University reports to stadium inquiry

Brighton and Hove Albion FC's controversial plans for a new stadium at Falmer will be discussed at a public inquiry starting this month. Students and staff at the University of Sussex have been watching developments with interest since the football club’s plans were first unveiled more than three years ago. The University has now submitted its own report to the inquiry.

The University campus would not be directly affected by the stadium building itself, which is planned for the south side of the A27. However, the use of the stadium would have a potentially substantial impact on transport links to Falmer and on access to the Sussex campus. The University’s submission has therefore focused on these key issues for Sussex, and on ensuring there are planning conditions that safeguard the University’s interests.

The University continues to be publicly neutral on whether a stadium should be built at Falmer, but has been closely involved in discussions. University representatives have attended most of the meetings of a working group that brings together the interested parties—the main participants being the football club, the local authority and the University of Brighton.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, says: “The University is keen to ensure that plans for the stadium are properly and fully debated and understood. That includes going through all the planning processes, right up to the Secretary of State. If the stadium is to be built, it is vital that there is proper infrastructure, most importantly effective transport links, to support it and to minimise any impact on our campus. We believe details should be set down in clear conditions on any approval.”

The main direct impact would arise from the club’s wish to use some parking space at the University, in addition to spaces elsewhere in Brighton, when matches take place.

In preparing its submission to the inquiry, the University therefore commissioned a study to look at the impact on parking and access to campus. The evidence suggests that Sussex could offer space for about 1,200 cars on Saturdays and 500 for weekday evening matches, without reducing use for normal University activities. However, current road access to campus would not be adequate to support the use of these spaces.

Plans have therefore been developed that include the creation of a new link road to join the existing road into neighbouring Stanmer Park. This could be of enormous benefit to University staff and students, giving better access all year round to the University campus, helping to reduce the current evening congestion as cars depart.

There would also be new revenue from the use of car parks during matches. In addition, the club would pay for the new link road and for upgrading of CCTV cameras around campus.

However, it is vital that parking is managed to minimise the impact on campus users, the campus itself and the University’s business. If the stadium is judged to be in the public interest, the University is prepared to be flexible in working with the club to provide properly controlled car parking for football matches and to prevent illegal and unmanaged parking and use of the campus.

The Vice-Chancellor says: “We would approach the issue in a spirit of co-operation and endeavour to ensure a properly controlled and managed approach to the parking facilities we are able to provide. But the overriding priority is to ensure the campus runs effectively for our students and staff.”

The initial planning permission given last June by Brighton and Hove City Council also allows for a small number of non-football events each year. It is not yet clear what form these events might take, nor what potential demand there might be for the co-operative use of University parking. There is, however, no intention of allowing parking on the University site other than for strictly specified events or of allowing parking at times when the University is undertaking its normal business.

Parking on campus would be subject to a formal management contract between the stadium and the University and one condition in the contract would be that appropriate University representatives are part of the team managing travel to and from stadium events.

The type of day-time use envisaged by the club will not involve University parking facilities. The stadium itself will have parking for 150 cars, which should be enough for whatever activities take place during the normal working day.

Detailed discussions are also underway on the potential implications of the stadium for public transport.

The public inquiry is due to start on 18 February, lasting about seven weeks. The inspector will issue a report and recommendations later in the year and the club is hoping for a final decision in September or October.

If the scheme is approved, Brighton & Hove Albion must secure the necessary funding and tie up deals with landowners including the council and the University of Brighton. The University of Sussex is unlikely to support any arrangement that does not have the agreement of its partner institution across the A27.
Laser tweezers to study hairy ears

A Sussex neuroscientist has been awarded just under £775,000 by the Medical Research Council to continue his research on mammalian hair cells for the next five years.

"Hair cells are the sensory receptors in the ear. Sound vibrates the hairs, which produces an electrical current, and this current starts a chain of events that the brain then interprets as sound," explains Dr Corné Kros (pictured).

A new £120,000 microscope will be used to manipulate the hair bundles on the hair cells using 'laser tweezers'. At the moment this is done using a jet of fluid instead of a laser, but this works only up to a frequency of 1 kHz, whereas the human ear can hear up to a frequency of 20 kHz.

"The ear is a bit like a rolled-up piano with one end sensitive to low frequencies and the other to high frequencies," Corné explains. "What I'm interested in is to find out what the essential differences are between high- and low-frequency hair cells."

In future, his work may make possible treatments for deafness in humans that is due to a loss of function in these hair cells.

"Deafness has two main categories," says Corné. "One is early onset deafness, which happens in about one in 800 children, usually due to a specific genetic defect. Much more common is old-age deafness, which is due to a loss of function in these hair cells, particularly the high-frequency ones."

"We know a lot about what makes the heart tick, but we don't know a lot about what makes the ear work. If you know what sort of molecules make these hair cells work, drugs could be developed to affect them and improve hearing."

Corné hopes it may at some point become possible to regenerate these hair cells: "Birds can do this, but for some reason mammals cannot."

New money for research on promiscuous proteins

New research grants totalling almost £400,000 will fund an interdisciplinary project in the new School of Life Sciences, intended to develop better and more accurate methods of drug delivery to target cells in the body.

Professor Steve Caddick (Chemistry) and Dr Dek Woolfson (Biochemistry) have been working together on an anti-cancer agent isolated from soil bacteria. The substance, Neocarzinostatin (NCS), which has already been used clinically in Japan, actually comprises two components: a small active chemical ingredient and a stabilising protein.

The active chemical component, says Steve, has a beautiful molecular structure. It is a 'molecular contortionist' and these contortions lead to strain and instability, this gives NCS its biological activity.

How is the contorted active chemical protected from premature release? "One possibility," says Dek, "is that the protein acts as a molecular 'chaperone' that keeps the highly active and potentially dangerous molecule out of mischief until it reaches its site of action - possibly a cancer cell."

The new funding will enable Steve and Dek to turn their attention to applications. In particular, they are interested in how 'promiscuous' the protein might be in accepting other drug molecules and whether it can be encouraged to deliver a variety of drugs to different target cells.

The funding from the EPSRC and BBSRC has not come easily, and much has depended on collaborative work here at Sussex and with the MRC's Biological NMR Spectroscopy Centre at Mill Hill.

Sussex graduate student Mick Urbania has played a significant part in this collaborative work and has found that the protein can accommodate a range of non-natural chemicals, some of which could provide the basis for recruiting other drugs.

"Mick's preliminary work is really exciting," says Steve and Dek, "because it shows that we can use the promiscuity of the protein for applications such as biosensing, drug delivery and even chemical synthesis." Mick's findings have recently been published in the journal Biochemistry.

With the new funding and strengthened links between Chemistry and Biochemistry, the two investigators expect this to be the first of many such interdisciplinary projects in the new School of Life Sciences.

As they point out, the considerable potential at the boundary of their two disciplines could not have been realised without 'seed-corn' funding through the Centre for Biomolecular Design and Drug Development, which was established by the University in 1996 thanks to the vision of its director, Professor Douglas Young.

Research funding opportunities

More details of these and other research opportunities are available on the Research Services Division. Please contact your Research Support Officer for more information. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities, see REFUND on the RSD website, www.sussex.ac.uk/units/research/refund.shtml

Interreg IIa France-British programme
This programme includes the following priorities: lifelong learning; applied research and technology transfer; conservation and the environment. Projects require a French partner in northern France and must demonstrate benefits for the region. Matched funding is required.

Deadlines: 17 Feb & 30 June

ARHB Research Leave Funds replacement teaching costs for 3-4 months of research leave for an individual to complete a significant research project. The leave period must be matched by the host institution in the preceding term. Apply to this deadline if the Sussex-supported leave starts no later than the academic year 2003/04.

Deadline: 31 March

BBSRC Research Equipment Initiative
The aim of the REI is to contribute to physical research infrastructure and to enable high-quality research to be undertaken. Applications can be in the range of £25k-£200k. A contribution from a source external to Sussex towards the cost of the equipment is required.

Deadline: 7 April

Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowships
Up to 25 Fellowships are available to enable researchers in the humanities and social sciences to devote themselves to a project of outstanding originality and significance for a period of 2-3 years. The Trust will support a full-time replacement lecturer and up to £3,500 p.a. for research expenses.

Deadline: 2 May

ESRC Research Fellowships
Provides researchers with the opportunity to undertake a period of concentrated research. Fellowships fund a wide variety of academic activities ranging from further training to the consolidation of previous research. Grants cover the fellow's salary and up to £25k p.a. research expenses.

No deadline
The public reaction to the government White Paper on higher education has focused on the high-profile issue of student fees. But there are other issues that deserve careful attention.

I welcome the emphasis on the importance of research selectivity and the need for more funding for top-class research, and the overall increase in research funding is also welcome. However, I am worried by the recurrent theme that ‘big is better’ in research. Universities like Sussex that are more successful in research than many bigger institutions need to make the case strongly that big is not necessarily better.

The quality of research is assessed in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and is also assessed by research councils and other funders. There are subjects where the highest-ranked departments tend to be the largest departments, but since the benefits of scale are already reflected in the assessment of research quality, there is no case for specially favourable treatment for large units.

Nor is there a case for specially favourable treatment of larger institutions. In the overall RAE league table the 1994 Group of smaller research-intensive universities on average scores slightly higher than the Russell Group of larger research-intensive universities. And if Oxford and Cambridge are counted separately, the 1994 Group scores very significantly better than the rest of the Russell Group.

Against this background, there is one specific proposal in the White Paper that is of concern: “We will ask HECFE, using the results of the latest Research Assessment Exercise, along with international peer review of additional material, to identify the very best of the 5* departments which have a critical mass of researchers [emphasis added] – 6* – and will provide additional resources to [them] over the next three years.” The implication of the italicised phrase is that only larger 5* departments will be eligible to be considered for additional funding. But if a smaller department has achieved a 5* rating, has this not itself demonstrated that big is not necessarily best?

There is also a problem in using the results of one competition to run a new competition with different rules. Some departments achieved their 5* ratings by selective non-submission of some researchers, while others achieved a 5 rating with all of their research submitted. These submission decisions were made in the light of the rules for the 2001 assessment exercise, and it is hard to argue that a department rated 5B is stronger than one rated 5A.

“The best universities contain a critical mass of research groups which can compete globally in a wide range of disciplines,” says the White Paper. Indeed they do. But don’t assume that there are only two or four or five ‘best’ universities. So long as research funding is allocated on the basis of fair assessment of evidence of research quality, rather than on poorly evidenmented prejudices about critical mass, I am confident that we can show that one of the strengths of the UK higher education system is that there is a considerable number of universities that “can compete globally in a wide range of disciplines”. Sussex is, and must remain, one of them.

Most of this initial raft of posts are in the humanities, social sciences and life sciences, areas where plans were most firmly developed as a result of Schools and departments’ engagement with the SRG. However, the Vice-Chancellor has made clear that the SRG work remains the most up-to-date basis on which planning for future posts will take place, and additional posts in other areas can expect to be supported as funds are released from the range of planned changes. The SRG report will also form the background for future unit planning work in the new Schools.

While the SRG has completed its work, the recommendations it made for detailed planning in particular areas continue to be taken forward. The recovery and implementation group for Biology and Environmental Science chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor has started its meetings. In Mathematical Sciences, the department itself is developing proposals, in discussion with senior academic colleagues, that aim to provide a basis for securing its long-term future.

Research open evening

An open evening on campus this month provides an ideal opportunity to find out more about research degrees at Sussex. The Research Open Evening will take place in Bramber House between 5pm and 7pm on Tuesday 25 February. Academic faculty representing each of the University’s research programmes will be available to discuss research opportunities and answer specific enquiries.

The Research Open Evening will also feature:

- A display of recently published books by University of Sussex faculty
- A presentation on ‘Research at Sussex’ by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Workshops on financing postgraduate study.

For further information contact Postgraduate Admissions on ext. 8412, email PG.Admissions@sussex.ac.uk or see the website: www.sussex.ac.uk/central/postgraduate.shtml.
All in a day's work

The annual race is on to become a Students' Union sabbatical officer. This year 20 contenders are competing for the six coveted positions – President, Finance, Communications, Sports and Activities, Education and Welfare Officers. For a year the winners will represent students, liaise with the University, and significantly bolster their CV. All are paid full-time posts that students take up either after graduation or by intermittently. Lori Culora, a 20-year-old Multimedia and Digital Systems student, is standing for Welfare Officer.

I suppose like a lot of people I was a bit apathetic in my first year. I didn't really know or care what the Students' Union was. Then I got a job in the Union Shop and Nik, a friend I worked with, became Education Officer. I thought to myself, 'Why not stand as part-time Ents chair?' and then I won too! I was involved in the Freshers' Ball and loads of other stuff.

OK, so there's not an obvious link between Ents and Welfare, but the Student Advice Centre helped me massively when I had problems financially, and I can see how students need a lot of support. Anyhow, I’m always solving my mates’ crises, so I went for it.

I got to campus early today so I could fly students for their 9.15s, but everyone's really tired and not very receptive. Flying feels like you're rapping your soul out! You have to talk and smile at people who sometimes just blank you. People say things like: 'I can't be bothered to vote' or 'I'm leaving uni – I don't care', and it just makes me angry. If you don't vote, your vote, you won't have any say at all.

Over the weekend I designed my posters and a banner. These have to be approved by the returning officers. They check we don’t slag off opponents, break Union policy or suggest candidate alliances. They then sign it and take a copy for the records. If you break these rules they can impose a penalty. If you were really naughty they could even disqualify you!

We get a 'virtual' £20 election budget. All our photocopying comes out of that, but the returning officers also cost up other materials. So they might decide a hat or a banner costs £2. It might actually have cost £20 or nothing at all, but it's so everyone's campaign is on an equal footing.

Last night, fellow candidate Emily and I went around the bars and residences persuading first years to vote. These guys said they knew who they were voting for because they had seen some posters. But we were the first candidates they'd actually met, so hopefully that's a few votes changed.

I also had to go through the hustings, which is a nightmare. You basically just stand up in front of loads of students and have to explain why they should vote for you. I was terrified I'd fluff my lines or sound crap or something. It went okay, but I ran out of time and forgot one of my manifesto points!

The campaigns all seem quite similar – flyers, banners, Library Square and all that. But a few have gimmicks. Emily Baker's team are wearing bakers' hats, while Jasmine has an All that jazz theme and keeps playing the same jazz tune all day. It'll drive me potty soon. My slogan is 'Let Lori Listen' but I'm trying to avoid too many gimmicks and just be myself.

If I were to win I'd concentrate on the Student Advice Centre. Its usage has gone up 165 per cent, yet its funding hasn't reflected this. I'd also look at housing problems – both on and off campus – and I'd continue to build up Nightline.

If I don't win, at least I know I've tried. No, actually, I'd be really disappointed. My heart's been set on it since the campaign started. For a week you put your degree to one side. The further you go, the more you get swept up in the election. And it's not just me – all the candidates really, really want to win. We're all very nice to each other and rooting for each other to win. But in the end, we're all rivals. We're all at each others' votes!

Results were due yesterday (6 February). So by the time you read this, Lori will know whether his bid to become Welfare Officer has been successful. See the USSU website www.myunion.info for a full results analysis.
Dear Bulletin

Campus Health Week seems a worthy idea and it was nice to be offered a free bottle of unadulterated fruit juice with my lunch in the Laines restaurant. However, I could take the intention behind this initiative more seriously if the entire refectory complex was not permanently plastered with advertisements for Coca-Cola. 

Professor Tim Roper, BIOLS

Dear Editor

In December I was mugged in Portsdown on my way home from work. I sustained four broken ribs, an injured back and knee. I would like to thank the staff in the hamper they gave me as a get well present and especially Diane King, who organised it. I would also like to thank all the staff of the Arts Complex for their good wishes and the collection they made for me. Thirdly and most importantly, I must thank my colleagues Keith Fowler, Gerry Douglas, John Head, Ken Wolmer and Mary Roberts.

Gary Hicks, Estates

Dear Bulletin

I enjoyed your article on the value of small ads in the Bulletin (24 January), but you shouldn’t imagine they are as local as you suggest. About two years ago I advertised a pair of loudspeakers in a Bulletin small ad. Last April I got a phone call from a hi-fi enthusiast in Germany wanting to know if they were still for sale. They were and he drove from Cologne that weekend and bought them.

He’d found my Bulletin small ad on the web pages for the University, so your outreach is a good deal wider than you might think.

Professor Norman Billingham, CPES

Dear Bulletin

If one needs to walk down into the University from Falmer village, the upper bus stop or the roundabout, there is no pavement or footpath. This means that you have to dodge the traffic while walking at the side of the road or get muddy feet from the slippery grassed area beyond the road edge. Surely, what with all the money spent on the building work up there, a little could be put aside for a pavement/pathway to avoid this problem?

Phil Meek, CPES

Can’t you see I’m angry?

Zoë Koumouzi
Human Sciences finalist, BIOLS

Recognising emotion is something we take for granted. But experimental psychologist Sue Sullivan in BIOLS has shown that this ability declines with age.

For her doctoral research, Sue showed images of faces expressing different emotions to old and young experimental subjects. She asked them to name the emotion and found that the elderly subjects were less able to recognise anger, sadness and disgust.

This experiment also addresses the issue of ‘modularity’. The theory of modularity says that, rather than declining uniformly, the brain ages in a modular fashion: different areas age at different rates. It is well known that, in the elderly, short-term memory declines faster than long-term memory. Hence the classic image of granddad being able to remember what he had for breakfast in 1943 but not in 2003!

Once she was sure that participants did not have any other cognitive impediments, she felt safe to conclude that, in the elderly, the ability to recognise emotion had declined faster than other cognitive abilities. This is consistent with the modularity theory.

Sue’s results add to our knowledge about the way in which the brain ages, but are there any practical applications? The fact that the ‘trusting elderly’ have often fallen prey to scams by con men has been widely publicised. Sue and her colleague Ted Ruffman in New Zealand think this may be to do with a degeneration of the areas of the brain that recognise trustworthy/untrustworthy faces, and will be investigating further.

Most of us now expect to live to a ripe old age. “We can’t reverse the effects of ageing” says Sue, “but we may be able to develop techniques to help elderly people stay socially active for longer.”

European Question Time

Feelings ran high about all things European at the Question Time event organised by the UK Office of the European Parliament and the Sussex European Institute last month.

The panel of MEPs facing questions included Robert Evans (Labour), Graham Booth (UK Independence), Baroness Nicholson (Liberal Democrat) and Nini Deva (Conservative).

Vice-Chancellor Professor Alasdair Smith chaired the event – an unenviable task given the level of feeling expressed by some of the more vocal members of the audience.

Topics raised included the question of Turkish entry into the EU, the effect of the Franco-German relationship on the possible war in Iraq, and – inevitably – the Euro.

Towards the end of the debate the Vice-Chancellor challenged the panel to answer two questions with a yes or no answer: Should Britain join the Euro?, and is the Euro’s arrival in Britain inevitable? In a stunning display of political brevity, the UKIP and Conservative MEPs both answered “No. No”, while Labour replied, “Yes. Yes.” Labour’s Robert Evans didn’t even mention Gordon Brown’s infamous ‘five tests’.
Changing the way we work

Barbara Bush
Director of Human Resources

Payroll and pension enquiries
For some time, there has been a window at the back entrance to Sussex House, for staff to raise queries in person on payroll and pensions issues.

This involves waiting in a draughty corridor, where others can overhear your personal details. If the query raises personnel issues, it also involves transferring into the Human Resources Office to progress these.

To make this process more efficient, confidential and friendly, callers should now come straight to reception for Human Resources in room 338 Sussex House. There the payroll, pensions and personnel teams are all available to ensure your enquiry is dealt with quickly and fully. With effect from 1 February, the payroll/pensions window has been closed.

For queries by phone or email, contact details are given below:
Carol Stafford (Acting Head of Payroll, ext. 2265, email c.a.stafford@sussex.ac.uk).
Emma Bambury (Payroll Assistant, ext. 3767, email e.l.bambury@sussex.ac.uk).
Nick Imrie (Payroll Assistant, ext. 3756, email n.j.imrie@sussex.ac.uk).
Vanessa Leak (Payroll Assistant, ext. 4098, v.c.lease@sussex.ac.uk).
Michael Nicholas (Payroll Assistant, ext. 7372, m.d.nicholas@sussex.ac.uk).

Using agency temps and student helpers
Do you use temps? Are you responsible for finding the answer when there is short-term pressure and you need an extra pair of hands?

The Career Development & Employment Centre (CDEC) based in Falmer House has considerable expertise in supplying student helpers to the University campus. Many departments use it to advertise their short-term or temporary staff needs.

One of the regular users of the service is the Head of Schools Liaison, Tanya Shadrick. "We need more than 30 helpers for our Open Days each year, but would struggle to sign up enough current students if it weren't for CDEC. They have always come up trumps and done a really good job of matching people to our requirements."

If you have any permanent part-time positions, CDEC can also help. In addition to advertising your vacancy, the staff can manage the recruitment process for you, from processing application forms to arranging interviews with students.

Whatever your requirements, all you have to do is book via ext. 8429 or www.sussex.ac.uk/cdec/advertise. If you would like to visit CDEC or want to find out more about the services on offer, please call CDEC's Employment Adviser, Andrea Wall.

If a student can't help, the University has selected a preferred supplier for all agency temps: Office Angels. They will provide a reduced rate, to help your budget, and an express service, and are used to providing temps to campus so can brief the temp before arrival on key University working practices. You can book by phone on 737554 or online at www.office-angels.com.

If you already have a temp from another agency, or if you are a temp reading this, don't be alarmed. Existing temps will complete their assignment as it stands. At the end of that assignment, or when the temp leaves, whichever is the sooner, you should go to Office Angels for any further temp.

If you have any queries, ring Karen Wath in Personnel on ext. 7324 or Andrea Wall on ext. 3384.

Small ads

FOR SALE: Red Ford Escort 1.3, 5-door hatchback. 1996, 51k miles, MoT till 20 July. £1,600 ono. Email t.c.yang@sussex.ac.uk

WANTED: People of heights 6' 6", 5' 4", 5' 2" and 5' 0" for a quick picture used in psychology experiment on Sussex campus. Pay £3. Email bdu83@sussex.ac.uk

TO LET: Room and private shower in house in Hanover St, suit visiting PG or faculty. Two cats, one teenager and academic parent. £280p/m. Call 816866 or email p.drake@sussex.ac.uk

TO LET: Single room in 3-bed house nr Queens Park. Must be non-smoker, share with one other. £340 pcm incl. Call 07813 876073 or 602873.

TO LET: 3-bed house nr Preston Park station. Suitable for couple with small child. £900 pcm neg. Contact Neil on 877223.

FOR SALE: Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Sportster 1200cc. H reg, 12,000 miles, recent MoT, Garaged and in VGC. Accessories included. £2,800 ono. Contact ext. 8342 or email g.mather@sussex.ac.uk

WANTED: PG/staff to share house in Hanover, B'ton. Small or large room. Share lounge/kitchen/bathroom/garden. 5 mins bus Un/town centre. Rent negotiable. Email s.s.watson@ksds.ac.uk, or phone Steph Watson on 628761.

HOLIDAY LET: Gites and B&B in the Loire Valley. Open all year. Info and pics at www.derekindangela.com

Staff vacancies

Apply by 14 Feb
Research Technician
BIOL (ref 008b)

Apply by 21 Feb
User Support Librarian
Library (ref 106)

Apply by 28 Feb
Senior Lecturer/Lecturer in Education CSE (ref 110)
Research Fellow
Genome Damage & Stability Centre (ref 539)
Lecturer in Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics (ref 522)

For further details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/personnel/vacancies or contact Staffing Services on ext. 8706, fax 877401, email recruitment@sussex.ac.uk.

First class

Professor Richard Coates has taken over as editor of the journal of the English Place-Name Society and as acting honorary director of the Survey of English Place-Names, a long-running BA- and AHHR-supported project.

Professor John Nixon (CPES) has been awarded the Ludwig Mond Lectureship and Medal of the Royal Society of Chemistry for 2003. John will deliver his lecture at a special one-day symposium at Nottingham University in mid-February and also at the Universities of Bristol and St Andrews later in the year.

Obituaries

Brian Nicholas
Brian Nicholas, who died on 24 January, was a Lecturer in French at Sussex from 1964 until his retirement in 1997. His major strengths were in 19th-century French literature, but he also had a special interest in comedy, with particular reference to Mollière and Wilde.

For ten years Brian was Sub-Dean of Student Affairs in the School of European Studies and had to be persuaded to give up this responsibility, which he loved, in order to have more time for his own research. He was a paternal, caring figure to several generations of students and for his colleagues he was completely identified with the role.

In addition to this he served the School in a variety of different administrative positions - Academic Secretary, Graduate Chair, School Admissions Tutor and more.

The funeral will take place on Monday (10 February) at 11am in Kingston church near Lewes.

Donald Wood
The historian Dr Donald Wood, whose work changed perspectives on the British Caribbean, died on 29 December at the age of 79.

Donald joined the University of Sussex in 1964, retiring 25 years later as Reader Emeritus. Based in the School of African and Asian Studies, he taught undergraduate courses on Caribbean history, literature and society, and on the consequences of slavery in the Americas. Among his students was Kamau Brathwaite, the Barbadian poet and historian.

After retiring from Sussex in 1989, Donald returned to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, where he had written his classic work, Trinidad In Transition: The years after slavery.
Making selection fairer

A level grades are only one factor in assessing a candidate's suitability for a degree, suggests a Universities UK report published this month.

The report outlines the findings of a two-year project carried out at six higher education institutions including Sussex. Focusing on 15 subject disciplines, the research identified criteria that universities and colleges could use to develop 'fair admissions' policies for all applications to higher education, and make the university admissions process more open and objective.

The report, 'Fair Enough? Wider access to university by identifying potential to succeed', outlines techniques to help admissions tutors identify the potential for success among a wider range of applicants to university.

Research has shown that A level grades are poor predictors of a final degree mark, so the 'Fair Enough?' team suggest using a range of criteria including motivation and aptitude alongside grades. Many of the principles are derived from well-used human resources strategies. Employers, after all, look for a range of skills when choosing candidates for jobs.

The 'Fair Enough?' report indicates how these criteria may be used to identify borderline applicants who have the potential to benefit from undergraduate study.

At Sussex, History, Media Studies and Computer Science were used as test beds for the new procedures. Among other changes, they all received new entry profiles on the UCAS website.

"The UCAS website used to simply detail what grades were needed. These new profiles now include sections on what Sussex is looking for in terms of students and what students can expect from the degree as well," says Melanie Cooke from the Publications Office, who is responsible for the profiles.

This extra information helps students make the correct decision about a degree, while also giving admission tutors more information on which candidates to pick. So, for instance, the Media Studies profile includes sections on motivation, commitment and how students must be able to think creatively.

“In Media Studies there is no template for the 'right answer', explains the profile.

"Media Studies at Sussex has 800 students applying for 100 places," says Melanie. They could just look at the grades and fill the courses straight away. With this system, however, tutors can be much more selective and can look at how personal statements and references might reveal the suitability of the candidate. This leads to a much more diverse and committed student body from a range of backgrounds.

Using the 'Fair Enough?' method could also benefit students who just fail to make the grade: "What we are saying is that in a number of cases you have to look beyond A level," says Elizabeth Stewart from the Undergraduate Office.

In the future the University hopes to use the 'Fair Enough?' findings across campus. Elizabeth explains: "We will use the new principles that have been developed and expand them so that all our tutors have this information. We hope also to put entry profiles on the Sussex website for candidates to search easily."

Getting the higher education message across to teenagers

You may have seen sessions on "Pre-18 Learning and Teaching: Getting the Message Across" advertised in this term's staff development bulletin.

The aim of the training is to give all faculty and support staff who have offered (or would like to offer) events for schools an opportunity to design and deliver activities for the 14-18 age-group. With the new drive and school-based funding for widening participation, someone from each subject area should be present in order to ensure equal involvement across the University.

The training is being developed and delivered by the Staff Development Unit, the Widening Participation Officers and their colleagues in pre-18 education. It consists of two lunchtime surgeries (of which you are encouraged to attend one) on Wednesday 19 February and Thursday 6 March, from 12.30 until 2pm; plus the main event on Thursday 12 June from 9.30am until 1pm, including lunch.

The lunchtime surgeries are an opportunity to raise your concerns and put your questions to the WP Officers and school teaching staff. Resulting issues will be incorporated into the main training event, which will also include:

- Perspectives of a 'WP' student (what works?)
- Hints and tips, curriculum advice, jargon busting from current teachers
- Planning for more effective sessions: ideas for new activity that both activate the imagination and motivate learning.

If you would like to take part in this exciting new event, please reply to Sara McKernan as soon as possible on ext. 7999 or S.McKernan@sussex.ac.uk, indicating which of the two surgery sessions you would prefer to attend.
Lectures, seminars, colloquia

Mon 10 Feb

1.00pm Cognitive Psychology Research Group Seminar: Beena Khurana (Sussex). TBE, EP Seminar Room, BOLS.

1.00pm IPS/PRUS Seminar: Uma Lale (World Bank). A critical evaluation of the World Bank’s impact on the forestry sector in developing countries. IIDS 221.

3.00pm International Relations and Politics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Ian Duncan (Sussex). India’s untouchables and the colonial state. Arts C219.

4.00pm Economics Research Seminar: Jon Stern (NEERA). Utility industry services in developing countries: Can contracts substitute for regulatory agencies? Arts D520.

5.00pm USIE Open Seminar: Tony Sewell (Leeds). Black masculinities from Cameroon to the Caribbean. Arts C303.

5.00pm Women’s Studies Graduate Seminar: Mary Evans. On being wrong: Feminism and the academy. Arts A155.

Tue 11 Feb
2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: Phillipa Sherrington (Warwick). The politics of EU co-decision making ten years on. Arts A71.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: David O’Connor (Southampton), tbe TBA. Biology Lecture Theatre.


5.00pm Geography Research Seminar: David Simon (Royal Holloway). Regional development-environment interactions: Policies and practices in post-apartheid South Africa. Arts C175.

6.30pm Professorial Lecture: James Fairhead (Sussex). 3 million die in the Congo - you, me and the horror. Chichester Lecture Theatre.

Wed 12 Feb
1.00pm IIDS Seminar: Roger Jeffrey (Edinburgh). Education and the millennium development targets: Class, gender and secular secondary schooling in north India - the fate of a Nehruvian vision. IIDS 221.

4.00pm Centre for Modernist Studies: Adam Platt (Glasgow). The war to recall all wars. Isaac Rosenberg, Emmanuel Levinas and transcendentally haunting. Arts A1.

4.00pm Southern Africa Seminar: Peter Kyle (Sussex). Building capacity for community economic development: The case of the Kaf River Valley, South Africa. Arts C162.

4.30pm History of Art Research Seminar: Steve Wharton (Sussex). Italian renaissance ceramics and the consumption of knowledge. Arts A103.

5.00pm Migration Research Seminar: Anja van Heuselen (Amsterdam). The development of organisations of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Arts D 440.

Thu 13 Feb
12.30pm Centre for Environmental Research Seminar: Corina Gicov and Dorina Podar (Sussex). Histopathology and biological effects monitoring in the mussel and influence of 2n and pH on uptake by lettuce. Pevensey 1 2A12.

4.00pm Psychology Colloquium: Richard Gregory (Brighton). Putting illusions in their place. Pev 1A7.

Fri 14 Feb
2.15pm SPRU Seminar: Peter Holmes (Sussex) and the WTO: Relationship and implications. ED812.

3.30pm Philosophy Society Seminar: Leo Cheung (Hong Kong). Understanding Wittgenstein’s Tractatus. IICS 219.

Mon 17 Feb

1.00pm Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience Research Group Seminar: Jane Powell (Goldsmiths). From addiction to brain injury: A matter of motivation? EP Room 4014, BOLS.


Sun 16 Feb
4pm The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (PG)
6pm Sweet Sixteen (18)
Flicks for free: for each film in the spring programme, a free pair of tickets worth £9 to the first live Bulletin readers at the box office.

Sun 16 Feb
4pm The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (PG)
Flicks for free: for each film in the spring programme, a free pair of tickets worth £9 to the first live Bulletin readers at the box office.

Sun 16 Feb
6.30pm Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (PG)
Flicks for free: for each film in the spring programme, a free pair of tickets worth £9 to the first live Bulletin readers at the box office.

Wed 18 Feb
1.00pm IIDS Seminar: Simon Appleton (Nottingham). Education and the millennium development targets: What can we learn from conventional estimates of rates of return to education? Recent evidence from Africa. IIDS 221.