



# SRHE News

## Issue 9 – July 2012



# SRHE

*Society for Research into Higher Education*

*Advancing knowledge Informing policy Enhancing practice*

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## Editorial

### ***'Open access' publishing: is gold overpriced, is green more sustainable?***

*Rob Cuthbert*



Access to research findings has been a hot topic on both sides of the Atlantic in 2012. It seemed easy to join the debate, since academics and even (in the UK) politicians could take their preferred place on the moral high ground, looking down on the rapaciously profit-motivated publishers. After the Elsevier boycott prompted by Jonathan Gowers (Cambridge), as reported everywhere (including *SRHE News 8* in May 2012), Reed Elsevier withdrew its support for the controversial US Research Works Act, which had threatened to limit access to research findings and had been supported by some major academic publishers.

The US Act was withdrawn and after Elsevier's '[significant flinch](#)' the UK got into the act with a significant Finch. Keele Vice-Chancellor Dame Janet Finch chaired the *Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings*, convened by HE Minister David Willetts to advise on how to maximise access to publicly-funded research findings.

[Paul Jump in Times Higher Education](#) on 7 June 2012 leaked some of the Group's recommendations, in particular that there would be no general guidelines on pricing articles, because, even though the group had identified an average 'cost-neutral' price of £1450 per article, they believed that the costs would vary so much by discipline that an average would be unhelpful. When the [Finch Group report](#) was published on 18 June it recommended a programme of action to support 'a clear policy direction in the UK towards support for open access publishing'. Their preferred solution was the so-called 'gold' system under which 'publishers receive their revenues from authors rather than readers, and so research articles become freely accessible to everyone immediately upon publication'. As Finch said: 'The key policy questions are how to promote that shift in an ordered way which promotes innovation and maximises the benefits while minimising the risks'. The Group claimed to have produced a 'balanced programme' which showed how 'different stakeholder groups can work together', but the debate soon reignited. Stevan Arnad (Montreal) echoed the views of many in [his comments](#) on the *impact of Social Sciences* blog: "[Finch] is strongly biased in favour of the interests of the publishing industry over the interests of UK research. Instead of recommending building on the UK's lead in cost-free Green OA, the committee has recommended spending a great deal of money to pay publishers for "Gold" OA publishing. If the Finch committee were heeded, the UK would lose both its lead in OA and a great deal of public money – and worldwide OA would be set back at least a decade." Paul Jump in *Times Higher Education* on 28 June 2012 said many research-intensive universities feared the gold system would involve crippling costs. Those universities preferred the 'green' approach in which articles become openly available after a period of 12 months or so; they felt that Finch was unduly influenced by publishers who felt the green approach would endanger their business model.

Time to declare an interest: more than 80% of SRHE's income comes from its contracts with publishers, in particular with Routledge/Taylor and Francis, whom we have always found to be very committed to supporting research into higher education, which is not exactly a publishing goldmine. The green approach is close to being achieved in most fields relevant to research into higher education, and institutional repositories are adding to accessibility, with most offering (with

publishers' blessing) access to early versions of work later published in a final form after refereeing. SRHE Director Helen Perkins [wrote to the Times Higher Education](#) on 28 June 2012 pointing out that two 'inconvenient truths' were being ignored in the continuing debate. First was the role and position of the learned societies, and second the marked differences in costs between the sciences and social sciences. The Finch proposals might, said Helen, threaten the viability of social science research and the continuing existence of many learned societies; they meant that the debate was not yet achieving the necessary balance between all the stakeholders.

The other inconvenient truth is that the broader higher education system undervalues the work of peer review and editing on which research integrity and rigour depend. We have a precedent for this kind of problem. As academics' ability and willingness to serve as external examiners gradually declined, so examiners' fees rose, not a great deal, but enough to make the problem manageable. However in publishing the costs are too great and the rewards are too low for market forces to solve the problem: reviewing and refereeing are likely to remain public goods that no-one but some collective authority will pay for – and that no longer means the universities themselves, driven as they are to take an ever narrower and more short-sighted view of what is in their best interests. A better solution would be to make this vital contribution to the academic community count for much more in the Research Excellence Framework.

Even when we all agree on the desirable end, it seems easier to find moral dilemmas than to occupy the moral high ground: we must look beyond Finch for the open access formula that 'maximises benefits and minimizes risks'.

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## Editorial policy

*SRHE News* aims to comment on recent events, publications, and activities in a journalistic but scholarly way, allowing more human interest and unsupported speculation than any self-respecting journal, but never forgetting its academic audience and their concern for the professional niceties. If you would like to suggest topics for inclusion in future issues, to contribute an item, or to volunteer a regular contribution, please contact [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk). We aim to be legal, decent, honest, truthful, opinionated and informed by scholarship. We identify named individuals with their employing institutions. *News* content is written by the editor except where authors are identified or sources are acknowledged. *Comments and suggested additions to editorial policy are welcome.*

## Future editions of SRHE NEWS

Copy deadline for SRHE News Issue 10: **30 September 2012**

Contributions and comments from SRHE members keep News in touch with what is going on in higher education research around the world: please let the editor know of any personal news or contributions you would like to submit for future issues. Just email [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk)

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# Government and Higher Education Policy

## *Policy and Funding in England*

### **The rich get richer even quicker**

The same old Government policy of favouring the richest research-intensive universities was reinforced on 29 March 2012 when HEFCE announced 2012-2013 funding allocations. *Times Higher Education* gave us [a good summary](#) of how the numbers worked out, with student numbers being cut by more than 10% in the worst-hit institutions, headed by East London and Bedfordshire. And of course research income from QR was skewed even further towards the Russell Group, the only 'mission group' to see an increase in its QR allocations. HEFCE chief executive Alan Langlands said he had [got into trouble](#) with Government for saying what everyone knows, that there are contradictions in the Government's HE policy, especially at the HE/FE boundary. And John Gill editorialised in *Times Higher Education* on 12 April 2012 about the '[Charge of the elite brigade](#)'.

### **UCU's evidence-based opposition to policy**

The University and College Union (UCU) has been busy commissioning reports which analyse Government HE policy and find it wanting. A report from the Intergenerational Foundation (ITF), published on 18 May 2012, predicted that the cost of higher student loans could rise above the Office of Budget Responsibility's forecast of £50bn to as much as £100bn over the next 20 years. The ITF projected a rise in annual student loans costs of £5-6bn a year – almost twice the £3bn annual savings achieved through cuts to universities' teaching grants. ITF also said higher student loans would inflate the Consumer Price Index (CPI), adding up to £2.2billion to the social security budget by 2016, and criticised the Government for not realising this would happen.

A second report, *Further Higher? Tertiary education and growth in the UK's new economy*, commissioned by UCU from left-leaning think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) argued that there is a substantial economic return from public investment in A-levels and first degrees. Putting an individual through A-levels and a degree costs £19,000 but generates a return to the exchequer of £47,000 for A-levels and a further £180,000 for the degree, a net gain of £227,000. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt launched the report at UCU's annual congress on 9 June 2012, arguing that HE cuts were damaging the UK's economic recovery.

### **HE in FE and the *Times Educational Supplement***

TES editor Gerard Baker had an attack of the vapours in his 8 June 2012 editorial 'Ministers must stand up to university bullies', going way over the top in purporting to defend HE in FE from supposedly selfish anti-competitive behaviour by universities objecting to low-cost HE in FE. The always readable and sensible Joseph Lee had a more balanced article in the same issue, but even he suffered from the subeditors' headline 'Saving the polytechnic ideal: FE colleges are battling to provide the kind of local, lifelong learning that both the new and old universities have abandoned.' Which, unlike Lee's actual story but like Baker's editorial, abused the universities without bothering to argue the case or even offer any evidence. We could always see Gerard Baker's unease with HE while editing *Times Higher Education*, but we hadn't realised he took it with him to TES.

### **Less funding, more complex funding arrangements**

As a result of the recent invitation to bid for full-time undergraduate places, HEFCE are directly funding an additional 65 further education colleges in 2012-13. The full report and tables are at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2012/12\\_08/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2012/12_08/)

### 1994 minus 4 equals 15

Higher education everywhere, but especially in the UK, is obsessed with hierarchies, so there was much interest when in March 2012 four universities abandoned the British 1994 Group to join the Russell Group. Exeter, Durham, York and Queen Mary, University of London announced that they would all jump ship. The Russell Group had previously resisted boarders, indeed there had been rumblings about whether all Russell Group members really deserved to remain in the UK's most prestigious grouping of (mostly) the larger research-intensive universities. But the newly knighted Sir Steve Smith, VC at Exeter, having delivered as UUK President almost all the Russell Group had asked for, was presumably an irresistible applicant. He said that the Government's new policy of giving universities more freedom to recruit the best-qualified applicants (those with AAB at A-level, or better) had 'changed the debate' and [made the Russell Group a 'more natural fit'](#) for Exeter. The Russell Group now has 24 members; the 1994 Group has 15 after losing the gang of four. Perhaps they should call it the 1990 Group.

## *Policy and Funding in Scotland*

### **Letter from North of the Tweed: a personal view from Vicky Gunn**



(definitely NOT representing my institution!)

As changes to the higher education sector south of the Tweed emerge, so too does the divergence between the English universities and their Scottish (Welsh and Northern Irish) counterparts. In recent months, taxing topics have included:

- a governance review that explicitly links the devolved (not-independent) Scottish government with the Scottish Funding Council (spinning the notion of arm's length bodies into up-close-and-personal ones);
- the potential for funding outcome agreements that embed political ideologies and undermine institutional autonomy. In what can only be seen as an oxymoronic policy statement, it attempts to achieve this whilst arguing for more internal democracy within the management of individual institutions and a wider definition of academic freedom in the law. Some of us fear this will lead to senior management groups looking increasingly like government mandarins, with resultant notions of collegiality being less democratic, less about the emergence of nuanced disciplinary and academic cultures, and more about uniformity (of course, this makes me sound like a grumpy, middle-aged academic. But I am a grumpy, middle-aged academic, so that's ok);
- alignments between various institutional types (egg Research-intensive Russell Groupers; research-intensive Robbins' clusters; less research-intensive post-moderns-post-1992ers) and their southern equivalents, leading to more inter-Vice-Principal activities and a fair bit of cross-border lobbying;
- engagement with key information sets (KIS), particularly viewed in Strathclyde as having all the finesse of a 'Glasgow Kiss' (a head-butt) and none of the impact;
- concerns about what fees for the Rest of the UK student body mean in terms of translation into the student experience in the Scottish context (in case you wonder, we already have quite robust student engagement mechanisms relatively and student charters are not consequently currently on the agenda, but will extraneous forces seep up the UK's north-south motorways - M1 & M6 - and lead us into such things?);
- enthusiastic conversations about how we demonstrate the efficacy (and fun) of an enhancement approach to quality in learning, teaching and assessment.

I want to focus on this last one, because it encapsulates a dynamism of spirit within the Scottish sector which is worth shouting about. QAA Scotland oversees a process of enhancement themes which enable quality audit to be achieved through improving learning, teaching, and assessment. The agency facilitates a steering committee of representatives from all of Scotland's HEIs as well as a range of development and dissemination events that pull participants from different institutions into the same room. Over the last academic session, lively discussions about what curriculum in higher education in Scotland means and how innovative forms of curriculum can be supported were illustrative of the sector's approach to this year's enhancement theme: *Developing and Supporting the Curriculum*. This follows an equally engaging two years in which we focused on Graduate Attributes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Whilst the structure of the enhancement themes allows for the emergence of institutionally defined approaches, the themes themselves act like a spider's web, pulling together the disparate initiatives into a gossamer pattern of coherence. I have come to look forward to the steering committee meetings for the enhancement theme because, as each institution makes representations from their unique environment, the way to facilitate educational development is debated through explicit case studies of activity. These in turn, value a university's mission difference at the same time as ameliorating the tendency to avoid dialogue that this can engender. In this, the enhancement themes become a counter-cultural force to the competition impetus within higher education, whilst simultaneously maintaining that arch example of compliance, the quality agenda. The inherent irony of this is sweet.

**Postscript:** Should you want to read the variety of enhancement themes' case studies and other outputs, they can be found at: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

*SRHE member Dr Vicky Gunn is Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre at the University of Glasgow*

## ***Policy and Funding in the USA***

### **Michigan offers more HE funding but with dangerous strings attached**

After some years of severe budget cuts the state of Michigan is likely to increase HE funding in 2012-2013, but has tied some remarkable, even outrageous, conditions to the extra funds, [as the Chronicle reported](#) on 6 June 2012. There were conditions affecting stem cell research and universities' treatment of students' religious beliefs, but perhaps worst of all was the requirement for universities to have no dealings with organisations which have protested against exploitation of workers at a particular restaurant. Things are rather less directive in Massachusetts, where the University of Massachusetts has [decided to raise tuition fees](#) despite the opposition of the Governor.

### **Let them eat cake 2**

The Iowa Board of Regents have voted to eliminate student aid funded from tuition fees within five years, according to [a report from Associated Press](#) on 6 June 2012. In 2011-2012 Iowa universities used about 21% of tuition fee revenue, about \$144million, to support students in need. The Regents expected greater state funding to fill part of the gap, but it was unclear whether such an increase in funding would win political support.

## Private and For-Profit Higher Education

The [College of Law has been sold](#), university title and all. Montagu Private Equity bought the College for a reported £200million, a move David Willetts described as ‘an excellent outcome’. As Gill Evans pointed out in SRHE News 8 (May 2012), there are considerable uncertainties surrounding the security and longevity of the degree-awarding powers of the College and other private providers. But now that we know the market price for a university title, look out for troubled or misguided universities trying to fill a funding gap by selling or mortgaging university title, their most precious possession, probably in return for a mess of pottage.

## Leadership, Governance and Management

Just what we’ve all been waiting for – a new model for universities, invented by a committee of politicians supported by management consultants. That should work perfectly, then. The initial results were [reported by the Chronicle](#) on 16 May. The University of North Texas – Dallas wants to be a trailblazer and Bain and Co are helping them. It all sounds rather like a traditional old university model to us, but maybe it would count as ‘modernisation’ to some politicians and management consultants.

There was a nice analysis of *Managing Modernity: Beyond Bureaucracy?*, an edited collection by Stewart Clegg et al, in the [LSE’s British Policy and Politics blog](#) on 29 April 2012. The book is a fine example of what sceptical reviewer Patrick Donleavy (LSE) called ‘beyondist’ social science, with all its attractions and limitations. Donleavy argues that bureaucracy is not at all as rigid and unable to evolve as Clegg et al tend to think.

### Are vice-chancellors worth their salaries?

That was the question [Nick Petford \(Northampton\) asked](#) in *Guardian Professional’s Higher Education Network* on 31 May 2012. He is a VC, but managed to avoid answering with a resounding yes, by plotting student satisfaction against VC salary. We think he would have got more interesting results if he’d used staff satisfaction instead, but in any case there are plenty of opportunities to test the market right now. Just as both UCL **and** Imperial advertise for new ‘chief executives’, two [top jobs in California](#) have also opened up, also through retirement – Chancellors for the California State University system and for the California Community Colleges, which between them account for 15% of all US enrolments. And [Times Higher Education reported on 13 April 2012](#) that former HE Minister Bill Rammell, who became Deputy VC at Plymouth after losing his marginal Harlow seat in the 2010 general election, would take over as VC at Bedfordshire from Les Ebdon, who is the new head of the Office for Fair Access.

### John Craven Newsround

Portsmouth VC John Craven explained in *Times Higher Education* on 7 June 2012 how much he was looking forward to doing a Masters in philosophy after his retirement in 2013. We think it would help if VCs did more philosophical reflection while they’re still VCs.

### Going? - more trouble at Florida A&M

After the death of a marching band member in a hazing incident in Autumn 2011 the Florida A&M Trustees reprimanded university president James H Ammons, and now they’ve voted no confidence

in him (by the same 8-4 margin), but he says he won't step down. [AP reported](#) the latest developments on 7 June 2012, quoting the staff member on the board as saying the university was 'caught in a wilderness of errors'.

### **Going? - losing their Powers?**

There was speculation that University of Texas President William C Powers Jnr might be fired for expressing his disappointment that his Board of Regents voted to freeze tuition fees for two years, after he had proposed a 2.6% rise to compensate for state budget cuts. The regents are appointed by Governor Rick Perry, who favoured the freeze. The usual positions were being taken on both sides in response to the [Chronicle story](#) on 11 May 2012.

### **Gone - California University of Pennsylvania fires its President**

Angelo Armenti Jnr was fired by the University's Board the day before it released a report critical of various financial transactions including the funding of a \$58million Convocation Centre, as the [Chronicle reported](#) on 17 May 2012.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### ***Teaching and learning***

Bahram Bekhradnia once again ruffled feathers everywhere, in [The Academic Experience of Students at English Universities](#), HEPI Report No 57, repeating the HEPI surveys of 2006, 2007 and 2009. Each survey report has posed uncomfortable questions about variability in contact time and overall student workload between universities offering ostensibly very similar degrees. The 2012 survey once again revealed great variations between universities and the Report pointed out that there had been no significant changes even though fees were about to increase to £9000, and even though students say that the main thing they would like to see in return for higher fees is more contact time – up to a point. Nearly 45 per cent of students with fewer than eight contact hours per week were dissatisfied, but dissatisfaction reduces steadily in line with increasing amounts of contact, up to 25 hours a week, at which point students start to complain about overload. The weighted mean contact was 13.9 hours a week, varying significantly not only between subjects, but also between institutions within subjects. The crunch question posed by Bahram: "How is it possible in one University or in one subject to obtain a degree with so much less effort than is required in another University or subject? And what does it say about what it means to possess a degree from an English university if this is so?" Answers (good enough to persuade students) on a postcard please, or else HEPI will still be asking the question next year.

UCU was quick to spin this to their advantage; their 17 May 2012 media release said: "... the increase in fees is simply filling the hole left by the huge funding cuts the government has made to higher education and ... universities simply cannot deliver more for less, despite the perception that extra money is coming into the sector." Given that most analysts think that if enrolments hold up there will indeed be more money coming into the sector (albeit in a very unbalanced way), this was a rather less evidence-based statement than their pronouncements on the research reports they commissioned around the same time.

### **Hail Fellow, especially at Exeter**

The HE Academy has given [Fellowships to 80 Exeter staff](#) who qualified for the award either through the PG Cert in Academic Practice or through the university's Accrediting Staff Development in Research-led Education (ASPIRE) programme.

## Evaluating *'Evaluating Teaching and Learning'* by Lesley Moore

Kember, D & Ginns, P (2012) *Evaluating Teaching and Learning*. Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.



This book and the companion online item bank with Routledge are very practical and a rich resource of tried and tested evaluation questionnaires that focus on various aspects of traditional teaching and learning. The authors state at the outset that the book aims to suit two audiences; namely staff concerned about organising evaluation in educational settings, and those conducting research on teaching and learning.

The text has been compiled by two academics who work in Hong Kong and Australian Universities and they draw heavily on their own practices, projects and contexts. There is a bias towards qualitative methods, but in Chapter 10 there is an acknowledgement that experimental methods have a place but researchers need to be aware of the many pitfalls for education projects. A compilation of advanced statistical methods for teaching evaluation data can be found in the appendix. For more in depth knowledge of such methods it is advisable for readers who are novices to evaluation methods to refer to reputable research methods literature.

The questionnaires have been designed and tested by past researchers and the growing community of scholars of teaching and learning. Chapter 4 gives advice on how to use the Items Bank and encourages the reader to adapt the focus of the items according to their need. Whilst evaluation of teaching and learning is important this book does not draw on reputable evaluation frameworks which could enable researchers to capture the mechanisms and changing contexts of the evolving learning spaces and activities to which today's students are exposed. Experiential learning, especially negotiated, action and work-based learning, are poorly addressed. Experiential learning relates closely to outcome driven curricula and this book does focus heavily on content and undergraduate taught programmes. The authors do acknowledge that using the same questions for undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts is not good practice. The strength of the book is the fact that the questionnaires have been tried and tested. In adapting these researchers will need to be mindful of the context and the mechanisms that may influence or not the students' learning.

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If you've seen a book you think SRHE members should know about, let us know: email [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk) and we can probably get you a review copy.

## Assessment

The Higher Education Academy published a [Handbook for External Examining](#) in April 2012, intended to help institutions avoid reinventing some very familiar wheels: "It is designed for use by all external examiners and be (*sic*) of particular interest to new external examiners or those examiners who need to be more familiar with academic institutions and their practices. For more experienced examiners the intention is that the handbook will be used as a reference source." We think this might be even more widely read than all those QAA thematic reviews which everyone awaits so avidly (sarcasm not applicable in Scotland).

It made us wonder if News should have a section for 'examiners wanted'. We might be able to run a kind of clearing house for people seeking examiners, referees, reviewers, and people who'd like to take on those roles. Tell us what you think: email [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk).

## **Students**

**Rob Gresham** and **Camille B. Kandiko** report that SRHE's *Postgraduate Issues* and *Student Experience* networks combined to stage a seminar which drew more than 40 participants to discuss 'The internationalisation and marketisation of the undergraduate and postgraduate student experience', at the SRHE offices on 15 June 2012.



**Photo** (Left to right) **David Forrest**, University of Sheffield, **Richard Race** University of Roehampton, **Camille B. Kandiko** King's College, London, **Gemma Thorpe**, Freelance photographer (Sheffield) , **Paulo Charles Pimentel Bótas**, University of Bath, **Lisha Liu**, Institute of Education (Univ of London)

This vibrant event, co-hosted by Richard Race and Camille B. Kandiko, covered a fast-changing area of higher education from a range of speakers and perspectives. The opening presentation from Christine Humfrey (Independent Consultant; Nottingham), '**All our students can be international now**', considered the evolution and future of internationalisation, and the place of marketisation on this journey.

Richard Race (Roehampton) explored '**Internationalisation and Marketisation of Postgraduate Delivery**' through two case studies.

Paulo Charles Pimentel Bótas, (Bath) asked '**Are we using the cash cows for easy money or are we herding, training and educating them? Implications for policy and practice in the teaching and learning process**', outlining some key institutional challenges, and an article from this presentation recently appeared in [University World News](#)

Lisha Liu (Institute of Education, University of London) gave a doctoral student's perspective based on her research and experience and the event concluded with an audio/visual presentation on the international student experience, by David Forrest (Sheffield) and Gemma Thorpe, freelance photographer. The full presentations from this event are [available on the SRHE website](#).

Discussions included changing dynamics of internationalisation; how internationalisation can, and should, involve the whole institution, including home students; the challenges of international partnerships; students' and academics' perspectives on internationalisation in teaching and learning;

the increasing diversity of international and home students; and how international students approach postgraduate programmes and the associated workload, particularly in light of what is offered, or marketed, to them. Questions were raised about the future of internationalisation in an environment of increased fees for all students, including issues of incoming qualifications, degree prestige and employability. Further points were made about the role of the co-curriculum, student support services, and accommodation for international students and institutional internationalisation. A major point was the need for integration of international students in the entire student experience, from the strategic institutional perspective, academics' classroom notions, and from both home and international students.

The seminar theme was closely related to a recent project by SRHE members Senthila Quirke and Mun'delanji Catherine Mthangeyi Vestergaard, reported below.

### **Closing doors or opening opportunities? *Senthi Quirke & Mun'de Vestergaard***

*Senthila Quirke*



After the popular Tier 1 Post-Study Work Visa was closed from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012, by the UK Border Agency, social networking sites like Facebook were overwhelmed with soon-to-be graduates voicing their concerns. Two major issues are their lack of skills and work experience as they leave the UK and their employability factor abroad. It is important now to study the views of *pre-Tier 1-closure* foreign alumni, employed abroad, about their UK HE experience and the skills they have acquired.

*Mun'delanji Catherine  
Mthangeyi Vestergaard*



These alumni are connected to their contemporaries and potential university applicants via Facebook. Their comments and advice to future applicants act as a marketing tool, generally unseen by universities. Facebook was the medium for our short study, focusing on STEM graduates, which revealed that 75% of the participants were employed in a country that was not their home country. All the participants valued their UK university qualification and were aware that it gave them 'competitive advantage' in terms of jobs, although not necessarily in terms of salary. Half of the participants stated that the academic knowledge gained from the UK qualification was applicable to their job, and 75% thought that it was the overall skills and attributes they acquired in the UK - 'communication, multicultural experience and confidence' - that paved the way for their progression, a view which they felt their employer also shared. Most participants stated that social networking played a significant role in initiating contacts with potential employers as well as rendering an 'almost impromptu mentoring' from their peers via social networking prior to interviews.

We wonder whether this process can be extended and widened by UK universities to manage social networking links with employed foreign alumni. If Facebook can shape student choices, then this could enhance the marketing of UK universities to prospective foreign students who may no longer be tempted by the post-study work opportunities in the UK. This short study attempted to highlight some opportunities for UK HEIs to tailor marketing and mentoring strategies that appeal to foreign applicants at a time of change. To succeed in producing globally employable graduates, the transferable skills training in HEIs must take into account the expectations of employers in countries where the majority of foreign students gain employment.

One Asian country, which is strengthening its graduate employability with a global outlook, is Japan. Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST) is a postgraduate-only institution that has the highest percentage of international students in Japan, counting the foreign dual-degree partnerships. Piloting and pioneering changes in graduate education culture, JAIST has a two-track system where students can opt to follow a curriculum that takes them towards employment either in industry or academia. PhD students targeting industry are given industrial placements during their study, while those aiming for academic careers can have an internship in a laboratory abroad. JAIST also provides courses at a satellite in Tokyo to allow participation of students currently in industries, enabling JAIST to maintain close contact and increase collaboration with industry, government, and academic institutions.

*SHRE member Dr. Senthila Quirke is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is appointed as Postgraduate Tutor at Brunel University and co-ordinates the Researcher Development Programme at Brunel Graduate School. SRHE member, Dr. Mun'delanji Catherine Mthangeyi Vestergaard is a Research Associate Professor at the Center for Graduate Education Initiative & School of Materials Science (Adjunct) at Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology. She is also a Visiting Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Engineering at Osaka University.*

## Research

### **Keep calm and carry on having an impact (or not)**

Mark Golberg (Nottingham) thinks that institutions and maybe academics might be overreacting to the impact of 'impact' in the REF, as he [said on the \*Impact of Social Sciences\* blog](#) on 15 May 2012.

### **New National Centre for Universities and Business**

Following the Government-commissioned report by former Hertfordshire VC Sir Tim Wilson, the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) on 26 June 2012 announced plans to implement one of Wilson's recommendations by launching a new National Centre for Universities and Business. This will 'focus on strengthening the strategic partnership between universities and business with a view to driving economic growth and recovery'. HEFCE will initially fund the centre, with support from other national funding bodies. Good to see industry paying its share as usual.

## ***Research into higher education***

### **When did research into higher education begin?**

Not in 1963, as Philip Larkin (Hull) might have said, maybe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though Greeks may beg to differ. In any case, [here's a new online source](#) for original material which may have the odd nugget (or should that be needle in a haystack) for those who know where to look.

### ***Higher Education Research and Development***

A cracking issue of HERDSA's journal in May/June 2012 (31:3) was devoted to theory-method relations in HE research, kicked off by SRHE Fellow Paul Trowler in his usual fine form on one of his favourite topics, 'wicked issues'. Another SRHE Fellow, Kerri-Lee Krause, wrote about quality as a wicked issue – which is no doubt very close to her everyday experience now that she's a Pro-Vice Chancellor at Western Sydney. And there was much more good stuff from yet more SRHE fellows Louise Morley and Sue Clegg in the same issue – all in all a rattling good read. Co-edited by SRHE Council member Paul Ashwin, so we shouldn't be surprised.

## Subjects and disciplines, tribes and territories

### Socio-economic and Humanities Research for Policy

Is [this](#) the most boring presentation of social research you can find? We subscribe to their *News Alert* and there's never anything remotely interesting in it. Then again, it is all EU 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Framework funded research. And of course, acceptable presentations of new research can be difficult to craft, as [the spat](#) between author and journalist Jonah Lehrer and Christopher Chabris (Union College) about [Lehrer's book](#) on creativity showed.

### Shortening the US Humanities PhD

Last year's Modern Languages Association President Russell Berman (Stanford) argued for shortening PhD programmes to enable them to survive, and now he's produced proposals to do just that, as [Inside Higher Education reported](#) on 16 May 2012. But it may come as a surprise to some other disciplines and some other countries that the 'radical new PhD' will still take 4-5 years.

## Quality, Standards, Performance, Evaluation

### *Quality assurance*

Here's a quiz.

1. What's the difference between Institutional Review (IR), Integrated Quality Enhancement and Review (IQER), Review for Educational Oversight (REO), and the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO)?
2. Can you tell from the way QAA reports the results?  
Following the QAA's development of its new approaches, the modal judgment for IR is now thrillingly expressed as 'meets UK expectations'. Wow. Meanwhile the subtle differences between IQER, REO and RSEO are reflected in nuances likely to be completely wasted on their intended audience. IQER leads mostly to judgments of 'confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities' for learning opportunities and standards. REO on the other hand leads to judgments of 'confidence in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities' for learning opportunities and standards. And RSEO uses the same expression about 'how the provider manages' but in this case it applies to 'its awarding bodies' and not to its own awards. Obviously. You knew that already. But:
3. Will anyone other than a QA bureaucrat understand the differences?

For anyone working in HE we recommend our own golden rule: never completely trust anyone who has 'quality' in their job title, since they are unlikely to have anything directly to do with quality, that is to say, they probably don't actually teach or do research. This rule also works outside HE.

### *Performance evaluation*

#### Measuring productivity and quality in HE is really difficult

And now we have a [192-page report](#) saying all the things we already knew, from a National Research Council task force funded by the Lumina Foundation.

#### How to evaluate academic staff performance

Here's [one version](#), by a newish head of department who does written evaluations of staff every year. We think if you must have this kind of process, you need somehow to stop it taking up huge

amounts of time on evaluating people whose performance is excellent. And for the others, there should be no surprises when it comes to the formal evaluation – any issues should have been surfaced with immediate and informal feedback when a problem arose. If they're put off until the end of the year it's hardly surprising if the process becomes problematic.

## ***League tables***

The House of Lords was sadly unimpressed by Europe's new universities ranking system. The Lords report *The Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe*, published on 22 March 2012, said that the European Commission's U-Multirank initiative had attracted widespread criticism and it was unclear whether it was intended as a ranking or a transparency tool, as [Jack Grove reported](#) in *Times Higher Education* on 22 March 2012. Of course U-Multirank is deliberately designed to prevent the *reductio ad absurdum* much sought after by league table readers, a feature perhaps not fully appreciated by noble Lords. For those who prefer meaningful and meaningless statistics all mixed up to produce one overall number, the [Guardian Universities League Table 2013](#) was published on 21 May 2012. And [Mail Online reported](#) on 24 April on the 'Complete University Guide' (a new one on us, or perhaps just a new name for an old product).

Phil Baty of *Times Higher Education* wrote a mostly self-congratulatory [piece in Inside Higher Education](#) on 31 May 2012 echoing his THE contributions about the THE global rankings, in the course of which he also said that governments misused global rankings by treating overall league position in an 'ill-advised' way, even though such use was a flattering and 'welcome endorsement of the rigour' of the rankings. And next week, flattered global arms manufacturers say that governments using their profitable products to kill people are ill-advised, but such use is a welcome endorsement of the deadliness of the weapons themselves.

Global network Universitas 21 came up with a good ruse to get noticed in May 2012, when they launched their ranking of countries in terms of how good they are at delivering higher education. The UK was in the top 10, but only just, as [Geoff Maslen reported](#) in *University World News* on 11 May 2012.

## **Staff**

### **Revenge of the underpaid professors**

Regular *Chronicle* contributor [Kevin Carey speculated](#) on 25 May 2012 that we might be about to see a massive change in the balance of power in HE, through a digital revolution creating platforms for new teaching organisations, empowering and rewarding good teachers properly rather than consigning them to years of tenuous employment as adjuncts. He did find a couple of people in California who are trying to make it happen. We checked it wasn't written on 1 April.

### **Jobs at the London Institute of Education**

The IoE advertised up to 32 new posts at professorial and other levels in May 2012, but the many areas in which the Institute was 'particularly keen to recruit academics' did not, alas, seem to include higher education.

### **Professionalising FE staff**

A review panel chaired by Lord Lingfield issued an [interim report](#) into the regulation and facilitation of professionalisation of the FE and skills workforce in England. Its recommendations included

replacing the 2007 FE teachers' regulations by largely discretionary advice to employers on appropriate qualifications for staff and continuous professional development. The report suggested simplifying and renaming FE teachers qualifications, said OfSTED should report on the professional competence of college teaching staff, and proposed that 'an appropriate government body' should become responsible for keeping a register of staff found guilty of gross misconduct. Government grant funding to the Institute for Learning should continue to be phased out. The example of the Higher Education Academy was said to show that persuading lecturers and employers to gain teacher training qualifications in order to enhance standards is more effective than compelling staff to do so through state regulation. A final report, which will consider professionalism more widely, is due in the summer.

### **Shorter gets smaller and smaller-minded**

Baptist-controlled Shorter University in Rome, Georgia issued a 'lifestyle statement' demand to all its staff, requiring them to sign up to a rejection of 'homosexuality, adultery, premarital sex, drug use and drinking in public' near the campus, and to be active members of a church. 50 staff refused to sign and resigned instead. Long-serving gay librarian Michael Wilson did not at first resign but he did cross out the relevant sentence in his new contract, which presumably is tantamount to resignation. [His story](#) featured in *Inside Higher Education* on 14 May 2012.

### **The sun ain't gonna shine any more**

Not for faculty unions in Wisconsin, anyway, after they failed in their attempt to unseat Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (no, not [that one](#)), as the *Chronicle* reported on 5 June 2012. Governor Walker, elected in 2010, was forced into a recall election partly because labour interests objected to the [limits on public employees' bargaining rights](#) which were enacted in 2011. In the recall election Walker defeated Democrat Tom Barrett, the mayor of Milwaukee. The state's faculty unions had [played a major role](#) in the recall campaign.

## **Ethics and Academic Freedom**

### **The paradox of conflict aversion**

The paradox is that by avoiding conflict you simply drive it underground, distort it and make things worse, [according to Scott Jaschik](#) in *Inside Higher Education* on 21 May 2012. He develops this broader argument from a reading of the [shenanigans at Bergen Community College](#) in New Jersey, where a Professor Helff, president of the faculty union, was found guilty of getting his failing granddaughter's grades changed to keep her in the college.

## **Plagiarism**

### **Plagiarism conference**

The Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe) held its [Sixth Plagiarism event](#), in conjunction with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), at Oxford Brookes on 14 June 2012. Hope they didn't just copy the previous year's programme.

### **Plagiarism or poor scholarship?**

Or maybe both, in Terence W Deacon's (UC Berkeley) new book *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged From Matter*. Tom Bartlett told [the story](#) in the *Chronicle* on 17 May 2012.

### **Another German politician in doctorate difficulty**

After the high-profile case of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (SRHE News 6), the defence minister forced to resign after allegations of a plagiarised doctorate, the minister for education and research, Annette Schavan, is in trouble for alleged sloppy or non-existent referencing and text-lifting in her 32-year old dissertation, as [Brian Bloch \(Munster\) explained](#) in *Times Higher Education* on 7 June 2012.

### **More political plagiarism? Romanians copy Germans and Hungarians**

After Romanian Education Minister Ioan Mang was accused of plagiarism the new Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta requested an investigation by the Romanian Academy and said that if the accusations were borne out the Minister would be sacked. This followed earlier political resignations after plagiarism accusations in Germany and Hungary, and - most embarrassingly for the Romanian Prime Minister – after his first nominee for education minister was forced to withdraw after she too was accused of plagiarism. AFP had the report, carried [in AsiaOne](#) on 11 May 2012.

## ***Academic freedom***

Sissy Bradford was an adjunct (part-time teacher) at Texas A&M with excellent feedback on her teaching, who was told she would be teaching four courses in Fall 2012. But then she was told she wouldn't be teaching at all, and some people think it was because she complained about lack of support from the university, after she was threatened by people who didn't like her successful complaints about the plans to put crosses on a prominent new university building. The American Association for University Professors and the Foundation for Independent Rights in Education are both on the case, [as Inside Higher Education reported](#) on 1 June 2012. But not so much a question of academic freedom as an issue about First Amendment rights to protected free speech.

## **Access and Widening Participation**

### ***Access in the USA***

*Access to Success* is a bold initiative which started in 2007, with 22 state university systems now signed up to a programme intended to boost participation numbers and proportions for under-represented groups in US HE. And the May 2012 [mid-term report](#) *Replenishing Opportunity in America*, is positive, while admitting that more needs to be done, especially to address success rates in two-year colleges.

On the opposite tack, one of the *Chronicle's* resident conservative commentators, [Richard Vedder \(Ohio\), praised](#) Robert J [Samuelson's opinion piece](#) in the *Washington Post* on 28 May 2012 saying that the college-for-all 'crusade' had failed and led to dumbing down. Presumably it would be much better if more young people were unemployed, or joined the army and went abroad to kill people or get killed themselves.

Justin Coombs, son of a very wealthy father, got a full athletics scholarship at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and [some people are asking why](#). They wonder if it was merited – but surely if his father is so rich, he wouldn't need a scholarship. Justin says he 'put the work in' and presumably if he didn't it would be very obvious very soon. Sounds like the politics of envy to us.

## ***Widening participation in the UK***

The political temperature was rising for widening participation and social inclusion in the UK, as news emerged in late May that 10% fewer people from England had applied for a higher education place, compared to the same time in 2011. Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU) understandably complained about "... the government's recklessness in raising tuition fees to as much as £9,000 a year. It should come as little surprise that applications in England are hardest hit as a result of the government making it the most expensive country in the world in which to gain a public degree education." But a dip as fees trebled was universally expected; the question is whether applications can bounce back in future years, as they have done after previous increases.

An all-party parliamentary group on social mobility produced an interim report on 1 May 2012: [Seven key truths about social mobility](#), which mostly told us what we already knew, but had the merit of pointing out that there are three policy issues involved – 'breaking out' (overcoming economic disadvantage and poverty of aspiration), 'moving on up' (ensuring all can realise their potential), and 'stars to shine' (nurturing the gifted and talented) - but political debate tends to ignore this complexity. It ended with 'Seven things we don't know', helpful pointers for educational researchers wanting to be policy-relevant, and next on its agenda will be higher education. Credit to [Damian Hinds MP](#) for East Hampshire and his colleagues on the committee for encouraging evidence-based policy and more thoughtful debate.

Former Labour Cabinet Minister Alan Milburn, now promoted to tsar (also known as the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty) produced a progress report [Fair Access to Professional Careers](#) following his earlier lambasting of the professions ([Unleashing Aspiration](#)) for being too socially exclusive. He gave them another lambasting for not having listened the first time. Higher education management is still the most socially inclusive profession he considered, with only 24% of UK VCs having attended private schools. And journalism is still just about the most exclusive: remember that as you read national media coverage of higher education.

*Fiscal Studies* had a [special issue \(33:2\)](#) devoted to 'The Role of Education and Skills in Driving Social Mobility' in June 2012, introduced and guest-edited (we assume, it's hard to tell on-line) by former Guardian journalist Lee Elliott-Major, the ubiquitous Director of Research and Policy at the Sutton Trust, notoriously effective at skewing political debate to emphasise the 'stars to shine' issue. Haroon Chowdry (Institute for Fiscal Studies) *et al* looked at 'The Distributional Impact of the 2012-2013 Higher Education Funding Reforms in England', concluding that students will be better off while they study, worse off afterwards, and that overall the changes do reflect a significant public-to-private shift in cost. Joanne Lindley (Surrey) and Stephen Machin (University College London) argued that rapid expansion of HE, differentially favouring better-off families, and increasing wage differentials for the more educated have combined to reinforce already-existing social inequalities and slow down social mobility. And there was much more in the same policy-relevant vein.

On a different tack, John Hills and Ben Richards of LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion produced *Localisation and the means test: A case study of support for English students from Autumn 2012* (CASE Paper No 160 May 2012). Their analysis highlighted an increase in the use of complex and idiosyncratic means tests designed by universities, which they said ran counter to the Government's broader objective of smoothing out and simplifying means tests through Universal Credit, and introduced marginal tax rates in the range 40-100% for some income brackets. This vindicated [Liam Burns, NUS President](#), writing in *Times Higher Education* on 22 March 2012 that the National Scholarships Programme: "... is neither national, nor a scholarship, nor a coherent programme. ... the programme needs significant amendment if perverse and unacceptable

consequences are to be avoided. ... Otherwise, students will rightly see the NSP as little more than fraudulent window dressing.”

This all made interesting contextualisation of the joint HEFCE/OFFA statement on their collaboration: “Colleagues have watched with interest developments of policy and practice around Widening Participation Strategic Assessments and Access Agreements. In their letter of 22 May, ministers Vince Cable and David Willetts ask the organisations to work further together strategically across investment streams to ensure synergy and to maximise outcomes for students. Working together basing this joint work on **the evidence of what works** in widening access at home and abroad. Further information (which includes a pdf copy of the letter) on the HEFCE website: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2012/name,73001,en.html>” (emphasis in original)

## Libraries, Publishing and Information Technology

### *Libraries*

#### **Worth a search**

Check out the evolving *Scholrly*, a search engine for research with a difference – which is that it is much more people-centred than, say, Google Scholar – [according to Brian Mathews](#) in the *Chronicle*.

### *Publishing*

#### **Georgia State University copyright case ends in defeat for the publishers**

Well, mostly. The judge’s ruling in a complex case brought by Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and SAGE against Georgia State University (GSU)’s use of on-line materials for students has vindicated most of GSU’s ‘fair use’ policy, as [the Chronicle reported](#) on 13 May 2012.

Meanwhile Canadian universities signed a deal on copyright which soon attracted critics who said it was too expensive and that the timing was odd, with new legislation expected soon after the deal was signed. [Erin Millar’s report](#) in *University World News* on 11 May 2012 said: “The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Access Copyright ... announced on 16 April that they had successfully negotiated a model licence to allow universities to reproduce copyright-protected materials. The deal will see universities pay a flat rate of CA\$26 (US\$26.10) per full-time student. Under the pre-existing agreement, universities paid CA\$3.38 per student plus 10 cents per page copied. ... Over the past year, a number of Canadian universities have functioned without an agreement, relying instead on materials available through electronic databases and open access licencing.”

#### **Another one bites the dust**

University of Missouri system President Timothy M [Wolfe announced](#) on 24 May 2012 that the University of Missouri Press is to close after 54 years of publishing over 2000 academic texts.

#### **Put a sock in it**

Simon Tanner (King’s College London) [in the Guardian Higher Education Network](#) on 7 June 2012 attacked the phenomenon of ‘sock puppets’ – online identities created to allow the author not only to remain anonymous but actively to mislead, by setting up fake personae who purport to engage in

academic debate, or worse. We don't like anonymity much, certainly not in most of the online comments in, for example, *Times Higher Education*, and not entirely in academic refereeing either.

## ***Journals***

### **Journal Impact Factors are losing impact**

[George Lozano on the Impact of Social Sciences blog](#) on 8 June 2012 reported on his research showing that the relationship between journal impact factors and citation rates has been steadily weakening for 20 years. Increasingly, the most-cited papers are coming from a diversity of sources.

### **MLA Journals hand copyright to authors**

In an 'open-access-friendly' move the influential US [Modern Languages Association announced](#) on 5 June 2012 that its journals would transfer copyright of articles in its journals to authors with effect from the next full issues of all journals.

## ***Information technology***

The [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) had a story on 29 April 2012 about an academic social networking site called Academia.edu: "As a medieval historian with some decidedly old-school habits, Guy Geltner wanted to expand his online presence, but he shuddered at the thought of "friending" or "Tweeting" to get other scholars' attention. Then a colleague introduced him to [www.Academia.edu](http://www.Academia.edu), one of a growing number of networking sites designed specifically for scholars." Geltner (Amsterdam) described it as 'Facebook for nerds, which I'm very happy with'. Nerds might also try Zotero, Mendeley and Researchgate, but the jury is out on whether it's worth doing. Mark Bauerlein in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on 4 June 2012 was enthusiastic about internet entrepreneur Andrew Keen's new book [Digital vertigo: how today's online social revolution is dividing, diminishing, and disorienting us](#). Facebook and co are more Panopticon than counter-culture utopia, says Keen.

## **Global Perspectives**

[Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners](#), a new book edited by former SRHE Vice-Chair Maria Slowey (Dublin City) and Hans Schuetze (British Columbia), was published on 10 May 2012 by Routledge. Would anyone like to review it? Volunteer to [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk).

## ***Australia***

### **Higher education & regulatory bodies: control or safety net? Debra Bateman**



"Have you looked at the AQF and TEQSA?" seems to precede all decision making about a how a course is constructed, or a policy renewed within Australian higher education. At a recent conference, an empathetic, yet more anxious query to presenters showcasing some new courses was along the lines of 'What will you do if it doesn't fit the AQF and TEQSA?'

“AQF” or the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) is the new national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. “TEQSA” or the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#) is a regulatory body to ensure that all students receive a high quality education within Higher Education Institutions (HEI). A third wheel yet to be so commonly referred to, is HESP, the Higher Education Standards Panel which is responsible for developing and monitoring the [Higher Education Standards Framework](#) (HESF). In a nutshell, the HESF will draw upon the AQF to plot where HEIs sit, and then TEQSA will assess whether students are adequately being educated, and thus whether the HEIs are positioned to offer courses at different course award levels. [What a mouthful!]

There is an overriding deficit view of regulatory bodies, which are perceived to be policing what occurs in teaching and learning across higher education. It has also been suggested that such control and regulation of courses could result in a ‘dampening’ of creativity and innovation within pedagogical approaches and student experiences. From this perspective it is not surprising that there is a groundswell of anxiety amongst those who care, when these regulators are linked to a public reporting website called [MyUniversity](#).

As a naive idealist, I’d like to offer an alternative way of thinking about the regulators. Imagine if regulatory bodies were really **just** a safety net to catch those who stray from excellent practice, or never arrived there in the first place. This would mean that across the sector, rather than hamstringing innovative course design and pedagogical practices, excellent practitioners could act with greater autonomy, safe in the knowledge that they have achieved track record in affording students excellent experiences whilst simultaneously upholding disciplinary integrity, and thus will always meet standards and other benchmarks. I suggest that *good practice is good practice is good practice*.

In the regulatory-safety-net scenario, the HEIs could/would market their institutional differences on the merits of the curriculum and education generated by experts in the field, who build on scholarly and research data and activities. Precious financial and human resources could be re-intensified to support the work of the academic, at the coalface, to achieve increased outcomes in core businesses (such as research, teaching and learning), rather than wasting time on administrative activities . . . Did I mention I was a naive idealist?

*SRHE member Dr Debra Bateman is Senior Lecturer in Education, School of Education, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University*

## ***Europe***

### **England**

HEFCE has published the [11th edition](#) of its 'Regional profiles of higher education', as always a mine of useful information about the pattern of higher education (HE) in the nine English regions. The data include a map showing all the universities and colleges providing HE courses, student numbers by institution, and a profile of students’ study methods. There is the usual breakdown of student numbers by age, gender and ethnicity, where they come from; what subjects they study; and mode of study. In addition there are data on annual income and funding for each higher education institution (HEI), knowledge exchange activities between HEIs and business, and where students find employment when they graduate from an HEI, and what kind of jobs they take.

## People



A well-deserved double celebration for SRHE member and *Higher Education Quarterly* co-editor **Celia Whitchurch**, who has not only seen her long-awaited book *Reconstructing identities in HE* go to press for the new SRHE/Routledge book series (out in September 2012), but also been promoted to Senior Lecturer at the London Institute of Education.



Congratulations to regular *News* columnist **Marcia Devlin**, who has moved from Deakin to become Executive Director, Academic Programs and Services at Open Universities Australia. She's promised to return to columnist duties, but we'll let her unpack her books first.



The HE Academy has [awarded international scholarships](#) to 13 UK academics for them to investigate specific topics by investigating practice in another country or countries; one of the winners is SRHE member and former SRHE Council member **Gina Wisker** (Brighton).

We always like news about SRHE people. Send your stuff about job moves, awards, triumphs, new articles or books, whatever you think we'll like, to [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk).

## Society News

### SRHE Team

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### ***SRHE Annual Research Conference 2012***

Celtic Manor, Newport, Wales 12-14 December

We are pleased to confirm our speakers for this event as follows:



Professor Howard Hotson

Fellow and Tutor in Modern History, Professor of Early Modern Intellectual History, St Anne's College, University of Oxford



Professor Suellen Shay-  
Associate Professor and Deputy Dean in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa



Professor Georg Krücken  
Director of the International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel, Germany, and Professor of Sociology and Higher Education Research at the University of Kassel.

We hope researchers and scholars from the many forms of higher education globally and in the UK will contribute to this Conference, stimulating international debate on the way in which higher education is responding to economic, social and political and cultural pressures and both re-defining and re-asserting its nature and purpose. As higher education researchers, we aim to provide significant, meaningful research insights and knowledge to inform and guide universities, governments and societies.

We would like to thank all members who have submitted papers for this event. The review process is now well under way, and we aim to communicate outcomes by the end of July. We would encourage all members to book their places as soon as possible in order to benefit from the early booking discounts available until **30<sup>th</sup> September 2012** via the website at [www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2012](http://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2012)

## ***SRHE Newer Researchers' Conference 2012***

Celtic Manor, Newport, Wales 11 December



As for our Newer Researchers event, we are delighted to confirm that **Dr Roni Bamber**, Director of Centre for Academic Practice, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh has agreed to give the keynote address for this event entitled ***Tribal Identities and Tribal Reservations***. This address will consider how the roles and identities of academics and researchers have changed, and continue to change, within a rapidly changing environment characterised by super complexity.

Further information including how to book a place at this event is available via [www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2012/nr.info.asp](http://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2012/nr.info.asp)

## ***Newer Researchers Awards 2012***

Continuing with the theme of Newer Researchers, we are also pleased to announce our two award winners for 2012. A record number of entries were received, all of which were peer reviewed by at least two reviewers, and a shortlist of 11 entries of an extremely high standard was drawn up and discussed in detail by the Society's Research and Development Committee. After much deliberation, the following two entries emerged as award winners:



**Dr. Michael Keenan**, Lecturer in Sociology at Nottingham Trent University for his proposal entitled: ***Coming out and fitting in: A qualitative exploration of Lesbian, gay, homosexual, bisexual, trans and queer students' university experiences***



**Dr. Anna Zimdars**, Lecturer in Higher Education from King's College London for her proposal entitled:

***Converging pathways? Revisiting Turner's mobility modes for the case of undergraduate admission in the UK and the U.S.***

We would like to thank all entrants for putting such considerable effort into their proposals. There were a number of excellent proposals that were worthy of further support, but alas the Society's resources are limited to funding only two. Congratulations to Michael and to Anna, and we look to seeing both of the above proposals develop.

### ***SRHE Annual Research Awards 2012***

Members are invited to submit application for 3 to 4 awards of £10,000 for research focused on any aspect of higher education submitted under three overarching themes: **Higher Education Policy, Higher Education and Society, and Higher Education Practice**. There are also 2 to 4 awards of £5,000 open to both members and non-members for the exploration of any new or emerging area of higher education research leading to the development of a plan for further research. Applications close on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012, and further details, including application forms are available [here](#).

### ***Forthcoming Network Events***

International Research and Researchers Network

**Friday 7th September 2012**

#### **Analysis from the Antipodes**

Speakers: Professor Simon Marginson, University of Melbourne, Australia

Dr Susan Carter, Centre for Academic Development, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Professor David Boud, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Newer Researchers Network

**Wednesday 12 September 2012**

#### **Academic Writing Skills**

Speaker: Dr Rowena Murray, Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Education, Strathclyde University

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Newer Researchers Network

**Thursday 27 September 2012**

#### **Developing Theoretical perspectives from your research**

Speaker: Professor Linda Evans, University of Leeds

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Newer Researchers Network

**Thursday 16 October 2012**

**Demystifying and Preparing for the Doctoral Viva**

Speaker: Dr Sara Delamont, University of Cardiff

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Student Experience Network

**Thursday 18 October 2012**

**Bricks, Bed & Higher Education: The Transformation of Student Accommodation in Britain**

Speakers: Harold Silver, Visiting Professor, Open University

Liz Pride and Reza Schuster, MJP Architects

Paul Harris, Group Strategy & Corporate Relations Director, UNITE

Darren Smith, Reader in Geography, Loughborough University

Nicholas Beyts, Visiting Fellow, Cass Business School, City University, London

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Newer Researchers Network

**Wednesday 24 October 2012**

**Undertaking a Literature Review**

Speakers: Dr Christopher Hart, University of Chester

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

Higher Education Policy Network

**Friday 26 October 2012**

**Pedagogy, Performance and E/quality: Challenges for Higher Education Policy**

Speakers; Dr Andrea Abbas (Teesside University), Dr Paul Ashwin (Lancaster University) and

Professor Monica McLean (University of Nottingham) and Dr Cath Lambert (University of Warwick)

Venue: London Metropolitan University

Digital University Network

**Friday 2nd November 2012**

**Critical Perspectives on 'Openness' in Higher Education**

Speakers: Robin Goodfellow, Jane Tinkler & Jeremy Knox

Venue: University of Edinburgh – further details to follow

Newer Researchers Network

**Tuesday 6 November 2012**

**Publishing Academic Articles**

Speakers: Dr Karen Smith, University of Greenwich, Ian White, Routledge, Taylor and Francis

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

SRHE Post-Compulsory and Higher Education Research Network

**Thursday 8 November 2012**

**Title to follow**

Venue: - London – further information to follow

Access and Widening Participation

Wednesday 14 November 2012

**Widening Participation Professional Practice and Identities**

Speakers Dr Celia Whitchurch, Institute of Education & Pauline Whelan, Leeds Metropolitan University

Venue - SRHE, 73 Collier Street, London N1 9BE

For further details and to book your place, see [www.srhe.ac.uk](http://www.srhe.ac.uk). SRHE events are free to members, but we do have to make charge of £45 for non-members to cover our costs (£25 if paid before 31.07.2012)

***SRHE Membership***

A reminder particularly to our many members unable to travel to London for events that SRHE membership benefits also include:

- Substantial discounts on rates for SRHE Annual Conference
- Free subscription to Research into Higher Education Abstracts, including on-line access to the current issue and the full on-line archive of Abstracts
- On-line access to Higher Education (HE) journals such as Teaching in HE, Assessment & Evaluation in HE, European Journal of HE, Innovations in Education and Teaching International, Journal of Marketing for HE, Perspectives: Policy and Practice in HE, and Quality in HE )
- Reduced rates for Studies in Higher Education and Higher Education Quarterly
- Free copies of SRHE News, providing an international review of all that is current in research into HE
- 30% discount on all books published by Routledge/Taylor and Francis
- 20% discount on all books and journals published by Wiley Publishing
- The opportunity to apply for the annual research grants
- The opportunity to participate in the Society's Networks
- Access to - and inclusion in- the Register of Members' Research Interests - to help facilitate networking between the Society's members

Please note also that from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 there will be some slight increases to some membership subscriptions as follows:

SRHE Membership rates until 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2012		SRHE Membership rates from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2012	
Students	£30	Students	£35
Individual	£100	Individual	£100
Retired	£40	Retired	£45
Lifetime Retired	£250	Lifetime Retired	£300

## Small ads

### External examiners, referees, reviewers wanted

News will be happy to carry advertisements for external examiners in the broad field of research into higher education, for publishers' referees, for book reviewers, and so on.

## Conferences and seminars

### 17-19 September 2012

The OECD Institutional Management in HE (IMHE) General Conference

Contact [Valérie.Lafon@oecd.org](mailto:Valerie.Lafon@oecd.org)

[www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings](http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings)

Paris, France

## Mind your language

### What's in a name?

Does it matter what title you give your article? [James Hartley \(Keele\) has looked at the research](#) and says you should maybe just go with whatever seems to be the disciplinary norm. Does anyone know what the disciplinary norm is in HE research? Email your suggestions to [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk).

### Naming rights

[Allan Metcalf in the Chronicle](#) on 31 May 2012 said that, even if you can't control how people use language in general, you can at least control how they use your own name – or can you? And since opinions differ even on that, imagine what it's like for universities where there are thousands of people who think the university title is 'theirs'. There were [protests in the streets](#) of Lagos against the Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's announcement that Nigeria's leading university, the University of Lagos, was to be renamed Moshood Abiola University in honour of a political dissident who died while in detention ten years ago.

### [Campus dictionary](#)

**Impact** *n.* 1. The effect one thing has on another 2. A collision. 3. An unmeasurable characteristic of research which will be measured through the Research Excellence Framework. *v.* Back formation from **impacted**, term used in dentistry to describe problems with wisdom teeth. Commonly misused as a verb by those who have problems with wisdom.

## And Finally ...

### Campus novels

Last call for your reviews or recollections of campus novels. Send them to [rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:rob.cuthbert@uwe.ac.uk). We won't ask again.

### Why college football should be banned

Buzz Bissinger wrote about 'Why college football should be banned' in the *Wall Street Journal* on 8 May 2012: 'college football has no academic purpose'. And on the same theme see Paul Alper's 'Note from North America: Building Deception' in [Higher Education Review](#) 44(3) Summer 2012.

### Ian McNay writes ...



An EdD student recently perpetrated 'voluntee', someone who is 'done to' by a volunteer in corporate social responsibility context. The student only did it once.

US Aid is funding a programme to promote a culture of good governance and leaders of integrity in HE in Africa. Do you think they might be persuaded to fund a UK programme?

*SRHE Fellow Ian McNay is emeritus professor at the University of Greenwich.*