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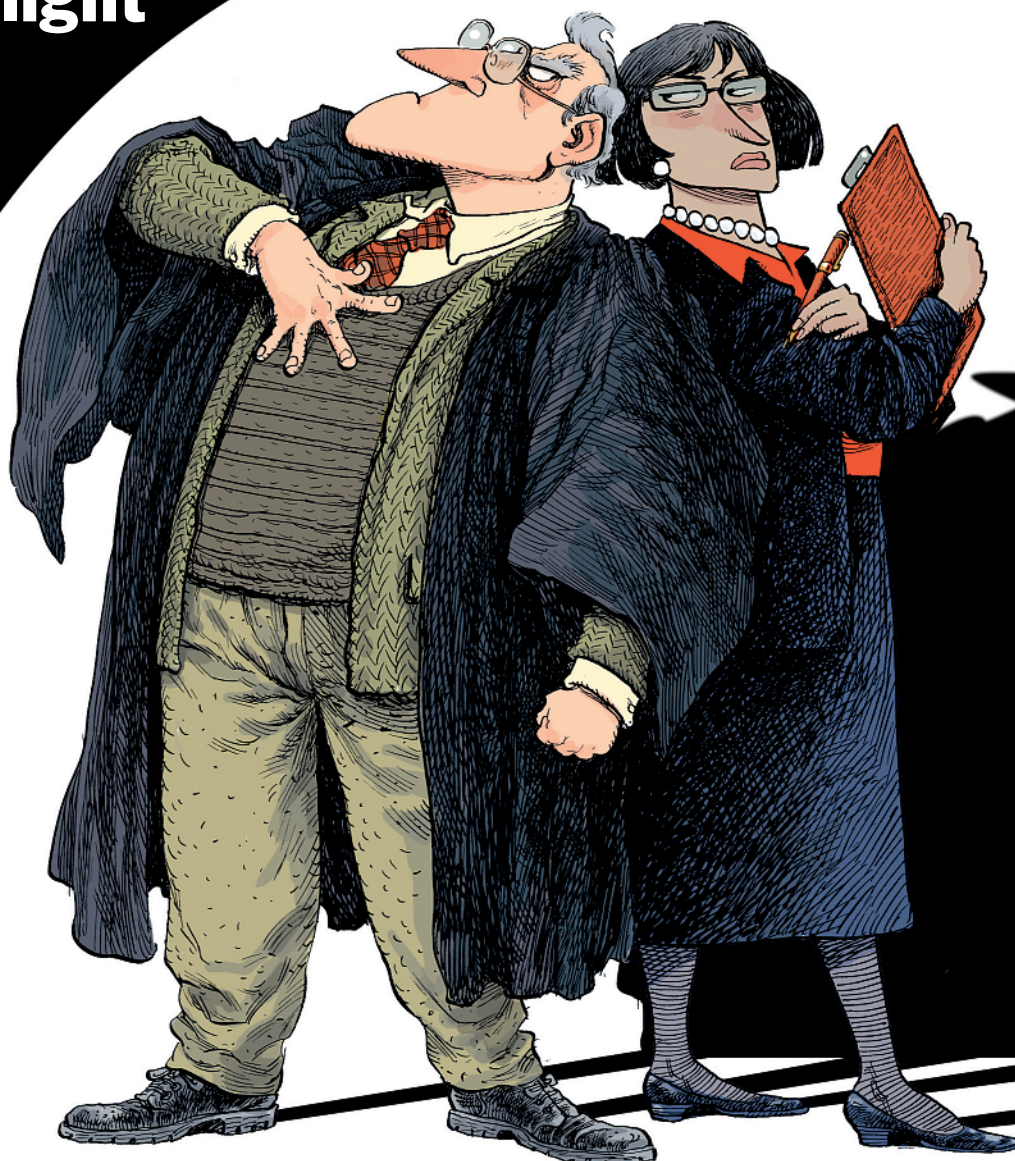
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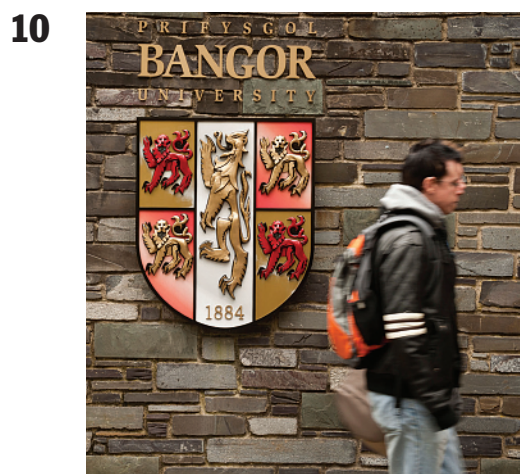
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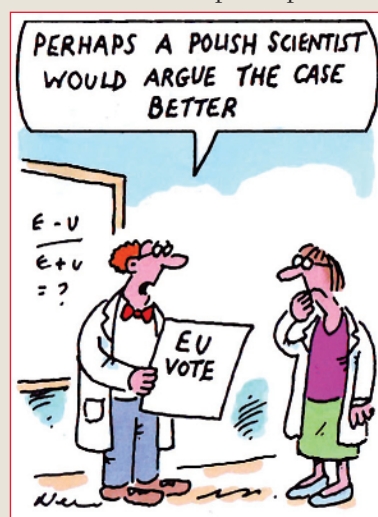
THE WEEK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

● ● ● The University of Edinburgh said that it “deeply regrets” an incident in which a student was pushed to the ground by a security guard. Footage of the incident, which happened during an occupation of a university building in protest at the university’s decision not to divest fully from fossil fuels, shows the guard placing his hand around the demonstrator’s neck. An Edinburgh spokesman said that the university “deeply regrets the unfortunate incident” and that it would “continue to support the right of students to peacefully and lawfully demonstrate”. On 21 May, a Police Scotland spokeswoman said that two men had been arrested and charged.

● ● ● “The prominent climate change sceptic Viscount Monckton of Brenchley has complained to police after a tombstone engraved with his name was exhibited at Anglia Ruskin University,” reported *The Independent* on 20 May. The piece features the names of six sceptics, also including Lord Lawson and journalist James Delingpole, “chiselled under the words ‘Lest We Forget Those Who Denied’”, the newspaper said. “A constant stream of engine oil runs over the memorial.” A spokesman for the viscount said that “a complaint had been

made to police about the university press release, which he says reinforced the representation of the death threat in the art work”, *The Independent* continued. The work, by third-year fine art student Ian Wolter, prompted a *Daily Mail* article by Mr Delingpole noting what he saw as a salient and distasteful fact: Anglia Ruskin is “formerly Anglia Polytechnic”.

● ● ● A group of scientists and advocates for science published a letter in *The Times* on 22 May setting out “our support for the EU, its scientific direction, and [the UK’s] continued membership”. The letter – signed by figures including Sir Paul Nurse, *Nature* editor-in-chief Philip Campbell and



Sir Steve Smith, vice-chancellor of the University of Exeter – says that the coming EU referendum “will need debate enriched by perspectives from all concerned, including the science community”. Arguing that the perspective of the scientific community is pro-EU, the letter urges Jo Johnson, the universities and science minister, to “ensure this is communicated robustly from his position”. It remains to be seen what hearing science will receive in a public debate that many expect to focus on three issues: immigration, immigration and immigration.

● ● ● It has been a mixed week for Oxbridge traditionalists. On 22 May, *The Daily Telegraph* reported that more than 75 per cent of students at the University of Oxford had voted to keep the requirement for formal dress, known as sub fusc, to be worn for exams despite claims from some that it was archaic and elitist. On the other hand, *The Independent* reported on 20 May that more than 900 undergraduates at the University of Cambridge have signed a petition calling for an end to publicly displaying their exam results on the grounds that it promotes a “culture of shaming”. Then the *Daily Mail* reported on 23 May that Cambridge’s “notorious” men-only drinking society the

Gentleman Wyverns has restored the tradition of female jelly wrestling at its annual garden party. A petition had put paid to the “sexist, misogynist and completely inappropriate” practice two years ago. But this time chaps will be permitted to join the “bikini-clad” female students “cavorting in a paddling pool of jelly”. Perhaps they could all wear full sub fusc?

● ● ● Academics have reacted coolly to a botanist’s claims to have unearthed the only known picture of Shakespeare drawn during his lifetime. *The Independent* reported on 19 May that historian Mark Griffiths found the image on the title page of a 1598 book called *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes*. The bearded figure holding flowers and an ear of sweetcorn is supposedly unmasked as the Swan of Avon by numerous typically Elizabethan cryptic clues that amount to “a simple equation”. Edward Wilson, emeritus fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, called the revelation “sensational”, but colleagues were less convinced. Michael Dobson, director of the University of Birmingham’s Shakespeare Institute, called it a “hallucination”. It can only be a matter of time before an academic somewhere claims that the picture is actually of the 17th Earl of Oxford.



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The fad for extensions is cooling

The move away from overseas branches attests to the fact that such operations are hard to get right and offer no quick returns



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Over the past decade, many universities have assumed that to be taken seriously on internationalisation, they had to have a presence overseas in the form of a branch or a joint campus. Fired by that notion, many institutions blazed trails across the globe, with the most popular destinations for UK universities being China, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates, according to a list produced by the State University of New York Albany.

But this push has been bogged down in trickier terrain of late. Some have hit snags in setting up branches: think of the University of Central Lancashire's difficulties in Thailand, Sri Lanka and, most memorably, Cyprus (where its campus is built in a UN-policed buffer zone).

Others already established overseas have had to address ethical concerns raised about their operations: anger about the exploitation of migrant labour in Gulf states is just one issue that has put branch campuses in the line of fire.

Most recently, we have started to see institutions abandoning the branch campus model altogether, most notably University College London, which is closing its branch campus in Adelaide and recalibrating its international strategy with the focus on partnerships.

This trend appears to be confirmed by a report we feature this week from the European Association for International Education, which suggests that more than half of internationalisation staff have seen no change in branch campus activity in the past three years. That is echoed by feedback from experts outside universities: there is now "limited attention" being paid "to the expansion of branch campuses".

At the same time, according to the EAIE study, just about every other aspect of internationalisation is surging ahead in Europe, especially strategic partnerships and

the inward/outward flow of students and staff. Indeed, figures from a British Council report released ahead of next week's Going Global conference in London suggest that even in the UK – where getting students to go abroad has been the weakest area of the country's internationalisation effort – the outward flow of students is growing at a healthy rate.

As with so many aspects of globalisation, to understand these trends it can help to follow the money. In terms of income, it is certainly true that branch campuses can fall short of a university's expectations compared with the cash that rolls in when it recruits international students to its UK base. But perhaps the most striking finding from the EAIE study is that those institutions considered to have the best international strategy are those that do not simply have pound signs in their eyes. Meanwhile, universities "perceived as lagging behind in internationalisation are

Branch campus activity is flat, but most other areas of internationalisation are surging ahead, especially strategic partnerships and scholarly mobility

commonly indicated to have a stronger focus on [seeking] the financial benefits".

It is probably this difficulty of balancing the financial and the academic and cultural returns that makes the utility of branch campuses clear, and also explains why they are now falling out of favour. Well planned and executed, they can enhance a university's reputation, expand its global reach and increase the cross-border traffic of staff and students. But get it wrong, and the effect can kill a university's internationalisation strategy stone dead – a risk that for many is clearly no longer worth taking.

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Overseas branch campuses fa

Internationalisation refocuses on student mobility and strategic partnerships. Chris Havergal writes

Opening branch campuses is now the lowest internationalisation priority for European universities, according to a major study, prompting suggestions that a market dominated by UK institutions is now past its peak.

In a survey conducted by the European Association for International Education, just 1 per cent of respondents who worked for universities said that they had witnessed a substantial increase in branch campus activity at their institution in the past three years.

Twelve per cent said they had seen an increase, while 53 per cent reported no change and 1 per cent said branch campus activity had decreased.

This puts branch campuses at the bottom of the list of 15 internationalisation trends that the EAIE asked about, with institutions focusing instead on strategic partnerships and student mobility.

The report, *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe*, was based on 2,411 responses from across the European Higher Education Area, mainly from employees of higher education institutions. The question about internationalisation trends was answered by 1,365 university staff.

The UK has led the way in Europe on branch campuses; it set up 35 of the 99 outposts listed as of this month by the Cross-Border Educa-

tion Research Team at the State University of New York Albany. However, branch campuses did not figure highly when the survey answers from the 168 UK respondents were considered separately.

Nigel Healey, pro vice-chancellor (international) at Nottingham Trent University, said the findings were “consistent with the slowing pace of investment” in branch campuses.

Three institutions accounted for more than 90 per cent of all UK branch campus enrolments in 2012-13, Professor Healey said. These were the University of Nottingham, in Malaysia and China; Middlesex University, in Dubai and Mauritius; and Heriot-Watt University in Dubai (the institution has since opened another branch campus in Malaysia).

Other institutions have announced the closure of foreign campuses. University College London is shutting its site in Australia and reviewing its operations in Qatar, while the University of East London closed its Cyprus arm after just six months because of poor recruitment.

Professor Healey said the sector may now be at “peak branch campuses”. “A handful of UK universities have committed to this form of transnational education and are now successfully operating financially viable branch campuses. These are the survivors,” Professor Healey said.



Learning curve after the rush for overseas expansion, most UK universities now have a

“Most of the rest of us have looked at the casualties and concluded that there are easier and safer ways to reach out to new international markets, with dual and joint degrees currently the fastest growing activities,” he added.

Some UK universities are pushing

ahead with plans for branch campuses. The University of Warwick is developing an outpost in California, while the University of Aberdeen will become the first UK university to open a base in South Korea. But others have decided that the high costs and reputational risks

Rising interest shown in grade point average de

More than 50 higher education institutions have expressed an interest in running a US-style grade point average scheme alongside traditional degree classifications.

The growing appetite for operating a dual system, in which an average mark ranging from 0 to 4.25 would be awarded next to the honours classification, is outlined in a report by the GPA Advisory Group led by Sir Bob Burgess, the former vice-chancellor of the University of Leicester.

The group, which oversaw a one-year pilot of GPA at 21 institutions, calls for universities to run GPA for

a trial period of five years alongside the current classification system, which in the past critics have labelled as being “not fit for purpose”.

The report, published by the Higher Education Academy on 28 May, says the trial will give institutions the opportunity to monitor the effects of introducing the new system.

Some may switch to using GPA alone as it offers a more detailed and accurate picture of how individuals performed throughout their studies, it says.

“A process of ‘dual running’ will allow institutions to adopt GPA

within timescales that suit their institutional context while ensuring that a national system is retained,” said Sir Bob, who chaired the advisory group.

The group’s recommendations, which include a call for a national review of degree classifications after five years, had been “carefully constructed to build upon the evidence from the sector regarding the appetite and capacity for change”, he added.

There is a “vital need for a more precise indicator of degree grades” and “a more internationally recognisable measure” than the honours

classification system, Sir Bob claimed.

Under the scheme proposed by the group, graduates would receive one of 16 numerical marks up to 4.25, which would correspond to grades between A+ and F-.

This compares with the five-level honours classification system, in which 70 per cent of graduates earned either a first or a 2:1 last year.

However, the report’s recommendations may raise questions about the comparability of GPA scores across the sector as universities would be free to weight marks as they wished.

II out of favour



clearer conception of the potential pitfalls

of operating overseas make branch campuses unattractive.

A study conducted last year for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills found that there was only a “very small direct revenue stream” from branch campuses to UK parent institutions.

The University of Central Lancashire’s Cyprus campus recorded a £1.4 million loss in 2013-14, and it has put aside another £2.8 million to cover further losses on its international campuses.

Kevin Kinser, associate professor at SUNY Albany’s Institute for Global Education Policy Studies, said that institutions now better understand the challenges of setting up a branch campus, and that host countries are more selective.

“It seemed that this was a ‘Wild West’ model of expansion and everyone thought ‘this is the way it’s moving,’” Dr Kinser said. “Now [host] countries are seeking to develop branch campuses focusing more narrowly on the best set of institutions and the programmes they are interested in.”

The opening of new markets means there is still potential for branch campus expansion, he added.

The EAIE survey also asked respondents what were the most important reasons to internationalise: improving the quality of education (56 per cent) and preparing students for a global world (45 per cent) were the most popular.

Only 10 per cent highlighted the financial benefits for their institution. But respondents from institutions that were perceived to lag behind on internationalisation were nearly twice as likely to mention financial benefits compared with those from leading global universities (15 per cent to 8 per cent).

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Opinion, page 28

gree classification trial

Institutions would be able to disregard marks for the first year and give greater weighting to final-year modules, although the report adds that the sector should strive to achieve a universal approach to GPA.

Some institutions had expressed concern that the inclusion of first-year marks would depress degree scores in some subjects, leaving their graduates at a disadvantage in the labour market compared with those from universities with more generous scoring systems.

The only publicly funded university in the UK to adopt a parallel

GPA system so far – Oxford Brookes University – includes first-year students’ grades when calculating GPA, saying their use had motivated first-years to work harder, thereby improving attainment.

The potential move to GPA was welcomed as a “positive step” by Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

“Employers will value the greater granularity in the marking structure while students will benefit from a fairer representation of their grades,” he said.

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Into battle? union is in fighting mood over pay and ‘anti-radicalisation’ proposals

Strikes loom as UCU urges rebuff

Union advocates rejection of pay offer and Prevent strategy implementation. Jack Grove reports

Members of higher education’s largest trade union will be urged to reject a 1 per cent pay offer in a forthcoming ballot, raising the prospect of industrial action in universities.

University staff who are members of the University and College Union are to be consulted on the final offer for 2015-16 after delegates at the union’s congress in Glasgow backed the move.

The congress, which took place on 23-24 May, backed a motion by representatives from Leeds Beckett University that said “the UCU should call for members to reject the offer and vote yes for strike action and action short of a strike”.

Meanwhile, in another congress vote, delegates backed plans to ask staff to boycott the implementation of the government’s Prevent counter-terrorism strategy in higher education, despite warnings that non-cooperation may be unlawful.

The motion passed on pay said the UCU “must actively campaign amongst members to explain why the pay campaign is particularly important this year after many years of real-terms pay cuts”.

The motion was carried in a private session, from which the media were excluded. But it is believed that the vote was close and required a recount to establish the result.

The call for more explicit advice on the pay offer follows criticism from some union activists that the UCU had shown weak leadership by failing to urge members to turn down pay offers in previous years.

Under the latest offer, pay for

staff on the eight lowest points of the national pay spine would be increased by up to 2.65 per cent, which would mean that they are paid at least the living wage of £9.15 an hour in London and £7.85 in the rest of the UK.

The offer of 1 per cent for the rest of the pay spine – described as “disappointing” by the UCU – represents a small advance on the employers’ original proposal for 2015-16 of 0.9 per cent.

That proposal addressed “all aspects” of the pay claim by trade unions involved in higher education in spite of “the ever-increasingly challenging sector environment”, according to the Universities and Colleges Employers Association.

On Prevent, delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion to boycott the government’s initiative, which includes an aim to stop students from becoming radicalised in universities. The motion said that implementing Prevent will “force our members to spy on learners” and “be involved in the racist labelling of students”, principally Muslim students.

“We should all be reporting our students because they should all be becoming radical,” said Andrew Higginbotham, UCU branch chair at Kingston University.

However, the UCU leadership said it had taken legal advice, which stated that any boycott of Prevent might be illegal as it would constitute a failure to carry out reasonable instructions from an employer.

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'Too scared to speak' at NUS conference

A number of delegates who attended the annual conference of the National Union of Students have complained of an "atmosphere of intimidation" at the event.

An open letter signed by 43 attendees of last month's conference claims that many students "felt too scared to speak on stage out of fear of the response they would get".

There was an "atmosphere of intimidation, fear and inaccessibility that perpetuated during the entirety of conference", the letter says.

"There seemed to be a general lack of tolerance for opinions which aren't the mainstream view," the letter adds. "We frequently saw the same faces speaking on stage, time after time, creating an atmosphere that this was a conference for the few, not the many."

The letter also complains about time being wasted during conference sessions, with the result that many key policy motions were not debated but instead were sent on to the national executive council for deliberation.

A particular concern raised is the use of the chair's visual assessment of the audience to count votes, which the letter says was often open to challenge and sometimes resulted in time-consuming manual counts being carried out.

More accurate methods such as electronic voting need to be adopted "as a matter of urgency" to save time and to eliminate "accusations of bias", the letter says.

The letter, signed by 16 students' union presidents, concludes: "This year's event made a mockery of the student movement and served to weaken and divide it, rather than bringing us together."

Toni Pearce, the outgoing NUS president, told *Times Higher Education* that she was "disappointed" to hear that some delegates had not felt that the conference had lived up to the union's values, and said she was "grateful" to delegates for raising their concerns.

"We have always encouraged delegates to feed back on our events and share their experiences so that we can make changes based on evidence to improve the experience of delegates at our events, and this year's national conference will be evaluated in detail," Ms Pearce said. chris.havergal@tesglobal.com



Still waiting the lack of secure academic posts 'is causing instability at structural, professional and personal levels'

A profusion of PhDs but a lack of tenure

European study reveals stressed doctoral holders – only a third have tenured posts. Holly Else writes

The oversupply of PhD holders in Europe is causing "considerable dissatisfaction and stress" for researchers on temporary contracts, according to a report by the European Science Foundation.

The study, tracking the careers of doctoral holders from five research organisations, finds that just a third end up in tenured positions and that the widespread desire for an academic career is "not sustainable".

That few doctoral graduates go on to work in sectors outside academia should be "centre stage" on national policy agendas, it says.

As part of a pilot project to better understand what happens to PhD holders in Europe, the ESF worked with five continental research organisations, including the Goethe Graduate Academy at the University of Frankfurt and the National Research Fund in Luxembourg. Each organisation contacted PhD graduates up to seven years after completing their doctorates, and almost 500 of them completed questionnaires about their work and life.

The analysis found that it took on average 4.3 years for respondents to complete a PhD, which is shorter than the average reported by the US' Council of Graduate Schools. This

is probably the result of shorter funding periods and a fall in the quality of PhDs as more countries "dramatically expand" doctoral programmes, says the report, *Career Tracking of Doctorate Holders*.

Almost all respondents were employed, with 90 per cent in research posts. But only a third of these had tenured positions, according to the report. The main reason for leaving research – given by those who had left – was the difficulty of building a career in the field.

Insecure employment causes "considerable dissatisfaction and stress" in the postdoctoral population, the report says.

Most of those surveyed wanted a career in academia, which is "not sustainable" given the rising number of PhD graduates looking for work in an "oversupplied" employment sector, it adds.

"Tenure, or the increasing lack of it, is a major issue causing instability at structural, professional and personal levels," says the report. The shortage should be "critically examined with a view to developing alternative models that provide structured opportunities for tenured employment", it states. "Addressing the reasons for low levels of transfer

to other employment sectors...needs to be centre stage on European and national policy agendas."

The report advises that universities and funding bodies should manage the expectations of PhD candidates and make them aware that only a "tiny proportion" will find work in academia, and should also look at how well candidates are prepared for work elsewhere. "More should be done to develop greater awareness of, and knowledge about, relevant careers outside of academia in consultancy, industry, government and elsewhere," it adds.

About 90 per cent of those surveyed had worked or studied in another country. The report warns that the pressure for PhD graduates to be mobile can be difficult for those with a family or caring responsibilities and says that this should be taken into account in funding models.

The report also finds that researchers from countries on the periphery of Europe tend to move to north European countries for work and often do not return home.

Siobhan Phillips, a senior science officer at the European Science Foundation, said: "Countries on the periphery [of Europe] need to look at their models for encouraging and supporting the continuity of their doctoral population." holly.else@tesglobal.com

Oxford 'needs cultural shift' to support BME students, study says

Black and minority ethnic undergraduates report racial slurs and isolation. Jack Grove writes

The University of Oxford needs to do more to challenge racism and to make black and minority ethnic students feel more included, claims a long-awaited report finally released into the public domain.

Drawing on interviews with 70 black and minority ethnic students at Oxford, the study by the Oxford University Student Union's Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE) highlights what it calls a number of "experiences of racism and discrimination" faced by undergraduates.

In one instance, a black undergraduate reported having been present when racial slurs had been used in an apparently humorous context to "see how I would react", according to the report, *100 Voices Campaign 2: Black and Minority Ethnic Students of Oxford Speak Out*.

Another undergraduate said that there was "a culture of making racist jokes or comments which, because they are considered amusing or ironic, are tolerated".

"If you voice your discomfort, you are accused of not having a sense of humour, being over-sensitive or accusing somebody unjustly of being racist," the student said.

A different respondent said: "I've never brought my culture into college in a serious way that hasn't been

mocked", adding that "to feel popular and adapt, I have to bring as little of 'that [culturally "other"] side of myself' as possible".

A further interviewee blamed Oxford's college system for their sense of isolation, saying they struggled to meet other BME students because "when you have a lot of friends outside of college, you're almost seen as a traitor in some sense".

Another said that there were

"very few institutional spaces in Oxford where you can have a regular black gathering that is supported and funded and has its own infrastructure or history".

The report, which has been shared internally at Oxford since March 2014 but only now has been released publicly, calls for a "cultural shift" at the university to support ethnic minority students. It also contains the results – already publicly available – of a survey that found that 59.3 per cent of BME respondents had at some point felt uncomfortable or unwelcome at Oxford

because of their race or ethnicity.

Although Oxford had begun to take steps to address the problems, Marc Shi, chairman of CRAE, said the group had published the full report as "[the university had not taken] concerns seriously enough given the speed it is moving to address them".

An Oxford spokesman said that the university "neither tolerates nor condones racial harassment or abuse in any form, and we are committed to addressing and preventing exclusionary behaviour".

He said the institution welcomed the work by Oxford students on the issue, including their input into a race summit last year, which he said had led to "concrete outcomes" on the diversification of curricula.

A university-wide series of events scheduled for 2015-16 would include student-led events, faculty-led round tables, input from external institutions and a series of high-profile speakers, he added.

"Oxford is committed both to supporting potential and current ethnic minority students and to ensuring an appreciation of cultural diversity is fully embedded in the wider university community," the spokesman said. "Recruiting the best and the brightest from all corners of the UK and the wider world means ensuring prospective students know we value and welcome those from all backgrounds."

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Cultural 'others' BME students at Oxford still feel isolated and uncomfortable

Trip switch: the world is UK students' oyster

The number of UK students who go abroad as part of their degree programme has increased by as much as 39 per cent in the space of a year.

Analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency data reveals that 28,640 students at British universities went overseas to study, work or volunteer during 2013-14, compared with 18,105 the previous year. Of the 2013-14 figure, 22,100 were UK-domiciled students.

The UK Higher Education International Unit, which carried out the study, acknowledges that improved reporting contributed to the rise, because trips lasting less than four

weeks were recorded for the first time in 2013-14.

But when stays of four weeks or more only are compared year-on-year, there is an increase of 47.4 per cent, or 39.3 per cent when only UK domiciles are counted.

Most students who go abroad do so in their second and third years, and the unit's analysis suggests that 2.5 per cent of all students in these cohorts went overseas in 2013-14, compared with 2 per cent the previous year.

Vivienne Stern, the unit's director, said that it was clear that there had been a "significant increase" in

mobility regardless of improvements in data collection. "It shows a growing commitment to outward student mobility at the very top of our universities and a recognition that overseas experience brings real benefits to students including in terms of future employability," she said.

The data were released ahead of the Going Global conference for international education, which will be held in London on 1 and 2 June.

At the event, the British Council will release statistics showing that the number of UK students going abroad via the European Union's Erasmus mobility programme dur-

ing 2013-14 rose by 6.8 per cent year-on-year, to 15,566.

The organisation will also share a report showing that 34 per cent of 2,856 British students who were surveyed said that they were interested in studying abroad. This was down 3 per cent year-on-year, but was still significantly higher than the 20 per cent result in 2013.

Forty-nine per cent of respondents said that the cost of UK tuition fees played a role in their interest in overseas study. But living costs and limited language skills were a key deterrent.

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Support for part-time and postgrad study cut in Hefcw funding decision

Welsh research budget protected but sector head seeks policy changes. Chris Havergal reports

The Welsh government has faced renewed calls for a rethink of higher education funding after a decision to protect the sector's research budget triggered cuts to support for part-time and postgraduate study.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales' funding announcement for 2015-16, the first since the publication of the results of the research excellence framework, leaves the amount of quality-related money available unchanged from this year, at £71.1 million.

The only institutions to see an increase in their QR funding are Swansea University and Bangor University, following strong performances in the REF, while Glyndwr University will receive a small amount of QR funding for the first time. All the other Welsh universities will have their QR funding decreased next year.

The total funding being distributed by Hefcw will be reduced by £8.5 million (5.2 per cent) compared with 2014-15, to £154.2 million.

This means that funding to support part-time undergraduate teaching is being cut by £3.8 million (12.5 per cent). Funding for postgraduate taught courses is being decreased by £786,004 (11.2 per cent).

John Hughes, the vice-chancellor of Bangor University, said that the cut in postgraduate support was "certainly a worry" when Welsh ministers were yet to state whether they would follow the Westminster government in introducing loans for postgraduate students.

And although he welcomed the boost for Bangor, Professor Hughes told *Times Higher Education* that the overall research budget "lagged behind" the rest of the UK.

"There have been investments from the Welsh government in spe-

cial initiatives such as Sêr Cymru, to attract international 'stars' to Wales, but there has been rather less focus on fundamental research support and obviously we would like to see that increased," he said.

Professor Hughes added that the current policy of providing grants to subsidise the tuition fees of Welsh undergraduates who chose to study elsewhere in the UK should be ended because it was "not working for the universities".

"The overall cost of that policy... is simply too expensive and simply cannot be sustained in the medium to long term," he said.

The Hefcw settlement, announced on 22 May, increased Swansea's QR

funding by 19.6 per cent, from £11.5 million to £13.7 million. The biggest loser in cash terms following the REF is the University of South Wales, which sees its QR grant reduced by 45.6 per cent, from £2.8 million to £1.5 million. Cardiff University's QR funding was cut by £555,478 to £39.8 million, but it still takes 56 per cent of the total pot.

David Blaney, Hefcw's chief executive, said that the payment of fee grants by the Welsh government to home students studying in the country should ensure that institutions' combined fee and public funding will not be lower than this year.

"We have done our best to support the priority areas within the resources available to us," Dr Blaney said. "These decisions are never easy."

A Welsh government spokesman said that higher education funding, including that for part-time and postgraduate provision, was being considered by a review led by Sir Ian Diamond, principal of the University of Aberdeen.

"We remain clear that our tuition fee policy is an investment in the young person and that the choice of institution shall be driven by individual circumstances, not cost," the spokesman added.

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● For a table of the funding allocations, see <http://ow.ly/NhQ75>



Boost for Bangor the Hefcw settlement increases the university's QR funding

Schools-led teacher training 'risks supply crisis'

The new government has been warned by universities not to risk a teacher supply crisis by solely pursuing a schools-led training system, after being left frustrated in their attempts to help alleviate the problem.

James Noble-Rogers, executive director of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers, said that although the sector was broadly supportive of the previous government's schools-led philosophy, it was the universities sector that "delivers on numbers, particularly during periods of teacher shortage", and he called on the government to "make sure [that the HE] infrastructure is maintained".

The comments come as universities wait to find out whether the new Conservative majority administration will continue the coalition government's shift towards more training places being allocated to schools, which critics argue has failed to keep pace with the demand for new staff.

John Howson, honorary Norham fellow in the department of education at the University of Oxford, said if the School Direct training route "fails to recruit to the same extent as higher education", there could be severe consequences.

"We cannot afford to turn away people who want to be teachers just because of the whim of a school,"

he said. "People have to understand this is a training programme for the benefit of people going through it who we want to enter the teaching profession."

John Cater, vice-chancellor of Edge Hill University, suggested that the government should be wary of believing in one "preferred route" to qualified teacher status, if it is not the one the market prefers.

He also warned that if universities are not awarded the places to train teachers, they may reconsider where they invest their resources.

"I've got enormous amounts of resource tied up in the Faculty of Education, and I will always want to be heavily involved in teacher training,"

he said. "However, universities have a choice: they can take undergraduates on a range of other programmes, with no cap, and they don't have to necessarily put their teacher education courses at the front of that queue."

A Department for Education spokesman said that School Direct was "proving hugely popular with schools and teachers, with record numbers of requests" for places. But he added that "the role of universities in delivering teacher training places continues to be crucial – seven out of 10 School Direct places in 2014-15 are partnerships between schools and higher education institutions".

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Wage gap concerns have been raised about the tougher performance management in the LSE's new career structure

Two-tier pay system emerges at the LSE

Support staff on single salary spine with bespoke model set up to lure researchers. Jack Grove writes

The London School of Economics has effectively scrapped nationally agreed pay scales for most of its academic staff so that it can offer higher salaries to attract the world's best early career researchers, its personnel chief has admitted.

Indi Seehra, the LSE's director of human resources, said that one of the main reasons for introducing a new career structure for teaching staff in 2013-14 was that senior management felt that the school was not offering high enough salaries to entice leading junior academics.

Shortly after the arrival of the LSE's director Craig Calhoun in September 2012, it was decided that there was a "need to tackle remuneration" in order to attract more top talent, Mr Seehra told the Universities Human Resources national conference in Leeds on 20 May.

That meant "moving away from the single salary spine", which was introduced nationally in 2006, with the new salary scales increasing by 20 per cent in each band to allow the LSE to compete for top staff, he added. "We cannot do it on environ-

ment, as we are in central London, or on housing, so somewhere the issue of money has to come in," he said.

Under the LSE's career structure, assistant or associate professors teaching staff could be paid up to £74,516 a year in 2013-14, about £11,000 more than the maximum allowed under the national pay framework used by other universities in 2013-14. Professors are also paid more under the new career structure, with salaries potentially reaching £118,628 in 2013-14, according to the LSE's website.

Mr Seehra, a former head of human resources at the University of Cambridge, said that he expected Cambridge to follow the LSE's example and move within a few years to its own bespoke pay and career structure.

Inflationary concerns

His comments are likely to raise concerns that leading universities may use their financial power to poach top research academics, fuelling large-scale pay inflation at all levels of the sector. Asked how the LSE

would afford to pay the extra money to staff, Mr Seehra said that he hoped that research councils would show "greater flexibility" in making grant awards.

"We would say 'we are investing in the best researchers in this way and this is why we are putting in research costs in this way'," he said.

Delegates heard how the new career structure, which is due to be introduced for research staff this autumn, had faced considerable union opposition, particularly among support staff left on the old, lower-paid structure.

Questions had also been raised by the union about the tougher performance management used in the new structure, in which those who did not meet criteria would be required to leave after their eight-year probation period ended – a policy it described as "up or out".

But the clearly defined, albeit more stretching, performance criteria meant that academics could be largely left alone to carry out their research, Mr Seehra said.

"If you are really tough on who you are bringing in and tough when people need to go, you can really leave people on their own," he said. jack.grove@tesglobal.com

New blood needed to pump up research

Young innovative researchers need to come to the fore in medical science to help with the challenges that lie ahead, according to funders.

Declan Mulkeen, chief science officer at the Medical Research Council, said that informatics expertise, which tends to be found in younger scientists, is needed on peer review panels to help shape new thinking about data investigations.

Meanwhile, a senior official from the Wellcome Trust said that too many major awards were led by mature researchers and the field could benefit from the spirit of tech entrepreneurship.

Speaking at a Westminster Higher Education Forum on healthcare research on 21 May, Dr Mulkeen singled out computational medicine and informatics as one of several priorities for the future of medical research. He said that recognising patterns in large biological datasets is a "phenomenal challenge" that needs new methodologies and new data interrogation and visualisation tools.

"Informatics is also going to change the way we collaborate in science...But a real progressive effort is needed to effect this change in the right timescale," he added.

One change needed was to broaden undergraduate molecular biology programmes so that future researchers can connect better with maths and physics, he said.

Dr Mulkeen suggested that peer review might also have to adapt to the fact that researchers exploring large datasets could not articulate their aims at the outset of a project. This is counter to many of the "tried, trusted and tested" ways of thinking about research in peer review.

Peer review committees might be helped by researchers with expertise in this area, who tend to be younger.

Meanwhile, John Williams, head of science strategy, performance and impact at the Wellcome Trust, said that medical science needed to recognise that "too many of our major awards" are led by "the more mature representatives of the community".

"Look at the vibrant tech economies of Silicon Valley and the entrepreneurship shown by twenty- and thirtysomethings. We have to ask how we [can] bring that drive and energy into our research environment," he said.

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Care to explain yourself and your work? Well now you can

Video interviews by a non-specialist give scholars a platform to discuss research. Matthew Reisz writes

Why do translators keep us civilised? What does it mean for us – and especially for religious believers – that humans are closely related to both aggressive chimpanzees and pacific, hypersexual bonobos? What can we learn about democracy from the ancient Greeks? How far does it make sense to call the United States an “epicurean republic” – and why is it still so much more religious than almost anywhere else in the developed world?

These are just a few of the topics up for debate in some 60 hour-long video interviews (and accompanying e-books) with leading academics now available from Ideas Roadshow, a project that aims to increase understanding of specific research fields.

All the interviews are conducted by Howard Burton, who has an academic background in both theoretical physics and philosophy and who makes a point of asking the scholars about their background and experience as well as their work.

Ian Stewart, emeritus professor

of mathematics at the University of Warwick, tells him about the maths behind “colouring networks” and “trotting horses” but also explains how a steady stream of female graduate students from Portugal and Brazil have decisively disproved all theories about an “inherent, biological” element in differences in mathematical ability between the sexes.

Angie Hobbs, professor of the public understanding of philosophy at the University of Sheffield, describes the thousands of emails she receives – testimony to people “absolutely hungering for a more thoughtful, subtle and careful debate about [political] issues... who think that the problems that are facing us are so big that they’re fed up with the smart soundbite”. But she also tells of her unimpressive performance in “a re-enactment of Monty Python’s Philosophers’ Football Match”.

And Stefan Collini, professor of English literature and intellectual history at the University of Cambridge,



On your mettle expert knowledge

describes how the famous “two cultures” dispute between C.P. Snow and F.R. Leavis can still illuminate questions of “the value of public dialogue and the role of the modern university”.

In-flight education

Dr Burton served as the founding executive director of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Canada, from 1999 to 2007. So what makes him a good interviewer on topics ranging from the First Crusade to “the limits of consciousness”?

Although he puts in “at least three or four days of solid preparation” for each interview, Dr Burton acknowledges that he is “not an expert in any of the areas I talk about – the entire point is *not* to have experts talking to other experts, since the target audience consists of non-experts [students, teachers, the interested general public and academics keen to find out what ‘the guy down the hall’ does]. It allows me to play the role of curious non-expert and ask basic questions. It’s often helpful to the experts themselves as it forces them to clarify their thoughts in ways they hadn’t realised was necessary.”

Future plans include the release of 35 to 40 new videos each year. The e-books include the complete unedited texts, detailed references and pedagogic questions to promote discussion. But although the e-books obviously sell to university libraries, the content has also been leased to British Airways and Cathay Pacific for travellers who want to use a long plane journey as an opportunity to catch up on brain science, “Plato’s heaven” or “the cyclic universe”.

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Science: never use one word when three will do

More is more when it comes to writing the abstract of a scientific paper if a researcher wants it to be cited, despite advice to the contrary, according to research.

Three academics from the University of Chicago have put to the test the advice given to scientists on how to write an abstract to score citations.

The researchers found that short and clear abstracts lead to a lower than expected citation count, most likely because of the way that scientists use internet search engines to find papers to reference.

This runs counter to well-known rules that researchers are often given for writing science, which include keeping abstracts short, using plain language instead of jargon, and constructing compact sentences in the present tense with few adjectives and adverbs.



More is better in the abstract

The researchers, led by Cody Weinberger, a research assistant at Chicago, analysed the features of more than 1 million abstracts published over 17 years in eight disciplines, alongside citation data and 10 common rules for writing science.

The analysis took into account factors that could have affected the citation count, including the age of the article, the number of authors and references, and the journal it was published in.

“We have found that – when it comes to abstracts – ‘more is more’ despite clear and abundant advice to the contrary,” say the researchers in an editorial for *Plos Computational Biology*.

“Surprisingly, half of the typical suggestions – including those that are most common, about brevity

and clarity – are associated with a significant decrease in citations,” they add.

Short sentences benefited only papers in mathematics and physics, and using more, rather than fewer, adjectives and adverbs led to higher than expected citations. Abstracts with fewer, rather than more, easy words also scored more citations.

“The use of the present tense is beneficial in biology and psychology, while it has a negative impact in chemistry and physics, possibly reflecting differences in disciplinary culture,” the authors say.

The researchers say that the results are likely explained by the fact that scientists use search engines to find the right articles to cite. “Longer, more detailed, prolix prose is simply more available for search.” holly.else@tesglobal.com

News in brief

THE 'exam howlers' competition Bubbles for bloopers

Times Higher Education is launching this year's call for entries to its "exam howlers" competition, in which lecturers are invited to share their favourite mistakes from students' scripts. Last year's winner was John Milliken, lecturer in education at Ulster University, for his entry about a student's claim that "the [hole in the] ozone layer was caused by arseholes". Another blooper he submitted – that "in future all cars [will] be fitted with Catholic converters" – also proved popular with *THE*'s newsroom, as did the view that Google is "one of the two main suppositories of data in the world", which was submitted by Verity Black, information technology programme director at the University of Sheffield.

• *Send examples of unfortunate typos, spoonerisms and misunderstandings to john.elmes@tesglobal.com by 26 June. A magnum of champagne will be awarded for the winning entry.*

Higher education briefs Who's in and who's out?

Liam Byrne is to remain as Labour's shadow universities, science and skills minister. Mr Byrne, who was appointed to the brief in October 2013, featured in the election campaign, with David Cameron repeatedly brandishing a copy of his infamous 2010 "there is no money" note, which he wrote upon leaving his government post in the Treasury. Chuka Umunna, who stepped down from the Labour leadership race, remains as shadow business secretary. Meanwhile, the Scottish National Party has confirmed that newly elected MP Michelle Thomson will be its spokeswoman for business, innovation and skills. Ms Thomson was elected to represent Edinburgh West in the general election after a career in financial services and, in the run-up to the Scottish independence referendum, serving as managing director of Business for Scotland for two years.

Pay talks

Unison welcomes latest offer

The trade union that represents university support staff has broadly welcomed the latest national pay offer. Unison is currently consulting its

higher education members about the final 1 per cent pay offer announced by employers on 15 May, which also includes additional rises of up to 2.65 per cent for the lowest-paid staff to bring them in line with the living wage. Unison's higher education service group executive said that the offer is "the best that can be achieved by negotiation and that any improvement will only be secured by sustained strike action". The University and College Union was due to decide at its annual congress in Glasgow on 23-25 May whether it will put the offer to its membership.

Student loan book New body 'to speed up sale'

A decision by George Osborne to bring together the two bodies that manage taxpayer stakes in businesses aims to accelerate the sale of assets, including the student loan book. The formation of UK Government Investments – which brings together the Shareholder Executive and UK Financial Investments – is part of a plan to deliver the biggest ever sale of publicly owned corporate and financial assets in 2015-16. That includes the sale of the pre-2012 income-contingent student loan book, as well as public shareholdings such as that in Royal Bank of Scotland. The chancellor said: "If we want a more productive economy, let's get the government out of the business of owning great chunks of our banking system – and indeed other assets that should be in the private sector." Critics have claimed that although the sale of student loans may produce a short-term cash benefit, it will amount to a loss in the long-term as a result of lost future repayments and subsidies required to mitigate risks for private buyers.

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twitter

Our feature asking if **the traditional doctoral thesis was becoming a thing of the past** had our Twitter followers debating. "Yes, yes, yes," said @OmanReagan, "doctoral candidates should write x number of articles instead." Cultural geographer @jfourniere said that in his discipline, "it is normal to publish whilst writing up your thesis – have your cake and eat it!" @Rob_Briner had a short and to the point answer to the question "is the thesis obsolete?". "I know mine is," he tweeted.

www.twitter.com/timeshighered

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The crucible for firing up industry and innovation

Chris Havergal hears how a soon-to-open campus aims to create big economic opportunities for Wales

It once provided jobs for thousands of workers. But the decline and eventual closure of BP's petrochemical operations in Swansea was mirrored all over Wales as the heavy industries of old melted away.

Now it is hoped that part of this estate will once more be a model for and a mainstay of the Welsh economy as Swansea University's new Bay Campus.

The £450 million project will have at its heart cutting-edge engineering research and high-level skills training. The College of Engineering and the School of Management will be the first departments to move to the site later this year, alongside 5,000 students and 1,000 staff.

Collaboration with industry will feature heavily, with major firms such as Rolls-Royce and Tata Steel already planning research partnerships and more expected to follow.

The new campus has attracted significant funding from the Welsh and the UK governments, as well as from the European Union, in the hope that high-grade research and a skilled workforce will encourage businesses to relocate to the Swansea region, and thus spur economic regeneration in Wales.

Richard Davies, Swansea's vice-chancellor, is eagerly awaiting the opening of the new campus. Swansea had, he said, "fallen a bit behind the pack of research-led universities" at the turn of the millennium, and efforts to catch up have long been restricted by the size of the landlocked Singleton Park Campus.

"We didn't have the space for growing the academic offering, and we didn't have the space for working with industry in the way indus-



Room for expansion the Bay Campus will act as a catalyst for promoting the region as an investment hot spot

try wants to get involved with the university much more closely," the vice-chancellor explained. "They want open innovation working with academics, so the whole campus was designed after talking to our partners about what they wanted."

In anticipation of the move, Swansea has already doubled the size of its engineering department, and plans are to double it again over the next four or five years.

The new campus will also allow the university to increase its student numbers, from the current level of 16,000 or so to about 25,000 over the next three or four years.

Tradition of trail-blazing

This represents a period of significant change for Swansea, but for Iwan Davies, the pro vice-chancellor (internationalisation and external affairs) who has led the development of the Bay Campus, it is very much

in line with the university's traditions.

He highlighted that Swansea had become the UK's first campus university under principal John Fulton in the late 1940s, long before the expansion of the plate-glass universities, and underlined that the campus experience was an important part of the "Swansea experience".

Professor Iwan Davies said that Swansea also had a proud history of working with industry. BP itself had been a long-standing benefactor of the university, and the company has donated the land and substantial funding for the new campus.

But he acknowledged that the old model of economic development in Wales, of simply providing land grants, "doesn't create the sustainable model that collaborating on research and development does".

To foster industry collaborations, Swansea has created new research institutes with a focus on applied research and commercialisation.

And moving the School of Management to the new campus was a direct response to economic needs, Professor Iwan Davies said, because many engineering start-ups needed graduates with strong business skills

to help extract the full potential of their innovations.

The aim of devoting resources and attention to the new campus was to turn the university into "a catalyst for promoting the region as an investment hot spot", Professor Iwan Davies said.

"What industry requires is world-class research to scale and also enough flow of graduates coming through, and this is an investment in both," he said. "We want to build up the scale of internationally excellent research to provide sufficient resilience for multinational enterprises to potentially co-locate not simply research and development but also potentially bigger facilities, such as service facilities and manufacturing facilities, within the locality."

When all the talk is of the strength of the London economy and the so-called "northern powerhouse", the university leadership wants to remind people that Swansea should not be forgotten.

"This is not something you can create overnight," Professor Iwan Davies said. "Our success is related to the fact that we have been collaborating with major industry for 30 or 40 years."

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In numbers

£450m

Cost of developing the Bay Campus

University of Edinburgh

A collaborative degree in integrative biomedical sciences is being launched by the University of Edinburgh and China's Zhejiang University. The four-year undergraduate programme will be taught entirely in English by academics from Edinburgh and Zhejiang at the Chinese institution's new international campus in Hangzhou. Staff from Zhejiang have visited Scotland several times in recent years and have aligned their existing biomedical sciences degree with Edinburgh's equivalent. The jointly delivered course is expected to start in 2016.



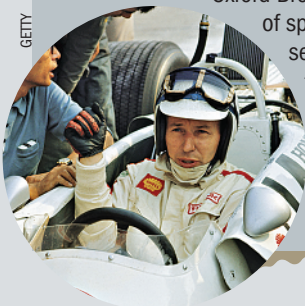
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University of Warwick

Researchers have been awarded £3.19 million in funding to support a flagship project into anti-microbial resistance (AMR). The funding for a team drawn from the University of Warwick's School of Life Sciences and its department of physics was awarded by a cross-research council "war cabinet" on AMR comprising the Medical Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. The Warwick group will study a vital link in the chain of AMR – the bacterial cell wall – to aid the development of new antibiotics.

Oxford Brookes University

A Formula One champion will speak at an event to celebrate the 150-year history of a university. On 29 May, the department of mechanical engineering and mathematical sciences at Oxford Brookes University will hold a day of special events. This will include several high-profile speakers from the Formula One industry, among them past world champion John Surtees. Other speakers include an aerodynamicist from Red Bull Racing and the managing director of BMW (UK).



GETTY

Royal Holloway, University of London

A recent film studies graduate has been awarded a Bafta for her performance in a hard-hitting drama about domestic abuse. Georgina Campbell, who graduated from Royal Holloway, University of London last year, received the TV industry's top award for acting on 10 May in recognition of her starring role in BBC Three's *Murdered by my Boyfriend*. The 22-year-old, who has also appeared in *Holby City*, *Casualty* and *Doctors*, beat Sheridan Smith, Sarah Lancashire and Keeley Hawes to pick up the leading actress award.



ALAMY

Northumbria University

A letting agency set up by Northumbria Students' Union has saved students more than £100,000 since it was created in 2012. The not-for-profit NU:Lets service is free for students to use and saves them agency fees, which cost an average of £150, every time a tenancy agreement begins. Natalie-Dawn Hodgson, the students' union president, said: "We're delighted to have hit the £100,000-saved mark, and we're looking forward to continued savings for students while delivering a top-quality service."



ALAMY

University of Cambridge

A sculpture to celebrate the close bonds between one university and Poland has been erected. *The Sierpiński Tree*, based on a geometric figure developed by the Polish mathematician Waclaw Sierpiński, is on display at the University of Cambridge's Centre for Mathematical Sciences, having previously been housed on London's South Bank. Professor Sierpiński was a pioneer in the field of fractals in the early 20th century. Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, the university's vice-chancellor, said the sculpture was a "fitting symbol" of the long history of mathematical excellence in Poland and Cambridge.

University of Bedfordshire

A university is working with local general practitioners to address what it calls a "sustainability time bomb" in the NHS. The University of Bedfordshire has partnered with Luton Clinical Commissioning Group to help develop GP leaders through the Luton Future GP Leaders Scheme. "We are investing in the development of selected GPs by offering fully funded courses and study leave through our MA in medical education or our executive MBA," said Clare Morris, head of clinical education and leadership at Bedfordshire.



ALAMY

King's College London

A professor is presenting a major BBC radio series on the history of India. Sunil Khilnani, director of King's College London's India Institute, is following a journey from ancient India to the 21st century in *Incarnations – India in 50 Lives*. The first 25 episodes of the 50-part series, which was recorded in India over the past year, are being broadcast on Radio 4 each weekday until mid-June.



United States

Fraternities 'top liability risk'

US university fraternities, or male student societies, are widely considered to be a significant risk to institutions, according to a survey of university risk managers. The University Risk Management and Insurance Association survey of 60 managers found that about two-thirds judge the potential for problems arising from fraternities to be among their institutions' "top liability risks". Most of those interviewed are not convinced that their institution's current strategies for addressing fraternity risks are sufficient.

Feature, page 40



GETTY

Poland

Science Picnic: a feast for the mind

Europe's largest outdoor event aimed at promoting science focused on the theme of light. Poland's annual Science Picnic, now in its 19th year, was held in Warsaw. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education, one of the partners behind the picnic, offered visitors the chance to sample experiments with a Crookes radiometer (a device for measuring the intensity of light) and optical illusions. The event also promoted the ministry's "Occupation: Scientist" campaign, where its "ambassador" Monika Koperska – winner of the first Polish FameLab competition for three-minute presentations of scientific projects – spoke about the phenomenon of "white balance".

China

Trio charged with stealing tech secrets

Three Chinese professors are among six men indicted in the US "for what authorities say was a long-running conspiracy to steal valuable technology from two US firms". Reuters reported that the US government "alleges that the men



carried out their plan with the intent of benefiting the Chinese government and Tianjin University", and other bodies including "a university investment arm called Tianjin Micro Nano Manufacturing Tech". The indictment centres on an alleged plan to set up a company in China to exploit stolen US technology that filters wireless signals in mobile phones.

GETTY

Turkey

Ray of light for Syrian refugees

A university for Syrian refugees is to be built in a joint project between Turkey and Qatar. The university will be located in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, close to the Syrian border. Fatma Sahin, the mayor of Gaziantep, told Turkey's state-run press service Anadolu Agency that several potential sites had been located. The Qatari embassy had been conducting planning studies, she added. About 1.5 million Syrians are estimated to have crossed the border into Turkey to escape the conflict in their homeland.



ALAMY

Latin America

Exploit the rich PhD pickings

A report suggests that the surplus of PhD graduates in industrialised countries could be a "great opportunity" for Latin American countries to attract talent. Writing in the journal *International Higher Education*, Iván Pacheco, a visiting scholar at the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, said that most Latin American countries lack a clear policy for recruiting abroad. Often efforts are focused around bringing expatriates home from their work overseas, he added.


Germany

Woman earns doctorate that was stalled by Nazis

A 102-year-old German woman has passed her PhD 77 years after the Nazis stopped her from completing her studies. Ingeborg Syllm-Rapoport is believed to be the oldest person in the world to gain a doctorate after she received the title from the University of Hamburg. Professor Syllm-Rapoport was barred from her final oral exam on diphtheria in 1938 because her mother was Jewish. Nevertheless, she went on to become an expert on neonatal medicine in the US, where she qualified as a doctor, before returning to Germany. Having had to revise almost 80 years of medical advances in diphtheria despite her failing eyesight, Professor Syllm-Rapoport's performance in her 45-minute viva was described by examiners as "brilliant".



REUTERS



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The tip-top club: home to 173 men and just 28 women

Of top 200 institutions in the world, only one in seven has a female leader, research shows. Ellie Bothwell reports

Just 14 per cent of the universities ranked in the top 200 in the world are female-led, a major higher education conference will hear next week.

Figures based on data from the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, to be presented at the British Council's Going Global conference in London on 2 June, show that only 28 of the world's top 201 universities have a female leader. And that number will soon fall to 26, with men taking over the reins at the universities of Alberta and Miami by the end of this summer.

Nearly half the female leaders (46 per cent) are at the helm of universities in the US, while 14 per cent lead an institution in the UK. These nations also dominate the list of the top 10 institutions led by women: seven are in the US, two are in the UK and one is in Canada.

Although the US and the UK have by far the most institutions in the overall top 200, 74 and 29 respectively, the countries still have much work to do to reduce the gender gap at the top of their universities. Just 17.6 per cent of the US institutions ranked in the top 200, and 13.8 per cent of the UK institutions in that elite group, are led by women.

Sweden is the country with the highest percentage of women leading universities in the list – two out of five of its institutions have a female president or vice-chancellor. The Netherlands has 11 institutions in the top 200, and three are led by women.

Strikingly, 19 of the 28 countries represented in the top 200 have no female university leaders in that elite cohort, according to figures that will be presented at a session on the *THE* rankings by Miguel Antonio Lim, EU Marie Curie doctoral fellow at Aarhus University in Denmark.

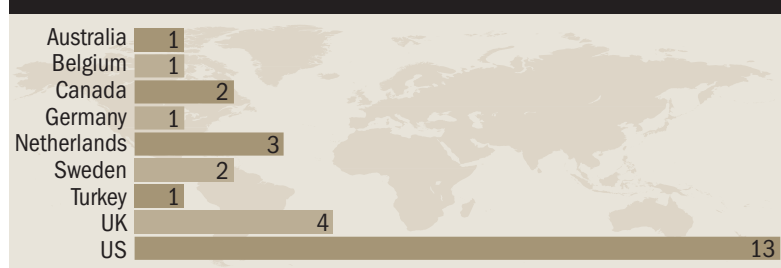
Dame Nancy Rothwell, vice-chancellor of the University of Manchester (eighth among the elite



SMALL ELITE: TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS LED BY WOMEN

Position in THE World University Rankings 2014-15	University	Country	University head
2	Harvard University	US	Drew Gilpin Faust
=9	Imperial College London	UK	Alice Gast
16	University of Pennsylvania	US	Amy Gutmann
26	University of Washington	US	Ana Mari Cauce (acting)
=29	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	US	Phyllis Wise
=29	University of Wisconsin-Madison	US	Rebecca Blank
39	McGill University	Canada	Suzanne Fortier
=52	University of Manchester	UK	Nancy Rothwell
54	Brown University	US	Christina Hull Paxson
=55	University of California, Davis	US	Linda P.B. Katehi

ON THE MAP: FEMALE-LED TOP-200 INSTITUTIONS



institutions run by a woman and 52nd in the overall top 200), said the paucity of female leaders was “most likely a combination of factors: huge time commitment, few role models, lack of confidence”.

Regarding disciplinary backgrounds, nearly half (46 per cent) the female leaders of a top-ranked university are social scientists, compared with less than a quarter of men (23 per cent). Conversely, the most popular discipline for male leaders is natural sciences – the field of 27 per cent of men in the list, but only 18 per cent of women.

Phyllis Wise is chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the fifth highest-ranked university led by a woman and joint 29th in the overall world ranking. She said the focus should not be on “reaching some target number” but on female leaders helping “those women who are earlier in their careers to be ready to walk through these doors when they open”.

Her point was echoed by Rebecca Blank, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which sits jointly with Urbana-Champaign at 29th in the WUR. “As long as people have a [fixed] view of what a dean or president should look like, women will have difficulty moving into these jobs,” she said.

ellie.bothwell@tesglobal.com



Broncos, pirates, professors: all powerless before corporate march

Rain and a blustery wind spoiled the big reveal of the Bronze Bronc statue, a weighty upgrade on Bucky the Bronc, the moth-eaten mascot for the basketball team at one of my former universities, the University of Texas-Pan American. Our university hoopsters on the Mexican border often lost by double or triple digits. Bucky was less an indomitable mustang, more a bipolar donkey on the skids.

A substantial chunk of alloy created by a "renowned artist" from another state, the Bronze Bronc was unveiled in 2002 and was a welcome reinforcement to his foppish counterpart. "Nuevo Bronc" stood on his concrete plinth as if eternally ready to charge headlong anyone doubting the credibility or virtue of the university's sports teams, students, faculty and administrators.

So the colourful mariachis played on loudly, if not well, at the games; the dignitaries rendered their dreary speeches; and hope sprang eternal among the gathered crowd.

Imagine, then, the pushback a decade later when UTPA's "athletic branding committee" selected a new mascot, the "Vaquero", to replace both the Bronze Bronc and sidekick Bucky the Bronc. The *vaquero* "embodies strength, determination, pride and respect", we were told. We also got a new motto: "We are one".

In the corporatisation of many US public universities, rebranding and marketing includes not only the renaming of football stadiums and library carrels in honour of donors, but also the reshuffling of the basic principles on which our institutions rest. Students are now customers.

At East Carolina University, my current institution, the sports mascot PeeDee the Pirate was turned from a ferocious marauder into a Disneyesque metrosexual with a smile any orthodontist would be proud of. There was also a five-year, consultant-driven

university reorganisation mandated by our state legislature.

With the new mascot came the expected paraphernalia: hats, wallets, jackets, number-plate frames, infant clothing, jewellery, children's toys and games, sunglasses, key chains, coffee mugs, rainwear, luggage and the "East Carolina Pirates Vintage Art Glass Night Light".

Also came the new university motto: "Tomorrow starts here".

Leaving aside just where tomorrow really begins, along with the new mascot and the new motto marched the purposeful commodification of most educational goods and services, including the professoriate. Like many others, I remain unsure how faculty fit into a system in which public resources are privatised and no one seems to notice.

Included in this backstage list fabricated by highly paid consultants is the deskilling of university faculty, university instructors paid

poverty wages, the fetishising of assessment and its metrics, the proliferation of online classes taken by resident students and the assumed professional superiority of all staff winning research grants.

As graduation events come and go this year, I see far too many of my student-customers ushered off the graduation stage with no clue as to what they have learned or why they have learned it. As they begin their careers, these same student-customers are frequently burdened by outlandish debts.

After our restructure, faculty seem left with little function, place or role in educational institutions reconstructed to ape industrial parks. This new system does nothing but leave the professoriate courtside with little to do but cheer on our student-customers to supposed victory – just like the Vaquero and PeeDee the Pirate.

Robert Lee Maril is professor of sociology, East Carolina University.





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Interview

£25K 'doesn't even scratch the surface'

Mick Fuller talks to Holly Else about the changes he's seen to postgraduate funding as UKCGE chair

In the nine years that he has been part of the UK Council for Graduate Education, Mick Fuller has seen sweeping changes to postgraduate education.

But as he prepares to step down from his three-year stint as chair of the organisation, he expressed disappointment over the recent lack of joined-up policy for postgraduate provision.

He said that announcements for a loans scheme for postgraduate taught and PhD students made in the Autumn Statement and the Budget – the consultations for which end this week – lacked enough detail to make it possible to judge how the policy is going to work.

“[They] sound like soundbites to win an election rather than a true higher education policy,” he told *Times Higher Education*. “That is what disappoints me as there doesn't seem to be a big joined-up comprehensive...policy.”

Professor Fuller, who is also head of the graduate school at Plymouth University, said he hoped that now that the general election and its associated “change paralysis” was over, policymakers would have a chance to reflect on how best to move forwards with postgraduate funding.

The outcomes of the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Postgraduate Support Scheme pilots should play a part in this reflection.

The £25 million scheme, which ran projects in 20 universities from 2014, offered a test bed for new ways to support students progressing from undergraduate to postgraduate taught courses. Support ranged from funding mechanisms, such as credit unions, to courses closely linked to industry and initia-

tives to address the under-representation of certain groups in specific subjects.

It was subsequently followed by a top-up £50 million scholarship programme designed to support students who had paid £9,000 tuition fees at undergraduate level, ahead of the roll-out of the national loans scheme in 2016-17.

Professor Fuller said that there was a risk that when the master's loans scheme comes in, course fees would be pushed up. In recent years, universities have “sat tight” on master's fees, implementing only modest rises despite the fact that teaching funding from Hefce has been slowly squeezed and reduced to nothing for many subjects, he said.

Institutions resisted ramping up fees to meet costs because they knew that students could not afford to “work at McDonald's and pay £11,000-£12,000” to study, he said. “If they put their fees up to an [economically viable] level, it would kill the postgraduate taught market immediately because about 90 per cent of people coming to [do it] were funding themselves,” he added.

“Many universities took their eye off postgraduate taught provision,” he went on, and instead turned their attention to the “meteoric change” to undergraduate fees. As a result, master's courses have been the “forgotten pillar” of postgraduate education, he said.

Catalyst for change

This contrasts markedly with the situation in postgraduate research, where the UK has “led the world” over the time that Professor Fuller has been part of the UKCGE.

An influential 2003 report – *SET*



Design issues were the loans schemes for postgraduate taught and PhD students simply

for Success – by the late physicist Sir Gareth Roberts led to a funding boost for those entering PhD study, with it helping universities to increase their emphasis on researchers' professional and personal development. For the first time, concentrating on a student's research project was not enough, and it was recognised that other skills should play a part in training.

“That marked a real hive of activity in the postgraduate research agenda...There was lots of cash put into universities [and] there was an incentive for universities to think about this and deliver on it,”



Mick Fuller at UKCGE for nine years

said Professor Fuller.

It was the “catalyst” for a series of subsequent changes, such as the creation of university graduate schools, which became responsible for administering the money and reporting on how the skills agenda was delivering.

“It marked a massive upsurge in meetings and discussions and a whole new series of jobs within universities...[It] has become firmly embedded within university structures,” he added.

This has been “revolutionary and copied across the world”, he said. These ideas are now being embedded at universities in Europe and Australia and are being considered in the US, where institutions have “fallen behind” on employability and generic skills, he added.

The UKCGE has played its part in this by bringing people together to discuss the issues at an increased number of workshops, meetings and conferences that universities had the money to send people on, he said.



CORBIS

'soundbites to win an election rather than a true higher education policy'?

Changes in the way that the research councils fund PhD students soon followed with the advent of doctoral training partnerships and centres for doctoral training. These have concentrated PhD training in a smaller number of institutions and developed students' broader professional skills.

But although the programmes come with benefits, such as getting academics to think more widely about doctoral training and extending PhD funding from three to three and a half to four years, they still provide for only a minority of students, he explained.

Professor Fuller said 80 per cent of PhD students at UK universities are not funded by the research councils, so the "real challenge now" is to find ways to offer all students similar opportunities. Institutions also have to contribute to these centres with additional studentships, which usually come from Hefce's quality-related research funding.

"Effectively what it is doing is

dragging the universities to put their Hefce income into those minority doctoral training partnerships," he said, adding that other subject areas may get "starved" of studentships.

As Professor Fuller embarks on his final co-opted year on the UKCGE executive committee, he said that he is also "suspicious" about one aspect that lies ahead for postgraduate research: chancellor George Osborne's PhD loan system, which offers students the chance to borrow up to £25,000.

"I am a bit worried as to what is going to come out of the current discussion and the Paul Nurse investigation of the research councils, whether the dual-funding system [for PhDs] will be scrapped or whether it will be completely reviewed," he said.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds for a PhD doesn't even scratch the surface. It takes £75,000 to study for a PhD," he said.

holly.else@tesglobal.com

Opinion, page 30

Grant winners

National Institute for Health Research

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation programme

- *Award winner:* Andrew Horne
- *Institution:* University of Edinburgh
- *Value:* £1,215,358

A multi-centre randomised controlled trial of the efficacy and mechanism of action of Gabapentin for the management of chronic pelvic pain in women

- *Award winner:* Alberto Sanchez-Fueyo
- *Institution:* King's College London
- *Value:* £1,671,143

Prospective randomised marker-based trial to assess the clinical utility and safety of biomarker-guided immunosuppression withdrawal in liver transplantation ("LiverTOL-Dx" Trial)

Health Technology Assessment programme

- *Award winner:* Simon Thompson
 - *Institution:* University of Cambridge
 - *Value:* £226,643
- Screening women for abdominal aortic aneurysm

Economic and Social Research Council

Research grants

- *Award winner:* Timothy Hope
- *Institution:* University of Salford
- *Value:* £150,136

A profiler for crime, criminal justice and social harm

- *Award winner:* Krijn Peters
- *Institution:* Swansea University
- *Value:* £134,268

At the end of the feeder road: assessing the impact of track construction for motorbike taxis on agrarian development in Liberia

- *Award winner:* Alison Brown
- *Institution:* Cardiff University
- *Value:* £411,516

Economic recovery in post-conflict cities: the role of the urban informal economy

- *Award winner:* Michaela Benzeval
- *Institution:* University of Essex
- *Value:* £1,467,783

How can biomarkers and genetics improve our understanding of society and health?

IN DETAIL



Award winner
Daniel Stevens
Institution
University of Exeter
Value £241,890
Media in context and the 2015 general election:

how traditional and social media shape elections and governing

Researchers on this project will explore pressing questions relating to media effects on governance and elections. These include:

- the flow of campaign information, which is traditionally depicted as trickling down from elites to the masses;
- the changing media landscape and the impact of declining newspaper readership and trust in media;
- the role of traditional and social media in the post-election period (interpretations of poll results may confer legitimacy on an outcome and may provide a narrative about an electoral mandate).

The project will also look at flaws in election coverage studies. Much work ignores non-election coverage, thus not permitting analysis of the overall news context. British media studies also tend to rely solely on survey data, ignoring the benefits for establishing causation and effect sizes offered by field experiments.

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

Research grants

- *Award winner:* Marina Bloj
- *Institution:* University of Bradford
- *Value:* £17,501

Neural pathways underlying human 3D motion perception

- *Award winner:* Ruaidhri Carmody
- *Institution:* University of Glasgow
- *Value:* £693,836

Dissecting the function of Bcl-3 in NF-kB signalling in B cells

- *Award winner:* Giorgio Gilestro
 - *Institution:* Imperial College London
 - *Value:* £375,531
- Genetics of sleep regulation and function: the AKR genes in *Drosophila*

Obituary

Anthony Yu, 1938-2015

A leading scholar of religion and literature best known for his translation of the Chinese epic *The Journey to the West* has died.

Anthony Yu was born in Hong Kong on 6 October 1938, although the Second World War forced his family to flee to mainland China in 1941. To keep him distracted and entertained in air raid shelters and other dangerous environments, his grandfather would recount the fantastical stories of a wise monk and his companions Monkey and Pig, collected in the classic 16th-century Chinese novel *The Journey to the West*.

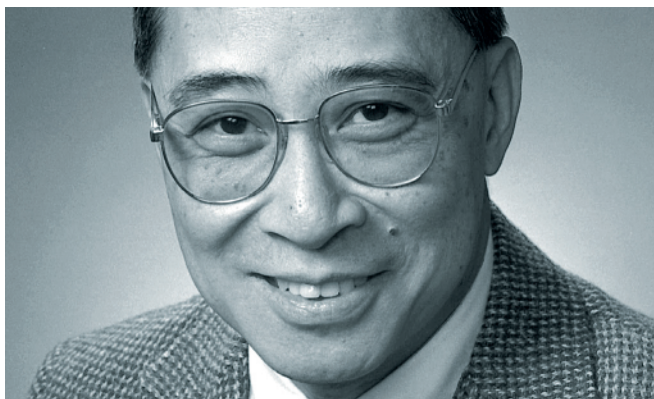
Coming to the US in 1956, Professor Yu studied history and English at Houghton College in New York and the philosophy of religion at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He then moved to the University of Chicago for a PhD in religion and literature.

It was on graduating in 1969 that Professor Yu rediscovered *The Journey to the West*, then available only in a single abridged English edition. He therefore embarked on a complete four-volume translation of this vast text, published to great acclaim in 1977-83, which combines readability with a scholarly commitment to tracking down all the literary allusions. *The New York Times* praised it for “do[ing] full justice to the adventure, lyricism and buffoonery” of the original while remaining “completely sensitive to the spiritual content of the text as well”. An abridged version, *The Monkey and the Monk*, was published in 2006 and a revised second edition in 2012.

Remaining at Chicago for the whole of his 46-year career, Professor Yu worked across five different departments and retired in 2005 as the Carl Darling Buck distinguished service professor emeritus in humanities. He was always committed to a comparative approach to literary studies and wrote influential articles that argue for the importance of studying religion and literature alongside each other. His other publications include *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber* (1997) – an analysis of one of the greatest Chinese novels – *State and Religion in China* (2005) and *Comparative Journeys: Essays on Literature and Religion East and West* (2008).

Margaret M. Mitchell, dean of the Divinity School at Chicago, described Professor Yu as “an outstanding scholar, whose work was marked by uncommon erudition, range of reference and interpretive sophistication”. Yet he was also “a person of inimitable elegance, dignity, passion and the highest standards for everything he did”.

Professor Yu died after a short illness on 12 May and is survived by his wife Priscilla and son Christopher.
matthew.reisz@tesglobal.com



HE & me

Elizabeth Fenn is Walter S. and Lucienne Driskill chair in Western American History at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her academic field is the early American West. Last month she was awarded the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for History, for her book *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People*

● Where and when were you born?

I was born in 1959 in Arlington, California, but we moved a lot when I was young, eventually landing in New Jersey when I was five. That's where I grew up.

● How has this shaped you?

New Jersey cultivated toughness and gave me a bit of an attitude. I learned how to look out for myself, but this came with an impatience and selfishness that I still struggle to shake.

● Did you even consider being nominated let alone winning?

No. As my husband (fellow historian Peter Wood) says, this was a lightning strike out of the clear, blue sky.

● A Pulitzer Prize is a world-renowned award. Are academics concerned with gongs?

Academics are like everyone else – we love accolades. But I don't know anyone who pursues their work with this in mind. Besides, prizes like this result from shared effort. Writing a book is a solitary experience, yet none of us works alone. My colleagues helped; the Mandan people helped; my husband, friends, family and predecessors helped.

● The book took you 10 years to complete. Is this the most fitting end to a decade of work?

I hope the Pulitzer is not so much an end as a beginning. The prize recognises the central, foundational place of native peoples in American history. I'm not the first scholar to make a case for this, but the prize helps to move us all ahead.

● What inspired you to research and write about the Mandans?

The research for my first book, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*, led me to the Mandans. The Mandan set-



Higher education is being reduced to a vocational school. We've lost sight of its bigger meaning, its resonance for the human soul

tlements were a major population hub, with flourishing commerce and culture, at the very centre of the North American continent.

● Do you think higher education is too concerned with impact?

Impact factors discourage risk-taking and intellectual creativity, and they cannot convey the subjective qualities of the work. I am reminded of Frederick Winslow Taylor's turn of the century efforts to improve industrial efficiency with “scientific management”. The result was the alienation of workers and the degradation of work.

● Ahead of the US presidential election next year, what are the priorities for higher education?

The first issue would be student



ELIZABETH FENN

debt. It's crazy. A second, related issue is restoring state funding to higher education. And a third issue is the cultivation of public relevance for the arts and humanities. Higher education is being reduced to a vocational school. We've lost sight of its bigger meaning, its resonance for the human soul.

● **What has changed most in global higher education in the past 10 years?**

Students have little sense of why history matters. In the immediate post-9/11 years, history majors jumped in number as everyone tried to figure out how that event came to pass. But the passage of time and the 2008 financial crisis have reconfigured student priorities. A first-year student arriving at university this fall was three or four years old at the time of 9/11. The post 9/11 sense of urgency in sorting out the world has yielded to a relentless focus on postgraduate employment.

● **What kind of undergraduate were you?**

I was a lacklustre undergraduate until I started studying history. Once that happened, I could

hardly contain myself, and my learning went through the roof.

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

My most memorable moment by far was the spring 1981 acquittal of Ku Klux Klansmen involved in the murder of five protesters at the Greensboro Massacre on 3 November 1979. For students at Duke, just 50 miles up the road, this was a deeply politicising event. Many if not all those killed had ties to the university.

● **Tell us about someone you've always admired.**

Nelson Mandela. My parents told me about apartheid and Mandela's imprisonment when I was a kid, and I have admired him ever since. I got to meet him at a reception in Houston in 1991. I still have not washed my right hand. (Just kidding.)

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

The best things are my students, my colleagues, my teaching and my research and writing. The worst thing is grading. Yuck.

John Elmes

THE SCHOLARLY WEB

Weekly transmissions from the blogosphere

"Historians for Britain" is, according to its website (<http://owl.li/N7YPO>), a campaign headed by some of Britain's leading historians and academics who believe that there needs to be a substantial change in Britain's relationship with the European Union.

The group plans to produce research, speeches and seminars in order to highlight what it describes as "the historical myths that surround the EU and look at Britain's troubled history with the Union". The campaigners were, they say, "inspired by a group of historians who signed a letter to *The Times* in 2013 calling for a renegotiation of Britain's membership of the EU".

Its website lists a number of its illustrious supporters (<http://owl.li/N7ZhW>). They include David Starkey, television presenter and honorary fellow of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge; David Abulafia, professor of Mediterranean history at the University of Cambridge; author and broadcaster Amanda Foreman; and Andrew Roberts, visiting professor in the war studies department at King's College London.

A number of choice quotes from supporting academics are displayed on the site, including one from Nigel Saul, professor of medieval history at Royal Holloway, University of London, who says that the single currency is "wrecking lives in the Mediterranean". Dr Abulafia says that the EU "has to change".

Not everyone agrees. In fact, the group has attracted a barrage of criticism online, particularly after an article penned by Dr Abulafia appeared on the History Today website on 11 May (<http://owl.li/N81HR>). In it, he writes that the "British political temper has been milder than that in the larger European countries", pointing out that "Fascism and antisemitism never struck deep roots here".

Academics on Twitter were less than impressed. "Can't believe this #historiansforbritain crap," said Kathryn Maude (@krmaude), a "feminist, activist, medievalist, anglo-saxonist, gin-lover, knitting enthusiast" and PhD student based at King's College London. Some also started a rival hashtag: #historiansforeurope.

"Does antisemitism need to have concentration camps to be recognized as having 'deep roots'?" asked "antiquarian" and "early modernist/medievalist" Sjoerd Levelt (@SLevelt). Sarah Crook (@SarahRoseCrook), a "social historian" and PhD candidate at Queen Mary University of London, said that Historians for Britain offered an "unconvincing argument poorly supported by evidence".

There were blogs in response, too. The History Matters blog from the University of Sheffield (<http://owl.li/N83hH>) carried a post by Charles West (@Pseudo_Isidore), the institution's senior lecturer in medieval history. "From an early medieval perspective, at least, it cannot be said that England has always stood apart from continental affairs," he writes. "On the contrary, for England to continue to play a key and immediate role in those affairs in the future would be wholly consonant with the country's very deepest roots."

History Today later carried an open letter (<http://owl.li/N8540>), signed by more than 250 historians opposed to the original article.

"Political, social, cultural, and economic life in Britain has always depended on, drawn upon, and given back to Europe," it says. "Britain's past – and, therefore, its future – must be understood in the context of a complex, messy, exciting, and above all continuous interaction with European neighbours and indeed with the rest of the world."

Chris Parr

● Send links to topical, insightful and quirky online comment by and about academics to chris.parr@tesglobal.com

Careers intelligence

There's method in this madness

An award-winning lecturer explains why 'unsettling' students is a valuable tactic. John Elmes reports

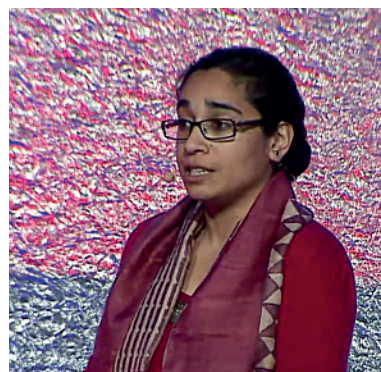
"I'm a bit of a mad teacher. I'm always welcoming the bizarre, the creative, the extraordinary into the classroom. I'm a huge fan of the unusual."

This is perhaps not the first thing an academic might admit to in an interview, but for Shakuntala Banaji, lecturer and programme director of the MSc in media, communication and development at the London School of Economics, it is a crucial aspect of her teaching methods, which have recently won her the annual European Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Social Sciences and Humanities, awarded by the Central European University. In a marketised sector, Dr Banaji said,

she understood the notion of "knowledge as instrumental – what's going to get me a job, what do I need to pass an exam – versus knowledge that is a life skill, that will inspire you; knowledge that's humane".

"I'm very respectful of the way financial and economic pressures are pushing [students] and their families to think in instrumental ways about knowledge," she said. "[But] I'm giving them a skill, through the way in which I run seminars, showing them that they can learn, even when people are holding very differing views, to communicate with each other."

Given the breadth and interdisciplinarity of the social sciences and humanities, and the strong inter-



national make-up of her master's students, Dr Banaji strives to ensure that the content relates to everyone.

"I am constantly contextualising everything," she said. "You always see yourself as somehow translating – not just [language] but...cultural issues, historical ones."

"How do you make someone interested in an event? How do you translate a desire for humanity? For some people, it may sound simplistic; they think that by the time they've lectured for 20 years they can use words without translating because they've earned that right. With every cohort of new students, you need to earn that right again."

She added: "Take simple academic

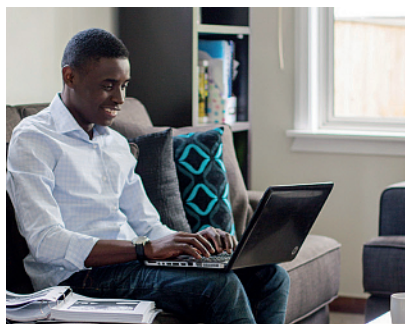
words like 'discourse' or 'text'. They mean so many different things to different people. People from gender studies understand the body as a text, film students think of the film as a text, and then you've got the literature student who's never thought of a film or a body as a text!"

Dr Banaji said that her approach was to "denaturalise" the students' subject knowledge by "democratising the canon and then deconstructing it". Those who thought they knew it all are "completely unsettled" and have to learn something new; and those who thought that they knew nothing are emboldened, she added. Unsettling the students and interspersing her teaching with different kinds of media ensures that Dr Banaji holds the students' attention and keeps them interested.

Using lots of visual material is part of this, and she chooses images carefully to "help students think through things in different ways".

"It's exhausting for them to listen to a lecturer for an hour. Having something that visually represents what has just been said, in a different way, is very helpful and exciting."

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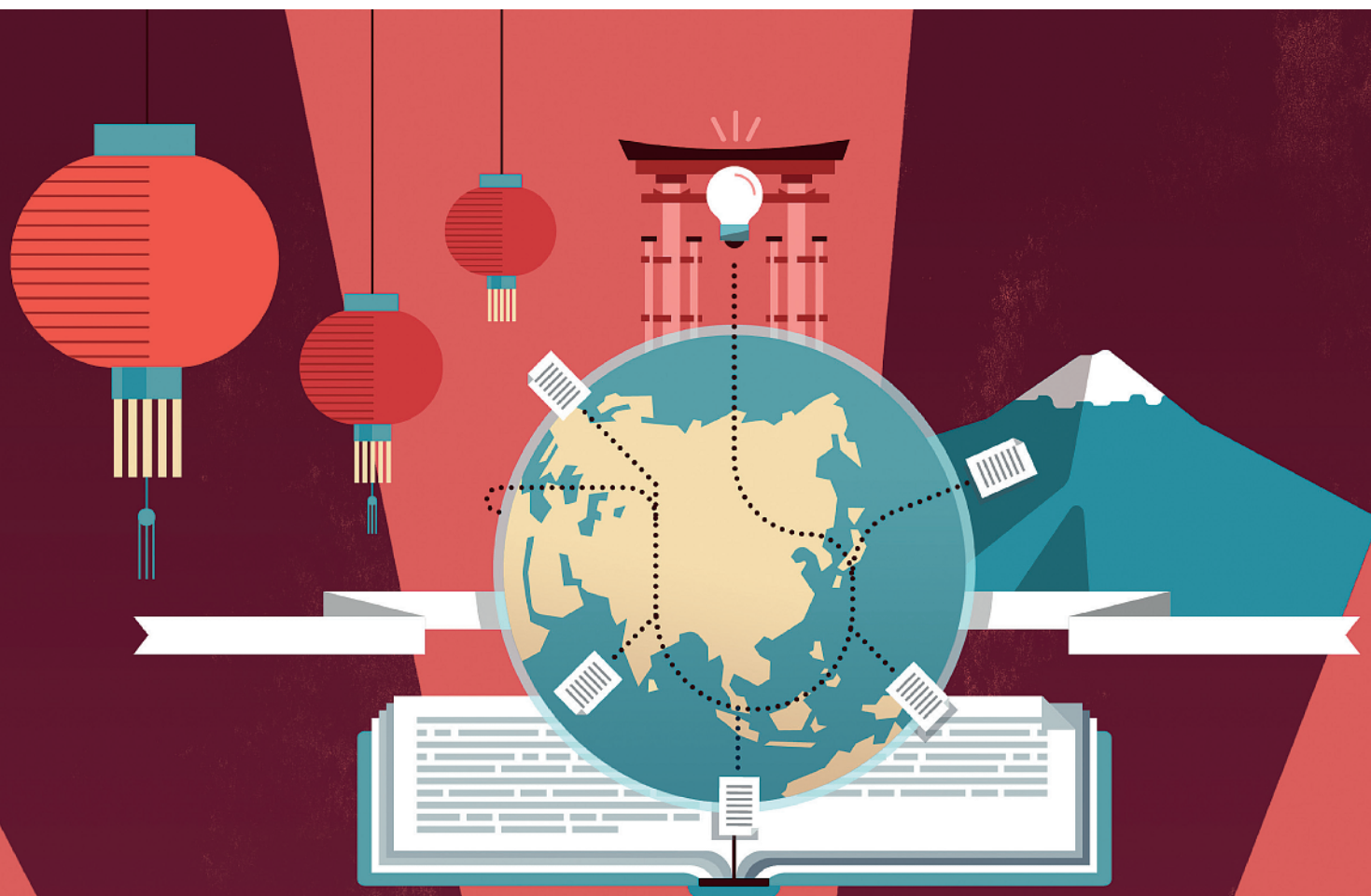
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Fruit from the branches

Transnational education helps people who want a quality university education to get it, argues Rebecca Hughes

Throughout my career in transnational education and English language policy, the charges of cultural imperialism have never been far away. The term “transnational education”, or TNE, is regarded by some as a euphemism for money-grabbing foreign universities setting up overseas campuses that crush local provision and impose alien values on their host countries’ educational systems.

The dominance of English in global academic circles – both at scholarly conferences and, increasingly, in lecture theatres – is also seen as problematic. So for critics, that the biggest purveyors of TNE are from anglophone countries creates a culturally lethal cocktail.

TNE and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) are not culturally neutral phenomena, and yet debates around them miss the point. TNE is additive and necessary; it affects providers as much as recipients. The imperialism, to my mind, lies in thinking that we Brits still control English, and that it is a big deal whether people speak it or not.

“The world needs far more high-quality tertiary-level provision than developing systems can generate from local provision”

British Council research has found that TNE is credited in host countries with increasing access to higher education and improving its overall quality. Host countries also expect it to assist in the development of local knowledge economies and to prompt more internationally collaborative research output.

The world needs far more high-quality tertiary-level provision than developing systems can generate from local provision, and TNE is one part of the solution. Furthermore, critics’ allegations of a one-size-fits-all approach are not accurate. I will chair a panel on the cultural challenges of TNE next week at the British Council’s annual Going Global conference for leaders of international higher education. The examples under discussion will reflect the realities of modern, diverse TNE: from a Russell Group business school in Dubai to a collaboration of 16 South Asian universities, to a UK/Australian/Pakistani partnership on curriculum development.

Transnational programmes cost more than other degree courses in the host country, but they are generally cheaper

than they would be if the student travelled overseas to take them. TNE students can gain an internationally recognised qualification while avoiding the typically higher costs of living and the visa complexities of the institutions’ home countries. They can also combine work and study more easily, and remain close to their local jobs markets.

There is no reason why TNE has to be delivered in English. The domination of EMI is a symptom of a much bigger trend: English standards are rising globally through choices that governments are making. English is taught as a subject in many education systems and allowed as a medium of instruction in 53 per cent of public and 87 per cent of private primary schools, a 2015 British Council survey of 55 countries reveals. Young people also access English language material electronically on their own.

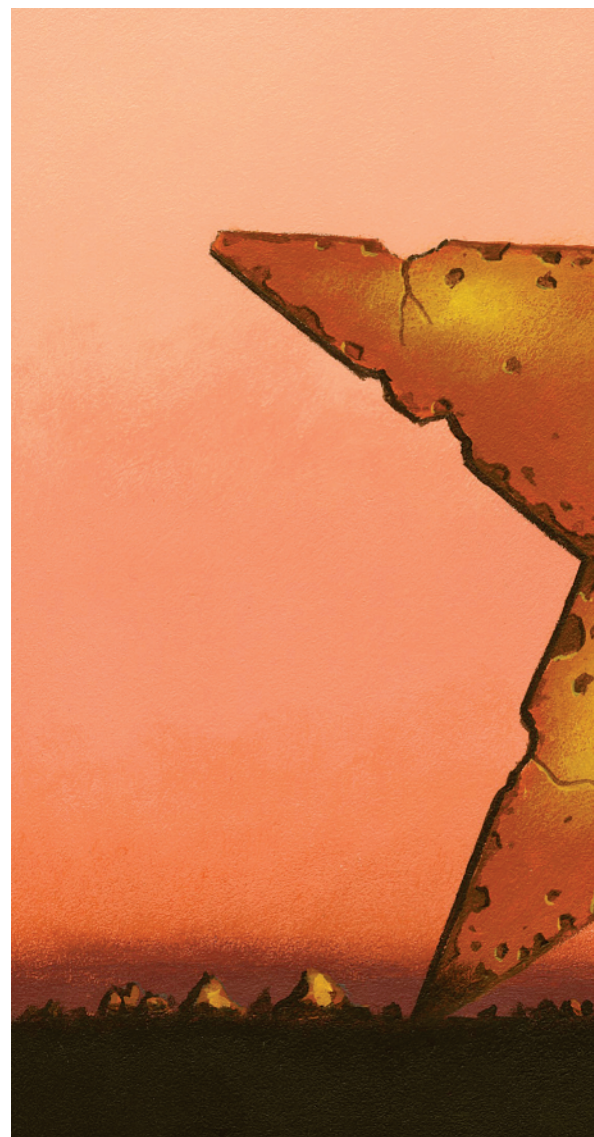
I know from experience that putting English language in the hands of young people, along with excellent study skills and critical perspectives on knowledge, gives them a powerful tool to build connections and a voice to decide their own future. If anything, the problem now lies with the UK’s system, which does not actively promote language learning from an early age, and therefore produces students who cannot compete with similarly educated young people from abroad with the cultural agility acquired by speaking two, three or often four languages.

I am not saying that the globalisation of higher education does not have any downsides, and everyone involved in TNE must be open about the risks and responsibilities that exploring this new frontier involves. One problem, for instance, is the unidimensional measures of excellence that drive the behaviour and resources of young institutions towards the “global research university” model.

We should also remain critically aware that TNE inevitably involves the export of cultural values. But this is not a unidirectional or a simple binary process. Those values are also being reshaped by exposure to the myriad local contexts in which universities are operating. This is why I believe TNE is making a so far modest but certainly positive contribution to global development.

Rebecca Hughes is director of education at the British Council.

● *Going Global 2015 takes place on 1-2 June at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in London. Times Higher Education is a media partner.*



It is paradoxical and ironic that peer review, a process at the heart of science, is based on faith not evidence.

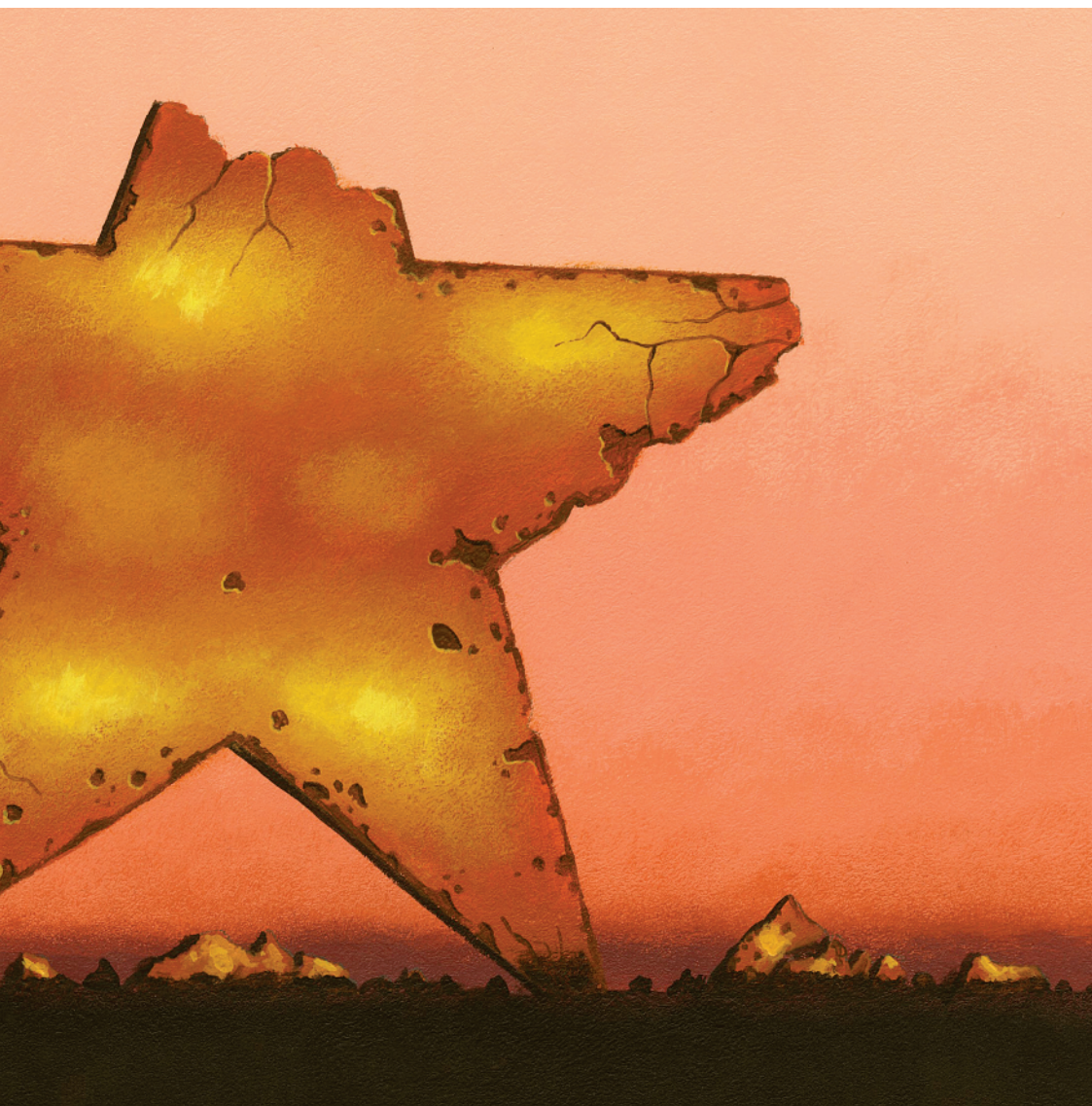
There is evidence on peer review, but few scientists and scientific editors seem to know of it – and what it shows is that the process has little if any benefit and lots of flaws.

Peer review is supposed to be the quality assurance system for science, weeding out the scientifically unreliable and reassuring readers of journals that they can trust what they are reading. In reality, however, it is ineffective, largely a lottery, anti-innovatory, slow, expensive, wasteful of scientific time, inefficient, easily abused, prone to bias, unable to detect fraud and irrelevant.

As Drummond Rennie, the founder of the annual International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication, says, “If peer review was a drug it would never be allowed onto the market.”

Cochrane reviews, which gather systematically all available evidence, are the highest form of scientific evidence. A 2007 Cochrane review of peer review for journals concludes: “At present, little empirical evidence is available to support the use of editorial peer review as a mechanism to ensure quality of biomedical research.”

We can see before our eyes that peer review doesn’t work because most of what is



Ineffective at any dose? Why peer review simply doesn't work

A process at the heart of science is based on faith instead of evidence, says Richard Smith, and vested interests keep it in place

published in scientific journals is plain wrong. The most cited paper in *Plos Medicine*, which was written by Stanford University's John Ioannidis, shows that most published research findings are false. Studies by Ioannidis and others find that studies published in "top journals" are the most likely to be inaccurate. This is initially surprising, but it is to be expected as the "top journals" select studies that are new and sexy rather than reliable. A series published in *The Lancet* in 2014 has shown that 85 per cent of medical research is wasted because of poor methods, bias and poor quality control. A study in

Nature showed that more than 85 per cent of preclinical studies could not be replicated, the acid test in science.

I used to be the editor of the *BMJ*, and we conducted our own research into peer review. In one study we inserted eight errors into a 600 word paper and sent it 300 reviewers. None of them spotted more than five errors, and a fifth didn't detect any. The median number spotted was two. These studies have been repeated many times with the same result. Other studies have shown that if reviewers are asked whether a study should be published there is little more agree-

ment than would be expected by chance.

Peer review is anti-innovatory because it is a process that depends on approval by exponents of the current orthodoxy. Bruce Glick, Hans Krebs and the team of Solomon Berson and Rosalyn Yalow all had hugely important work – including Nobel prizewinning research – rejected by journals.

Many journals take months and even years to publish and the process wastes researchers' time. As for the cost, the Research Information Network estimated the global cost of peer review at £1.9 billion in 2008.

Peer review is easily abused, and there are many examples of authors reviewing their own papers, stealing papers and ideas under the cloak of anonymity, deliberately rubbishing competitors' work, and taking a long time to review competitors' studies. Several studies have shown that peer review is biased against the provincial and those from low- and middle-income countries. Finally,

When I edited the *BMJ*, we inserted eight errors into a 600-word paper and sent it to 300 reviewers. None spotted more than five; a fifth didn't spot any

it doesn't guard against fraud because it works on trust: if a study says that there were 200 patients involved, reviewers and editors assume that there were.

There have been many attempts to improve peer review through training reviewers, blinding them to the identity of authors and opening up the whole process, but none has shown any appreciable improvement.

Perhaps the biggest argument against the peer review of completed studies is that it simply isn't needed. With the World Wide Web everything can be published, and the world can decide what's important and what isn't. This proposition strikes terror into many hearts, but with so much poor-quality science published what do we have to lose?

Yet peer review persists because of vested interests. Absurdly, academic credit is measured by where people publish, holding back scientists from simply posting their studies online rather than publishing in journals. Publishers of science journals, both commercial and society, are making returns of up to 30 per cent and journals employ thousands of people. As John Maynard Keynes observed, it is impossible to convince somebody of the value of an innovation if his or her job depends on maintaining the status quo.

Scrapping peer review may sound radical, but actually by doing so we would be returning to the origins of science. Before journals existed, scientists gathered together, presented their studies and critiqued them. The web allows us to do that on a global scale.

Richard Smith was editor of the *BMJ* and chief executive of the *BMJ* Publishing Group from 1991 to 2004.

The wrong carrot?

Postgraduate loans are welcome, but we must recognise the role of funding in decision-making, argue Paul Wakeling and Adél Pásztor



DAVID HUMPHRIES

This week marks the closure of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' consultation on postgraduate loans, but it is not clear to us that all the responses will be as positive as the department may be expecting.

Loans of up to £10,000 for taught master's study, announced by the chancellor in last December's Autumn Statement, are likely to be widely welcomed. The loans scheme is a response to direct calls for such funding from several bodies, including Universities UK, the National Union of Students and the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. Indeed, the proposed loans closely mirror plans already outlined by the thinktanks CentreForum and the Institute for Public Policy Research.

But what of loans for doctoral study? Their announcement in the Budget took many – including us – by surprise. The headline maximum figure of £25,000 is eye-catching and the absence of subject restrictions continues the departure, first seen in the master's loans proposal, from the default Treasury emphasis on science, technology, engineering and maths subjects. This, like the pledge not to displace existing doctoral funding, is welcome. But

further details are sketchy. It is unclear, for example, whether postgraduate research loans would, like master's loans, be restricted to those under the age of 30. And the lack of public clamour for a PhD loan scheme may indicate that there is actually little need for it.

There is certainly less apparent appetite for self-funding at PhD level. Figures reported in BIS' consultation document indicate that just over a third of UK research degree entrants are self-funding, compared with three-quarters of new UK master's students. Beyond that, what evidence is there about the role of funding in attracting talented graduates to postgraduate research?

Our work is one of only a few British studies to examine access to the PhD, including the role of funding in graduates' decision-making. We interviewed 53 graduates in-depth about their post-graduation choices. About half our sample were enrolled on a PhD; the others had not enrolled despite being qualified to do so. We found that many graduates, including some academic high-flyers, rejected the idea of a PhD on grounds other than finances. Some had simply had enough of studying and wanted to "get out into the

world and do something". Others, with only a tinge of economic rationalism, saw a PhD as a little frivolous. To them, it was an indulgence that would distract them from the next stages of adulthood, such as establishing a career and buying a house.

Debt itself did not loom large as a deterrent for our interviewees. Many saw state-provided loans as a fact of modern student life and palatable compared with commercial debt. Few participants mentioned accumulated undergraduate debt as a barrier to further study – although our interviewees graduated under lower tuition fee regimes than the class of 2015.

Studentships, by contrast, were highlighted time and again as critical in enabling doctoral study. For most interviewees, winning or being granted a studentship was a signal that they were up to the task of doctoral study, and, for a few, this was the carrot that convinced them to do a PhD. In addition, while many of our sample were willing to endure financial hardship for a year of master's study, three years was too much even for the most privileged graduates. Students lucky enough to hold a studentship already felt that they were forgoing higher earnings elsewhere, but accepted the sacrifice in order to pursue their love of research. Hence, we remain unconvinced that repayable loans worth less than half the value of a research council studentship will succeed in attracting additional talented graduates to postgraduate research.

Most of our interviewees, including those already doing a PhD, thought of the qualification primarily as a gateway to an academic career. Unsurprisingly, a common reason for not considering doctoral study was a lack of ambition to be an academic. By the same token, only a few PhD students thought of pursuing a non-academic career afterwards, sometimes as a second choice if they were unable to secure a university post. But, as frequently seen in these pages, there is already a reserve army of academic labour, often caught in a cycle of contingent jobs and under-employment. PhD loans could lengthen this job queue and increase the debt levels of those waiting in it.

If the rationale for doctoral loans is to increase the supply of doctoral graduates, perhaps a more fundamental "hearts and minds" campaign is required to highlight the broader benefits of the PhD before funding is addressed. And if PhD graduates are in demand in the labour market, then perhaps it is to employers, rather than individuals, that the government should turn for the funding.

Paul Wakeling is senior lecturer in education at the University of York. **Adél Pásztor** is lecturer in sociology at Newcastle University.

Things left unsaid

It's time to rouse an academy reticent about politics, says Shahidha Bari

I don't know if it was "The Sun wot won it", but I'm fairly certain that it wasn't footage of a young Ed Miliband stuttering sedition in a 1991 interview at an Oxford student rent strike that lost the Labour Party the 2015 general election.

The clip did the usual rounds, gleefully circulated by some as a revealing portrait of a radical red in utero, and cooingly claimed by others as a riposte to the post-prandial port swilling antics of David Cameron's Bullingdon boys. Fresh-faced and wonky-nosed, earnestly arguing against the iniquity of 27 per cent rent rises, "Ted" Miliband probably struck most of us as rather unremarkable and instantly recognisable – a young politico dabbling in the small fare of student life.

Embarrassingly, I remember protesting for a similarly high stakes cause as an undergraduate, defiantly releasing into the ether 100 helium balloons impishly emblazoned: "Stop rising rents!" *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. We may mock the mischief of perennially protesting students, but the political life of the university runs deep, in ways more serious and subtle than we care to acknowledge.

Rebecca Roache, a lecturer in philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London, evidently knows this to some degree, after announcing on the University of Oxford's Practical Ethics blog, on the day after the election, that she had "unfriended" on Facebook anyone who "liked" the Conservatives or David Cameron. She explained the logic by which she came to her decision – while also acknowledging the particular circumstances of feeling by which she was also motivated, and which are by no means irrelevant to moral and political understandings. Perhaps most interestingly, she made public the ways our political stances can be forged in, and framed by, our professional knowledge.

Roache explained that "the view that I have arrived at today is that openly supporting a politi-

cal party that – in the name of austerity – withdraws support from the poor, the sick, the foreign, and the unemployed while rewarding those in society who are least in need of reward... is as objectionable as expressing racist, sexist, or homophobic views...I don't want to be friends with racists, sexists, or homophobes. And I don't want to be friends with Conservatives either."

Regardless of whether you share her sentiment (for the record, I don't), Roache reaches her position through philosophically motivated self-scrutiny and evaluation. "I am attracted", she says, "by the view that we should all keep the debate open...take other people's views into account, and revise and improve our own as we all benefit from this dialogue...But – depressingly – I'm far more sceptical than I was yesterday about how much of a difference we can make with political debate."

Ironically, this loss of faith in "reasoned debate" is itself *reasoned* – unlike the backlash to Roache's blog, which some media outlets inaccurately dismissed as an example of the temper tantrums "typical" of our petulant and overwhelmingly left-leaning professorial class. I suspect it's my own left bias rudely kicking in when I wince at the number of men berating a young woman for her allegedly poor grasp of logic and demanding disciplinary action against her. But, for my own part, I don't think we have cause to fear Roache lashing out at young Tories in her lecture hall if we've cared to note that her aversion is to right-inclined "friends", not students. Since – as her blog attests – she can read Edmund Burke and Leon Kass, I imagine she's capable of discerning that difference.

All Roache really did is make explicit a political stance that is so often implicit in academic life. You don't have to read the sticker in my window to know which party I voted for, and there is no way in which you could examine my research and not find its political compass swung wildly in one

direction. But we might argue that the world into which we send our recently graduated students is one that is driven by market forces, and so we carve out for them a space to think about alternatives. In philosophy, it is part of our faith in students that we compel them to read about all sorts of ideas and ask them to make of it what they will. If we are resistant to the marketisation of higher education, it may be because what's at stake is the notion of the university as a place that privileges knowledge, free from the logic of money. The academy, we hope, provides a momentary refuge before a lifetime of the imperatives to earn and win.

My own experience is that our community is remarkably diverse, with shy Tories and bold ones alike congenially bashing elbows with all shades of reds in the staffroom as they reach for a copy of *Times Higher Education*. Universities are not apolitical spaces: our students – the Ted Milibands of their day – tell us this when they gripe about rents and worry about tuition fees. We know this too when we fail to secure visas for the finest students seeking to lend their brilliance to our floundering intellectual endeavours.

Perhaps there is something odious about leftist tub-thumping, but I wonder what our role in the world is if it isn't to attempt in some way to feed knowledge into public discourse. When the public debate has been so concerned with ideas of economy, identity and morality, maybe we should have the courage, not of our convictions, but of our professional knowledge, to say why we believe the things we do.

Shahidha Bari is lecturer in Romanticism at Queen Mary University of London.



Universities are not apolitical spaces: our students – the Ted Milibands of their day – tell us this when they gripe about rents and tuition fees

Advancement rests on research record

You report that a black philosopher claims that he was rejected for a full-time job because his proposed black studies course was too challenging to white-dominated academia ("New MA 'too critical of white hegemony'", News, 21 May). I find Nathaniel Adam Tobias Coleman's protestations utterly unconvincing: there is no way that anyone with a two-year-old PhD and not a single peer-reviewed publication could be offered a permanent job at University College London. Coleman should consider himself very lucky to have been offered a coveted postdoc at a prestigious institution with his research record.

Priscilla Ahern

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

I am a philosophy student at UCL and I am disappointed that Coleman's contract will not be renewed. This is especially unfortunate considering that philosophy is a discipline with such a dismal record of recognising the work of non-white scholars.

Klara Andersson

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

I think this is a prime example of the issues in academia highlighted in the "Why is my curriculum white?" movement. Coleman could provide a much-needed critical voice to another unquestioned curriculum (and institution) that maintains colonial white discourses (and faces). And his proposed MA would begin to allow for wider perspectives to enter this "prestigious institution". However, it seems that UCL's pledge towards "further progress in diversity" is contingent on its remaining inoffensive to existing privileged [scholars]. As a former member of staff at UCL, I am disappointed. As a woman of mixed race, I am offended. And as someone who would jump to be part of that MA course, I am heartbroken.

Sara Felix

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

The #whitecurriculum campaign has had more impact than most peer-reviewed articles ever have. The fact that UCL will not give Coleman a permanent position, despite his demonstrable expertise and influence in instigating a public debate on white supremacy within philosophy and UK academia as a whole, is just more evidence of the problem that his work (and the work of all academics and students challenging institutional racism in academia) seeks to address.

Terese Jonsson

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

Let me see if I can get this straight:

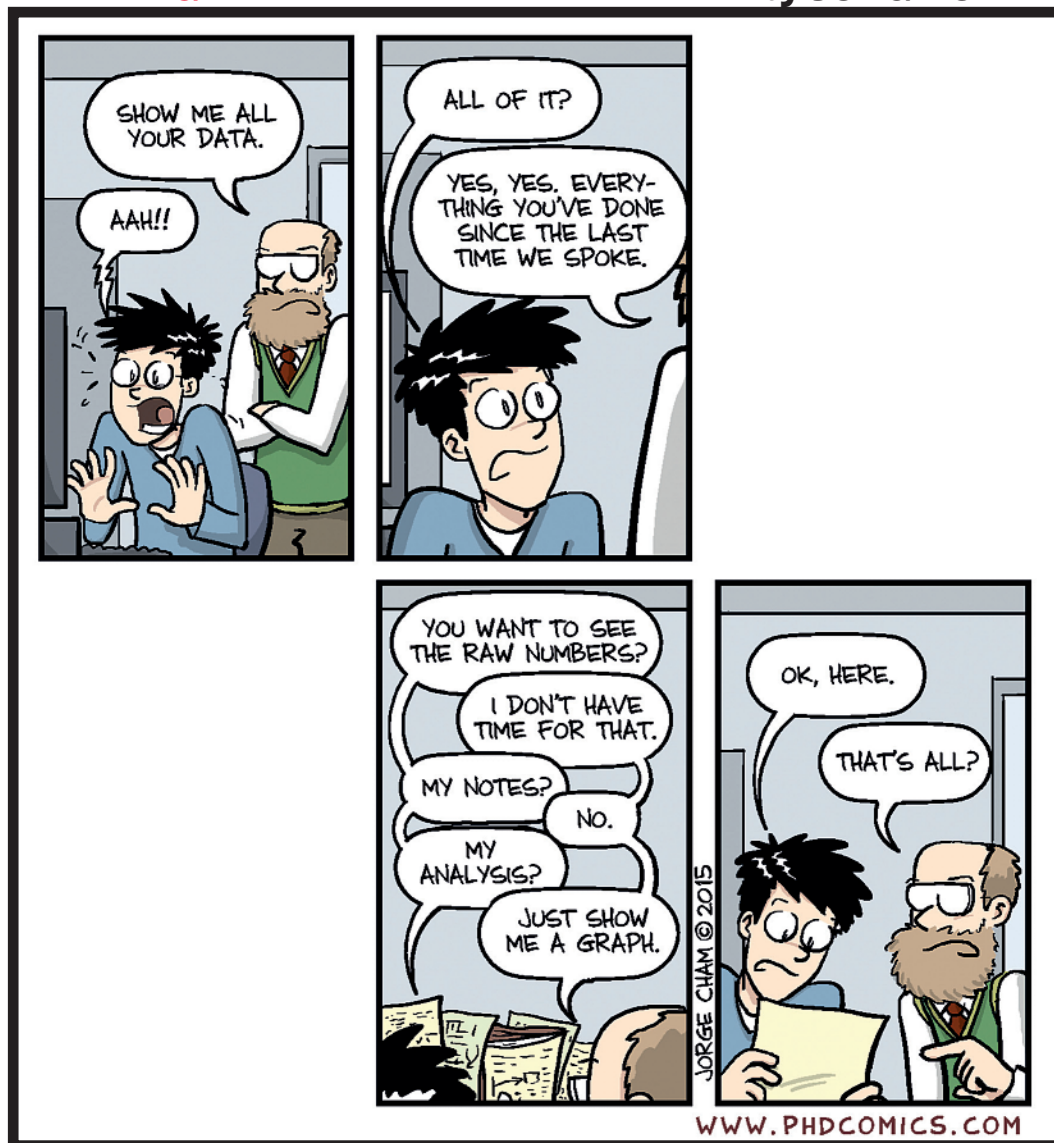
1) Academia needs more black/non-white voices – agreed.

2) Philosophy is too white – agreed.

Here's the bit where it all falls to pieces for me. Because of the above points, an academic who has failed to publish a single

PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER

by **JORGE CHAM**



peer-reviewed piece should be given a full-time permanent job *without a competitive application process*? That is what is being argued here. Challenging and breaking down racism in the academy isn't done by rewarding mediocrity or by "jobs for the boys" because, ironically, simply giving a job to this man reinforces [higher education's] gender problem. Someone applying for a full-time lecturer post at my lowly post-92 wouldn't even get shortlisted without publications. Also, people need to knock off with "demonstrated expertise" – we have a way of demonstrating that in the academy. At the moment people are just relying on the idea of false authority – "he's an expert because we say he's an expert".

Alan Smithee

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

A strong peer-reviewed publication record is regarded as essential for getting a permanent job, and by such criteria Coleman would be unlikely to get a position at UCL or anywhere else. However, let's not pretend that number of publications is an infallible or objective measure. Also, I'd like to know more about the process by which UCL decided against running the proposed MA. Was that to do with Coleman's publication record? It's a separate issue

really, and I don't think one can deny that UCL, like the academy in general, is reluctant to confront the issues that Coleman deals with in his teaching and non peer-reviewed publications.

Harry Stopes

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

Libraries in fine fettle

G.R. Evans argues for more funding for Oxford library staff. As a former Oxford librarian, I can only applaud her sentiments ("Oxford libraries in disrepair", Letters, 21 May). Sadly, she follows this with a series of assertions that should be challenged.

Evans claims that a 2005 review "began by arguing that the integration of the libraries had resulted in too many 'over-graded' academic librarians". I was a member of the review panel, and what it actually says is "In a small library...the required flexibility [of working] is only achieved if...academic-related staff also undertake clerical duties. There is a great deal of talent and experience in site libraries which is currently under-exploited." Library integration did not result in the downgrading of academic librarians but freed them to do more

to support academic staff and students. Just two individual subject specialist posts (out of nearly 200 academic-related staff) were deemed to be overgraded in their role.

Evans continues: "It is now difficult for students and researchers to find a librarian with the relevant expert knowledge in a given field." The Bodleian's subject web pages name and give contact details for 53 subject specialist librarians covering 99 identified subject areas. How many does she want?

To test Evans' third assertion, that "a series of highly paid management roles have been advertised and filled with professional 'managers' who conspicuously do not spend time in the libraries", I reviewed all the senior Oxford library appointments advertised in 2014. This is necessarily an imperfect tool as vacancies arise for any number of reasons and most are not new appointments, but it is at least based on data, not prejudice.

First, I looked at all those whose grade qualifies the post holders as senior members of the university. There were just six. One was a straight administrative post, an accountant. Three were specifically "librarian": an archivist, the deputy librarian, and an open-access librarian. The other two posts were a library services manager for the science library (directly meeting reader needs) and a systems post. As that may seem too small a sample, I then looked at the nine advertisements for the next grade down. Here, there was one subject librarian (history) and the other eight were not managerial, but required digital expertise, including a specialist in digital manuscripts (excuse the apparent oxymoron, it is accurate), one dealing with digital preservation and curation, and one directly supporting digital scholarship. This points to the real direction in which libraries are moving and the Bodleian is leading – it is to embrace not managerialism, but the digital revolution.

Blanket assertions are all very well but not when the facts contradict every one of them.

Michael Heaney
Oxford

OU face time

The anonymous letter writer who draws attention to the potential closure of many of the Open University's regional centres regrets the loss of local presence ("The OU is closing doors", Letters, 21 May). But there is another implication – the move will lead to less face-to-face teaching. The OU's new vice-chancellor has already called for it to become "more digital".

Yet there is evidence that suggests that moving to exclusively online learning will have a detrimental effect on retention. There is a widespread belief in many distance learning institutions that some initial face-to-face contact is necessary to enhance online work. For example, the Korean National Open University, where I worked a few years ago, insists that its students start their studies with a three-day face-to-face session. As it says in its student guide: "To overcome the limitations of distant education and to encourage interactions

between faculty members and students and also among students, KNOU requires its freshmen to take face-to-face classes at its regional campuses". This is despite the fact that South Korean students have greater access to higher speed internet than students in the UK.

If the OU does become "more digital", then I have little doubt that its retention rates will continue to fall.

Ormond Simpson

Visiting fellow

Centre for Distance Education, University of London

Scandi drama

Will Podmore, in arguing that European research funding is not dependent on a country's membership of the European Union, cites Norway as an example as if this were one of numerous examples to choose from ("EU benefits without club tie", Letters, 21 May). But, of course, it is a very particular example arising because Norway is a member of the European Economic Area and, to all intents and purposes, an EU member (and, hence, a very strange model to champion for those who wish to leave the EU). Those advocating a UK exit from the EU rarely make it clear what they actually mean, but if they mean complete exit then the consequence would indeed be that UK researchers would be unable to receive EU research funds.

Peter Guilleam

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

No skim-reading

I am surprised to hear the view that examiners do not read all of a PhD ("Last era's model", Features, 21 May). In my experience of about 35 PhD examinations, I have read the whole thesis and marked it with notes for the viva.

I also take issue with the time "waiting to be examined". Unless I am missing some funding source, I would assume that today's candidates need to do what I did and start work while they wait for the viva. This is therefore not wasted time as viva preparation takes place in parallel with whatever post follows.

I would not say that the PhDs I have supervised, nor those that I have examined, were part of a "conveyor belt". They have all been different and the students all progressed as researchers and people during their completion.

Mark Leeson

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

A kick from the Left

In the opinion piece "Attitude is everything" (21 May), Diana Beech explains why she voted Conservative in the general election, citing the belligerence of the Left's intelligentsia". She obviously has ruder colleagues and friends than I do, but the assumptions made are similar. I guess it depends partly on the subject area and partly on the institution. Perhaps it would be equally unpleasant to be a political minority

in an industry full of right-wing people. But I agree with Beech that this aggression and narrow-mindedness is disappointing in a sector where liberals claim to be in favour of diverse, open, self-critical and civilised discourse. It's something one experiences outside of election campaigns, too, and is bizarrely justified as the academy being a last bulwark against the neoliberal hordes. Which only confirms how irrelevant academic leftism is becoming. Oh, and I voted Labour by the way.

Charlie Beckett

Via timeshighereducation.co.uk

Mirror image

You report that vice-chancellors are likely to welcome the appointment of Jo Johnson as the new universities minister ("Ministers enjoy network effect", News, 14 May). Quite so. As a middle-aged, clean-shaven white man in a suit, he is clearly recognised as one of their own.

Keith Flett

London

Carry on Doctor

Your article about the German fondness for academic titles reminded me of a German businessman announced to the company I used to work for as "Dr Dr Schulz" ("The no-holds barred title race", From Where I Sit, 7 May). The Swiss employee dealing with him, unfamiliar with the German practice of allowing someone with two doctorates to duplicate the title, was uncertain how to address this man. He opted for a full-blown "Herr Dr Dr Schulz", and, since this seemed to go down well, continued to address him in this way for months.

One day, over several pints of Bavarian beer, his opposite number mellowed. "You know," he said, "I really can't have you calling me 'Dr Dr' all the time."

My colleague heaved a sigh of relief.

"Just call me Dr."

Peter Butler

University of Applied Sciences and Arts
Northwestern Switzerland

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Keeping the peace

Is there a way for academics and a growing army of administrative staff to rub along? **Laurie Taylor** and **Simeon Underwood** consider the rules of engagement



“What used to be a mildly patronising relationship between dons and their administrative servants has now become more like a battle for control”

When I took up my first academic post as assistant lecturer in sociology at the University of York in the late 1960s, I had no idea that there was any such occupational category as university administration.

I knew from my interview that Lord James of Rusholme was vice-chancellor and that my letter of appointment had been signed by someone called the registrar. But otherwise I assumed that the university was almost entirely managed by academics. It was, after all, academics who at that time staffed every major and minor committee even if they had no known competence in the area. (For years I chaired the Technical Staff Subcommittee, where I spent many happy afternoons arguing with philosophers and medieval historians about whether a glassblower in the physics laboratory had displayed sufficient competence to move on to a higher pay grade.)

My culpable ignorance of administrative work was eventually remedied by an invitation from the university's newly appointed registrar, Anne Riddell, the first female chief administrative officer at a British university.

“Laurie. Would you be so kind as to come over to my office in Heslington Hall and answer an important question about the English department?”

I was happy to accept. Anne was a wonderfully insightful tactician who discharged all her duties with great efficiency while maintaining an endearingly patrician air which always suggested that she had rather better things to do with her time than manage a major university.

“Do you know Heslington Hall?”, she asked when I arrived. And she proceeded to introduce me to such esoteric administrative functions as estates and maintenance, finance, student liaison, admissions and planning before asking me “as a sociologist” to explain why so many academics in the English department at York spent quite so much time “hopping in and out of each other's beds”. (I think I told her that their behaviour could only be the result of an overindulgent use of novels.)

At that time, back in the 1980s and 1990s, I was hardly alone among academics in believing that if administrators had any function at all then it was to offer a little background assistance to academics who, because of their higher vocational calling, became occasionally confused about such relatively minor matters as finance and admission and examination procedures. Their relative unimportance at the time is evident in the back page columns I wrote for what was then *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. There are plenty of lazy and incompetent dons (Dr Piercemüller loomed large) and a harassed departmental secretary (Maureen) but hardly a manager

or administrator within parodic sight.

How different it all is now. Managers and administrators who once had a mute background presence are now a noisy part of the daily life of every scholar. Their ranks continue to swell even though the UK is already one of the very few countries in the world where non-academic staff already outnumber academics (see box, page 38). No wonder that my weekly *Times Higher Education* column is no longer stuffed with professors and readers but with directors of corporate affairs and human relations and the heads of research excellence framework strategy, overseas recruitment, research impact, fundraising, external relations and brand management. No wonder that what used to be a mildly patronising relationship between dons and their administrative servants has now become more and more like a battle for control.

When I was recently asked to address the annual conference of the Association of University Administrators on the manner in which this gap between managers and academics might be redressed, I refrained from the utopian suggestion that it could only truly be remedied if universities were no longer subject to their current marketing imperatives.

Instead, when I stood up to speak, I reminded my audience of the distinctive (and often unfortunate) presumptions that academics held about a university. I pointed out that no matter how effective each member of the audience might be at their respective task, their work would always be regarded by the typical academic as little more than pen-pushing. Compared with the rigours of intellectual life, running the finances of a university was, frankly, child's play.

Neither could they as administrators ever hope for any degree of acceptance by academics as long as their roles might be characterised as management. The very word “manager” aroused academic hackles in much the same manner that the term “capitalist” stiffened the sinews of a Marxist.

But perhaps even more of a barrier to any reconciliation between the two tribes was the average academic's resistance to any form of enthusiasm. Being discontented was somehow a guarantee of academic seriousness, an attitude that could not be vanquished by managerial injunction, a style of being only properly captured in the famous Jewish telegram: “Start worrying. Details to follow.”

And neither should administrators entertain any hope that academics might come to identify more and more closely with their university's goals and mission statements. Academics persisted in regarding themselves as citizens of the world who had an inalienable right to criticise the institution that provided their temporary home. When under pressure to conform they could readily resort to universalistic



DAVID PARKINSON

concepts of “free speech” and “human rights”. And their ready access to the media ensured that they could always broaden what began as an institutional squabble into “a matter of principle”.

There were other incompatibilities. Academics felt that managerial demands for accounts of how they spent their time were philosophically flawed. How could one possibly place mundane time brackets around such a diffuse but essentially creative activity as “thinking”?

And then there was also the inequity of assessment. Whereas every academic was now increasingly subject to evaluation by means of such centralised devices as the REF, administrators seemed to go on their own sweet way, rewarding themselves without any clear evidence of how such rewards related to improved performance. And, of course, no one better exemplified this self-rewarding system than the fat vice-chancellor who sat at the head of his administrative army.

I left the last, and perhaps the most potent of what I chose to call “academic presumptions” until the end of my AUA address. Do you remember, I asked, the philosopher Gilbert Ryle’s story of the foreigner who wished to see a university? He was duly shown all the campus buildings but still complained that he hadn’t seen the university. Of course, Ryle’s point was that the university was not a thing but a set of elements. But that wouldn’t wash with most academics. They are the university. It is their names and academic titles

that appear on the covers of books and the bylines of articles and the subtitles of the television screen and in the Nobel prize orations.

Is there anything, then, that administrators might do to remedy any of these impediments to cooperation? I suggested one answer to my audience. They might, I proposed, improve matters if they allowed academics to maintain their presumptions. And they might best do this by using a theatrical analogy. Actors are traditionally allowed to be sensitive, thoughtful, creative beings. They are also expected as part of their occupation to be temperamental and occasionally difficult. Their loyalty is not to any individual theatre but to “the theatre itself”.

Might not administrators improve their relationship if they presented themselves not as managers but as support staff to those upon the academic stage, as producers, property masters, scene setters, audience providers? What they must surely never do is to seek to occupy the stage themselves.

I’d like to be able to say that my address was well received. There was some modest applause but as I left the lectern I heard a noise that rather oddly for landlocked Nottingham resembled a receding tide. Only when I’d seated myself did I recognise it as the sound of collective seething.

Laurie Taylor is a sociologist, presenter of BBC Radio 4’s *Thinking Allowed* and author of *Times Higher Education*’s Poppletonian column.

“The very word ‘manager’ aroused academic hackles in much the same manner that the term ‘capitalist’ stiffened the sinews of a Marxist”

“Prose is now the medium in which academics and administrators interact, and writing well is a critical way to establish respect and trust”

Why did Laurie Taylor’s audience of university administrators seethe? One reason is that the world is different now. I worked with Anne Riddell and Laurie – or Professor Taylor, as I still think of him – at the University of York in the early 1980s. In this golden age as a very junior and very generalist administrator, I was able to see the institution as a whole, to know academic staff in every department, and to know them as individuals to the point of recognising their handwriting and telephone manner.

In this golden age, too, respect was reciprocal. Early on in my time at York I supported a working group on admissions and public relations. After its report was published, one of the group’s members wrote to Anne praising my work in support of the group and the quality of the report I had written. Some 30 years on, Laurie has almost certainly forgotten that he wrote that letter. I haven’t.

Perhaps one of the reasons his audience seethed was because talk of a golden age can be painful for those condemned not to live in one. (Anyway it wasn’t entirely a golden age: but that is a topic for another article.)

So what changed?

The most striking difference is that virtually all universities are much larger than they were. The York of the early 1980s had about 3,500 students: the York of today has more than 15,000.

The range of administrative functions has also grown. Some of the new roles have emerged from within, often related to an institution’s financial survival. Others were created in response to external pressures such as

teaching quality assurance, health and safety, and changes to the visa system. Still others have come in response to student expectations and requirements such as learning support and support for disabled students. Almost all these new roles are specialist. Few administrators would now claim to be a generalist.

Another reason the audience may have seethed is because the term “university administrator” is now too broad to be meaningful. The worlds of managers and administrators, of central administrators and administrators in academic departments are sharply differentiated. Administrators are no longer a job lot.

Somewhere along the line the relationship between academic and administrative staff worsened. My own view is that the developments in academic quality assurance in the 1990s were pivotal. For many academics, in the old universities especially, subject review inspections were an intrusion into their world; and the administrators that universities employed to mediate, translate and handle this new world were seen as intruders too. This is from an article written by Richard Roberts in *The Tablet*, October 1997: “A thought police now emerges from the academic woodwork to enforce academic management and ‘quality audit’. Here the Salieri principle applies: nothing gives greater pleasure to the guardians of competence than knowingly to suffocate real creativity. Salieri could not forgive Mozart his gift. He understood the nature of it, for he was himself a musician: but by the same token he understood how to destroy it.”

And if this language sounds lurid, I can recall a more recent disagreement with a well-known economics professor in which he told me that collaborative activity by university

STAFF PROFILE: THE AGE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Non-academic staff at UK higher education institutions outnumber academic staff by 7,290 people, according to the latest data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

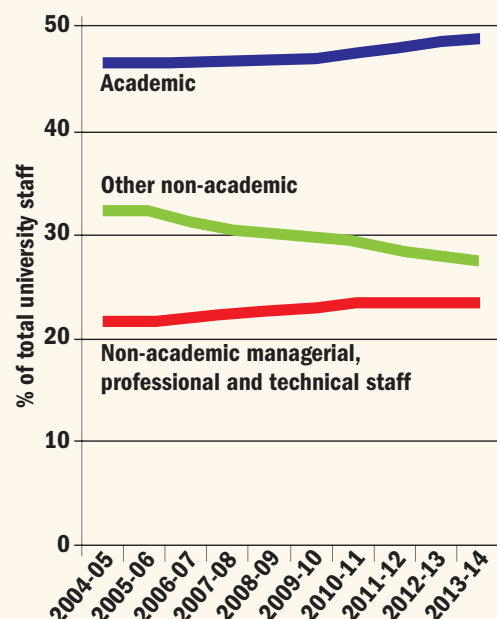
In 2013-14, the number of academic staff stood at 194,245 while the number of non-academic staff stood at 201,535.

In the past decade, the proportion of academic staff has grown – from 46 per cent of all staff in 2004-05 to 49 per cent in 2013-14.

But the fastest rate of growth in this period was in posts classified as “non-academic managerial, professional and technical staff”. The number of staff in this category grew by 25 per cent, climbing from 74,520 to 92,785, while the number of academic staff increased by 21 per cent.

The number of posts classed as “other non-academic” – a category made up of clerical and manual positions – declined by 2 per cent.

Times Higher Education reporters





DAVID PARKINSON

administrators in German universities in the 1920s and 1930s had caused the rise of the Nazi Party, and that my work in collaborating with the UK Border Agency over student visas was a direct parallel.

So another reason why the audience may have seethed is because many of the people in it will have experienced sophisticated professional and/or personal abuse of this kind. And if that is right, his proposed remedy may sound suspiciously like putting up with it.

So what advice would I give to the audience of university administrators on how to restore trust? I have three suggestions.

The first is to reflect on and sharpen the basic tools of your personal professionalism. Prose, for example, is now the medium in which academics and administrators interact, whether in emails or more formal papers; and writing well is a critical way to establish respect and trust. This is not about the right use of the apostrophe in “its”, although that is important. It is more about the voice you use in prose. Sometimes administrators adopt the vocabulary of managerialism; or the vacuousness of what my predecessor as academic registrar at the London School of Economics called “New Labour prose”; or the costive prose associated (often wrongly) with Civil Service mandarins, gnarled with polysyllables and passives. All these are signs of professional insecurity, and it is easy to avoid them. So question the words you use individually and lovingly. In particular, you must avoid the word “must”. And if prose is not your main

medium, then reflect in the same way on numbers or presentation or, especially, the presentation of numbers.

The second suggestion is to be alert to the costs of what you are doing and to be able to explain and justify them. Benchmarking against peer institutions is one device, although it needs to be done sensitively. Also, the sector should surely be able to come up with a “performance indicator” showing the ratio of administrative to academic costs for each institution.

The third is to make a conscious point of seeing academics face-to-face. Visit them in their own offices, rather than expecting them to come to yours. This is about writing less and talking more, establishing personal relationships with individual academics, on their terms and in their environment.

Laurie’s talk touched a raw nerve in his audience. They know that a harmonious university, with good working relations between academic and administrative staff, is more likely to be an effective university. I have suggested some steps that individual administrators might take to this end. But unilateral action is only half a solution. This is in my view something that university managers and academics have to address, in the name of inclusivity and collegiality; and they have to address it urgently. ●

Simeon Underwood is academic registrar and director of academic services at the London School of Economics.

“The range of administrative functions has grown. Almost all of these new roles are specialist. Few administrators would now claim to be a generalist”

ΑΤΩ

Dogged by endless scandals and sexual assault allegations, fraternities are under pressure like never before. Is it time to shut them down – or can they mend their ways?

Jon Marcus reports

Members of US university fraternities and sororities last month gathered at Capitol Hill in Washington to lobby Congress on legislation that is important to them – just as other interest groups do. It is a rite of US politics that fraternities have undergone for two decades, bringing smiling students in suits and ties to meet with lawmakers and pose for photos.

But the reception they receive is getting noticeably cooler. High-profile stories of sexual abuse, racist acts and other scandals continue to dog fraternities and their national networks. How serious this image problem has become was evident in the rush to judgement after *Rolling Stone* magazine reported in November the story of a particularly heinous alleged gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity – even though the story had to be recanted after an investigation by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism found significant flaws in the reporting.

Before descending on Congress, the North-American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference felt compelled to issue a rare public statement contrasting the reality of fraternities with the “myth”. This reality is highly nuanced.

On the one hand, some fraternities continue to commit misdeeds, even criminal acts, often involving alcohol. These include sexual assaults, the purported mishandling of which by US universities has come under attack.

On the other hand, recent research shows that while they are more likely to smoke and drink,

fraternity members are also less likely to drop out. They have higher graduation rates and get better jobs than non-members, too. (The study controlled for race and family background.) All of these are measures on which universities themselves are increasingly judged. This is among the many reasons why, despite perennial debates about their role and the suspension or shutting down of particularly egregious offenders, fraternities continue to thrive at US universities.

It’s so complex. There are so many moving parts in this,” says Steve Veldkamp, executive director of the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity at Indiana University.

He says the strength of the US fraternity was probably best understood by a Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, who in his text *Democracy in America* (the first volume of which was published in 1835) described such groups as symbolising the fiercely guarded, sacrosanct privilege of associating outside the boundaries of government.

“The DNA of the fraternity is deep in the roots of this country,” Veldkamp says. “That’s potentially why we’ve held on to these kinds of organisation.”

Today, it is not the government that is forced to contend with the repercussions of too much independence among rowdy students in fraternities (also known as Greek organisations on account of the Greek letters that feature in their names), but the universities with which they are associated. A recent survey of members of the University Risk

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Management and Insurance Association found that two-thirds think that fraternity behaviour is among their institutions' top liability risks, although most also said that fraternities were important to campus traditions and viewed the reputational risks they pose as less significant.

But there has been no shortage of scandal or shocking behaviour this year. Members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity at the University of Oklahoma, for instance, video-recorded themselves singing a racist chant and vowing never to admit black members. The chapter was thrown off campus and two of its members were expelled. The parent organisation has promised reforms.

Sigma Alpha Mu at the University of Michigan was disbanded by its national headquarters after members allegedly caused \$400,000-worth (£263,000) of damage at a ski lodge. Several were criminally charged.

The University of Florida closed its Zeta Beta Tau fraternity after charges that its members spat on and threw bottles at military veterans holding an event at the same beach resort.

Kappa Delta Rho at Pennsylvania State University was suspended for a year by its national head office for posting photographs of naked, unconscious women on its Facebook page.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison stripped Chi Phi of its formal status as a student group for "hazing" pledges – humiliating or abusive initiation rituals – that included making new members wear hoods during a period of isolation and refusing them food.

Pi Kappa Alpha at the University of South Carolina was suspended by its national organisation after a member was found dead under what authorities said were "suspicious circumstances".

Alpha Tau Omega at North Carolina State University was suspended from campus when a student said that she had been sexually assaulted in the fraternity house. And Baruch College, part of the public City University of New York, this month banned fraternity and sorority initiation rites for three years after a "pledge" died of brain trauma in 2013 at the fraternity Pi Delta Psi, whose chapter there was also shut down.

The DNA of the fraternity is deep in the roots of this country. That's potentially why we've held on to these kinds of organisations

It is the outcry against sexual assault in particular that has brought new pressure to bear on the fraternities. Last year, female undergraduates across the US started to raise loud protests over what they said were university cover-ups of sexual assaults that could damage the institutions' reputations. Now the universities are worried about the implications of being found to have done too little in response to such cases.

"That's a big factor focusing attention on fraternities and sororities," Veldkamp says.

Research about the connection between fraternities and sexual assault varies widely in its conclusions. A 2007 nationwide study by

John Foubert, professor of higher education and students affairs at Oklahoma State University, concluded that fraternity members are three times more likely than non-members to commit such assaults. He cited other studies suggesting that fraternity members are more likely than their male classmates to believe that women like being "roughed up" and want to be forced into sex.

Another authoritative source, insurance company United Educators, which specialises in university legal liability cases, studied 305 sexual assault claims over three years (2011-13). It concluded that about 10 per cent of reported on-campus rapes were allegedly committed by y members, who constitute 9 per cent of the student population; however, 24 per cent of repeat offenders were fraternity members.

University athletes were the accused in 15 per cent of rape cases, United Educators added – about the same proportion as their share of all students. However, they were implicated in 40 per cent of gang rapes.

There is consensus that alcohol is often involved in sexual assault and that fraternities encourage drinking. The National Institute of Justice reports that sexual assault on campus is commonly associated with alcohol, and United Educators says that in 92 per cent of successful legal claims against its client universities for student-on-student sexual assault, the accusers were drunk. In 60 per cent of incidents, they were so drunk they could not remember the assault.

Fraternities are closely associated with loud and raucous parties. Eighty-six per cent of their members engage in binge drinking, that is, drinking large amounts of alcohol in a very short space of time, according to Napsa, the national association of student affairs administrators: that is almost twice the proportion of non-members. And the National Institute of Justice says that more than half of women who report being sexually assaulted while incapacitated say the assault occurred at a party.

While not downplaying these incidents, fraternity associations point out that there are more than 6,000 fraternities on over 800 campuses in the US.

It is also unsurprising that some fraternities have found themselves in trouble time and again – even after being chastised publicly and promising reforms – because their memberships turn over every few years as students graduate, Veldkamp suggests. And students of traditional university age, whether in fraternities or not, are bound to test the boundaries of their freedom, he adds.



"Whether it's a club at Cambridge that's steeped in tradition and has a sporting event that it's passionate about and celebrates afterward, or a fraternity [with] Greek letters that also has a sporting event and celebrates afterward, that's part of any college experience when you have large numbers of similar-aged students moving away from home and starting to live together," he says.

However, recent actions of the North-American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference have done little to distance fraternities from their perceived connection with sexual assault. In March, the bodies called for some aspects of university adjudication in such cases to be put off until the completion of police investigations. Under federal laws prohibiting gender discrimination at any higher education institution that receives government funding, US universities are required to respond to incidents that create a hostile environment. This includes sexual assault, regardless of whether the alleged victim chooses to report it to the police.

But concerns have been raised about the rights of the accused in such proceedings.

The fraternity associations have said they believe in "fairness provided to all parties" and due process not only for all students, but also for the organisations to which they belong, including fraternities.

"Student organizations should have the same due process rights as an accused student when an institution attempts to punish an organization for alleged misconduct," the two groups said in a statement published in March. "Punishing student members of organizations for misconduct committed by members of other student organizations compromises the rights of individual students."

They cited, in particular, the prospect of "mass suspensions of student organizations like fraternities and sororities".



“A 2007 nationwide study concluded that fraternity members are three times more likely than non-members to commit sexual assaults”



Some universities have started taking firmer action against fraternities than the traditional punishment of temporarily suspending individual chapters.

For example, all social events at all fraternities were suspended at Johns Hopkins University after a 16-year-old girl reported being raped at a party held at the local Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter last November; Emory University took the same decision after a sexual assault at its Sigma Alpha Epsilon branch on Halloween; and San Diego State University suspended all fraternity activity after members of Delta Sigma Phi taunted marchers on a Take Back the Night parade, run in November to promote awareness of sexual violence. The fraternity members allegedly shouted obscenities and brandished sex toys at the protesters.

A documentary, *The Hunting Ground*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January, chronicles what it calls the “rape culture” at US universities. It particularly calls out fraternities such as Sigma Alpha Epsilon for perpetuating this culture.

In many of these cases, the fraternities in the dock already had long charge sheets. However, some of the clout they relied on to protect them in the past may be diminishing.

Fraternity and sorority members are still more likely to be white and come from higher socio-economic backgrounds than their classmates, according to research by Jay Walker, assistant professor of economics at Niagara University. Historically they have been in positions of power in government and business. Forty-four per cent of all US presidents were university fraternity alumni, as were three out of four senators at one point, according to the 2007 book *Inside Greek U* by Alan Desantis.

But demographic change and pushback against white privilege have eroded these ties. Two of the past three presidents – Barack Obama and Bill Clinton – were not fraternity members (although Clinton accepted honorary membership of Phi Beta Sigma in 2009), and only a third of the previous Congress had Greek affiliations.



Fraternities are still perceived to offer one thing universities need: money. Research shows that fraternity members maintain closer ties after graduation with their alma maters than non-members. However, a study by economists at Middlebury College found that fraternity membership had a statistically insignificant effect on whether alumni gave money to the university they attended.

Fraternities provide value to universities in other ways, though. According to the North-American Interfraternity Conference, fraternity members volunteered 3.8 million hours of their time last year for community service, and raised \$20 million for charity.

“That’s a really important part of this story – that students are self-governed in this sense, and as bad as they can become, they can also work to become the citizens everybody wants them to be,” says Veldkamp.

A recently published paper by Walker and P. Wesley Routon, assistant professor of economics at Georgia Gwinnett College, shows that at a time when universities are being scrutinised over the rate at which their students graduate, fraternity members are more likely to earn degrees than non-members.

Fraternity membership is “not a complete negative”, says Walker, whose findings are based on a survey of fraternity members at 400 universities. “That doesn’t mean there aren’t caveats about dangerous behaviour. There should be a way to maintain the camaraderie and positive social aspects without the negatives.”

Walker credits a system of mutual support for fraternity members’ higher graduation rates.

“You’ve got a broader social network, you’re more involved on campus. It keeps you around. And they’re graduating on time,” he explains. “Not everything that occurs in Greek organisations is completely good, but it certainly also isn’t completely bad.”

He and others believe that fraternities are facing more pressure than ever to reform.

“There’s much more scrutiny now, not only from the universities, but also from parents, and there’s a heightened legal environment,” Walker says.

Veldkamp agrees. “There is a tension in 2015,” he says. “It’s about more than sexual violence. Sexual violence is leading the charge. But there are a lot of things happening right now that are holding fraternities’ feet to the fire. Campus administrators who have been very frustrated are keeping the pressure on fraternities and sororities to really look at systemic cultural issues and to bring about change.” ●

‘Where is piety? Where is God in all this?’

Murderous deeds done in Islam’s name cannot exterminate love and courage in an unflinching Mali-set drama inspired by real events, writes Duncan Wu



Timbuktu
Directed by Abderrahmane Sissako
Starring Ibrahim Ahmed, Abel Jafri
and Toulou Kiki
On general release in the UK from 29 May

A gazelle runs through a storm of gunfire pursued by a group of men in a jeep. “Tire it!” one of them screams. They are like out of control children – or Yahoos in *Gulliver’s Travels*.

The thought put me in mind of Swift. And so in turn, while leaving the cinema where I had watched *Timbuktu*, I found myself wondering whether it qualified as satire. Mauritanian-born director Abderrahmane Sissako’s latest film, nominated for an Academy Award in the foreign language film category and honoured with seven Césars in France, certainly has no sympathy for the fundamentalists it depicts. Sissako felt compelled to write *Timbuktu* after seeing a newsreel of the occupation of the Malian city by the Ansar Dine, a fundamentalist group linked to al-Qaeda, in 2012-13. The footage showed two people, a man and a woman, buried up to their necks in preparation for being stoned to death for fornication. This atrocity is recreated in *Timbuktu*.

It is easy for uninformed non-Muslims to

assume that hardliners are representative of all Muslim opinion, but Sissako’s film renders any such thought impossible. *Timbuktu* takes us inside a city occupied by those whose claim to legitimacy is undermined by the brutality with which they enforce their rule. In an early scene, they force a female fish-seller at gunpoint to wear gloves and socks. When she refuses, they take her away; she seems to know she will not be coming back. In another scene, they arrest a guitarist and the woman who sings alongside him, sentencing each to 80 lashes as punishment for the sin of making music. We sense they are lucky to escape with their lives. (The woman is played by Malian actor and singer Fatoumata Diawara, whose sublime voice is one of many reasons for seeking out this film.)

Although the jihadists declare the supremacy of Sharia, they undermine themselves by their hypocrisy. They forbid smoking in the city but sneak off for a quiet cigarette whenever possible. They ban football but quarrel about World Cup matches they have watched on television. They denounce the rest of the world from the back of their sports utility vehicles. They take a puritanical view of sex but force themselves on local women. They are, as Sissako shows us, all too human in their absolutism, their standards so exalted

that, in their exhibitionistic self-righteousness, they could never live up to them.

If exaggeration were involved, *Timbuktu* would be a kind of satire, but from what I can discover, this is virtually reportage. In one scene, the Islamists are shown using local artworks – statues of female figures – for target practice. When the Ansar Dine occupied Timbuktu in 2012 they also engaged in a form of cultural revolution, demolishing the centuries-old shrines and tombs of Sufi saints. These acts echoed the Taliban’s 2001 destruction of Buddhist statues in Afghanistan, hailed by cheerleader-general Mullah Mohammed Omar with the words, “Muslims should be proud of smashing idols. It has given praise to God that we have destroyed them.”

Madmen like Omar would have us believe them exemplars of their religion but in several important scenes Sissako proves that to be self-important claptrap. Early in the film the invaders break into a mosque armed with machine-guns.

“You can’t wear shoes and carry guns in the house of God,” protests the imam (Adel Mahmoud Cherif).

“But we can,” returns the doltish burble, “we’re doing jihad.”

It is a tense, terrifying exchange, in which



the holy man risks his life attempting to persuade armed soldiers to lay down their weapons. “Where is piety?” he asks them. “Where is God in all this?” It is a question to which they have no answer.

The film’s central narrative involves a Tuareg goat and cattle herder, Kidane (played by Ibrahim Ahmed), who lives in an open tent outside the city with his wife, Satima (Toulou Kiki), their daughter Toya (Layla Walet Mohamed) and their adopted son Issan (Mehdi A. G. Mohamed). Theirs is the only remaining tent of many that once covered the dunes, their neighbours having long fled the

madness of occupation. Outside the city, they enjoy freedoms denied the inhabitants of Timbuktu: Kidane strums a guitar as they lie together at night, watching the sky; Satima does not cover her head, nor wear socks or gloves.

The extremists circle them like feral dogs. By day Satima and Toya are visited by Abdelkerim (Abel Jafri), the most asinine of the jihadists, a braying donkey with the face of a man, who flirts with Satima while ordering that she cover her head. “It’s indecent,” he declares. When she defies him with the observation that he makes housecalls only when her

REX

husband is away, he storms off and fires his machine-gun into the dunes. It is a promise that something terrible is in store.

The drama unfolds with the nauseous inevitability associated with tragedy. *Timbuktu* is, from that perspective, an old-fashioned film – about victims of injustice. It shows (in case we needed reminding) that all tyrannies are in essence the same, their instability guaranteed by dependence on brute force. What the film offers as new is its concentration on current events. Although it is set in Mali in 2012, it tells a story that continues: Al-Shabaab is terrorising Malians as I write, while similar groups rampage across Africa and the Middle East.

Some reviewers have argued that the film’s achievement is to paint the human face of terrorism. That thought was apparently in the mind of Jacques-Alain Bénisti, mayor of Villiers-sur-Marne, who (despite having not seen it) argued it would incite jihadism in the Paris suburbs and promptly banned it from his local cinema. His toy-theatre logic was almost – though not quite – as nutty as his claim that legalisation of same-sex marriage was the same as legalisation of rape, and he was even-

“Timbuktu is a city under occupation by Ansar Dine, jihadists whose claim to legitimacy is undermined by the brutality with which they enforce their rule”

tually obliged to back down. It would take the genius of Swift adequately to expose the idiocy of those who decree the burning of films, plays and novels they have not seen or read. And the irony was that in prohibiting *Timbuktu*, Bénisti acted in the same way as the hardliners it portrays.

Anyone who, having watched Sissako’s film, wants to join the ranks of the holy warriors, has clearly misunderstood it. It is true that its AK47-toting jihadists are all too human in their failings – ignorant, arrogant and self-interested. And Sissako does not glorify them.

Sissako’s achievement is his meticulous, nuanced portrait of the victims. Kidane and his family emerge out of the lyrical beauty with which cinematographer Sofian El Fani drenches the Sahara, especially in night-time scenes. Each steps out of that visionary world to learn the hardest of lessons: how to face death when all hope of redemption has been removed. *Timbuktu* is, finally, about how to die with love in one’s heart regardless of the circumstances. There’s nothing sentimental about this. As his characters stare into the barrel of a loaded gun, Sissako is as steel-eyed as they are, bringing us into perfect alignment with their unaffected nobility. That is why *Timbuktu* has been hailed, rightly, as a masterpiece, and why you will continue to reflect on it long after you have left the cinema.

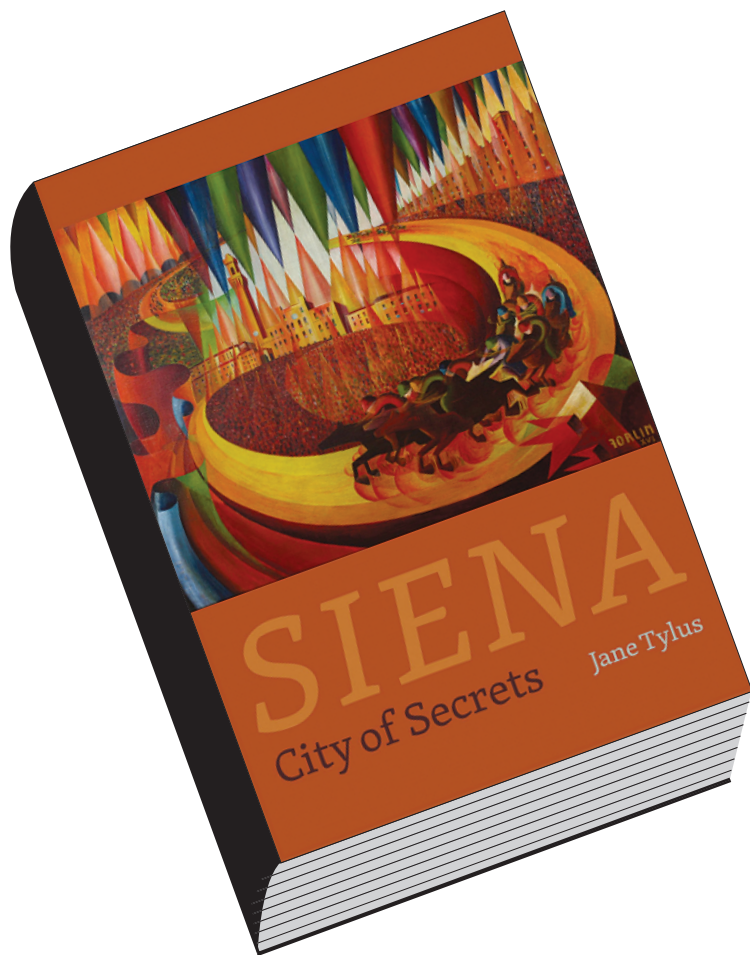
Duncan Wu is professor of English at Georgetown University.



All too human all tyrannies are the same, their instability guaranteed by dependence on brute force

Every nook and cranny

Discover the Tuscan metropolis in a study suffused with all the vitality of the Palio, says Philip Cooke



Siena: City of Secrets
By Jane Tylus
University of Chicago Press
256pp, £18.00
ISBN 9780226207827
and 7964 (e-book)
Published 4 May 2015

Built on three hills, Siena inevitably invites comparisons with Rome. Indeed, the Tuscan city's foundation myth traces its ancestry to Senio, one of the sons of Remus. In the 13th century, when the story of Senio's flight from Rome to Siena began to circulate, parallels with Rome were not too wide of the mark. The city was, as Jane Tylus shows in this elegant and captivatingly interdisciplinary book, a major economic centre, the powerhouse of Italy's successful banking industry, and politically

and socially advanced. In 1260, Ghibelline Siena, a supporter of the Holy Roman Empire, defeated Guelph Florence at the Battle of Montaperti, although victory was achieved only as a result of an act of treachery by the Florentine Bocca degli Abati. After receiving a signal, Abati attacked the Florentine standard-bearer and cut off his hand. The flag fell to the ground, the Florentine troops fell into disarray, and the battle was lost. For this sin, Dante placed Abati in the ninth circle of Hell.

Culturally, too, Siena was a centre of excellence, and over long periods defeated the Florentines in those contests – without the need of fifth columnists. Siennese art of the trecento was extraordinarily impressive, if not sumptuous, and Tylus discusses these achievements with great

sensitivity and sophistication. Duccio's *Maestà*, a complex polyptych painted on front and back, was carried in triumph through the streets of the city by the Siennese when it was completed in 1311. Although the original composition no longer survives, many of the panels have been conserved, including the central front panel, which remains in Siena. Others are in galleries around the world, such as *The Annunciation* from the lower *predella* sections, which is in the National Gallery in London.

Duccio was followed by the likes of Simone Martini, whose own monumental *Maestà*, which depicts the Virgin seated under a canopy decorated with the black and white colours of Siena, is in the city's Palazzo Pubblico. The same building houses Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Buon Governo* fresco cycle, an astonishing and much studied panorama of an entire society and the city upon which it depended. In terms of literary figures, the Siennese poet Cecco Angiolieri, to whom Tylus, a great expert on Italian poetry, devotes less attention than I feel he merits, produced a *canzoniere* devoted to the vicissitudes of his love for Becchina, his tortured relationship with his mean-spirited parents and his fondness for drinking and gambling, “la taverna e il dado” as he puts it. And unlike Petrarch, Angiolieri had a sense of humour.

But by the beginning of the 14th century, things were starting to go wrong for Siena. The Ghibelline cause collapsed, as did the banks (who did not learn their lesson, as the recent problems of the Monte dei Paschi, the giant Siennese bank, demonstrate). In 1348, the Black Death ravaged the city, and it would return at regular intervals. From the late 15th century onwards, Siena was subject to the rule of tyrants, foreigners or, even worse, the Florentines.

Although it became part of the Italian nation in 1861, there has always been a sense that Siena is cut off from the rest of the country and has continued to lose out to Florence. Whereas it was, in its glory days, a major waypoint on the Via Francigena, only tourists (and the intrepid Tylus) walk that way today. Florence, on the other hand, is connected to the North and South by Italy's largest motorway. To get to this road from Siena you have to travel along the less than super *superstrada*.

Although a railway line connects the two cities, it is notoriously slow and most people prefer the bus (when it runs). Florence is now one of the cities on the Italo high-speed train network; Siena is not. And perhaps the Siennese like it that way – certainly my own experience there as a young student in the 1980s was that it was not a place that welcomed outsiders, an impression

Jane Tylus is a modern-day Tobias. During her journey, she too accumulates many riches, which she generously passes on

confirmed by the Siennese poet Mario Luzi's line: “This is a city in which it's impossible to live as a stranger.”

Tylus' latest book, which successfully mixes a wide variety of genres and in many ways defies categorisation, has its origins in her highly praised study of Catherine of Siena, a work that opened up a new interpretative framework based, above all, on a series of subtle, nuanced and suggestive readings of the saint's letters. Having immersed herself in the city for the writing of *Reclaiming Catherine of Siena*, she has taken the bold step of attempting to reclaim not just its most famous saint, but the whole city, and above all its medieval and Renaissance facets.

The result is an outstanding volume, which demonstrates all the qualities the author has shown in her earlier works, and more. On the face of it, the book seems to be made up of a series of loosely linked excursions, in which Tylus variously reflects on pilgrims, saints, neighbourhoods, money, earth and water. This impression disappears on a closer reading, which reveals a complex pattern of parallels, associations and signposts that give the text an overall coherence and logic. It is reminiscent of the swirl and vitality of Siena's famed twice-yearly horse race, the Palio, to which she dedicates a short section – although I need to say that I have never understood the appeal of the Palio to anyone but the Siennese. At the book's structural heart lies the Santa Maria della Scala, or Spedale. One of the first hospitals in Europe, it began by welcoming pilgrims and then the

sick. One of its last patients before it reopened as a museum was the writer Italo Calvino, who died there in 1985 after a stroke, and from whom Tylus seems to have learned not a few lessons in terms of the simplicity and lightness of her style and the intricate patterns of her textual architecture.

Like Calvino, Tylus has an eye for detail. The starting point of her analysis is a fragment of a fresco, which is painted on the walls of the pilgrims' quarters at the Spedale, depicting the life of Tobias from the Book of Tobit. It is a remnant of an early fresco cycle, now "squeezed between two massive paintings dedicated to the early years of the Spedale". Tobias is setting off on a journey but "cranes his neck to look behind him even as his boots are pointed resolutely forward". He went off on a long and difficult journey but on his way picked up many riches. As this is a literary book, with various moments of self-consciousness, I do not think it is too adventurous to suggest that Tylus is, or sees herself as, a modern-day Tobias (the names

are strikingly similar). During the course of her journey, she too accumulates many riches, which she generously passes on here. Her discussions of the art are a highlight: not just the familiar works (the pages on Martini's *Maestà* are compelling), but also the lesser known (and in my case unknown) frescoes by Guido of Siena (Duccio's teacher), which were sealed up around 1500 and rediscovered only in 1999.

The last time I went to Siena was in 2002 to attend a concert in the Piazza del Campo by the rock singer Gianna Nannini – just one member of a massive Siennese dynasty. She belted out *Bello e Impossibile* and *California* – and it was free. I will now go back, with Tylus as my guide, and take another look.

Philip Cooke is professor of Italian history and culture, Strathclyde University. He is author of *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (2011) and co-author, with Anna Cento Bull, of *Ending Terrorism in Italy* (2013).

THE AUTHOR



Jane Tylus, professor of Italian and comparative literature at New York University, grew up in Parsippany, New Jersey, a shy child for whom "reading and playing piano were wonderful escapes. "My father and many of my parents' friends were first-generation immigrants; in the 1960s the Jersey suburbs were where you went to raise your children in a calm, safe place. And it was very safe and very calm.

"But you needed a car to go everywhere and there was no town centre – not even a town. Just housing developments and shopping malls, although we were lucky to have woods and ponds for ice skating.

"I would lie in bed at night and listen to the soothing sound of the train whistle, knowing there were exciting places out there I could go to when I grew up. I think I'm attracted to small towns like Siena – and big cities like Rome and New York – because you can walk everywhere and there are so many places people can spontaneously congregate."

Of her discovery of Italian literature, Tylus recalls: "Only in my last [undergraduate] year, when I took a comparative literature course, did I suddenly realise that Spenser and Shakespeare weren't all they were cracked up to be: the Italians had come first. That, plus a trip to Italy after I graduated, riding in a third-class train car from Rome to Brindisi with four elderly Italian women who didn't know each other before they boarded, but who were sharing food and

stories and laughing their heads off when they got off, as though they'd known each other for years. The beauty and expressiveness of the language and the inherent sociability of its people made me decide then and there to study Italian."

Tylus lives with her husband "in New York during the school year, in Barnard, Vermont in the summer – and Italy whenever someone will invite us. We have the good fortune to be living, until the end of June, in the lovely little town of Ponte a Mensola outside Florence, not far from where Michelangelo and Desiderio da Settignano carved out pietra serena in the quarries of Maiano, and you can still follow the *sentieri degli scalpellini*, the trails of the stonemasons, into the hills."

Karen Shook

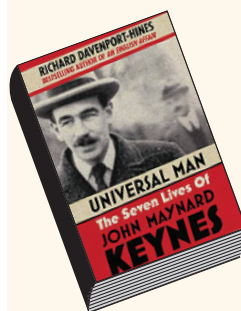
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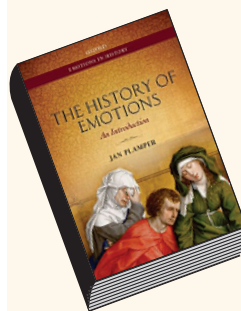
A weekly look over the shoulders of our scholar-reviewers



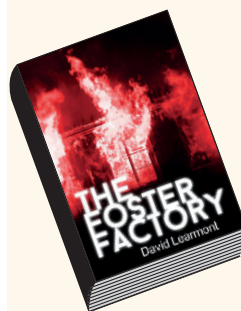
Leah Astbury, PhD student in the department of history and philosophy of science, University of Cambridge, is reading Jennifer Evans' *Aphrodisiacs, Fertility and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Boydell & Brewer, 2014). "Evans asks how individuals understood procreation in the 17th and 18th centuries, long before IVF and other reproductive technologies. Demanding that historians integrate the literature on sex and pleasure with that on medical perceptions of fertility, she convincingly shows how aphrodisiacs were used by both men and women with the twofold intention of increasing both libido and the likelihood of conception."



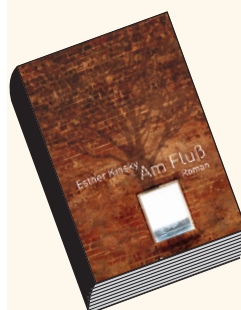
Stephen Halliday, panel tutor in history, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, is reading Richard Davenport-Hines' *The Universal Man: The Seven Lives of John Maynard Keynes* (HarperCollins, 2015). "Economist, polemicist, art connoisseur, statesman, philanthropist: in the face of considerable odds, this book manages to cast fresh light on the many-sided achievements of an extraordinary man who was perhaps the most truly gifted of all the 'Bloomsberries'. One strange omission: I couldn't find any reference to the fact that his degree was actually in mathematics – and a Wrangler (or first class) at that. But there's plenty to compensate."



Jane O'Grady, visiting lecturer in the philosophy of psychology, City University London, is reading Jan Plamper's *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2015). "This book throws a lifeline to anyone trying to navigate the present high tide of multidisciplinary material on the emotions. It lucidly analyses perspectives on emotion in philosophy, neuroscience, anthropology and sociology since the 19th century, weighing the competing claims of social constructionism versus universalism, and managing to be both scholarly and enjoyable."



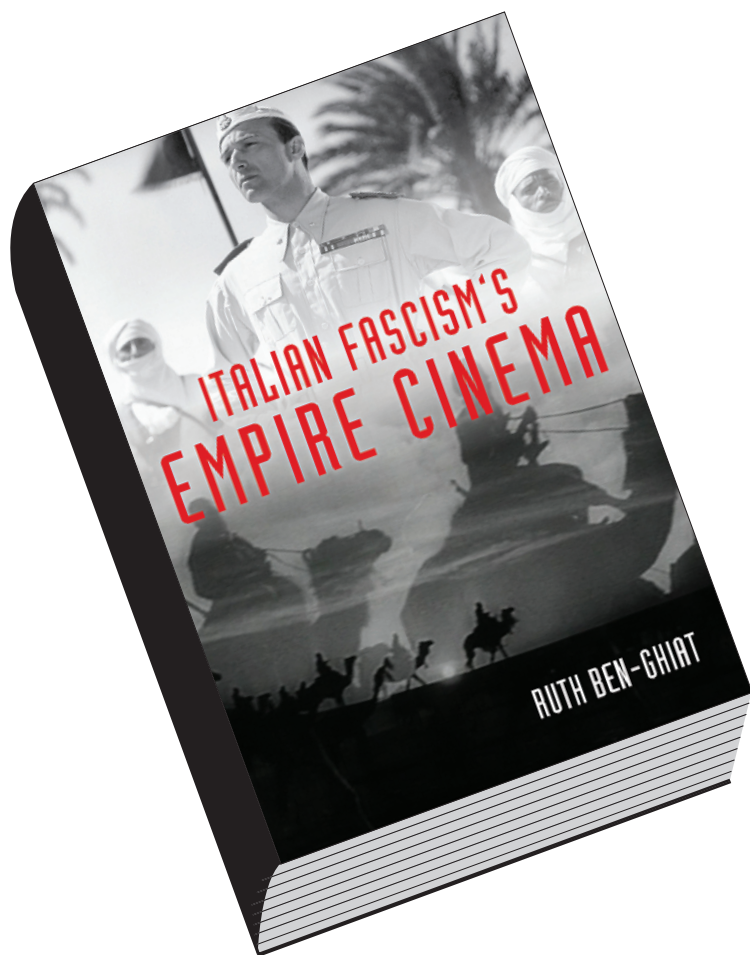
Jane Robertson, formerly lecturer in English at the University of Hong Kong, is reading David Learmont's *The Foster Factory* (Andrews, 2015). "This is an unusual, amusing, sometimes heart-rending memoir by Learmont, who, with his wife Marsha, decides to become a foster carer late in life. He offers a compendium of family breakdowns and other social problems, narrated in a style that ranges from *Catch-22* to Bertie Wooster. The pair are now enjoying 'a second retirement' in Andorra, and after reading this book, you feel they deserve it."



Uwe Schütte, reader in German, Aston University, is reading Esther Kinsky's *Am Fluß* (Matthes & Seitz, 2014). "Rejecting the conventions of a novel, this most remarkable book charts Kinsky's elegiac rambles along the river Lea in London's East End. Her haunting, meditative prose reflects the urban decay of a post-industrial landscape and empathises with people's life on the social margins. Unrelentingly precise, while also truly poetic, this is without a doubt the best book on London in recent German literature."

Fighting them in the matinees

Richard Bosworth has front-row seats for this tale of deserts, drama and silver-screen propaganda



Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema
By Ruth Ben-Ghiat
Indiana University Press
420pp, £61.00 and £24.99
ISBN 9780253015525, 5594
and 5662 (e-book)
Published 11 February 2015

In 1941-42, the swaying of the North African front made life difficult for the Fascist Italian film industry. The troupe shooting *I cavalieri del deserto*, for example, had to flee when Allied forces, shooting in a different manner, approached too near. This movie's scriptwriters, engaged in adapting a racy Emilio Salgari novel, were Vittorio Mussolini, eldest son of the dictator, and Federico Fellini, famous in the post-war era for his wry portrayals of his people's peccadilloes. It might seem an unlikely partnership. Yet such

conjunctions and disjunctions lie at the heart of Ruth Ben-Ghiat's fine study of the intricacies of her subject.

Her gaze is directed at films produced in Fascist Italy with themes that tied in with the dictatorship's violent rule of those colonies it had inherited from the Liberals (Libya, Eritrea, Somalia) and those it conquered (Ethiopia in 1935-36, Albania in 1939). Her purpose, she explains at the end of the book, is to display the "emphatic yet elusive relationship" such Fascist cinema had with "its own times", a history with its own peaks and troughs, especially as Italy's Second World War became a story of defeat and imperial loss. Films made in the 1930s centred much of their appeal and message on being shot on site, where the extras, white

and black, were "real" and only lead roles were taken by "stars". By contrast, *Bengasi*, which won the major prize at the Venice Biennale in the year of its release (1942), was filmed, of necessity, at Rome's Cinecittà. Nonetheless, the regime did spare 5,000 soldiers from its ever more hard-pressed war fronts to give flesh to the movie's battle scenes. Here, notes Ben-Ghiat, was a "measure of the importance" of cinema to the regime.

Ben-Ghiat begins with theoretical and historical introductions before transitioning into detailed readings of eight films: *Kif Tebbi*, 1928; *Il grande appello*, 1936; *Luciano Serra, pilota*, 1938; *Lo squadrone bianco*, 1936, perhaps Augusto Genina's directorial masterpiece; *Sentinelle di bronzo*, 1937; *L'Esclave blanc/Jungla nera*, 1936; *Sotto la Croce del Sud*, 1938; and *Un pilota ritorna*, 1942 (one of young director Roberto Rossellini's "Fascist" trilogy, soon to be replaced on screens by his "Anti-Fascist" trilogy led by *Rome: Open City* in 1945). She reads with acumen and span, her analysis ably reviewing Italian empire cinema's parallels with, and differences from, films produced in older and greater empires such as those of Britain and France, in Italy's Axis partner, Nazi Germany, or in Hollywood, already triumphant in its own imperium of publicity and sales. Despite Fascism's devotion to "autarchy", three-quarters of cinema tickets sold in Italy in 1938 were for Hollywood films. With such background sketched, each film is also scrutinised for its messages, witting and unwitting, visual and aural; Ben-Ghiat is acutely aware of sight and sound.

Sometimes readers might fear that the ghost of Derrida lurks in the margins of this monograph, advising that "there is nothing outside the text". Certainly Ben-Ghiat does not seriously ask who Vittorio Mussolini and Federico Fellini were in 1942, nor does she question how their relationship functioned. Yet this is a minor quibble. *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema* is the most subtle and detailed examination we have of a crucial element of the cultural practice of "totalitarian" dictatorship, Italian-style.

Richard Bosworth is senior research fellow, Jesus College, Oxford, and author of *Italian Venice: A History* (2014).



Paying Bribes for Public Services: A Global Guide to Grass-Roots Corruption
By Richard Rose and Caryn Peiffer
Palgrave Macmillan, 124pp, £45.00
ISBN 9781137509666
and 9673 (e-book)
Published 10 February 2015

In the past decade, corruption has been high on the agenda of governments and international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, reflecting a growing consensus among academics and policy-makers that its prevalence is stifling progress. But measuring corruption remains a significant challenge to formulating effective anti-corruption policy. Richard Rose and Caryn Peiffer argue that instead of basing estimates of corruption on perception alone, we need hard data based on the actual incidence of bribery.

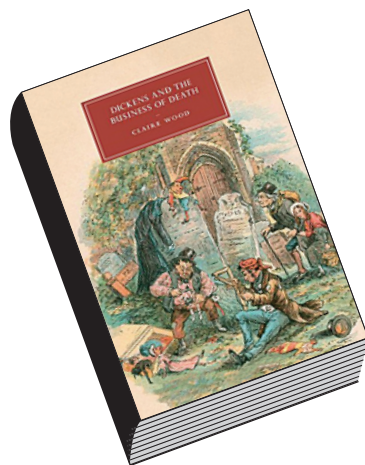
The main challenge with perception-based measures pioneered by Transparency International and the World Bank is that perceptions may differ significantly from reality. Various attempts to respond to this have tried to measure corruption directly, such as the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys, which asked: "Did you or any member of your households pay a bribe in the last one year when using public services?" Rose and Peiffer's book draws on a unique database of the experience of more than a quarter of a million people in 119 countries, taken from five major multinational surveys of bribery: Afrobarometer, Eurobarometer, the Latin American Public Opinion Project, the Life in Transition Survey and the Global Corruption Barometer. The focus is on bribes paid for everyday public services that directly affect more than 1.6 billion people annually.

Using these data, the authors highlight some interesting facts: in countries where the press is most free, the likelihood of paying a bribe is reduced by 13 percentage points. Similarly, lower contact with public officials, greater availability of public services and reduced regulation are linked to lower incidences of bribery.

Although the estimates provided by surveys cited here are better than the perception indexes, they may not be free from bias. Respondents who are not supporters of a current government may overstate the incidence of bribery; a polluting businessman who is benefiting from bribing environmental inspectors may not want to reveal it. Hence, some researchers have attempted to measure corruption by observing it directly. Benjamin Olken of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Patrick Barron of the World Bank observed the bribes that truck drivers paid to police on routes to and from the Indonesian province of Aceh. On some 300 trips, they noted more than 6,000 illegal payments, representing 13 per cent of the per-unit cost of the trip. Ritva Reinikka of the World Bank and Jakob Svensson of Stockholm University estimated a staggering 87 per cent leakage rate in education grants to schools in Uganda. John McMillan and Pablo Zoido of Stanford University documented the case of a secret police chief in Peru during Alberto Fujimori's presidency who bribed judges and politicians with sums ranging from \$3,000 to \$50,000 per month, and paid \$1.5 million per month to a TV channel to control the media.

The authors propose very broad strategies to reduce corruption, such as increased transparency and contactless service delivery. These policies have weaknesses of their own, however. A contactless service delivery may reduce accessibility in countries with high illiteracy and low infrastructure. Raising transparency may cause bribe-payers and bribe-takers to become more sophisticated and clandestine. While more needs to be done in terms of proposing effective anti-corruption policies, the comparative analysis undertaken in this book using hard data is a great starting point.

M. Emranul Haque is senior lecturer in macroeconomics, University of Manchester.



Dickens and the Business of Death
By Claire Wood
Cambridge University Press
256pp, £60.00
ISBN 9781107098633 and
9781316237434 (e-book)
Published 5 March 2015

In looking at Charles Dickens and the death business, Claire Wood has hit upon a wonderfully rich subject. Her focus is the Victorian funerary business and the industries it spawned – the mourning warehouses, the coffin furniture manufactories, the funerary displays that wealth (and insurance monies) generated – and what Dickens made of them. The book tells us that it starts at the time of the 1832 Anatomy Act, but it takes off with Dickens' withering description of the Duke of Wellington's ponderous funeral cortège at mid-century, and thereafter diffuses into the second half of Victoria's reign. The book's mainsprings are the 1851 Great Exhibition's proliferation of manufactures, and the Paris Morgue: "death commodification" is the pervasive theme.

Dickens is a gift to anyone interested in the Victorian celebration of death, prolific as a storyteller and social observer through a long writing lifetime from 1836 to 1870. His unashamed interest in and creative use of deathly matters are aspects of his vision many readers and scholars have relished before. He was both hilariously funny and archly critical from very early on – one has only to think of Mr Sowerberry the undertaker offering his snuffbox to Mr Bumble the parish beadle in *Oliver Twist*. The box takes the form of a patent coffin, and both men sniff pinch of its contents during a cosy chat about the profits to be made from pauper funerals.

Oliver, Sowerberry's new pauper apprentice, will be forced to sleep among coffins and starved almost to death by the undertaker's wife. Keeping the lad small saves expenditure and makes him useful for work as a funeral mute at the burials of other (better-off) children. Dickens interweaves the commodification of the dead and the living, using humour to hit home.

Dickens and the Business of Death is slender for its price. The cover design is seductive, but there's a paucity of other illustration. It has an excellent bibliography, but more leaves are devoted to adverts than are permitted to the skeletal index. I would have liked to see more passages from the novels quoted in the text: it is annoying to be told what a passage says but not to be able to read the original for oneself (one is instead presented with reported text-speech). One of the book's weaknesses is that whenever any brief passage is quoted from Dickens, too often a lengthy paraphrase follows immediately afterwards, as if the reader lacks the wit to grasp what he wrote. Interpretation is one thing, paraphrase another.

Literary conventions demand that academic writers learn how to utilise diction to assert the profundity of their own insight, but here the editor's pencil seems to have been paralysed with respect to certain weight-bearing phraseology. Things are distanced or defamiliarised a hundred times, positioned, in tension or in uncomfortable proximity, ambiguous, compelling, imbricated, inscribed, reified, presented, in an ahistorical eternal present. I found myself having to skip quite a lot, as too often the insights seem not only slight in themselves, but derivative or repetitive in their permutations. But there are a few places in this apprentice piece where Wood lets herself go, giving us fleeting glimpses of her own *joie de vivre* in reading Dickens. Her section on the paper mill in *Our Mutual Friend*, connecting recycling and resurrection, offers a happy example. I had hoped, perhaps, for something more, but this book is less about mortality than academic commerce.

Ruth Richardson is honorary professor in medicine and the humanities, Hong Kong University, and past president of the Dickens Society.

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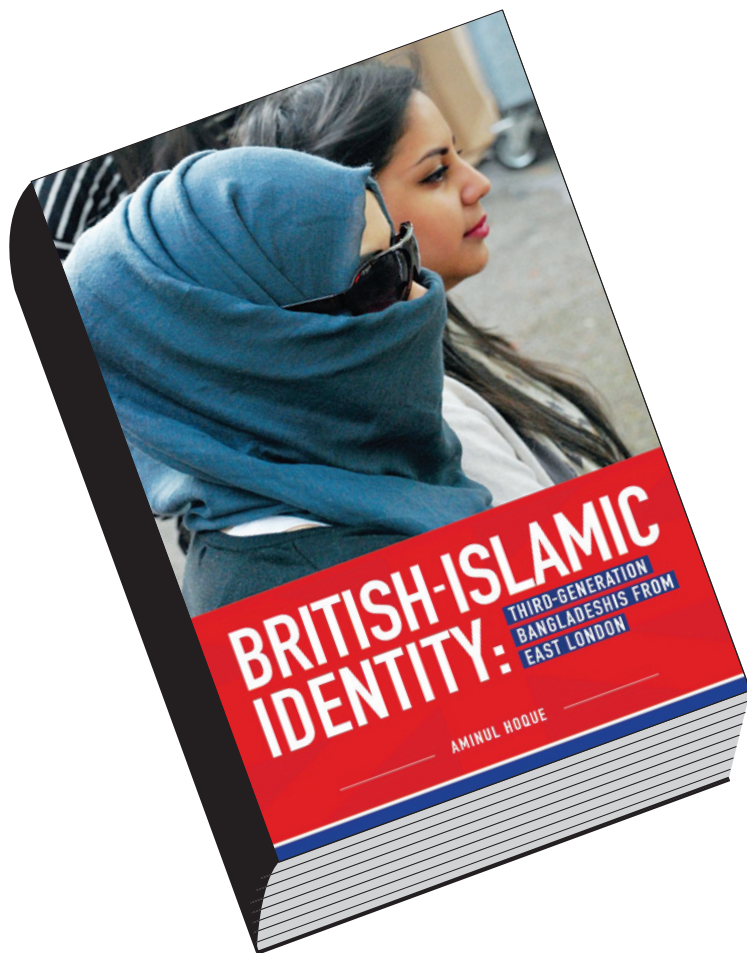
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Backing away from Banglish

Caught between two cultures, six teenagers turn to Arabic to feel at home, finds Mafruha Mohua



British-Islamic Identity: Third-Generation Bangladeshis from East London
By Aminul Hoque
Institute of Education Press
176pp, £26.99
ISBN 9781858566030
Published 27 February 2015

What would one call the confluence of Bangla (Bengali) and English? Banglish, of course! Such hybrid linguistic code-switching is common throughout South Asia; it is one of the many lingering effects of British colonialism. As the term Banglish has been in use for many years, I could not help but be amused by Aminul Hoque's claim to have "coined" it to describe the hybrid language spoken by British Bangladeshis in East London. There are many

variants of Banglish, and the one spoken by British Bangladeshis reflects an identity unique to them.

Hoque explores the construction of this specific British-Islamic identity via the experiences of six young interviewees. All are third-generation Bangladeshis living in Tower Hamlets, the London borough that is home to the largest concentration of Bangladeshis outside Bangladesh. Whitechapel, with its bilingual English-Bengali street signs and shops selling Bangladeshi vegetables, dried fish, syrupy sweets, brightly coloured saris and Bengali-language newspapers and books feels like a little Bangladesh.

But appearances can be deceptive. Tower Hamlets may be home to the young women and men aged 15 to 19 who participated in Hoque's study, but they do not

necessarily feel at home in Bangladeshi culture, which they see as "alien" and often un-Islamic. For them, Bangladesh is the repository of a dated tradition.

Yet neither do they enjoy an easy access to Britishness and are often acutely aware of being considered outsiders. As one participant says, "never in a million years will we be...accepted". Like previous generations, these third-generation Bangladeshis struggle to stake their claim to Britishness. Despite their desire to be British, they are also frequently wary of this identity, finding it as alien as the Bangladeshi identity of their elders. British identity is seen as the province of the "white", those who "drink alcohol" and dislike Muslims. This reductive view is the result, Hoque says, of the racism his interviewees speak of being subjected to, from being "spat at" and called names to undergoing extra security checks at airports.

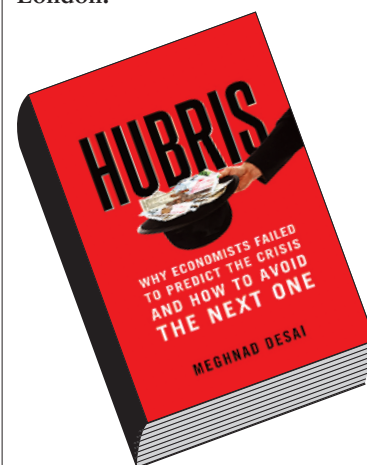
Estranged from their ancestral culture and rejected by mainstream UK culture, this cohort sees Islam as a neutral space in which to construct an identity different from that of their parents and grandparents. Hoque's examination of the strategies this generation employs in constructing British-Islamic identity is intriguing. I am not convinced, however, by his assessment that his interviewees' politicised Islamic identity is unique to third-generation Bangladeshis in London, not least because Islam as a political tool has a long history in South Asia and played a crucial role in the 1947 partition. The strategy unique to this generation is their marked preference for Arabic. They frequently use Arabic phrases and words in their conversation, but, as these interviews show, they do not always know the meaning of the words and phrases they use. This is a remarkable development in the construction of British-Islamic identity, and I wanted to know more about why Hoque's interviewees believe that Arabic offers "linguistic membership" in a global Islamic community. After all, the majority of Muslims in the world are not Arabs and practise their Islamic identities in languages other than Arabic.

These East London teenagers feel empowered by their sense of belonging to a global, albeit "imaginary", Muslim community. In this strategy of identification

and empowerment there is, however, a contradiction. While the study participants enthusiastically identify with this global community, they experience a sense of "disconnection" from "backward" Bangladeshis. But are these Bangladeshis not also a part of the global Muslim community? Hoque does not explore this contradiction, nor does he explain what his interviewees understand by Bangladeshi culture. And even when the narrative shifts from the perspective of the interviewees to that of the author, Bangladeshi culture remains an unclear concept.

In introducing a participant who, unlike the other five young people, comes from a middle-class background, Hoque states that although her family members are highly educated and liberal, they are still "paradoxically...rooted within Bangladeshi culture". I fail to comprehend why he sees this as a paradox.

Mafruha Mohua is teaching assistant in English literature, Queen Mary University of London.



Hubris: Why Economists Failed to Predict the Crisis and How to Avoid the Next One
By Meghnad Desai
Yale University Press, 304pp, £18.99
ISBN 9780300213546
Published 23 April 2015

A guided and highly readable tour of economic thinking from Adam Smith and Karl Marx to John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman, this book sets out to emphasise the importance of economic history in our understanding of the economic crisis of 2008 and its aftermath. Meghnad Desai, the economist and Labour peer, shows that for much of the past two centuries, economic theory has been built around the idea

that, with a hands-off state, economies have an inbuilt tendency to equilibrium and steadiness.

This optimistic theory of capitalism, dominant up until the Wall Street Crash of 1929, was to be superseded by Keynesianism's view that economies have, in fact, a strong tendency to be all too easily blown off course. Anathema to the classical theorists, Keynes showed that government intervention was essential to stability. It took the global crisis of the 1970s – and the apparent failure of Keynesianism to tackle stagflation – for the old model, revised and embellished with the help of advanced mathematics, to triumph once again. For the past 40 years, pro-market theory, applied by deregulation and weak economic management, has become the new orthodoxy.

For a while it seemed that the prophets of the new pro-market classical economics had been proved right. From the mid-1990s, much of the globe enjoyed a decade of sustained growth and falling unemployment – the Great Moderation, as it was known. It was this apparent success that helps to explain the hubris of the years up to 2007, and, as Desai expands in this book's subtitle, why economists failed to predict that anything like a crash was coming. Crises had simply been written out of the script.

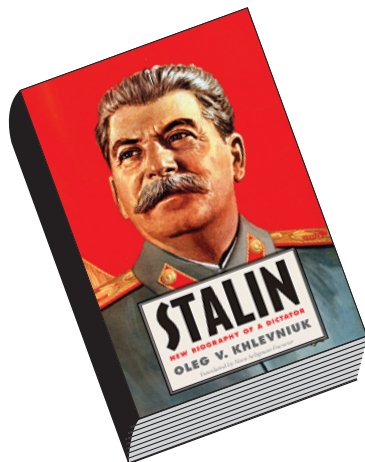
Far from being finally tamed, as much of the economics profession liked to boast, boom and bust was just on hold for a while. As Desai argues, the idea of automatic equilibrium is a dangerous delusion. Disequilibrium, not equilibrium, is the natural order. "Capitalism is a dynamic system but it works through creating cycles and crises. It is a disequilibrium system." In seeking an explanation for the post-2008 crisis, Desai turns to "long wave" theories, such as the one developed in the 1920s by the Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff, that predict periodic turbulence rather than equilibrium. He suggests that 2008 was at the tail end of the upswing phase of a 40-year-long Kondratieff cycle that began with a downswing lasting from the early 1970s to the early 1990s.

This cycle coincided with a shift in the "struggle between capital and labor for income shares" – another source of

instability – with economies moving from the crisis of profitability in the 1970s to a crisis of wages from the late 1980s, the latter the direct result of the triumph of the pro-market school. Together, these two cycles, intensified in their impact by acceleration in the rate of globalisation, imposed the shocks that took us over the cliff in 2008. The highly sophisticated but oversimplified models built by the new equilibrium theorists simply ignored these factors.

There is one significant gap in Desai's grand tour of rival theories, that of the late American heterodox economist Hyman Minsky. Minsky, who died in 1996, had with some prescience warned that the deregulated financial markets introduced in the 1980s would intensify the scale of economic instability, and it is a theory about the post-2008 crisis that has, belatedly, come to be widely endorsed. Nevertheless, Desai is right to restate the importance of natural turbulence and its causes. The accuracy of his somewhat pessimistic conclusion – that the world is at the beginning of a new long wave downturn – remains to be seen.

Stewart Lansley is visiting fellow in the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bristol, and co-author, with Joanna Mack, of *Breadline Britain: The Rise of Mass Poverty* (2015).



Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator
By Oleg V. Khlevniuk
Yale University Press, 408pp, £25.00
ISBN 9780300163889
Published 19 May 2015

A senior research fellow at the State Archive of the Russian Federation and a widely published expert on the Soviet Union, Oleg Khlevniuk rightly

claims that it is now feasible "to write a genuinely *new* biography" of Joseph Stalin, "insofar as newly accessible archival material has forced changes in our understanding of both the man and his era".

We learn that Stalin became a workaholic, a hands-on leader who even on vacation would receive 50 letters and reports each day, many requiring written responses. In Moscow or at his dacha, he routinely held meetings long into the night; in fact, over a 30-year period, some 3,000 people visited his Kremlin office. But what deep passions drove this enigmatic character, devoid as he was of a loving companion in the last 20 years of his life, and what really made him tick?

Although Khlevniuk's answer to that question, and the theme of his book, is that Stalin relentlessly strove for power, surely we need to go further if we want to understand his behaviour. It was not simply a matter of power for its own sake, for we can interpret the sources to show that Marxism-Leninism provided the red line that ran through the man's entire adult life. That ideology provided the key to his understanding of the world, although it also led him to make atrocious errors. Perhaps the most tragic of these was his conviction that faithful economic appeasement of Hitler in 1939-41 had made a Nazi invasion needless, and thus unthinkable, even as his best spies relentlessly reported otherwise. At the same time, Stalin was almost alone in recognising the social and political ramifications of the Second World War, and in deducing that Hitler, without knowing it, was playing a revolutionary role in annihilating Europe's ruling elite, thereby preparing the ground for Soviet-style socialism. Along with a keen sense of what was possible in global politics, Stalin's mission was to make communism work in the USSR, regardless of the costs, and then to spread its liberating gospel to Europe and beyond.

The author organises the book with a prologue to each chapter that singles out an episode in Stalin's last days in March 1953, along with reflections on various matters in his life, after which we get a political narrative of the major periods in the dictatorship. There is little social history, surprisingly few details about the dictator's intimate life, and it is curious that we meet his immedi-

ate family, and briefly, only in the prologue to the final chapter.

The two-track storyline occasionally sends mixed messages, such as on Stalin's role in the horrendous famine of 1932-33. In one prologue early in the book, we read that the government used starvation as a means of "punishing" the countryside, and that Moscow rejected "all opportunities to relieve the situation". Here, Stalin's decisions sound unequivocal and indicate that he intended mass murder, whereas much later in another chapter we learn that the dictator agreed, albeit too late, to a reduction in grain quotas in 1933. Even then, he blamed the enforcers and administrators for being weak-willed, because he would never admit that there were flaws in his big plans.

Khlevniuk elides a number of issues, such as Lenin's decision to abolish freedom of the press within days of taking power, and also to establish the secret police before the end of 1917, and then to shut down the constituent assembly in January 1918. The Soviet dictatorship is here presented as if it were Stalin's invention, when in fact the Bolsheviks established the system and got it running before he became the unchallengeable boss.

Elsewhere, Khlevniuk passes over problems that have plagued historians for decades. To mention one example among many, the text leaves us wondering why the Soviet boss apparently became anti-Semitic during the Second World War. Although the Red Army liberated the death camps, on Stalin's orders the regime posthumously converted the murdered Jews into "ordinary Soviet citizens". So in the decades that followed there would be no place for the Holocaust in the history of the Great Patriotic War anywhere in Eastern Europe, but why not?

Questions inevitably linger about a figure as complicated as Stalin, and historians will welcome this remarkably informative book, just as all readers must applaud the author's courageous and conscientious efforts to uphold the highest standards of historical scholarship.

Robert Gellately is professor of history, Florida State University, and author, most recently, of *Stalin's Curse: Battling for Communism in War and Cold War* (2013).

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The closing date for applications is Tuesday 9th June 2015 (at 23.59 UK time)

Informal enquiries about the scheme should be emailed to cheneyfellowships@leeds.ac.uk

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School of Law, Politics and Sociology

Department of Sociology

Lecturer in Criminology and Sociology

Ref: 161

Lecturer A: starting at £34,233 and rising to £37,394 pa

Lecturer B: starting at £38,511 and rising to £45,954 pa

Full-time, permanent

Expected start date: 01 September 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter

Interview date: 30 June 2015

The Department of Sociology, within the School of Law, Politics and Sociology, is looking to recruit to a permanent Lecturer post. The person appointed will have a specialism in crime, criminal justice, or the sociology of crime and deviance and will contribute to the delivery and further development of our degrees in criminology as well as to our sociology UG and PGT/R degrees more generally. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a commitment to high quality teaching and research, and have evidence of a developing profile of research and publication in fields relevant to the post.

Teaching Fellow

Ref: 165

Starting at £31,342 and rising to £37,394 pa

Full-time, fixed term for 12 months

Expected start date: 01 August 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter

Interview date: 30 June 2015

The Department of Sociology, within the School of Law, Politics and Sociology, is looking to recruit to a temporary 12 month teaching fellow post. The person appointed will contribute to the delivery of core sociology modules in Themes and Perspectives in Sociology and in the Sociology of Globalisation as well as provide seminar support across our sociology UG degrees generally.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate evidence of high quality teaching experience in both large-scale lecturing and small-group teaching, familiarity with convening and managing modules, and some experience of academic administration. The successful candidate will be enthusiastic, committed academics with a strong commitment to maximising student learning in a dynamic, research-led department.

For informal queries contact: Jo Moran-Ellis, Head of Department, email J.Moran-Ellis@sussex.ac.uk; 01273 877558.

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The Sussex Law School is a successful research-led law school which came 26th in the power ranking in the REF 2014. It is undergoing unprecedented strategic growth. Earlier recruitment rounds appointing new Chairs Readers, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers, have doubled the size of the Law School. The Sussex Law School is currently continuing this growth and expansion by recruiting a further 2 Lecturers and a Teaching Fellow. Successful candidates will be enthusiastic, committed academics who enjoy working in a dynamic, growing department.

Full-time, permanent

Expected start date: 01 September 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter

Lecturer in Criminology

Ref: 162

Lecturer A: starting at £34,233 and rising to £37,394 pa

Lecturer B: starting at £38,511 and rising to £45,954 pa

The Lecturer in Criminology will be expected to contribute to the teaching of Criminology and Criminal Justice within the Law School at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The successful appointee will also be expected to contribute the delivery of at least one core subject.

Teaching Fellow

Ref: 163

Grade 7: starting at £31,342 and rising to £37,394 pa

Grade 8: starting at £38,511 and rising to £45,954 pa

The Teaching Fellow will be able to contribute to the delivery of core modules within the LLB, to contribute to the development of a Law clinic in SLS and to contribute to our successful pro-bono and extra-curricular skills programmes.

Lecturer in Welfare Law

Ref: 164

Lecturer A: starting at £34,233 and rising to £37,394 pa

Lecturer B: starting at £38,511 and rising to £45,954 pa

The Lecturer in Welfare Law will be expected to develop and teach welfare law modules. We are particularly interested in receiving applications from those with a specialism in housing law. The successful appointee will also be expected to contribute to the delivery of at least one core subject.

Informal enquiries should be made to Professor Heather Keating, Acting Head of the School of Law, Politics and Sociology at h.m.keating@sussex.ac.uk; 01273 678796 or to Professor Richard Vogler, Acting Head, Sussex Law School at r.k.vogler@sussex.ac.uk; 01273 678839.

Closing date for all posts: 16 June 2015

For full details and how to apply please see www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs

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A matter of form

Our Deputy Head of Form Completion, Mr Ian Cage, has responded forcefully to the suggestion by Eliane Glaser, senior lecturer in English and creative writing at Canterbury Christ Church University, that much of the administrative form-filling currently required from academic staff might be meaningless.

Mr Cage said that he had not yet studied the survey on which Dr Glaser based her *Times Higher Education* article, but he had immediately sought to check her results by asking all academic staff to complete the following form-filling form. (Time allowed: one hour.)

1. Thinking very carefully about your future at Poppleton University, how would you describe your attitude to form-filling?

- a. Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. I'm sorry, but could you repeat the question?

2. If you answered 'yes' to Question 7, please now go straight to Question 14 in Section B.

3. Why does the word "monosyllabic" have five syllables? (Use both sides of the paper.)

4. Write brief notes on any three



Something for the weekend, Sir?

of the following:

- a. Mother Teresa
- b. The QAA's commitment to transparency
- c. The University of Warwick's disciplinary procedures

5. Have you ever suffered from any of the following conditions after extended form-filling?

- a. Writer's cramp

- b. Ennui
- c. A desire to self-mutilate

6. Have you ever thought what you might do with your life at this university if there were no more administrative forms to complete?

- a. Not really
- b. Not really
- c. How do you mean 'life'?

Although he was still awaiting the final analysis, Mr Cage said that the preliminary results of his own survey showed quite clearly that contemporary academics not only enjoyed filling in forms but no longer had any very clear idea of how they ever filled their time before filling it with form-filling. He hoped that this clarified the situation.

Literally red with anger

"They're displaying a basic misunderstanding of the central tenets of Branding philosophy."

That was how our very own Deputy Head of Corporate Branding, Christine Hovis, angrily rounded on academic critics of the University of Western Australia's new slogan "Pursue Impossible".

Ms Hovis said that she was "particularly incensed" by those academic pedants who objected to the slogan on the grounds that it was not "proper English". Had they raised the same objections, she wondered,



Tastes good like a slogan should

to such successful branding slogans as Beanz Meanz Heinz or Finger Lickin' Good?

She confessed, however, that Poppleton's slogans had some-

times encountered not dissimilar objections. She instanced the "grammatical pedants" who had complained about our 2012 slogan, "Poppleton: the university what cares", and its 2013 variant, "We is the greatest".

There were also those "sticklers for the literal" who had moaned about the possible ambiguities of such earlier Poppleton brand slogans as "Shooting Firmly Forward" and "We Aim to Please".

However, apart from a "small and unrepresentative group of asthmatics", she had so far encountered no "coherent opposition" to Poppleton's brand-new brand slogan: "Inspiring Aspiration".

Thought for the week

(contributed by Jennifer Doubleday, Head of Personal Development)

Following the disturbing new evidence that emptying your mind may have deleterious consequences, will all those members of academic staff who have attended any of our recent deep meditation courses please report to the Development Suite this Thursday when our Head of Involuntary Redundancy will be on hand to give them something to think about.



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