, one could be forgiven for presuming that gender equality simply follows in the footsteps of economic development. If so, economists could rightly ignore gender issues: by focusing on the economy, everything else would sort itself out. However, as Eswaran shows throughout this book, free market capitalism and economic development cannot be relied upon to resolve the plight of women across the world. Furthermore, and as is currently being argued elsewhere by economic historians, economic development will not be successful unless women are placed at the top of the agenda. The richest parts of the world today are those in which the position of women advanced beforehand.

Societies that seek to crack down on women's freedom and return to more "conservative" social orders need to take heed. Feminism and a successful economy are natural bedfellows. If you ignore the former, you turn your back on the latter.

**Victoria Bateman is fellow and college lecturer in economics at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and author of *Markets and Growth in Early Modern Europe* (2012).**



**Sharing our Lives Online: Risks and Exposure in Social Media**  
By David R. Brake  
Palgrave Macmillan  
208pp, £65.00 and £16.99  
ISBN 9780230320291, 0369  
and 9781137312716 (e-book)  
Published 30 September 2014

In an increasingly networked world, it has become the norm to share at least some aspects of our lives online, the ubiquitous use of Facebook being the obvious example. Whether you embrace such practices, resist them or have an ambivalent view of connecting and sharing, the rapid growth and widespread use of social media has made online disclosure so ingrained in our lives that it's easy to share without considering the consequences. The risks of social media use are well documented: familiar fears include mass surveillance, online sexual predators, cyberbullying, employment harm and identity theft. Worry over the perils of social media use has more than a whiff of moral panic about it, and is fodder for attention-grabbing headlines and clickbait. But subtle interpersonal risks have tended to receive less attention – until now.

In *Sharing our Lives Online*, journalism scholar David Brake explores many of the potential harms from self-disclosure on social media. Through a combination of his empirical research on personal bloggers and a theoretical framing of the micro and macro influences on our everyday use of social media platforms, he provides a compelling account of the risks of online communication conducted in an absence of interactional cues, alongside examining the ways in which technologies are constructed to lead us to disclose more than we may think.

Although Brake's main focus is self-disclosure rather than self-presentation, he draws heavily on symbolic interactionism and the

work of sociologist Erving Goffman, which provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the more subtle ways that sharing via social media can lead to interpersonal harm. In his discussion of micro-interactional considerations, he builds on the work of scholars including Joshua Meyrowitz, John Thompson and Joseph Walther, before presenting the macro influences: legal, market, norms and code.

While the early chapters focus on outlining the risks and establishing the theoretical framework for the study, it's in the subsequent discussion of Brake's own fieldwork that things get really interesting. Extracts from his in-depth interviews with personal bloggers offer a fascinating glimpse into blogging practice over time, exploring perceptions of relationships to readers, changes in motivation and circumstance, and practices of self-censorship and archiving that range from editing and deleting posts through to abandoning blogs entirely. These extracts are delicately woven into a rich discussion of the economic, technical and social factors that encourage self-disclosure. Brake's discussion of the temporal aspects of self-presentation through social media is fascinating, as he highlights how the persistence of online disclosure can result in harms when society's attitudes change over time.

The online world is a complicated space, and users are encouraged to be both open and authentic while remaining vigilant to potential harms. There is a delicate balance to be struck, and Brake concludes with a call to embed digital literacy into education at all levels, and makes recommendations for designers of social media platforms that would alert users to potential risks. Unfortunately, companies have a commercial interest in encouraging self-disclosure and frictionless sharing. So Brake's sensible suggestions for system design may fall on deaf ears, at least in the short term.

Although its overall structure and academic signposting points to *Sharing our Lives Online* being a development of a doctoral thesis, it is nevertheless an engaging and illuminating book that will be of interest to those involved in the study and/or design of social media, and more broadly as a digital literacy core text.

**Helen Keegan is senior lecturer in interactive media, University of Salford.**



# THE APPOINTMENTS

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The successful candidate will bring strong academic credibility, intellectual curiosity and sympathy for the values and culture of the University. He/she will be able to demonstrate a wide range of managerial skills and experiences, developed within large and complex organisations, sharing an understanding of and ability to be sensitive to the concerns of students and staff. The successful candidate will discern, clarify and articulate the academic mission and strategy for Durham University over the next 5-10 years and inspire staff to work together to deliver exceptional outcomes in education and research.

For further details, including job description, person specification and information on how to apply, please visit [www.perrettlaver.com/candidates](http://www.perrettlaver.com/candidates) quoting reference 1783. The closing date for applications is midday Friday 28th November 2014.







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1. The Rector is the highest body of University governance and external representation. He/She has a four year mandate that must be served on a full time basis.
2. The application process for the post of Rector of the University of Coimbra is open to professors and researchers of the University of Coimbra and of other national and foreign universities or research institutions, provided that they hold a doctorate and are not yet retired or otherwise made ineligible by the provisions of the law.
3. Applications, in print and digital form, should be submitted by the applicants themselves and addressed to the President of the General Council along with the following documents:
  - a) a cover letter giving the applicant's personal data and contact information, including an email address or fax number for the sole purpose of being notified on matters pertaining to the electoral process;
  - b) a detailed, signed and dated *curriculum vitae* and any other documents deemed relevant to the application;
  - c) a declaration by the applicant stating, on his/her honour, that he/she is not ineligible under the provisions of the law;
  - d) an action programme, written in Portuguese, for the four year mandate.
4. Applications may be submitted by email to [conselho geral@uc.pt](mailto:conselho geral@uc.pt). Only complete applications actually received before 6 PM on 5th January 2015 will be considered.
5. Further information pertaining to the electoral process – specifically the date, time and place of the public hearing for presenting and discussing the action programmes before the General Council and the election date – can be obtained by following the link below:

[http://www.uc.pt/governo/cons\\_geral/eleicao\\_reitor\\_15\\_19](http://www.uc.pt/governo/cons_geral/eleicao_reitor_15_19)

Coimbra, 10th November 2014

The President of the University of Coimbra's General Council

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Source: 1) Adobe SiteCatalyst (Omniure), 9 month average, 2012/13 2) TSL Internal data, Jan to Dec 2012, average exposure



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## Higher Education Statistics Agency

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The closing date for receipt of applications is 11 December 2014. It is planned that interviews will be held in mid-January.

# Minerva



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Ref: 009586

Successful applicants to these two posts will provide research leadership in the field of Accounting and Finance by undertaking and promoting world-class research with significant impact, and will contribute actively to enhancing the research profile and reputation of the Adam Smith Business School. They will contribute to, and offer academic leadership in, teaching and supervision at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, and will contribute, to an appropriate degree, to the administrative functioning of the school.

Applications would be welcomed from suitably qualified individuals working in the Accounting and Finance disciplinary area and in particular from individuals working in Management Accounting, Public Sector Accounting, Banking and core Corporate Finance.

Salary will be within the professorial range and subject to negotiation.

#### Senior Lecturer/Reader and Lecturers in Accounting and Finance Ref: 009585/009584

Successful applicants to these four posts will undertake high-quality research in the field of Accounting and Finance, contribute effectively across a range of teaching and supervision work, and competently discharge administrative duties appropriate to the role. You will provide a degree of research and academic leadership reflective of the level of the appointment.

Applications would be welcomed from suitably qualified individuals working in the Accounting and Finance disciplinary area and in particular from individuals working in Financial Accounting, Audit, Taxation, Management Accounting, Public Sector Accounting, Banking and core Corporate Finance.

#### Senior University Teacher/University Teacher in Accounting and Finance Ref: 009583

Successful applicants to these two posts will have established expertise in the field of Accounting and Finance, and be able to contribute effectively to the provision of quality undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and supervision. They will competently discharge an appropriate range of administrative and managerial duties, and undertake work that advances scholarship in Accounting and Finance.

Applications would be welcomed from suitably qualified individuals working in the Accounting and Finance disciplinary area and in particular from individuals working in Financial Accounting, Audit, and core Corporate Finance.

The salaries offered will be within the following bands:

Senior Lecturer/Reader Grade 9: £48,743 – £54,841

Lecturer Grade 7: £33,242 – £37,394 / Grade 8: £40,847 – £47,328

Senior University Teacher Grade 9: £48,743 – £54,841

University Teacher Grade 7: £33,242 – £37,394 / Grade 8: £40,847 – £47,328

An increased remuneration package, reflecting a market supplement, may be payable for some specialist areas.

Closing date: 14 December 2014.

It is anticipated that interviews will be held in January 2015.

Informal enquiries may be raised with:

- Professor Jim Love, Head of the Adam Smith Business School (email: [Jim.Love@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Jim.Love@glasgow.ac.uk))
- Professor John McKernan, Head of Subject: Accounting and Finance (email: [John.McKernan@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:John.McKernan@glasgow.ac.uk))

Apply online at [www.glasgow.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/jobs)

Further information is also available at [www.gla.ac.uk/schools/business/working](http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/business/working)

All candidates are asked to indicate the post and grade for which they are applying.

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You will have sufficient experience to be able to provide expert advice on student and staff mobility and exchange programmes and agreements, including UK Home Office Visas and Immigration requirements and the implementation of international student recruitment strategies, policies and procedures.

As the post requires detailed planning for international activities and monitoring progress against targets, an ability to prioritise, meet deadlines and achieve targets will be required.

**To discuss the post informally please contact the Executive Dean: Learning, Teaching and International, Dr. Ruth Sayers by email at [ruth.sayers@bishopp.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.sayers@bishopp.ac.uk)**

**The deadline for applications is 26 November 2014.**

**Interviews will take place on 5 December 2014.**

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- To make a strong and growing contribution towards the development of the research and knowledge exchange strategy, policy and its development within the Faculty and University in line with KPIs and objectives.

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- Have evidence of an extensive publication record, including authorship in recognised peer reviewed articles and journals, reports and public events.
- Have evidence of the ability to successfully secure grant income/consultancy.
- Have evidence of creating, maintaining and fulfilling national collaborations, with evidence of an emerging international profile.
- Evidence of some successful PhD supervision and completion.

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**Closing date: 30 November 2014**

**Ref: 1438258**

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## Chair Appointments in Big Data/Data Science

The University of Bristol is seeking to appoint a number of outstanding academic leaders to strengthen and help deliver its data science vision in a number of core strategic areas. This forms a key component of a University-wide initiative that recognises the current and future value of 'big data' analysis, and will build on its established, unique capabilities in data science founded on the three pillars of domains (large and complex data in health, environmental science and security applications), infrastructure, and analytics.

The University has world-leading activities in computational statistics and machine learning as applied to large-scale data sets and data streams, and is home to several cross-university research institutes, each formed to address major scientific and engineering challenges. We also maintain the world-renowned ALSPAC longitudinal data set and conduct broad ranging health research. The University has invested heavily in high-performance computing and data facilities, and is a leader in research data storage and management. We also benefit from a strong relationship with Bristol City Council via the £26M government funded Smart City initiative, which provides a unique opportunity for citizen data science research.

## Chair (Ref: ACAD101134) and Lectureships (Ref: ACAD101135) in Statistical Sciences

Located within the School of Mathematics, one of the leading centres for research and teaching in mathematics in the UK, the Probability and Statistics Group is internationally-recognised with interests spanning a broad range of areas and numerous collaborations with other disciplines. We seek outstanding candidates who have demonstrated, or shown potential for, the highest achievement in any area of mainstream statistics or cognate areas.

## Toshiba Chair in Data Science (Ref: ACAD101133)

The Merchant Venturers School of Engineering has a unique set of capabilities in this field. The School hosts the SPHERE Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration, has prominent research activity in high-performance networks and data centres, while further data science-related infrastructure research focuses on cloud computing, parallel architectures, GPU computing and energy-efficient computing. All these research activities benefit from a multitude of industry links. We seek an individual who will add value to and help coordinate and inspire the substantial community already working in the general field of data science at Bristol.

## Chair in One Health Bioinformatics and Biostatistics (Ref: ACAD101131)

The Schools of Social and Community Medicine and Veterinary Sciences are seeking to appoint an outstanding academic leader to strengthen and help deliver our strategy for 'One-Health' research. Improvement in animal and human health will increasingly be driven by the integration of large bioveterinary/biomedical data sets with next-generation, high throughput technologies such as; genomics, metabolomics and biological imaging. We seek an individual with a proven track record of scholarship in medically or biologically relevant Data Science, but also enthusiasm for linking data sets derived from different domains within the areas of animal and human health and disease.

## Chair in Virology (Ref: ACAD101132)

The School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine is a leading centre of innovative research in virology. In recent years, the School has moved from a virus-centric approach to a more systems-level view of the interaction between virus and host, including the use of high throughput 'Omics' based approaches to infectious disease research. We seek an individual with a strong track record of research excellence in virology and infectious diseases, particularly utilising high throughput 'Omics' based approaches, to extend and enhance the existing research and teaching activity in the School.

**To obtain further information and apply please visit our website at [www.bris.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.bris.ac.uk/jobs), enter the relevant vacancy number into the job search and follow the link to the job details. The closing date for applications is Friday, 12th December 2014.**

The University of Bristol is committed to equality and we value the diversity of our staff and students.



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## LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER IN APPLIED ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT X 2

Ref: 701/T3

The Department of Applied Engineering and Management (AEM) in the Faculty of Engineering and Science is a very exciting place to work. AEM is uniquely focused to deliver degrees and research in Applied Engineering, Business and Management. We offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are widely recognised for their academic quality, innovation and close ties to the industries in which our graduates work. We aim to ensure that we equip our graduates with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace upon graduation and throughout their professional careers. As such, we not only focus on the acquisition of technical knowledge, but also on the vital transferable skills and professional practices.

We are seeking to appoint a number of outstanding candidates as Lecturers or Senior Lecturers with engineering and technology backgrounds that have specialised in economics, accounting, finance and marketing and with a strong understanding of operation of engineering businesses. The successful candidates will take leading roles in the development and delivery of teaching and research within AEM's areas of interest predominantly in engineering business and management. The Department is developing a wider portfolio to include areas of industrial engineering and design, innovation and entrepreneurship as well as supporting our growing number of international partnerships. The posts offered develop and deliver that diversification of the portfolio. These are exciting opportunities to join a small, but dynamic team and to grow new and innovative academic programmes.

We are looking for applicants with experience in the following areas, ideally within an Engineering or Industrial context:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| (1) Economics              | (4) Project Management                     |
| (2) Marketing              | (5) Business Law and Intellectual Property |
| (3) Accounting and Finance | (6) Entrepreneurship                       |

A Doctorate degree combined with a good research track record is required and you will be expected to either continue with an established research topic compatible with the Department's interests or establish a new research area in collaboration with Department/Faculty colleagues. Our research inspires, and feeds directly into, our teaching programmes, ensuring that all of our students benefit from exposure to the latest developments in research.

**Salary Scale: (AC2 – AC3) £31,342- £45,954 per annum**

## READER IN ELECTRICAL, ELECTRONIC AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Ref: 702/T3

The Faculty of Engineering and Science is seeking to appoint an outstanding candidate at Reader level in Electrical, Electronic and/or Computer Engineering (EECE). The successful candidate will take a leading role in the development and delivery of teaching and research in this area. You will be based in the Department of Engineering Science and will support delivery in one or more of the degree programmes in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Computer Engineering and the innovative Engineering for Intelligent Systems.

We are looking especially for applicants with experience in one of the following areas, although all outstanding candidates will be considered:

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) Artificial intelligence | (4) The Internet of Things      |
| (2) Embedded devices        | (5) User-centred design and HCI |
| (3) Communication protocols |                                 |

A Doctorate degree combined with a strong research track record is required for the post of Reader. You will be expected to either continue with an established research topic compatible with the Department's interests or establish a new research area in collaboration with Department/Faculty colleagues. Our research inspires, and feeds directly into, our teaching programmes, ensuring that all of our students benefit from exposure to the latest developments in research.

**Salary Scale: (AC4) £47,328 - £54,841 per annum**

Informal enquiries about these positions can be made to Professor Simeon Keates, Dean of Engineering, Tel: 01634 883016 or e-mail: s.keates@gre.ac.uk

For further particulars on these posts and details of how to make an online application please go to [www2.gre.ac.uk/jobs](http://www2.gre.ac.uk/jobs)

Closing date for both posts: Friday 28 November 2014.

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Post number HR3701

Salary scales are: Lecturer - £37,394 - £42,067 per annum  
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You will become involved in a series of large research projects, funded by government and industry and will have access to some of the best laboratory facilities in Europe. Expertise in your research field should be matched by a strong research record, or proven potential to develop into a researcher of international quality.

Prospective applicants are invited to discuss the post informally with the Head of Research Group, Professor Nick Wright (nick.wright@ncl.ac.uk), 0191-208-8665.

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Ref: D1645A

Closing Date: 4 December 2014

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#### Business School

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You will be expected to teach specialist courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level, with the latter as part of the University's world-leading MSc degrees in Carbon Finance and Carbon Management. The post will also include dissertation supervision, engagement and some administrative duties.

This post is available on an open ended, full time (35 hours per week) basis.

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Organised by the Royal Television Society  
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Booking: Jamie O'Neill ▷ [jamie@rts.org.uk](mailto:jamie@rts.org.uk) ▷ 020 7822 2821

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**For full details:**

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**T: 0117 328 7190 E: [nccpe.enquiries@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:nccpe.enquiries@uwe.ac.uk)**

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement supports universities to engage with the public, and is funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust.



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**DR CHIK COLLINS**

*Reader, UWS School of Media,  
Culture & Society*

**FRANCIS STUART**

*Oxfam Scotland Policy  
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## Boycott broken – shock allegation

Shouts of “scab” and “blackleg” greeted one of our senior academics when he arrived on campus this morning.

According to informed sources, Professor Lapping of our Department of Media and Cultural Studies had reneged on the current University and College Union marking boycott during his Monday afternoon seminar on Cross-Gender Signification in *Mrs. Brown's Boys*. It appears that during the course of this seminar, one of the students in attendance, a Ms Zoe Phelps, referred to the television series as “vulgar and stupid”. At this, Professor Lapping is alleged to have leaped to his feet, punched the air with his fist and shouted, “Spot on, Zoe. That’s a first-class observation”, before returning to his seated position.



This remark, claimed union activist Mr Ted Odgers, was a clear violation of the UCU’s declaration that the boycott on marking should extend to any form of evaluation that might be seen as “contributing to a student’s final degree”.

Mr Odgers further claimed that his view of the inappropriateness of Professor Lapping’s behaviour had been “reinforced” by learning that at the end of the seminar Professor Lapping had approached Ms Phelps and offered her a segment of KitKat. In Mr Odgers’ words, “Although UCU guidelines do not refer explicitly to the conferral of confectionery upon students as an

act of evaluation, it is clear from the context that this particular segment had assessment overtones.”

Mr Odgers confirmed that he was investigating other “evaluation” offences. These included “excessive positive head-nodding” by English don Dr Bentinck during his Tuesday afternoon seminar on *Persuasion* and history don Dr E. P. Timpson’s alleged use of the defeated gladiator thumbs down sign to pass judgement on a student in his French Revolution seminar, who had spoken of Robespierre as “refreshingly decisive”.

Mr Odgers hoped that this clarified the boycott situation.

## No more for me, I’m talking

Our Deputy Head of Women’s Studies, Dr Janet Tomelty, has expressed her concerns about recent research findings from Australia which show that when academics are offered the choice between long or short speaking slots at a forthcoming conference, it is the female academics who are significantly more likely to opt for the shorter slots.

Dr Tomelty told *The Poppletonian* that she had initially been inclined to agree with the researchers’ intimation that these differences might be indicative of female academics wishing to maintain a lower profile than men.

However, after careful consideration she had found this explanation rather less convincing than the traditional and well-documented incapacity of women to make accurate assessments of length.

### Thought for the week

(contributed by Jennifer Doubleday, Head of Personal Development)

**“I am delighted to learn from internal correspondence that Goldsmiths, University of London Counselling Service will be holding a discussion group at midday this Thursday 13 November on Procrastination. Those wishing to attend are asked to ensure that their applications arrive at the Goldsmiths Counselling Service Office in good time for Christmas.”**



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