Campus five take up healthy challenge

Five healthy hopefuls from campus are planning to stick to their healthy new year's resolutions – with a little help from the experts at Sussexsport.

Each has been assessed by a member of Sussexsport staff and given a tailor-made programme designed to help them achieve their fitness targets. By the time of the 2006 campus Health Week (Monday 23-Friday 27 January) the hopefuls will be well into not only their stride, but also their stretch and tone.

In this issue of the Bulletin you can see what self-confessed "lazy student" Laura Fisher aims to do to cut the lethargy and read about David Bowel's attempts to reduce his blood pressure. Over the coming months we'll be following their progress. You can read about all five hopefuls at www.healthycampus.com.

But it's not just the Sussex five who can improve their health. "You don't have to pay to join an expensive gym – it's simply about being more active in our daily lives," says Health and Fitness Development Officer, Cath Smee. "Taking the stairs or having a kick-about in the park helps keep you healthy."

Health Week is packed with everyday ideas to get your new year off to a good start. Many of the week's events will be based in a special marquee outside Bramber House, including a lunchtime walk leaving at 1pm every day and a Health Fair on Tuesday. You can have your own mini health check on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Arts D foyer. More can be found on the Health Week website or in leaflets around campus.

University to respond to Students' Union campaign

Campus is awash with brightly coloured posters in the style of the Sussex visual identity. This is not a new recruitment push by the University, but part of the Students' Union campaign to follow up their presentation of concerns to the University Council in December.

Mandated by the Union AGM in November, its president Roger Hylton presented a detailed document to Council, outlining a range of areas – from financial management and housing to student support and contact hours – where the Union are looking for action from the University.

Council discussion made clear that students' views were taken seriously and it agreed to respond in detail to the issues raised by Week 5 of this term (the week beginning 6 February). A number of independent members of Council and senior University managers will be meeting with student representatives this month to discuss the response.

Reflecting on the students' requests, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: "Much of what the students are looking for is action on issues that we already have in hand – whether strategic planning, management structures, housing or student representation. We will of course look at all the issues the students have raised and see where further steps can be taken. We hope the Students' Union will therefore be able to give a positive welcome to what we have to say."

Senior managers at Council noted that there was a range of existing channels for formal and informal discussion with students and their representatives that would normally have been used to resolve many of these issues. They were reviewing how these operated and hoped that the need to take issues in bulk all the way to Council could be avoided in future.

Under the new committee structures proposed to Senate by the Registrar, student representation would be strengthened, giving students a voice on key new bodies such as the Strategy and Resources Committee.

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The healthy hopefuls

Follow the progress of the five hopefuls aiming for a healthier new year over the next few months in the Bulletin and online. Below we introduce David, Maggie and Laura – while online at www.healthycampus.com you can also check out Sam and Gill.

Laura Fisher: 2nd year Philosophy and English student
Age: 21
Body composition: 29% body fat (above average)
Flexibility: 10cm (below average)
Laura says: "I am looking to make a change from a lazy student lifestyle. I want to improve my fitness levels so I can enjoy sports without having to worry about not being able to keep up with my opponent. Being overweight and having a poor diet gives me low energy levels, which conflict with the workload of my degree."

Personal trainer Terry says: "Laura's long-term goal is to lose 12kg in 12 months. Her medium-term goal is to reduce weight, reduce body fat and tone up. Laura is keen to use the gym, so we'll be having personal training sessions. I will also be encouraging her to take part in activities such as badminton. By including activities that Laura can do with a friend it makes the exercise more enjoyable, meaning that she is more likely to stick with it."

“I think I’m 75% Christmas cake at the moment.”

If you need a good reason to join us in

UNISON
the public service union

You're less likely to be injured at work - unions provide health and safety officers to help employers meet legal obligations.

Will that do? To join Unison, contact Felicity Harrison on 01622 824363 or F.A.Harrison@us.ac.uk

Maggie Clune: Press Officer
Age: 42
Body composition: 33.8% body fat (above average)
Flexibility: 32cm (average)
Maggie says: "My fitness isn’t too bad, but to maintain it I’m going to have to shift a few pounds. I was surprised to find I was dehydrated – I’ll have to drink less wine and more water. And I need to tackle my sweet tooth – I think I’m 75% Christmas cake at the moment."

Personal trainer Matt says: "After finding out Maggie wasn’t 75% Christmas cake we have set up some attainable goals – firstly to get back into running, which she enjoys. We are also going to do a series of weight-bearing exercises, which will help in later life. The training will go towards a long-term goal of running in the University Fun Run on 10 May this year, which will have the knock-on effect of lowering her body-fat percentage."

David Bowel: former member of staff in BIOLS and the Innovation Centre
Age: 47
Body composition: 22.9% body fat (average)
Flexibility: 5cm (below average)
David says: "My high blood pressure has prompted me to adjust my lifestyle and look at my diet and exercise. There’s no excuse not to use the gym here on campus – I need to pick up where I left off."

Personal trainer Terry says: "We aim to lower David’s weight by 6kg and reduce his body fat and blood pressure through an activity programme three times a week. We will also reduce his consumption of red meat, while increasing his fruit and vegetable intake. David enjoys cycling, so I will be encouraging him to get his bike tuned up by the bike doctor in Health Week and start cycling in to work."

All articles are also featured on the internet at www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin
LETTERS ↓

New parking scheme "adds insult to injury"

The introduction of the car parking charges a couple of years ago felt like a cut but the new scheme [as reported in the Bulletin on 16 December] just adds insult to injury for staff in the £12,000–£22,000 pay bracket.

Please can you tell me how you can justify a new parking system in which those on lower pay have an increased payment of approximately £80 a year and those on higher pay see a decrease in their payment by approximately £70 a year? Why should we lower paid staff subsidise higher paid staff because the University is incapable of policing its own system?

Maria Brook, Technician, Physics & Astronomy

David Kirkwood, Director of Estates, replies:

I can understand why staff would not welcome any increase in costs for parking on campus. However, we are moving to a simple pay-and-display system that charges £1.1 a day for those staff earning £12,000 a year or more. We do not think this is unreasonable, even if it is unwelcome.

The current charging system – which differentiates between different salary bands, and across numbers of hours worked, with different rates out of term time – is a well-intentioned but complex compromise. It has in practice been difficult for new users to understand and very expensive to police.

This has meant a lot of the money raised has gone on running the parking system, rather than supporting University investment in other forms of transport – buses, cycling, walking and so on.

By moving towards a single-rate pay-and-display, we hope to reasonably encourage drivers to consider other forms of travel – whether public transport or car sharing – and ensure we can invest more of the money raised in supporting this.

Money down the pan?

I must congratulate the University on modernising the toilets in Pevensey 1 and hope that others will follow, as they are desperately needed. The old '60s facilities must be very embarrassing for our visitors to see and use.

I am sure the workers will do a brilliant job, but I did enquire how much it might cost for this work. Well, £40,000 seems a lot for a loo ... so maybe I could enquire through your pages if this figure is correct and if we included gold bath taps in the shower?

I do not wish to be unkind, but it does seem an awful lot of money for a university that isn't exactly flush for cash!

Mick Henry, Chemistry

Kenneth Illsley, Projects Manager in Estates, replies:

Mick is correct that the toilets (which dated from 1962) were in desperate need of modernisation. But I am happy to put him right on the price: rather than costing £40,000 of University money, the works have cost £28,900 (90% of which came from HEFCE via its Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF)).

Although gold taps are not part of the new facilities, they do include a shower (with disabled access) and a disabled toilet, as well as modern unisex toilets that are fit for the 21st century.

David Harper
Life Sciences

David Streeter
Life Sciences

A walk on the wild side ↓

May we wish all our readers a happy new year!

One can be forgiven for thinking that this time of year campus looks its bleakest. However, this year when one sometimes comes across small groups of weather-proofed individuals clustered around some ancient tree peering intently through lenses at the trunk. These are likely to be 'byronologists' or, more colloquially, 'mosser's'!

There is some truth in the country saying that moss grows on the north side of trees as they do best in moist situations. Our campus trees are beginning to develop a better selection of mosses as the air gets cleaner. Small dark-green tufts of Wood Bristle-moss, Orthotrichum affine, are now quite common, as is Dilated Scalewort, Frullania dilatata, a species of liverwort, plants that are closely related to the mosses.

Mosses are not noted for their economic value but medieval apothecaries knew of a cure that would work if all else failed. This was Muscux ex Craneo Humano, the moss that grows on a human skull. The identity of this amazing plant remained a mystery until a labelled packet was found recently in the library of St John's College, Cambridge. When examined, it was revealed to be the common Silky Wall Feather-moss, Homalothecium sericeum. You can find it growing on the base of the large ash outside the Meeting House, but it has to be on a skull to work!

At this time of year, we are often asked about nocturnal noises on campus. We have previously mentioned the loud screams made by Foxes during their mid-winter mating season. These are so unearthly that a reader recently asked if campus is haunted.

Like so many rural areas of Britain, the downs around campus are reputedly roamed by a large spectral hound. The local beast is rather prosaically called 'Black Dog'; more imaginatively, it is said to be headless.

The loud yelping calls of Herring Gulls are almost as obvious on campus at night as they are by day. They search for food throughout the day, often 'foot-paddling' on grass to attract earthworms.

Look out for unpaired males standing on tall vantage points and giving loud trumpeting calls to gulls flying nearby. Local pairs, which seem to resent the bachelors, can often be seen side-by-side on roofs near their past or future nests sites. When a gull returns to its mate, both usually give plaintive meowing calls or rhythmic gruff 'clucks'.

This January we have been struck by how many of last summer's brown-plumaged juveniles are still begging for – and receiving – food from their parents. They pump their heads up and down, typically from a hunched posture, and give a high-pitched, irritating 'pli-pee' every few seconds. Interestingly, adults seem especially likely to feed begging chicks at night; perhaps they are trying to stop the noise!

FIRST CLASS ↓

Three Sussex alumni were recognised in the New Year Honours list.

Oxford mathematician Professor John Ball, who obtained his DPhil in 1972 from Sussex, was knighted.

Sumantra Chakrabarti, Permanent Secretary in the Department for International Development (DFID), became a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB). Mr Chakrabarti studied for an MA in Development Economics from 1983–84.

Ann Robinson, who has worked in colleges since graduating from Sussex 37 years ago and has been the head of Barnett's Modelhouse College for the past eight years, was awarded an OBE for her services to education.

Director of Planning

Anthony Young, Director of Planning, will be taking early retirement from the University on 31 March.

Until then, Anthony's work will focus on preparations for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), working with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tony Moore.

Arrangements are underway to recruit to the post of Director of Planning. Until the appointee is in post, wider planning activities will be directed by the Registrar & Secretary, Dr Philip Harvey.
National Student Survey (again)

All final-year undergraduates will be asked to provide feedback on a range of topics in the second annual National Student Survey (NSS), with questionnaires being sent out at the end of this month. Topics are the same as before: quality of teaching; assessment and feedback; academic support; organisation and management; learning resources; and personal development. As with the previous survey, the 2006 results will help to inform improvements in services for Sussex students as well as to help prospective students choose courses and institutions.

ReFreshers Fair

If you missed your chance to join the Chamber Choir, the RecSoc, the Cheerleaders Society or even the Dirty Weekenders, you'll get another bite of the cherry on Tuesday (17 January). The ReFreshers Fair will bring back under one roof all the sporting clubs and social, political and religious societies you could dream of – all vying for you to become a member. Take a look from 11am–3pm in Mandela Hall, Falmer House.

Genome Centre Open Day

The Genome Damage and Stability Centre which investigates DNA damage and its relationship to human genetic disease and cancer, is holding an open day for prospective research students on 2 February. For details, call ext. 8123 or email gdsc@sussex.ac.uk.

New director for teacher training

Simon Thompson has taken over from Dr Viv Griffiths as Director of Initial Teacher Education in the Sussex School of Education. Simon is also convenor of the PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education).

Jo Scott dies

Jo Scott, who was known across campus through her work as Room Bookings Clerk from 1990 to 2003, has died at the age of 42. Jo moved across to the new School of Social Sciences & Cultural Studies, before leaving Sussex’s employment in summer 2005. However, she continued as a part-time student on the BA in Cultural Studies. For funeral details, contact Richard Price (Staff Welfare Officer) on ext. 7712.

Academic events

MON 16 JAN
1pm Geography seminar: Jane Willis (Queen Mary), Work, identity and new rhetorics for mobilisation. Arts C175.

4pm Language and Linguistics seminar: Gillian Forrester (Sussex), Micro-analysis of multimodal communication in Western Lowland gorillas. Arts D440.

5pm Education seminar: Linda Monroe (Sussex), Refugees and asylum seekers in the UK; lifelong learning and social capital. Arts E410.

1pm Seminar: John Difley (Clare Hall), Cell cycle regulation of DNA replication in yeast. Genome Centre seminar room.

THU 19 JAN
4pm History seminar: Martin Evans (Portsmouth), Islam, colonial violence and the French civilising mission: The legacy of the past in contemporary Algeria. Arts A155.

6pm Royal Statistical Society seminar: Susan Lewis (Southampton), Adventures in industry. 241 Martell Building.

FRI 20 JAN
2.15pm SPRU/CENTRIM seminar: Lara Markes (Silico Research), The importance of scientific advisory boards in the biotechnology industry. Freeman Centre G24/25.

SAT 21 JAN
10pm CCE open lecture: Nannette Aldret and Kate O’Riordan (Sussex), Voyeurism in visual representation: A history of peeping Tom. For booking info, T: 01225 873744 or E: d.mom@sussex.ac.uk.

MON 23 JAN
1pm Geography seminar: Giles Mohan (Open), Homeland, citizenships and diasporic Ghanaian politics. Arts C175.

4pm Language and Linguistics seminar: Munai Ramachandran (Sussex), Descriptions and presuppositions. Arts D440.

5pm Education seminar: Gwynedd Lloyd (Edinburgh), Problem girls: A critical view of current thinking on emotional and behavioural difficulties. Arts E419.

TUE 24 JAN
4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Alex Aisher (UCL Sussex), Human and spirit landscapes in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Arts C233.

6.30pm Professorial lecture: Judy Sebba (Sussex), Promoting social justice in public services through research reviews. BSMS lecture theatre.

WED 25 JAN
1pm Seminar: Veronica Costanzo (Clare Hall), ATM, ATR and Mre11 role in maintenance of genome stability. Genome Centre seminar room.

5pm SPRU/CENTRIM seminar: Isabel Freestone (Sussex), How do firms adopt innovative organisational and management practices? Freeman Centre Social Space.

THU 26 JAN
4pm History seminar: Joan Tumbleney (Southampton), The football World Cup 1938: Politics, spectacles and the culture physique in 1930s France. Arts A155.

FRI 27 JAN
2.15pm SPRU/CENTRIM seminar: Malcolm Eames (Policy Studies Institute), Technological expectations and the appraisal of contested hydrogen futures. Freeman Centre G24/25.

Changes to internal comms team

If you want to get a story in the Bulletin, talk about screen savers or work out how to get some news online – don’t call Communications Officer Benedict Brook for the next few months.

Benedict (left), who’s been working on internal communications to staff and students for the last four years, is temporarily abandoning the rolling downs of Sussex for the golden beaches of Sydney.

Here in the Press and Communications Office we wish him well on his arduous mission down under and thank him for his sterling work writing for and designing the Bulletin (among many other responsibilities).

Taking Benedict’s place during his sabbatical leave will be Sussex newcomer Claire Potter. Working alongside Alison Field, she will be taking up the reins in internal communications. Give her a call on ext. 7906 or email internalcomms@sussex.ac.uk.

4 bulletin board

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Benedict Brook, with contributions from Jacqui Bealing, Maggie Clune and Rob Read. 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 27 January with a copy deadline of 1pm on 20 January. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.