Four to receive teaching honour

Four academics will receive awards at the graduation ceremonies this month in recognition of their excellent teaching.

The annual Teaching Awards scheme is open to all academics at Sussex who teach courses or supervise higher degrees.

The Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), which runs the scheme, has evolved the award structure to reflect the three categories ("Experienced Teacher", "Rising Star" and "Academic Support") of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

Experienced Teacher

Dr Lynne Murphy, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics, leads on teaching and learning in her department. Lynne’s nomination had very strong support from her departmental colleagues, including head of department Professor Richard Coates, who describes her as a “fount of innovation and good practice”.

Lynne has been especially proactive in developing strategies to encourage undergraduates to acquire both core academic skills and skills that are specific to their subject.

A good example of this is Lynne’s ‘Adopt-a-Word’ scheme, which gets students involved in original, data-driven research from the start of their degree programme. Each student is assigned a single word (such as ‘fun’ or ‘famous’), which is then used to explore issues such as word origin and language change, word meaning, and the social or cultural significance of words.

Lynne is noted for her exemplary feedback to undergraduates and postgraduates; unsurprisingly, she gains her reward for this and for the other aspects of her teaching in student evaluation questionnaires that are overwhelmingly positive.

Lynne is also a member of the University’s working group on e-learning and has been one of the Linguistics department’s leaders in the use of web materials in teaching.

He teaches mostly doctoral and master’s students, with a major focus on helping them to investigate the interactions and contexts that make up social practice in their professional context. Through this they are better able to understand, and to change, both their own work and the institutions where they work.

Some of John’s research has focused on ‘formative assessment’. Developing this has also been central to his practice as a teacher, whereby dialogue, response and reflection on social practices and contexts are emphasised in teaching and learning. Through this, assessment criteria are progressively deconstructed, so that students become more critically aware of what constitutes knowledge in the particular field.

John has used this emphasis on formative assessment in his innovative work to develop e-learning: he led a project that developed an interactive website to facilitate student instruction, discussion and feedback. This ‘virtual learning environment’ is used within the Professional Doctorate in Education, which John convenes.

Rising Star

Dr Tamzin Ripley has just completed her second year in her first teaching position, as a Lecturer in Psychology. In this short time she has distinguished herself in a variety of respects – teaching methods, the use of new technology, assessment, and curriculum design – and in the way she has sought to develop her teaching skills through taking courses and through critical self-reflection.

Rod Bond, head of the Psychology department, has been impressed by Tamzin’s willingness to innovate and embrace new teaching methods, particularly in her approach to teaching large classes.

For example, Tamzin received a grant from the University’s own Teaching and Learning Development Fund (TLDF) to develop online teaching and learning tools for a first-year course with more than 300 students. The web-based materials include course documentation, multiple-choice quizzes, self-test case studies and discussion topics. “That Tamzin has taken on the job of developing these materials so early in her teaching career is exceptional,” says Rod.

She has also made a significant contribution in designing new courses and in developing the assessment of student work. On top of all this, Tamzin is currently undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

Academic Support Staff

When Catherine Reynolds joined Sussex in 1993 as a Career Development Adviser, her role was a new one: to initiate careers education within the curriculum. Through teaching, training, facilitating and mentoring, she provides students with opportunities to learn how to manage their own career development.

Linda Buckham, director of the Career Development and Employment Centre (CDEC), highlights "the enthusiasm Cath- erine exudes for her role, the confidence she inspires in students and the inspiration she provides to colleagues at Sussex and in the higher education careers community".

Her teaching philosophy is rooted in an understanding of educational research, theories and models. She adds to this a student-centred approach that encourages students to reflect on their learning.

Catherine is herself a reflective learner, continually re-evaluating her professional performance and values. In turn, she inspires colleagues at Sussex and within the professional association of careers advisers (AGCAS), for which she has been an accredited trainer since 2000.

Catherine encourages her academic colleagues and their students to think about careers education not as an add-on to academic work but rather as an integral part of the student experience. Hers is an holistic and embedded approach to careers education.

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Sussex students cycle to world leaders.
BOOKMARK

Tim Bale
(Senior Lecturer in Politics, SocCul)
European Politics: A comparative introduction
Palgrave Macmillan, £19.99 (paperback)
ISBN: 1403918716
Professor John McCormick, Indiana University, says: "Engaging and thought-provoking, and covering institutions and processes at both national and EU levels... an excellent comparative and continent-wide introduction to politics in the new Europe."

Meaghan Clarke (Lecturer in Art History, HumS)
Critical Voices: Women and art criticism in Britain 1880–1904
Ashgate, £55 (hardcover)
ISBN: 0754606158
The publisher says: "A fascinating account of women writing about art in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. Meaghan Clarke draws on a diversity of sources, including diaries, letters and periodicals, to highlight the many different forms their criticism took. Clarke argues that in order to understand fully art debates of the time it is essential we broaden our understanding of the role of women in the construction of art history."

Simon Fanshawe (independent member of Council)
The Done Thing: Negotiating the minefield of modern manners
Century, £9.99 (hardback)
ISBN: 1844136735
Rod Liddle in The Times says: "Simon Fanshawe’s book is not really about that worthless commodity, etiquette, as you might at first assume and as the title implies. Rather, it’s about having consideration for other people. It’s about not stepping over people when they die on the Tube."

James Hampshire (Lecturer in International Relations and Politics, SocCul)
Citizenship and Belonging: Immigration and the politics of demographic governance in post-war Britain
Palgrave Macmillan, £50.00 (hardcover)
ISBN: 1403951918X
The publisher says: "Explores the politics of immigration in post-war Britain and shows how ideas of race, demography and belonging intertwine to shape immigration policy... the first book to explain immigration in terms of the politics of demographic governance and provides a much needed historical context to current debates."

David Martin and David Rudling (Lecturer in Continuing Education (Archaeology))
Excavations in Winchelsea, Sussex 1974–2000
Heritage Marketing and Publications, £19.95
ISBN: 09544456x6
The publisher says: "The results from these excavations, together with other strands of recent research, have allowed a new perspective of the town of Winchelsea to be constructed... The town may have been considerably larger and more influential during the 13th and early 14th centuries than is usually considered to have been the case."

Andrea Prencipe (Senior Fellow, SPRU)
Strategy, Systems and Scope
Sage, £27.00 (paperback)
ISBN: 0761940375

Bookmark is a regular review of new books by Sussex authors.
You can buy these books at the University Bookshop in Bramber House, or order online at www.sussexunibooks.co.uk. Staff get a 10% discount on all products in the Bookshop on production of valid ID.

Charities ‘must learn to cherish their donors’

Charities who want supporters to give more should show them how much they are valued – as is the case for the UK’s much-cherished blood donors.

This was the message delivered to charity leaders last week (24 June) by social psychologist Dr Tom Farsides. Tom, who researches altruistic behaviour, was one of two experts speaking at a seminar in London as part of Social Sciences Week.

Tom points to the National Blood Service as an organisation that cherishes those who give. “Supporters are told how amazing they are and I have never seen any campaign in which the service suggests it thinks negatively about anyone who does not give blood. As a result, people who give blood a few times tend to keep giving it as often as they can for as long as they can – and feel good about themselves for doing so.”

Those who wish to follow the example of the National Blood Service should avoid undermining people’s sense of altruism, says Tom: “Charities shouldn’t put people in situations in which they feel the need to justify not giving. There is nothing wrong with charities asking for our help, but they need to be gracious if and when we do not want to give.”

Tom suggests that aggressive campaigning tactics by charities – known as “chugging” (charity mugging) – can make people doubt both their own motives for giving and the nature of charity itself. He says: “Lots of people resent being asked for money on the street. It’s like any other relationship: if you get your own way only by nagging, threatening or pleading, other people will eventually help you only when they feel they have to. They also will not like you very much.

"On the other hand, if you show warm appreciation for someone who voluntarily helps you, you will have a friend for life."
VC’s VOICE

The undergraduate examination season is now completed, successfully from the perspective of the University and also, I hope, for the vast majority of students involved. The pressure of demand for graduation tickets is strong, and we can look forward to the end of this academic year being marked, as in previous years, by graduation ceremonies that are both lively and moving.

At this time of year, everyone who works at a university finds they have to dispel the myth that the end of the university term marks the start of a long holiday. On the contrary, the pace of research speeds up and, in this important respect, the University works even harder out of term than in term.

The beginning of this week also saw the start of our largest ever summer school. Thanks to the energy and commitment of Dr Penny Chaloner and her colleagues, the summer school intake has now grown to the point where the introductory session on Monday morning filled the Gardner Arts Centre!

Of course, it requires special efforts by many people to ensure that our summer school students have access to the library, computing, catering and social facilities they deserve, and I’m grateful for everything that is being done to make all our out-of-term programmes work well.

I think we are getting better as an institution at responding flexibly to changing patterns of academic provision. The American Express part-time graduate programme in Informatics was a huge and important step forward, and I know that there are other important examples of new forms of provision.

But we still have some way to go in responding to opportunities in continuing professional development. Meeting such opportunities requires some cultural adjustment: what we put on our books has to be determined not so much by our academic interests as by the needs of the students and their employers, who demand the programme. Indeed the very phrase “on the books” may betray outmoded thinking.

We know that Sussex is more dependent on the funding council and the research councils for its income than most comparable UK universities, and it would be good for us to have a larger and more diverse income base. One of the working groups that the Senior Management Group (SMG) has set up to take forward the development of University strategy will be focused on income generation. When new opportunities come along, it is in our interests to seize them rather than to say we have more than enough work to do already.

Colleagues who develop new initiatives and take on new work need to be confident that resources will follow. We are looking at a fundamental revision of the resource allocation model that makes internal budgetary allocations, to make sure that it provides the right incentives to encourage innovation and initiative.

Changes in academic management

Professor John Holmwood, Dean of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies, will be stepping down at the end of September. He will take up a new post as Professor of Sociology at the University of Birmingham.

John was appointed Dean in April 2002. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: “John has helped to shape a strong academic school, with a bright future. Our best wishes go with him for a successful and enjoyable new role, developing the department at Birmingham.”

There will now be an internal process to appoint a successor, following the same procedure used for the appointment of the new deans in 2002. This includes open presentations to staff and students, as well as formal interview.

Details will be published on the web shortly. “I want to press ahead with this quickly to ensure we have a successor in readiness for October,” said the Vice-Chancellor.

Meanwhile, three new heads of department have recently taken up office: Professor James Fairhead in Anthropology, Dr Liz James in Art History, and Professor Vladimiro Sassone in Informatics.

Further changes will take place on 1 August, when the following heads of department take on their new responsibilities: Professor Trevor Burnard in American Studies, Professor Andrew Hadfield in English, Carol Kedward in Social Work and Social Care, Dr Andy Newell in Economics, and Dr Ruth Woodfield in Sociology.

Acting Registrar & Secretary arrives

Dr Philip Harvey starts work on Monday (4 July) as Acting Registrar & Secretary, to lead the Administration until a permanent appointment is made next year.

Philip is a secondment from the University of Exeter for nine months. He will play a key role in progressing a number of issues, including strategic planning; process improvement in administration, both central and schools; and the use of IT in the management of the University. He will also take on the statutory and regulatory roles of a Registrar & Secretary and will co-ordinate the Administration’s day-to-day work.

FIRST CLASS

Two academics have been promoted to professorships, with effect from 1 October. They are historical geographer Dr Alan Lester and Dr Anne-Marie Goetz, from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

Sussex graduate and former Olympic athlete Brendan Foster has been appointed Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University. After completing his Chemistry degree at Sussex in the late 1960s, Mr Foster trained as a teacher at Carnegie College, which is now one of Leeds Metropolitan’s seven faculties.

Tara Gould, who completed an MA in Creative Writing, Arts and Education in 2001, has received a runner-up prize in a prestigious short-story competition. More than 1,100 women entered this year’s Asham Award; Tara’s story and those of the other 11 shortlisted writers will now be published in an anthology.

Shamit Saggi, Professor of Political Science, has been appointed chair of the Law Society’s new Consumer Complaints Board. He will take up the part-time post in September.
Students take cycle protest all the way to Scotland

A group of Sussex students are hoping to encourage world leaders to address environmental issues, by cycling all the way from Brighton to the upcoming G8 summit at Gleneagles in Porthshire.

James Beecher, studying International Relations and Politics, is leading a group of Sussex students on a national G8 bike ride. Having left Brighton on Saturday 18 June, the group joined up with 60 other cyclists on London’s South Bank for their epic trek to central Scotland.

But why is the group cycling to the G8 when it would be much easier simply to hop on a train at King’s Cross? “We thought this would be a great way to celebrate the bike as an efficient and realistic way of combating pollution caused by other forms of travel,” says James.

Tony Blair’s protestation that environmental issues are at the top of his priority list doesn’t wash with the student activist: “Blair says he will solve the issues of climate change. But this is a farce when you consider he’s backing carbon trading and new nuclear power stations.”

As for the rest of the G8 leaders, James is equally unimpressed: “It’s not enough that eight people in Scotland should decide the future of the world.”

The cyclists hope to make the journey in less than two weeks. (The summit starts on 6 July, so they've got a bit of leeway.) The aim is to cycle an average of 42 miles per day, using 8 roads and the national cycle network.

Every fourth day will be a rest day and on the way the riders will lend their support to other environmental causes. They will spend a night with protesters at the site of a controversial new bypass near Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire; take a day trip to the Peak District and the dormant Nine Ladies stone quarry, where quarrying may resume; and drop by the Cre8 Summit (billed as a positive alternative to the G8 summit) in Glasgow.

James, who is also a member of cycle action group Wheels for Change, aims for the ride to do more than just raise the issue of the environment with G8 leaders. “I hope this will give people a new perspective on travel and distance,” he says. “Once you realise how close things are to one another in this country, you realise how easy it would be to cycle instead.”

Salazar, president of the Mexican Student Society on campus. The unveiling was part of an informal ceremony attended by Mexican students and staff with connections and links in Mexico.

The painting can be seen on the top floor of Bramber House in the Conference Centre reception area.

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News in brief

Park for free on campus

Term’s over, which means drivers get to park on campus all day for nothing. Charges will be payable once more with the start of the autumn term on 3 October.

International Summer School

Nearly 400 students from universities around the world arrived on campus on Sunday (26 June) for the sixth International Summer School. They are at Sussex for four or eight weeks and, to cater for them all, the IDS restaurant is open for evening meals until 19 August. All other students and staff are welcome to benefit from these extended opening hours.

Summer sport for children

Sussexsport are running a series of courses on campus over the summer, for boys and girls aged 8-18. Choose from Afro-Brazilian and samba dance, basketball, cricket, hockey, multi-sports, self-defence, soccer, squash and trampoline. See www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/sport/sportcentre/activities.html. For further information, contact Luke Terrill on ext. 7687 or email i.o.terril@sussex.ac.uk.

Show your skills with bat and ball

Sussex staff are needed to take on the University of Brighton staff team at cricket. The match will be held on Tuesday 19 July at 6pm, at the Falmer Sports Complex. If you can play, contact Simon Tunley on ext. 7125.

CookOUT for LGBT staff

The lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff group will be cooking up a treat on Tuesday 12 July at the first-ever LGBT CookOUT. The evening, to be held at East Slope bar, will include a barbeque, some less-than-challenging sporting pursuits and a pub quiz. The evening will run from 5.30pm until around 8pm. For details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Equalities/lgbtstaff.

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Small ads

To let: Room in house off Hollingdean Rd. Share with 3 females. Available 11 Aug-5 Jan (for all or part of this time). £40 pw + bills. E jae22@sussex.ac.uk, 07796 690475.

To let: 4-bed Edwardian house in Preston Park area, for 1yr from 1 Aug. £1,600 pcm. E s.m.goetz@cls.ac.uk.

To let: 3-bed house in Lewes + garden for visiting academic. £850 pcm. Available Jan for 5 mths. Ragger Fenn, ext. 7439.

To let: Furnished room in shared B’ton house from July. £270 pcm + bills. E aekw20@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: 2 tickets for The Winter’s Tale at Globe theatre. 22 July, 2pm. Seated, unrestricted views. £18 each. E esp221@hotmail.com.

Short-term let: 1-bed flat in B’ton, available 19 July to end Aug. £625 pcm inc. T Karen on 07885 179102 or E karen.aikroyd@employment-studies.co.uk.

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To let: Room in house off Hollingdean Rd. Share with 3 females. Available 11 Aug-5 Jan (for all or part of this time). £40 pw + bills. E jae22@sussex.ac.uk, 07796 690475.

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Mexican art donated

The University has been given a work of art to mark a new co-operation agreement with the Brockmann Foundation, which provides funding for talented Mexican students to undertake Masters degrees abroad.

In honour of this partnership, the Foundation presented to the University an original painting, ‘El idolio’, by the renowned Mexican contemporary artist Héctor Nájera. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dearlove is pictured (left) unveiling the painting together with Julian
This month we look at the spin-out company “xVista”, funding and training opportunities, and a UK-US bioscience collaboration.

Bioscience business opportunities can be financed

Sussex IP has been successful in securing a specialist workshop (Biobiz) that will address how to finance bio businesses. The workshop has been running since 1998 and is organised by Eurobiobiz and cofinanced by the European Union, and will be held between the 28-30 September at the Sussex Innovation Centre on the University of Sussex campus. Michel Lepers, the workshop organiser, was the European Sales Manager of Amersham Life Sciences before founding Eurobiobiz.

Sussex IP would be delighted to hear from any staff interested in understanding how to obtain funds to support their business ideas and will be providing free attendance at the workshop to selected ideas. Please contact h.kaptein@sussex.ac.uk for more information or an informal, confidential discussion.

Biobiz aims to increase the number of successful start-up companies in Europe by facilitating scientists’ access to funding through better business planning. During the 3 day workshop, you will learn how to create and finance a successful biotech start-up, and will consider all aspects of company creation including:

• Choosing a business model.
• Where is the money? How to access it?
• How to obtain subsidies.
• Business angel/venture capital: what they are, they want, they offer.
• Building the right business plan.
• Writing an efficient executive summary.
• The importance of intellectual property.
• Human resources management.
• How to create value.
• Exit strategies.

Individual counselling will also be available on a one to one basis, during the workshop. More information can be found on www.eurobiobiz.com/biobiz.php.

DTI sponsors international collaboration

Dr. Mike Shaw, CEO of Sussex IP was recently provided with a grant by the DTI to attend the Tissue Engineering workshop organised at the Texas Medical Centre in Houston. There he represented the self-assembling peptide technologies developed by Professor Dek Woolfson of the School of Life Sciences.

The DTI’s UK-Texas Bioscience Collaboration Program promotes biomedical research collaboration between UK universities and their US counterparts, in several key areas including tissue engineering, oncology and anti-infectives.

Professor Woolfson’s work provides potential solutions to many challenges facing material scientists as they develop matrices and scaffolds to support the growth and development of living cells. Together with Sussex IP, Prof. Woolfson has filed several patent applications in this area.

The DTI has supported these workshops to stimulate collaborations between multidisciplinary teams from the UK and Texas. The intent is to strengthen their already strong positions in the field and to stimulate further development of the technologies.

Texas is a research leader in the biosciences and a hub for research excellence. It receives almost $4 billion (£2.5 billion) of Federal R&D expenditure annually and is home to the world’s largest medical centre, The Texas Medical Center. This internationally renowned institution has 16,000 researchers, 40 member institutions, two medical schools, four schools of nursing, 13 renowned hospitals and two specialty institutions. It receives 5 million patient visits each year.

Although programs to initiate international collaborations are fashionable relatively few have produced significant commercial outcomes. However, the UK Texas Bioscience collaboration between the state of Texas and the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) launched in 2003 has been very successful in fostering links between the UK and Texas and the program resulted in more than $17 million of proposals being sent to the US National Institutes of Health and other funding bodies from collaborations through the program.

Staff who are interested in learning more about this program can contact Sussex IP on ext. 3000.
xVista – aiming at catching the counterfeitors

xVista is one of the University’s spinout companies supported by Sussex IP. Except when you look at how xVista came about it’s more of a spin-in from outside the University than a spinout. The entrepreneur behind the company and the man with original idea is Karlis Obрамs. His previous enterprises have included:

• data broadcast security in retail betting shops
• the provision of advertisements and information on building society ATM screens.

xVista’s anti-counterfeiting solution is aimed at branded goods. A unique identifier number is placed on each item as part of the packaging process. This can be visible or invisible in data matrix array form. The system including the data matrix reader was developed at Sussex in Professor Chris Chatwin’s group by Rupert Young and Fred Ciaret-Tournier. The identifying number read from the data matrix is communicated to a secure database and validated as an item that should be in the supply chain. The basic reader has been developed into a reader integrated into a normal mobile camera phone. This enables the counterfeit-detection field operation to determine whether or not an item is supposed to be where it has been found – in a flea market in Coventry or Canton – and determine whether, for example, it has been ‘diverted’ or counterfeited.

The mobile camera phone reader is used to take a picture of the identifying label or mark. This is transmitted back to the secure database and a validation message sent back to the mobile phone.

This patented technology has been developed to the stage that it needs limited trials in a real supply chain. Once these confirm that the xVista solution delivers what brand-owning companies want, license deals will be offered that can potentially save them millions of pounds.

Wellcome Trust’s translational research event allows major pharma to call for closer relationship with academia

New discoveries and technologies arising in academic laboratories may fail to realise their potential unless they become attractive to industry. The Wellcome Trust helps to bridge the gap between fundamental research and commercial application and provides support through the University Translation Awards (UTAs). The research behind the idea proposed for development through a UTA does not necessarily have to have been funded by the Trust.

Dr Mervyn Turner, Senior Vice President, Merck Pharmaceuticals has called for greater interaction between pharmaceutical companies and UK academic institutions to help develop the next generation of drug therapies. Speaking at the Wellcome Trust’s 3rd annual translational research event, Dr Turner emphasised the increased importance of partnering and highlighted the areas where academia and the pharmaceutical sector can strengthen their ties. Increased collaborative activity is key to the development of novel therapies and he highlighted the need to develop long term relationships with the UK university sector. This is a reflection of the increasing complexity and diversification of biological research.

Applications for the Wellcome trust’s UTAs will be considered on a rolling basis. Awards will be available for any amount up to £300K, including pilot projects up to £50K. Projects covering any aspect of technology development applicable to the biomedical sciences will be considered, providing they address a defined need in healthcare (see www.wellcome.ac.uk/funding/technologytransfer/).

The Wellcome Trust requires that UTA projects be handled in conjunction with the host institution’s technology transfer company, in Sussex’s case, Sussex IP. As project proposals will have to be worked up by researchers in collaboration with Sussex IP’s staff, the timescales for approval of UTA applications will differ to those for research grant applications.

If you are interested in exploring the possibility of applying for a UTA, please contact Sussex IP on ext 3000 or Dr. James Walsh on j.walsh@sussex.ac.uk.