We enjoy work but there’s too much to do, survey shows

What staff really think about Sussex

Sussex staff enjoy their work and feel their job offers them the opportunity to use their abilities and initiative. They feel valued by their colleagues and appreciate the working environment of the University campus. These are among the key findings of the recent staff survey, carried out on campus over the summer.

Of the 53% of all staff who chose to participate, the majority said that Sussex is a good place to work. “Even after two years of some of the biggest changes in the history of the University, the overall picture is still a positive one,” said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, “of a community where people respect and value each other.”

However, the feedback from the survey also shows strong concerns about workload pressures and stress, management (particularly the management of change), and communication across the University. “It’s important to hear these concerns,” said the Vice-Chancellor, “so that we can respond to them.”

For a fuller summary of the results, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/welfare/staffsurvey. “The University is fully committed to publishing the outcomes of this and future surveys and to reporting on actions taken as a result of the survey findings,” said Barbara Bush, Director of Human Resources. Barbara is leading the decision-making on what these actions should be and will report on the next steps as soon as possible.

Requests to complete the survey elicited a good response rate: 1,184 out of 2,220 staff members (53%) returned a survey. Barbara thanked “all who volunteered their time to contribute to this important exercise”.

All completed questionnaires have now been destroyed by the organisation that carried out the research and Barbara reiterated earlier assurances that all individual staff responses remain anonymous.

The questionnaire, which was sent out to staff in early June, measured a whole range of aspects of the University’s organisational culture including management style and effectiveness, pay and recognition, staff development, health, safety and welfare as well as work/life balance, equalities issues, stress and harassment.

The survey was carried out by the Research and Information Division of NHS Partners, formerly Pay and Workforce Research, who have surveyed more than 280 public-sector organisations since they were set up in 1999.

They have recently been involved in a pilot project with nine other universities across Britain, the results of which will allow effective benchmarking and the sharing of relevant information across the higher education sector.

Further surveys are to be carried out every two to three years.

Sussex student STEPs up to competition final

Enterprising Sussex student Martina Riedler has reached the national final of a major business competition with her design for a medical appliance that is set to benefit thousands of patients.

Martina, 24, a Biochemistry and Management Studies finalist, won the London and south-east regional heat of the STEP Most Enterprising Student of the Year competition. She now joins eight other regional winners, whittled down from 1,400 entries, for the final in London on 6 October.

Martina’s eight-week placement was with Welland Medical, a Crawley-based company that makes products used by people who have undergone bowel surgery.

Martina interviewed patients in hospital and carried out chemistry research to enable her to design a more durable and comfortable ‘colostomy flange’. Flanges are used to attach waste bags to the skin surrounding a stoma (a surgically created opening in the body). Welland is now planning to patent the product.

In another project, Martina was able to identify and resolve problems in the production process, saving Welland thousands of pounds.

Helen Raper, Welland director of personnel, says: “Martina was responsible for making significant cost savings for the company and improving the quality of life for our customers. We are extremely grateful for her efforts and are very proud of her.”

Martina is thrilled but surprised to be through to the final. “I loved working on the projects – I got my own lab and computer at Welland and I really enjoyed working with the patients. There were so many incredible projects, I never thought I’d get to the final.”

The Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP) offers study-related placements with small and medium-sized businesses nationwide. Students gain valuable work experience and the businesses get extra help with research and development projects.

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Sussex project aims to cut the flab across Europe.

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Bargains galore – from a racing bike to a handy woman for hire.
Obesity research looks to Europe for answers

In response to the alarming rise in obesity across the developed world, a Sussex food policy researcher is leading a project to find out how European governments could fight the flab.

The UK has one of the highest rates of obesity in Europe.

Earlier this week (21 September) Dr Erik Millstone met senior public health representatives from nine European countries at SPRU - Science and Technology Policy Research to launch a cross-national comparative study.

During the next two and a half years the project's teams will look at issues such as food labelling, food advertising and food subsidies in the European Union (EU) and within their own countries and feed the results into the study.

Erik, whose work has previously influenced UK government policies on food additives and BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis), says that the obesity epidemic and its health implications are of major concern to all European nations.

"The UK has one of the highest rates, affecting nearly a quarter of the population. Some of the other countries haven't reached that level yet, but they have faster growing rates of obesity. This is particularly true among the new members of the EU, especially those in eastern Europe."

Different countries currently use a variety of systems to try to address the problem. In Finland some firms use a 'traffic light' system with food labelling to allow consumers to identify healthy 'green' foods and bad 'red' foods. Other nations are in favour of subsidising healthy food and increasing taxes on unhealthy food.

"What we're doing is trying to capture perspectives from divergent approaches to see which mixes of policies might be effective in which countries," explains Erik. "It would be unrealistic to think that we could produce one set of policies that would work in all countries, but I hope this study will help to halt this juggernaut of obesity that's rolling over Europe."

The project is funded by a £153,000 grant from the European Commission. The countries taking part are the UK, Cyprus, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain.

Does size matter? Research tackles female body image

New research into how women view their bodies aims to challenge the as-yet-untested belief that thin, glamorous, perfect female models in advertising are socially desirable and "sell" products to the consumer more successfully than other body types.

The research, to be carried out by Dr Helga Dittmar, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, with Emma Halliwell from the University of the West of England, will also look at precisely how - and why - ultra-thin media ideals used in advertising have a negative effect in making many women feel dissatisfied with their own bodies.

The study will involve 400 female students at each university. They will first be asked to give information about how they feel about their own bodies before their reactions to various images are studied at three different stages, then compared to their original self-image.

One of the aims of the study, which starts this month and will take about a year to complete, is to discover whether the use of ultra-thin models in advertising actually helps to sell products. Although unrealistically thin young women are often used in advertisements for everything from soft drinks to cars, there has been no previous research to show that using such images actually increases sales of any product.

In fact, argues Helga, previous research has already shown that such advertising contributes to negative body images among young girls and women.

Helga says: "Body dissatisfaction can produce extreme body-shaping behaviours, such as eating disorders. Women and girls can't help being exposed to ultra-thin models in advertising, whose body size is unrealistic and unhealthy."

"There is good evidence already that exposure to these unhealthy models leads a large proportion of women to feel dissatisfied with their own bodies."

She adds: "Results from our studies so far suggest that average-size attractive models are equally effective in advertising as ultra-thin models. However, we need to conduct wider research before we can be confident that average-size models have good advertising effectiveness, but avoid increasing women's body dissatisfaction."

"We hope that the research will identify factors that make women particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of the thin ideal and help with the development of ways to protect women and girls."

The research is being funded by a £44,000 grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).
Anyone for tennis?

Not many people play a game of tennis to celebrate their 87th birthday. But that is exactly what chemist Sir John Cornforth did this month.

Sir John, a Nobel prize winner in 1975, also gave advice to some newly appointed chemistry faculty – not only as to how they might emulate his achievements but also on how to impart a vicious slice to the backhand return.

He is pictured with newcomer Dr Mark Osborne. The other recruits are Dr Robin Fulton, Dr Ewan Main and Dr Hansjoerg Streicher, who bring an international flavour to the faculty.

This injection of new blood is to replace faculty who have recently moved elsewhere. (In addition, Professors James Hanson, Raymond Richards and Douglas Young are hanging up their lab coats.) It represents an opportunity for the department to focus on new areas such as chemical biology, to underline the significance of chemistry to the life sciences.

The chemistry department has reached its admissions target for October despite increasing the entry requirements and reducing the number of programmes offered. Dr Gerry Lawless, who has taken over from Professor Norman Billingham as head of department, thanked Dr Hazel Cox and Shona Inkster for their hard work on admissions.

O'Reilly tennis champs celebrate

In New York, Roger Federer produced an outstanding performance to beat Lleyton Hewitt and win his first US Open title. In Palmer that day (12 September), glory on the tennis court went to Andy Black (Life Sciences) and Alison Field (Press and Communications), the winners of the O'Reilly Cup 2004. They are pictured with retired staff member Pauline O'Reilly, who presented the trophy that bears her name. Runners-up were Lorraine Holness (Residential Services, far left) and Rob Read (Communications, far right).

Sussex academic collects prestigious national teaching award

A University of Sussex academic has collected a national award for her excellence in teaching and for inspiring others in her profession.

Dr Celia Hunt, Senior Lecturer in Continuing Education, is one of 50 university teachers to receive the prestigious National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) award this year.

Sir Howard Newby, chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), presented Celia with a cheque for £50,000 at a gala award ceremony on 9 September in London.

Celia, who convenes and teaches the MA in Creative Writing and Personal Development at Sussex, will be using the money to develop and disseminate models of good practice in the use of creative writing to enhance creativity in the learning process. This will include the organisation of a conference and the compilation of a book.

Throughout her career, Celia has established creative writing as a powerful tool for self-reflection and improvement in the practical delivery of healthcare, education and work in the community.

Her successes include the foundation of Lapidus: the Association for the Literary Arts in Personal Development. She is currently working on a book called Creative Writing and the Writer, aimed at students of creative writing and their teachers.

The winners of the NTFS were selected from 249 nominations submitted by higher education institutions across England and Northern Ireland. Criteria included the ability to influence and inspire students, to inspire colleagues in teaching and to influence the teaching profession as a whole. Celia was one of 29 winners in the category for experienced staff, which attracted 91 nominations.

FIRST CLASS

University College Winchester is to award an honorary degree to social historian Professor Carol Dyhouse in recognition of her research, which has revealed patterns in the history of women's schooling and education. Professor Joyce Goodman from Winchester's School of Education says: "She has made a major contribution to debates about patterns of widening access to higher education and the history of teacher training, both of which relate closely to the mission of the College. Her research provided the impetus that underpinned the establishment of our Centre for the History of Women's Education and she has served on the advisory board since its inception."

Clive Parkinson, Director of Safety, has been invited to join the Health and Safety Steering Group of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). The group of 18 directors meets twice yearly to determine the key strategic business issues and identify priorities for CBI work in this field. This will complement Clive's work for UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers' Association), to which he is currently seconded a day a fortnight.
Small ads ↓


To let: 2-bedroom bungalow in Queen’s Park area with cooking facilities and sink. Share bathroom. Suit N/S female mature student/PG. £35 p/w + metered electricity. T 0870 602 0774 or 071 771 429147.

To let: Furnished room in Hanover. Suit visiting staff/PG. £70 p/w, incl. heat & light. Share kitchen, bathroom, dining-room, living-room, garden. E m.hates@sussex.ac.uk.

Wanted: Cleaner for private home, Lewes Rd area. 22hrs p/w, £6.50/h; rates and times negotiable. E w.a.start@bsms.ac.uk.


Wanted: Others on campus learning Swedish, for study/conversation group. Poss. sharing tuition. E tennym@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Gents REM Reynolds racing bike. Black, S-speed, 20 in frame, Inc. mud guards, carrying rack, mounted shock lock. On campus. £60. T Nick on 07177 838297.

For sale: Mercedes 190E automatic. Nautic blue, F reg., 102k miles, AMG body kit. MoT Aug 05, tax Jan 05. £1,000. Ext. 8337 or E alarg@sussex.ac.uk.

Electrician: All jobs, large or small. T Richard Williams on 07855 719244 or 07968 600134, E richpwl1@aol.com.

For sale: Unused O’mobile SIM card. £9. E esp06@ HP@sussex.ac.uk.

To let: Furnished single room in N/S shared flat nr London Rd station. Suit PG, mature or foreign student. £260 pcm + bills. E els@ HP@sussex.ac.uk.

To let: UF room in 3-bed Eastbourne house. Suit N/S PG or staff. Available early Oct. £250 pcm + bills. E AndrewSoe@ aol.com, T 01323 649487.

For sale: Peugeot 306 3.5 reg. Metallic blue. 70k miles. E p.davies@ HP@sussex.ac.uk, ext. 2158.

For sale: Ford Ka. V reg. 39.5k miles, tax Feb 05, new MoT, silver £2,000. T 07739 106611 or 01424 447463.

To let: Room + bathroom, nr Preston-Pk. Ideal N/S PG or staff. Share kitchen, lounge, garden, etc. £345 pcm (incl. bills, broadband). Contact Gill on T 382048 or E nick.jagger@ employment-studies.co.uk.

Woman who does: Handy work, plumbing, windows, painting, electrics, carpentry, etc. Free estimates. T Kate on 267729 or 0779 015621.

Free courses aim to get women back on career ladder

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) is launching a new learning programme aimed at getting women further up the career ladder - and it’s absolutely free.

Career Action for Women (CAW) is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and will also cover the cost of students’ childcare and travel expenses.

Over a two-year period, participants take a series of part-time courses, lasting between ten and 20 weeks, that can build to a degree, diploma or relevant vocational qualification. Often all that is required is attendance at a couple of two- hour sessions a week, plus independent study.

And there are no strict entry requirements - just an interview to ensure that students can cope with the demands of studying at this level. Sussex staff can apply for a place on one of the courses, which begin in October.

Programme organiser River Jones has been running similar courses in Brighton and Hove for the past six years. She says: “There are lots of women out there who know they have the potential to achieve so much more, but need that bit of support to decide what the next steps are and take them.”

Mother-of-three Tracy Elkins is a volunteer classroom assistant at Carlton Hill Primary School in Brighton. She wants to explore the possibility of training to become a teacher. “I’ve been encouraged by some of the teachers to go further, so I hope to do that by joining Career Action for Women,” says Tracy.

Lectures, seminars and colloquia ↓

TUE 5 OCT

4:00pm COGS
Research Seminar: John Sung (Sussex), Embodied cognition and molecular genetics. Arundel 4044.

WED 6 OCT

5.00pm Marie Jahoda Annual Lecture: Anthony Giddens (ex-LSE), Globalization: The state of the debate. BSMS lecture theatre.

FRI 8 OCT

2.15pm SPRU-CENTRIM Freeman Centre Seminar: Labour productivity, ICT and regions: The resurgence of the Italian Dualism? Freeman Centre 024/025.

Gardner Arts Centre ↓

PERFORMANCE

Mon 27 Sep-Fri 1 Oct
12 noon-2pm, 4-6pm

Blast Theory – Can You See Me Now?
Up to 20 gamers are ‘dropped’ at random locations into a virtual map of the Sussex campus. A real runner ‘catches’ a player by getting within five metres of their location.

Wed 6-Thur 7 Oct
Yolande Smuth – Jardin Blanc
A surreal language of dance, human behaviour and song.

EXHIBITIONS

Wed 6 Oct–Fri 26 Nov
Trish Morrissey – New Works
Working with family members, photographer Trish Morrissey creates a nostalgic and unsettling world.

Read all about it

The Library is holding a book sale on Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 October in the foyer, from 10am to 4pm both days. Prices are 50p for paperbacks and £1 for hardbacks. “The Library needs to withdraw extra copies of books from time to time,” said Ian Budden, “both because teaching patterns change, meaning that fewer copies of a particular book are needed, and because of space constraints. Only extra copies of books are being withdrawn. The numbers of books required for teaching purposes are decided very carefully on the basis of the numbers of students on the relevant courses. There should still be a copy or copies of all these books in the Library.”

Car parking on campus

Term starts on 4 October, which means drivers will have to start paying to park once more. And if you bring your car onto campus, now’s the time to check the expiry date on your permit or pass. (They’re valid for one year from the date of issue.) You can renew it on Sussex Direct or by calling ext. 6358 to get a renewal form. It is possible to change your method of payment for parking at the time of renewal. Those who pay and display on a daily basis will, within the next few weeks, receive a rechargeable payment card that avoids the need to have cash available every day.

Networking opportunities

Project workers in the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) have been working with refugees and asylum seekers who have higher level qualifications, to help them gain recognition for their skills and experience and access appropriate employment and/or learning opportunities. The staff would like to introduce these students to people working in their own field so that they can reap the networking benefits all-too-often denied to ‘outsiders’. They are particularly interested in people working in medicine, education, engineering or social work but are keen to hear from anyone who might be interested in getting involved. To find out more, contact Nicky Conlan (n.l.conlan@sussex.ac.uk, ext. 2504).

New-look Library catalogue

The Library has just launched a new-look catalogue, with a number of improvements to make searching the catalogue and managing your borrower account easier. Among other things, it is now possible to book Reserve items online; to see what books you have borrowed over the last 12 months; see whether fines are accruing on your account; and see straight away whether an item is a book, video or DVD.

News in brief ↓

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Benedict Brook, with contributions from Joaquí Boelling and Maggie Clune. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from the staff and students of the University. The next issue will be out on 18 October, with a copy deadline of 3pm on 1 October. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.
Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, brought to you by Sussex IP. Read on and you’ll find out who we are and what we do. We will bring you news about our current projects and the numerous innovation successes the University of Sussex has achieved.

Who we are

Formed in 2002, Sussex Intellectual Property Ltd (Sussex IP) markets the new technologies developed at Sussex. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Sussex and exclusively manages the University’s IP portfolio. Sussex IP is actively managing over twenty patent families, with the primary aim of licensing them to partner companies.

The Sussex IP team of industry professionals has two core outputs:

- Licensing patents, know how and copyright (for example software)
- Company formations (with the emphasis on licensing, which is generally more ‘hands-off’ for the inventor compared with company formation)

Sussex IP uses £1.64m government fund to support University inventors and budding entrepreneurs

Using the recent government grant of £1.64m awarded to the University of Sussex to unite the strengths and skills of the University with the commercial sector, Sussex IP will be working closely with the Regional Development Office and the Sussex Innovation Centre (SiC) to manage this support for bringing business to the University.

Sussex IP’s role within this entrepreneurial venture is to market new technologies developed at the University. The government-backed Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) will enable the University to continue its support of academics, students, inventors, entrepreneurs, and high technology companies, as well as expand Sussex IP’s commercialisation and IP services for small companies.

The funding will also induce staff recruitment, ensuring that Sussex IP has the capacity to achieve its business plan. A new position of Research Contracts Officer will strengthen the operational relationship between the Research and Regional Development Division and Sussex IP. This will help Sussex IP identify University commercial IP opportunities.

Sussex IP workshops

October 2004 will see the start of Sussex IP’s workshops, a half day course run by experienced technology transfer practitioners. The workshops have been introduced to provide researchers who want and need to take more responsibility for the creation, protection and exploitation of IP.

The course will be in two modules: a combination of informative presentations, Q&A sessions and hands on case studies. The first module will cover the basics of what IP is, its importance and how it can be exploited to maximise value and minimise its impact on research. The second module will cover the exploitation of IP, how opportunities can be assessed, and how to best interact with industry to aid research and avoid conflicts.

Back row: Mike Shaw (Chief Executive), Julia Fallon (Commercialisation Executive - SciTech), Helma Kapteijn (Commercialisation Executive - Life Sciences)
Front: Jo Blake (Company Coordinator), Mark Clark (Business Development Director)
Sussex Startracker orbits!

In 2002, a new Startracker was in development in the Laser and Photonic Systems Research Group at the University of Sussex. Having undertaken the commercialisation process and filed a patent application in February 2002 for the Startracker, Sussex IP is now proud to announce that the Startracker patent has been granted, which is truly testament to the inventors' ingenuity.

Startrackers determine satellite and spacecraft positions and attitude in space. Developed by Professor Chris Chatwin, Dr Rupert Young and Aristodimos Kouris, the Sussex Startracker revolutionised the Startracker process by employing optical technology to deliver faster, reliable positioning updates.

Sussex IP congratulates the Laser and Photonic Systems Research Group!

Sussex IP sister activities

Sussex IP works with a number of companies and organisations at the University of Sussex. Sussex IP is one of many young, innovative companies that works out of the Sussex Innovation Centre (SiNC). SiNC opened in 1996 to provide support for the growth and knowledge based companies in the South East. The Centre is fast becoming one of the most thriving business environments for companies within the IT, biotech, media and engineering sectors.

SiNC works very closely with the University and is a unique collaboration between the public, academic and business sectors.

Also located at SiNC is the Regional Development Office. The team is responsible for supporting the University’s regional activities, which acts as a bridge between local businesses and the community and the University’s expertise and facilities.

So, if you are looking for advice use the contacts box opposite. On matters related to intellectual property, patents or commercialisation, contact Sussex IP. For specialist company incubation support or support for new product development, call the Sussex Innovation Centre. For: a solution to a technical problem; research; assistance in conference planning; or academic support for projects, call the Regional Development Office.