Proposal to end confusion about the range, titles and different levels of postgraduate courses offered by universities and colleges are made in a recently published report, the Review of Postgraduate Education. The report welcomed the growth and increased diversity of the postgraduate sector in UK universities and colleges as a sign of the vitality of institutions meeting demand from students and employers.

However, there was now substantial evidence that this rapid growth had led to widespread confusion, at home and overseas, about the hugely varied range of provision at postgraduate level. It urges higher education institutions to move at once to a standardised description of what is on offer, and, as soon as possible, towards a standard set of titles which can be applied consistently to different levels and types of postgraduate provision.

Greater clarification, the report proposes, should be achieved following consultation. One central issue is widespread variation in use of the Masters title. A nationally applied set of criteria will ensure that students and their sponsors can be clear about the types of courses being offered. Accurate descriptions within such a framework might eventually become a condition of funding.

The Vice-Chancellor, Gordon Conway, was on the Review Group, which was set up by the HEFCE and also sponsored by CVCP and the Standing Committee of Principals. Its remit was to review the future size, shape and structure of postgraduate education and it has come up with a number of demanding recommendations. These include a proposal that postgraduate research students should attract funding from the HEFCE only in subject areas with a pervasive research culture and that only those departments which achieved a rating of 3 or more in the most recent research assessment exercise should receive research funding in respect of postgraduate research students.

The report also recommends a code of practice requiring institutions to have in place appropriate facilities and supervisory arrangements for postgraduate research students. It supports the current market-led system for planning the postgraduate sector whereby institutions should be free to expand provision beyond their funded numbers by charging additional fees or making efficiency savings, and one of its main conclusions is that a strong undergraduate base is essential for high quality postgraduate work. There should be no further transfer of resources from funding for undergraduate to postgraduate students. The report also recommends that quality assurance arrangements under the new single quality agency should involve postgraduate provision being monitored and reported on separately.
The Graduate Research Centre in Education

The Graduate Research Centre in Education (GRCE), formally set up in 1995 as part of the restructuring of the University of Sussex Institute of Education (USIE) has had a very successful first year of operation. Over 100 full and part time research students are registered in the Centre along with almost 150 full and part time MA students. A new MA programme in School Effectiveness, directed by David Burrell and collaboratively designed and taught with West Sussex LEA advisory staff has proved particularly popular, while old favourites such as the Language, The Arts and Education MA programme run by Peter Abbs and Trevor Pateman continue to recruit well.

The GRCE has been especially successful in 1995/96 at attracting new research and development project funding. The GRCE currently houses five ESRC-funded projects including a new project on the development of knowledge and skills in employment secured as part of the highly competitive Learning Society programme. The research team comprises Michael Eraut, Jane Alderton, Gerald Cole and Peter Senker. Other ESRC projects include professionals’ strategies for coping with change (Tony Becher); teacher assessment at key stage 1 (Harry Torrance and John Pryor); and pupils’ interpretation of the performance on maths assessment at key stages 2 and 3 (Barry Cooper, Mairead Dunne and Nicola Rogers).

Other major new projects secured this year include an NHS-sponsored evaluation of vocational training for science graduates in the NHS and an EU-sponsored study of the effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long term unemployed, both directed by Michael Eraut.

Assessments of PGCE students, as have Viv Griffiths and Mike Wilson to evaluate a new PGCE assessment and profiling system. Similarly Janet Stuart and Lisa Dart secured funding from the Teaching and Learning Development fund to evaluate aspects of the MA in Education programme.

On the conference front, Barry Cooper, Michael Eraut, John Pryor and Harry Torrance spent a week in New York over the Easter vacation at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (8-12 April). Michael presented a paper based on his recent ENB-funded project on Research on Cognition in Professional Practice; while Barry, John and Keith Lewin and Janet Stuart of the Centre for International Education (CIE), have secured contracts with the ODA for the evaluation of emergency teacher training in Malawi and for a three year programme of technical assistance support to a teacher education project in Mpumalanga, South Africa. This programme is likely to involve a large number of GRCE staff over the next three years.

However the GRCE is also remembering to put its own house in order: Lisa Dart and Pat Drake have secured funding from the University Research and Development fund to investigate school-based mentors’ development.

Harry presented papers based on their current ESRC-funded projects in a symposium which Harry organised on investigating relationships between student learning and assessment in Primary Schools. The symposium attracted a large and enthusiastic audience – they even received a congratulatory phone call from Basil Bernstein. Extra curricular activities included gallery visits, generally gaping at the architecture, and a night out at New York’s top blues club ‘Manny’s Car Wash’, while Brian Street was encountered at a party thrown by Palmer Press – interesting who you bump into on the other side of the world.

The Registrar and Secretary has arranged for Coopers and Lybrand to undertake an audit review of the Estates Division. The work will consist of an initial overview involving a detailed analysis of the risk areas. It will include interviews with specific users to identify key issues from their perspective. On the basis of the initial review priorities will be identified for more detailed work which is likely to include management and control of major projects. This audit review is being led by Mr. Alex Tombs, a senior manager in the Public Services Group from the Croydon office while more detailed work will be undertaken by Mr David Gander, a senior accountant also from the Public Services Group in Croydon. The project is being overseen by Mr. Graham Marsden of the London office.

AUDIT REVIEW OF ESTATES DIVISION
PEOPLE

AFRAS LECTURER RICHARD BLACK has been selected by the Labour Party as its prospective parliamentary candidate for the new Arundel and South Downs constituency. Richard, a specialist in environmental and refugee issues, lectures in human geography and development. The constituency for which he will be fighting in the next election covers the southern area of mid-Sussex. In between teaching and canvassing, Richard enjoys cycling and walking across the Downs.

A RECENTLY-PUBLISHED BOOK by Istvan Meszaros, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Sussex, has been nominated for the prestigious Michael Hannington Award by the American Political Science Association. Istvan’s work, *Beyond Capital: Towards a Theory of Transition*, can be ordered from the Bookshop.

BOB BENEWICK, Dean of EAM, has co-edited a book called *Belief in China: Art and Politics; Deities and Morality*, inspired by the collections and exhibitions of Chinese material at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. “Diversity rather than consistency marks the essays in this collection, which strive to represent and search for meaning in China’s belief systems.” says Bob.

**The Net Thesis**

“Is this thing – the Net – my life? Does that make me a sad Geek?” Serious questions indeed for Ben Morgan, whose DPhil demands three years of Net surfing.

The CulCom student is writing his thesis on the social and political implications of the Internet, a topic which couldn’t be hotter when Tony Blair has promised to see that every school-kid is wired. “Politicians use the Net as a rhetorical tool,” says Ben, whose MA dissertation examined the hype surrounding the Net in the US. “Al Gore’s speeches in the 1990s treated the Net as a panacea for everything from education to the economy.”

His thesis explores the relationship between the original subcultures which the Net produced, and the way in which commercialisation is transforming the medium. “The golden years for netheads are over,” he says. “At MIT in the 1950s, the first computer hackers were people who enjoyed playing around with technology. They were a self-regulating group, with a ‘hackers’ ethic’ or ‘netiquette’ which called for freedom of information on the Net. The Net was elitist and non-mainstream, filled with weird and wonderful information. But now that companies have seen its commercial potential, it’s become populist, and the quirkiness is being squeezed out.”

Ben first became hooked by the esoteric nature of the Net. “I stumbled into it, and I keep stumbling onwards,” he says. “The best way is to pull an all-nighter, but after a while you get information overload and think that all these people are mad.”

For all the hype surrounding the Net today, Ben believes that the future is in interactive TV. Californians can already order takeaway pizza on the Net. But one day people may be able to sort out their mortgage, take a trip to a virtual Sainsburys and select their evening’s TV viewing – all from the comfort of their sofa.

**Cartoon County Celebrates**

Check out the county’s cartoonist talent when the fourth Cartoon County exhibition arrives at the Gardner Centre. From Monday 3 to Friday 28 June, the Gardner’s main gallery will display work from over 100 local cartoonists and comic strip artists including Steve Bell, Raymond Briggs and Jamie Hewlett.

The exhibition coincides with the centenary celebration of the first ever UK comic strip – Weary Willy and Tired Tim by Tom Browne (above), which ran from 1896 to 1952. Paul Gravett of The Cartoon Art Trust will talk about 100 years of British Comic Art in the main gallery at 7pm on Wednesday 5 June.

**Women’s Studies: to market, to market**

The UK launch of *Women and Market Societies. Crisis and Opportunity*, edited by Barbara Einhorn and Eileen Yeo was held on campus recently. This Women's Studies book, written by eight Sussex faculty and scholars from China, Korea and Hong Kong, explores the impact of global restructuring on women’s lives.

Professor Svasti Mitter of the UN University, Maastricht, called it “a celebration of collaboration across disciplines” which goes beyond current analytic paradigms to help make “humane outcomes, rather than the rapacious one, a reality”.

Thanks to a grant from the Research Development Fund the book was ready to present at the NGO Forum of the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (and was the most stolen book on the British Council display!). The first British Council Links Scheme in Women's Studies between Sussex and China assures the continuation of the research.

Pictured: Xu Min (left), Director of Women’s Studies at Hangzhou University, who also works a Radio West Lake hotline, and Jin Yi, of Beiwei Adult Education College. They are both currently at Sussex working on women and the labour market.
Insects point robots in the right direction

A new research centre is set to weave networks between computer science and the neurosciences

Artificial intelligence really can learn a lot from natural stupidity. Or rather, researchers trying to design ‘thinking’ computers don’t have to turn to the human brain for inspiration. Snails and insects just might teach them a lot.

It is against this background that the University Development Fund is to provide pump priming support for the Sussex Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Robotics. A joint venture between BIOLS and COGS, the centre is a development of the work of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre (IRC), the Sussex Centre for Neuroscience, which is funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

There is more to the planned new centre than passing on the research from the neurosciences to the IT experts. It will be very much a two-way process, says Professor Michael O’Shea, director of the IRC, and one of the people behind the successful bid for development funds. The centre will also allow the neuroscientists to exploit the techniques of computing and cognitive sciences. Phil Husbands and David Cliff from COGS were also in the team that put together the proposal for the centre, and their work will help the neuroscientists. For example, computer techniques show promise for researchers who want to model just what goes on inside simple neural systems.

While this is a new venture, Michael O’Shea is quick to point out that there is nothing new about the idea of researchers from COGS and BIOLS working together. The University’s strengths in these areas have provided fertile collaboration in the past. The two Schools also received the highest possible rating for their science in the latest research assessment exercise.

“We have already established good collaborative links,” says Michael. There is already “a lively interface between neuroscience, information technology and robotics,” he adds.

The new centre, with its own laboratory, will make this collaboration more visible, and will provide a focus for the joint activity. “A physical presence is important,” says Michael. “It catalyses activities that wouldn’t otherwise happen.” The partners in the new venture, are drawn together by mutual benefit, he adds.

One such activity involves making it easier for companies that are interested in the research. The new centre hopes to create an industrial associates club. For working out where we are and moving around, but making us conscious of our surroundings and what is going on. You don’t need such complexity to solve such tasks as moving around in the world without bumping into objects.

“A small annual subscription companies interested in the centre’s research would have priority access to seminars and would have early warning of publications.

The centre has already attracted the interest of British Telecom, which has its own research activities in the area. Other companies have also shown interest. Michael foresees bringing in companies not just in the IT area but also those in manufacturing where robotics plays an important part, the motor industry for example.

The designers of robots face some fundamental problems such as teaching their creations how to ‘see’ where they are, and navigating around objects. While researchers who want to study these subjects can, and have, tried to copy the way that humans behave, there are simpler ways of going about the task.

In humans, Michael explains, a lot of our brain power goes not just into mimic electronically what is going on inside the animal’s brain.

The researchers behind the new centre hope that the university’s funding will be just the beginning and that it will grow and attract outside funds for research. While companies may see the need to bring together different areas of science, there are still barriers that you have to overcome if you want to carry out multidisciplinary research. Michael is confident that setting up the centre will make it easier for different research councils to tear down some of the barriers between themselves and the disciplines they support.

When the centre opens its doors later this year, it will provide a unique research focus. It will be the only laboratory of its kind in Europe. If all goes well, it could also have its impact on the factory floor, giving robots some of the intelligence of insects.
The squirrellies are in a dither of happy anticipation over the Essential Music Festival to be held this weekend in Stanmer Park. Alas the days of exotic cheroots and loud noises are but a distant memory trace for this old rodent – I heard a student mention one Jarvis Cocker the other day and I felt distinctly like a high court judge on account of never having heard of the fellow. But at least he had a recognisable name unlike the participants in the forthcoming music fest. While it is true that the name Cyril Squirrel has no particular meaning, it does conjure up an image of a sturdy bucolic nut fancier. Racehorses often have names like short stories, but you can at least begin to imagine the circumstances under which they came by them. Try the same exercise on Eat Static, Dreadzone, System 7, Echobelly and Dub Syndicate. However, I can see the Senior Common Room gyrating decorously to the strains of Mad Professor, while I myself switch on the phonograph and chill out to Super Furry Animals.

I would like to draw your attention to the goings on at the top of Boiler House Hill opposite Estates. Recently massive earthworks have appeared and just as mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind a flattened but scarred landscape. One possible reason for this does occur to me. The Vice Chancellor has had a sneak preview of the result of the RAE and, on the strength of it, has had a huge bunker built deep under Sussex House, covered in 20 feet of concrete, complete with operations room with wall maps and little flags of different colours and tins of Argentinian corned beef. From whence he will allocate our severely diminished resources and doubtless give succour to all those on temporary contracts, who are over fifty, research inactive and without either blue eyes or blonde hair.

In recent years it would be difficult to say that Higher Education policy has been characterised by logic and foresight. The words ‘stop’ and ‘go’ impressively come to mind. But the RAE has at least had the entertaining consequence of turning the university system into the equivalent of the football league. Academics trailing clouds of publications and research contracts name their price and get head hunted by a cutely styled agency called Saxton Bampfylde (now that’s a name to conjure with); humble souls who merely apply for and get jobs are the equivalent of a free transfer; small clubs dig deep to get a few stars on the books and look wistfully towards the first division, if not the premiere league. The publication of The Times’ league table of universities compounds the sporting analogy and has brought with it an appropriate style of reporting: “Oxford and Cambridge have drawn farther ahead of Imperial in this year’s rankings. There has been considerable movement elsewhere at the top of the table with St Andrew’s leaping 11 places to join Edinburgh and the LSE in fourth.” But lo and behold, the word is out that the HEFCE want to reinvent the binary line, but draw it much higher in the system, by giving all the research money to a small elite group of universities (this also has a name: it is called the Peter principle.) The upshot could be a lot of stranded stars desperate to return to the lands of milk and honey in Oxford or London. But then as football has taught us, the alternative to elitism is mediocrity.

And now for a mystery. If you have ever had to look up a telephone number in the University directory, it may have crossed your mind to ponder by what Byzantine logic the entries are ordered. The alphabet is clearly the guide to surnames, but after that it all breaks down, with Tarquin coming before Aloysius and Mavis before Gladys. It has been revealed to me in a dream that while the alphabet is still in play it is guided by a higher authority which alphabetises not by forename, but by title. Thus Dr C Squirrel comes before Mr B Squirrel who comes before Ms A Squirrel. What a clever wheeze – I wonder who thought it up?

What the papers say...

“MICROCHIPS ON THE MENU in a town that caters for the future” ran the headline (The Times, 15 May). Former Students’ Union president Jessica Gould has caused a stir with Cybar, Brighton’s first multimedia bar with upmarket minimalist decor, designer furniture and a “seriously hi-tech environment”. Cybar customers can sip their cappuccinos while surfing the net, emailing their mates or checking out the latest CD-ROMS. Jessica is particularly keen to attract women to the net: “there is a massive future for women on the Internet, but it is up to the creative, independent working woman to promote the net to others like herself,” she said.

SUSSEX ROBOTICISTS DAVE CLIFF, Inman Harvey and Phil Husbands have been using the principles of evolution to help them build super-efficient robots. Their computers come up with robot designs using a technique, known as a genetic algorithm, in which, “small strings of computer code are treated as genes. These strings are jumbled together to produce random programmes. The programmes are run and those that produce the best solutions to the problem are chosen to ‘breed’ the next generation of programmes, by combining their genes. The process is repeated until it produces effective ways of solving the problem.” (The Economist, 18 May)

A TEAM OF SUSSEX astronomers made the international headlines recently as part of the Virgo Consortium, which is investigating the evolution of space since the Big Bang. “Astronomers have run the history of the Universe in a computer simulation,” wrote The Times (17 April). “They showed how tiny fluctuations in energy in the split second after the Big Bang grew into concentrations of matter – the stars and galaxies – amid vast empty regions of space... The simulations probably used more computing power than any undertaking in the history of science, with the exception of defence work.”
base the talks on my own experiences as a student here. The first one was terrifying. I stood in the staffroom sweating buckets. The teacher got together about a hundred kids and when I walked in I saw they had a microphone for me. The job’s done wonders for my confidence. I’m not bothered at all now about giving talks like that. The kids hardly ever ask questions. They’re too timid at that age to put their hand up in front of their peers. Mind you, there was one group of fifteen year old boys at last week’s Open Day here who wouldn’t stop asking questions. It got to the stage where I was Agony Uncle Dave. They said, "do you recommend us getting a girlfriend to cope with the stress of university life?" I said it would add to the stress if anything.

When I’m not off on a trip somewhere, I’ll be in the office fixing up the next one or doing paperwork. You get some tragic letters, sometimes from African students saying things like, ‘my father’s died, my house has burnt down, please can I come and study at your institution?’ It can get quite stressful when you’ve got a pile of correspondence, a school visit arriving, a hire car to book and accommodation to sort out all at the same time. But whatever I end up doing when I leave, I hope I enjoy it as much as I enjoy this job.

Changing Face of Campus

The following work is being undertaken by the Estates Division. You are asked to take care in the vicinity of the work, and to stay outside any safety barriers.

WORK IN PROGRESS
- Sussex Innovation Centre: completion due May.
- East of Science Car Park: upgrade of electricity substation to serve the Sussex Innovation Centre.
- Arts A: external redecoration. Completion in May.
- AFRC: advance preparation works.

PLANNED FUTURE WORKS IN 1996
- Park Village: emergency lighting and replacement fire alarm. Will continue during July to September.
- Falmer House: works to improve safety of courtyard moat. Start date delayed.
- Bicycle racks: upgrade of existing racks (in 24 locations), and new racks (in a further 16).
- East Slope (Phase II): Refurbishment. July to October (in both ’96 and ’97).
- AFRC: major repair and refurbishment. May to December, followed by MOLS I: major repair and refurbishment.
- Campus Signposting: delayed pending possible renaming of buildings.
- Student Community Building (east of the Refectory): start on site delayed.
- Children’s Facilities Building (north of Lancaster House): planned start Summer ’96.
- Biology: replacement front doors. Anticipated May.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS
The following applications for listed building consent (LB), planning permission (FP) and Building Control approval (BC) are being submitted, and a copy may be seen at the Estates Building Reception:
- Falmer House: essential repair work to old Music Practice Rooms. (LB still being considered by Planning Authorities)
- ARTS A: replacement sub-station.
A choice evening with CCE
The Educational Equality Unit (EEU) in the Centre for Continuing Education held a very successful "Continuing Choice Evening" earlier this month. Current CCE students were able to discuss with convenors and tutors the choices they had in the award-bearing programmes for continuing their studies next year. The concourse in EDB was transformed into an exhibition area and course materials and handbooks were available to browse through as well as an impressive display of students' work. Well over a hundred students attended and, judging by the noise level, enjoyed the displays, chats with convenors and tutors and the food and wine.

Swanborough Manor Gardens
Open Day in aid of the Rockinghamse April
The Vice-Chancellor and Mrs Conway, with the support of the University, will be opening the gardens at Swanborough Manor on Saturday 1 June between 2-5pm. The proceeds will go to the Rockinghamse Appeal, Royal Alexandra Hospital for Sick Children, Brighton. All University members are most welcome at this event. Donations for stalls (second-hand books, homemade produce, bric-a-brac etc) would be most appreciated. Please deliver to:

- Peter Cockaday, Porters' Lodge, Sussex House
- Information Office, Sussex House
- Peter Amning, Porters' Lodge, Refectory
- Rod Caldon, Porters' Lodge, Holland House

Everyone welcome
Admission £1. Children free
Stalls, Teas

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
For more information, call Mylene Powell in the Research Office, ext 3812 (mornings only), email: M.G.Powell@sussex.ac.uk

INTEGRATION OF CELLULAR RESPONSES; STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY AND DESIGN APPLICATIONS; RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND STRESS IN PLANTS: BBBSRC new research initiatives aimed at supporting key areas of fundamental science and the strategic priorities of the Council which they underpin. Multidisciplinary proposals invited. Closing date: 14 June 1996.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO HEALTHY AGEING & GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS IN HEALTH: MRC-led Link programmes designed to address key recommendations arising from Technology Foresight. Applications for project grant support are invited which will effectively address the themes of one or other of the two Programmes and the generic LINK objectives. The 1996/7 deadlines are the first working Monday of August, November, January and April.


UK/PORTUGAL JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMME – TREATY OF WINDSOR: The British Council invites applications in all academic disciplines for inclusion in the 1997/98 programme. Applicants must already have identified a Portuguese project partner who will be making a simultaneous application at the Portuguese end. Closing dates: 30 June 1996 for new applications and 30 October 1996 for renewal applications.

SENIOR CIBA FELLOWSHIP AWARDS: to academic staff who wish to undertake research at an agreed continental European university or technological university. Aimed at encouraging the interchange of ideas between European scientists. Fields of interest: chemistry, biochemistry, chemical technology, chemical engineering, biotechnology and biology. Closing date: 1 November 1996.

CIBA AWARDS FOR COLLABORATION IN EUROPE (ACE): to encourage the development of co-operation between UK universities with collaborating research groups in European institutions. Fields of interest: as above. Closing date: 1 November 1996.

The British Council comes to campus
The first British Council Regional Services Officer to be based on campus arrived at Sussex on 1 May. Neal Tanner (pictured below) runs the British Council office from Arts B156.

Around 200 British Council overseas students pass through the University each year. 100 are based in IDS, Neal administers their funding awards, monitors their progress and looks after their welfare. In addition, his office acts as a resource centre for the whole University, offering advice and information on overseas funding, visas, immigration etc.

The University already takes part in many British Council sponsored activities, including international seminars and summer schools, higher education links, international visitor's programmes and study projects.

The British Council is Britain's principle agency for cultural relations abroad, with offices in 109 different countries. It is committed to winning international respect and long-term friends for the UK through educational, scientific and cultural cooperation.

The British Council office is open weekdays, 9am - 5pm. Tel: (67)8363 email: neal.tanner@britcoun.org.

Development Opportunities
Funding may be available from Staff Development or EHE funds for faculty to attend the following events. Please contact the Staff Development Officer, ext 3849, for details of these and other events.

Digital Resources for the Humanities
Oxford University Computing Services, at Oxford 1-3 July 1996

UKCOSA Conference 1996: The Virtual Campus - the impact of information technology on the world of international education, at Manchester 7-10 July 1996.
Monday 27 May - Sunday 2 June

Meeting House

Lunchtime Recital
1.20pm, Tues 28 May, Charles Macdonald & Derek Barnes (piano duet), in the Chapel.

Monday 27 May
7.45pm Heat

Thursday 30 May
7.45pm Hunt for Red October
11.30pm Straw Dogs

Sunday 2 June
6pm Fabulous Baker Boys
9pm Chummy Express

Mid-life Planning Seminar

Mid-life Planning Seminar
Wednesday 12 June, 2.30pm in Arts D610. Friends Provident First Call are presenting a mid-life planning seminar for those concerned about pensions and investment. If you wish to attend or would like further details, contact Richard Price (Staff Welfare), x3598.

CCE Saturday Schools - 8 June

Schubert's Neglected Masterpieces
By Michael Hall. Schubert wrote piano duets for himself, his friends and his two young pupils.

Monsters & Mysteries
By Gillian Anderton & Claudia Gould. Examine the supernatural in literature, including Coleridge, Keats, & the Shelleys.

Victorian Churches & Chapels
By Sue Berry. Brighton & Hove have a wonderful legacy of churches & chapels, many designed by famous architects.

Day Schools are taught in a friendly and informal atmosphere by expert tutors, normally from 10am - 5pm at the University. They cost £16/£12.6. For further details and enrolment, tel: 678926 or call into CCE in the EDB Building on campus.

Playgroup

The East Slope Playgroup are having an Open Afternoon on Thursday 13 June between 2 - 4pm. Come and meet the new staff - refreshments, bouncy castle and fun for the under-fives. Playgroup spaces available from October.

Language Centre

The Language Centre is offering 5 day Summer Schools in Chinese, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese & French 1 - 5 July, cost £85. For further details tel: Alex on 67(8006) at the Language Centre.

Chichester & Arundel Tour

Wednesday 5 June
Tour to Chichester and Arundel
A few tickets left for this International Student Office tour. Price £7. Email: j.strizhevskaya@sussex.

Small Ads

FLAT TO LET: with balcony & double bedroom in Brighton seafront square. From Sept. Fully furnished & equipped. Suitable for overseas visitors - minimum 1 month, maximum 3 months. £150 pw incl. (excl. telephone). Tel: Norma Binnie 542736 or x4257.

FOR SALE: portable typewriter in hard robust case with standard size keyboard. As new, £25. Alpine double glazing to fit one unit, 8" wide x 4" high, sliding panels. £10. Tel: Chris Hogarth 584317 (am or after 6pm).

TV FOR SALE: Sony colour TV, remote control, excellent condition. £70 ono. Tel: 729180 (eves).

PAINTING & DECORATING: service offered by mature student (9 - 10 years experience) available at excellent rates. Tel: 698719.

HOUSE TO LET: Fiveways, Brighton, delightful 3/4 bedroom with large garden. Close to local amenities and London Road station. Ideal for family. From late Sept - early Jan. £150 pw. Tel: 508534, email: r.wilson@sussex.ac.uk.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: for visiting fellow and family from 1 June - 15 July, 2 double bedrooms or 1 double bedroom and study in lounge for children. Tel: Kanchan Mathur x4117 or Joan Thomas x4191.

HOLIDAY HOME TO LET: Arroyo de la Miel, Costa del Sol, fully equipped studio apartment, sleeps 2, near Malaga & coast. available some dates June - Sept. University staff, £75 pw. Tel: Jean/Derek Croker 557328.

HOUSE TO LET: large Edwardian house between Dyke Road and Preston Park Railway Station, available to let July - December. Tel: 505171.

ROOM TO LET: in peaceful house in central Brighton. £45 pw. Tel: 701553.

AU PAIR POSITION WANTED: German 'A' level student would like to au pair from early July to mid-August. Tel: 820857.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: academic couple seek flat/house in Brighton area for 1 calendar month from 8 July. Tel: 01224 272772 or 01224 703272 (home), email: n.stockman@abdn.ac.uk , mail: Norman Stockman, Sociology Dept., University of Aberdeen, AB9 2TY.

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears every Friday of term with copy deadline the preceding Friday lunch-time. We welcome any suggestions for news, details of events, letters and small ads. Please contact the Information Office, Sussex House on ext. 8209 or email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.
Bulletin Special

Letter from the Vice-Chancellor

First, the not so good news. Just before Easter we received the grant settlement from HEFCE for 1996/97. It was as bad as we had feared. The government's policy of continuing so-called "efficiency gains" meant that our combined grant for teaching and research was reduced by 2.6% (£700k). On government instructions, HEFCE has also reduced the capital grant by £700k, which means a very severe cut in the expenditure we can make on teaching and laboratory equipment, including computing equipment. This will be cut in 1997-98 by a further 19% (£450k).

We are not alone in worrying about our financial situation. Some of the big civic universities are having to see large-scale redundancies in a context where the prospect of further cuts is real. If, for example, the government goes ahead with its plans for further efficiency gains and a further cut in the capital grant, we will have difficulty producing balanced budgets for the years beyond 1997-98. In these dire circumstances, I would urge all of you to alert your local MPs, and others with influence, to the serious conditions of universities and urge them to act before the formulation of the November budget statement.

There are major uncertainties which make predictions very difficult: student numbers; actual extent of efficiency gain; impact of the research assessment exercise; annual pay awards; impact of non-pay inflation and the University's ability to sustain soft-funded work at current volume and to enhance recovery of both direct and indirect costs.

In the meantime, we must make no medium or long-term commitments which will increase expenditure. We need to be assured that investments in development will bring a substantial return. We must also sustain our effort to maintain volume on grants, contracts, University consultancies and other work for outside bodies and to increase recovery of both direct and indirect costs. And we should endeavour to control non-pay expenditure through further elimination of waste and increased efficiency (especially in use of utilities). To this end, an Energy Management Group is to be established.

I am convinced that positive action in these areas will substantially reduce the forecast deficits in 1997, 1998 and 1999. Indeed, we are beginning to make progress. Overseas and postgraduate applications and accepted offers for 1996 have shown a substantial increase. This is due to the efforts of a number of individuals in the Schools and GR Cs. We must keep up this momentum. I appreciate the heavy burdens you all carry, but each one must continue to play a role. If you have further ideas for saving on expenditure or increasing income, please let me, your Dean or your Head of budgetary centre know.

One of the most serious problems lies with the overall deficit in the Arts budget. Some months ago this was predicted to be overspent by £1,190k. Planning Committee asked the Arts Deans to tackle this problem collectively through an Arts Finance Committee. They have made a number of decisions relating to temporary and permanent appointments, teaching loads and leave allocation. I know that many of you in the Arts Schools have been hard hit, and feel you have been unfairly treated. The Arts Deans are making difficult decisions, trying to balance the needs of subject groups in the light of current budgets and potential earning capacities. So far they have been able to get the predicted deficit down to £440k.

Another serious problem is the deficit within the new School of Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science. Careful planning has resulted in a projected balance for Chemistry as a subject.
group, but there remains a considerable inherited Physics deficit, which will require very tough measures if it is to be eliminated.

Other budgetary centres in the University are in better shape, but everyone will have to make further economies. The Registrar and Secretary, Barry Gooch, has begun a programme of re-organisation in the Administration. You will have read in last week’s Bulletin of the creation of an enlarged Registry under Ted Nakhle as Academic Secretary. Other changes will be announced shortly, and an advertisement for a new Finance Officer has just appeared. The Support Units will be carrying their fair share of the cuts.

Now, for the better news. In the first rounds of the Teaching Quality Assessment process, Sussex did poorly, scoring satisfactorily in all nine subjects assessed (virtually all other old universities gained at least one excellent). However, we have begun to do much better. In the most recent Exercise, the French subject group gained a total score of 22 out of 24. This is an excellent result; thus in the last 7 assessments we gained 3 excellents and, under the new system, a 24, two 22s and a 17. This success is due, in large part, to the efforts of individual staff, who have worked hard to improve the quality of our teaching and learning. It is also because we are better prepared, the assessors are taking more serious note of the distinctive features of the Sussex undergraduate experience, and because we have invested funds in new and experimental approaches through the Teaching and Learning Development Fund and the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (EHEI).

The EHEI is coming to an end but we are committed to its continuance, although in a rather different form. We will be combining EHEI and Teaching and Learning into the Registry to provide support and help in the Quality Assessment Exercise, with funds for some further new initiatives aimed at maintaining the string of excellent results. Funding from the Higher Education Council for England, HEFCE, will be increasingly tied to the Assessment results and, of course, they will determine the attractiveness of Sussex to students. Some of you will have seen the recent guides to universities in ‘The Times’, where status is based on a combination of high Research Assessment (RAE) and Quality Assessment scores.

Our RAE submission went to the Funding Council on time. It required an enormous amount of work and I am grateful to everyone involved for their efforts. Much thought and consideration was given to presenting our research achievements and I believe we can show considerable improvements since the last exercise. The results should be published just before Christmas, and I am hopeful we can at least maintain our relative position in the national rankings.

Gordon Conway