New foundation year going strong

More than 50 international students from 19 countries are enjoying life at Sussex on a new foundation programme run in partnership with Brighton-based Study Group.

The new International Study Centre (ISC) offers the students specialist preparation for degree-level study at Sussex in a wide range of subject areas (such as management, computing, engineering, law, humanities and social studies). It also provides preparation in English language and study skills, along with dedicated student-support services.

The September intake will be joined by another group of international students in January. Both start dates lead to entry to undergraduate degrees at Sussex in October 2007, provided the required entrance standards are reached.

The teaching staff are specific to the Centre and are skilled and experienced in pre-degree education and learning for international students. The content and delivery is validated by Sussex academics, in the normal way.

Unlike traditional foundation courses, which often place students in local colleges or in off-campus sites, the Centre is located on campus, in dedicated space in the Mantell Building. The 53 ISC students are full members of the Sussex community, with access to all University facilities.

The aim is to build recruitment to about 200 in three years' time. As the students enter their degree programmes this will strengthen Sussex's overseas numbers.

Dr Philip Baker, Head of International Liaison, said: "The establishment of the ISC in partnership with Study Group is a significant initiative within our international development strategy. "I am delighted that it has got off to such a flying start. It is tribute to the hard work put in by academic and administrative colleagues across the University and at Study Group."

Teaching rooms get a make-over

Teaching rooms on campus are being transformed, in a rolling programme of work that started in the spring of this year and will continue through to the end of the 2007 Easter vacation.

In seminar rooms, upgrading work includes redecoration, lighting, new carpets and new blinds. New technology (data projectors, whiteboards and interactive whiteboards) is being installed in a number of rooms.

By summer 2007 there will also be 11 new seminar rooms in Anrundel and 17 on the second floor of Bramber House (mainly to replace the disposal of current teaching rooms within the Arts buildings to other uses).

In addition, the Chichester Lecture Theatre, designed by architect Sir Basil Spence and listed by English Heritage, has been restored to its former glory. Refurbishment has included a new roof, new seating (increasing capacity from just under 300 to 350), extra lighting and new audio-visual technology, as well as a redecorated lobby and toilets.

The upgrades and refurbishments are being funded by HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England).

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   Wear It Pink day raises breast cancer awareness – and cash!
VC's open meetings with staff

The new format for the Vice-Chancellor’s open meetings with staff – with presentations and a chance to hear from a range of senior managers – was welcomed in feedback from the 250 staff who attended on 24 and 25 October.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, outlined the priority areas for work led by the executive team in the coming year – including continuing financial improvement and income generation, preparing for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and enhancing the student experience. In response to questions, he made clear that the work being carried out in these areas is both short- and long-term, so the work will continue for future years.

Professor Joanne Wright, the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), spoke about the work she is leading on the National Student Survey (NSS) and the student experience at Sussex. Discussions are taking place with every department to look at what can be learned from the NSS results for Sussex, and what changes should be made to improve the student experience. These ideas will feed into the development of a teaching and learning strategy for Sussex. Consultation on that strategy will take place this term.

The Registrar & Secretary, Dr Philip Harvey, reported initial thinking on the reviews of professional services and the steers given by Council at its meeting in late September. (Professional services include all units that report to the Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of ITS and Librarian; and the reviews will need to look at some cross-cutting functions that involve support activities in the schools.)

He made clear that the aim is to ensure that professional services align with and support the academic plans and development of the University. Overall savings will be required to meet the financial targets agreed by Senate and Council last year, and there will need to be room for investment in priority areas.

A range of approaches will be adopted in different areas – some led by managers, some by members of the executive and some with external support. Priority areas and timescales for reviews are being established and further information will be given as planning starts to take shape. Questions and comments from staff suggested that further information and involvement as the reviews develop would indeed be welcome.

The Vice-Chancellor also gave an update on the framework agreement: Sussex is in a similar position to many other universities, with a lot of discussion still going on between the University and the trades unions to sort out the details of implementation. A more detailed update, hopefully jointly agreed with the trades unions, will be provided to staff shortly.

In response to questions on early retirement/voluntary severance, the Vice-Chancellor said that the scheme currently in operation to support the implementation of the academic plans and financial targets agreed by Senate and Council in 2005–06 will now be extended. He continues to hope that compulsory redundancy can be avoided, but criteria will be drawn up if it should prove necessary.

A more detailed report on the open meetings is currently available at www.sussex.ac.uk/staff.

Better careers advice for visually impaired students

A new resource will make it easier for visually impaired university students in Sussex to get careers advice.

The Career Development & Employment Centre (CDEC) has been developing an audio career-planning pack for visually impaired students at the Universities of Sussex, Brighton and Chichester.

The pack includes two audio CDs. On the first CD, the Universities of Sussex, Brighton and Chichester introduce their respective careers services and outline the help available to visually impaired students. The second audio CD includes career-planning advice and inspirational case studies.

The career-planning pack has been developed with guidance and financial support from the Blatchington Court Trust, a local charity that promotes education and employment for vision-impaired young people under 30 throughout Sussex.

The Trust will also be funding the part-time employment of a visually impaired student at Sussex to promote the resource on campus.

The pack was launched at CDEC’s base in Falmer House on 25 October.

LETTERS

Cruelty-free cosmetics now on campus

The chemist on campus has replaced all of its old make-up with ‘Beauty Without Cruelty’ make-up very recently.

A couple of months ago I was in the chemist and overheard the staff talking about restocking their make-up stand, so I suggested they get some that isn’t tested on animals. They said they hadn’t considered that before. It seems they took notice of my comments!

Beauty Without Cruelty products are 100% vegan and their products and ingredients are not tested on animals by them or any other company.

This means this is the only place on campus where you can get cruelty-free beauty products (as far as I know). The Body Shop is not approved by anti-vivisection organisations.

Beth Granter, Web Team
Diwali celebrations bring people together

According to Indian mythology, the festival of Diwali symbolises the victory of good over evil. It is a day of rejoicing and celebration that inculcates unity, oneness and brotherhood among people of all cultures.

Keeping that in mind, more than a hundred students from different parts of the world and from different cultures gathered in the Meeting House on 21st October to celebrate Diwali together.

The festival celebrations included the offering of prayers to the Almighty, a cultural programme and a vegetarian Indian dinner, prepared by the students themselves.

Each item in the cultural programme, prepared by Pooja Saxena and Aditya Despande, was performed live by Sussex students.

It began with a traditional Bharatnatyam dance performed by Halak Mehta and included a Bollywood dance by Jahnvi Pradhan.

Rahul Kanhere and Harish Ramnathan played the tabla and the mridang (Indian drums) respectively. Other musical numbers included Indian Bollywood songs from Rakesh Gupta and an Indian devotional song presented by Sahar Gul Bhatti.

Reflecting on a memorable evening, Manish Gaur, South Asian Student Support Officer and the key organiser of the function, said: "The event was not only a celebration of a major festival but also an occasion for new international students to get over their homesickness and cultural shock and meet people."

Tickled pink

Neil Linstrem, Sam Fuller and Terry Cooper of SussexSport were decked out in outrageous pink costumes on Friday 27th October. It was all in aid of Breast Cancer Awareness’s ‘Wear It Pink’ day. Participants in Sussex House, the Sports Service and Hastings building raised £321.22. A separate event in Bramber House raised further funds.

A walk on the wild side ↓

Looking out of our windows on the top floor of the south side of the JMS Building while composing this piece, it is hard to believe that November is here.

There is not a bare branch in sight. The mild autumn also seems to be playing havoc with the internal clocks of some of our most familiar wild flowers.

Dandelions, primarily plants of the spring and early summer, are blooming in the grassy areas around campus. Dandelions have accumulated more than 50 local and vernacular names, mostly referring either to their diuretic properties or to their well-known time-telling facility. Hence ‘pass-a-bed’, ‘pottle bed’ and the French ‘pissenlit’ as well as ‘clock flower’ and ‘time-teller’.

What is rather more obscure is the reason for ‘dandelion’. The derivation from the Latin densus leonis and the French dent de lion is clear, but why it should have become attached to the plant appears to puzzle the punters. Our suspicion is that it refers to the jagged toothed leaves and has nothing to do with the flowers.

Insects too are taking advantage of the mild weather. We found one dandelion with several hover-flies nuzzling around the same flower-head for pollen. The larvae of many species of hover-flies feed on aphids, so are a real friend of the gardener.

The dandelion visitors belong to the common Epipyrhus balteatus, a medium-sized orange-coloured species with a characteristic pair of double black lines on two of its abdominal segments. In some years we get a large influx from the continent, but many will hibernate over winter.

The excursions over the summer for the new heating system produced large areas of disturbed bare ground, perfect for weeds!

One still flowering is the familiar Groundsel. Its very name proclaims its ecology: grundsesselie, we are reliably informed, is Old English for ‘ground swallow’. It shares its generic name of Senecio with Ragwort.

William Bullein in his Book of Simples published in 1562 explains the name thus: ‘The flower of this herb, hath white hayre, and when the winde bloweth it awaye, then it appeareth like a Bald headed Man, therefore it is called Senecio.’ (Latin Senex = old man.)

The most conspicuous yellow flower of the moment is Prickly Ox-tongue, one of the many dandelion-like flowers with a confusing array of zoological names: Goat’s-beard; Cat’s-ear; Hawk’s-beard.

The first trick in trying to sort them out is to see whether the stem is leafy. Ox-tongue has a branched leafy stem and the leaves have stiff, bristly hairs with a white, pimple-like base.

In Britain it has a rather southernly distribution, where it is especially common on lime-rich soils and — like many plants of similar habitats and distribution — its origins are uncertain. It is probably a native of southern Europe and introduced to this country in antiquity. Such species are now dubbed ‘archaeophytes’.
Academic events

MON 6 NOV
4pm Language and Linguistics seminar: Nikos Gogonas (Sussex), Bilingualism and language shift: The case of Albanian pupils in Greece. Arts D440.

4.30pm Neuroscience seminar: Carol Haxby (Keese), The Ultrasound localisation of tyrosine receptor and large activated potassium channels in the rat cochlea. GDSC Seminar Room.

TUE 7 NOV
12noon Biochemistry seminar: Mark Caldwell (Sussex), Using siRNA to investigate the expression of isofoms of the translation initiation factor eIF4G. JMS LT.

12.30pm Library lecture: Gill Clarke (Southampton), Reconstructing a life - Evelyn Dunbar: War and country. Library Meeting Room.

2.15pm SEI seminar: Jeffrey Karp (Exeter), Comparing support for direct democracy in Europe, New Zealand and Canada. Arts C233.

4pm COSG seminar: Annette Karmiloff-Smith (London), Modules, genes and evolution: What have we learnt from developmental disorders? Pev 1A6.

4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Hester Dibbits (Royal Netherlands), Moroccan Dutch and the unifying agency of domestic interiors. Arts C233.

6.30pm Professorial lecture: Sherman Robinson (Sussex), Potential drivers of economic development in the 21st century. BSMS LT.

WED 8 NOV
1pm SPRU seminar: Markku Lehtonen, Adra Evans & Michael Hopkins (Sussex), Biofuels and biotechnologies: Potential and expectations. Freeman Centre social space.

3pm Justice and Violence Centre seminar: Kate Nash (Goldsmiths), Mediated international human rights in the national public sphere: The Phinooth case. Arts A71.

5pm Migration seminar: Christian Joppke (Bremen), Beyond national models: Civic integration of immigrants in Western Europe. Arts C233.

THU 9 NOV
6pm History lecture: Norman Davies (London), Europe at war, 1939–45: Not freedom's victory. Chichester LT.

FRI 10 NOV
2.15pm SPRU seminar: Jonathan Haslak (London), Innovation, productivity growth and knowledge flows. Freeman Centre G24/25.

MON 13 NOV
3pm International Relations seminar: Anna Stavrandakis (Sussex), Too close for comfort? NGOs, global civil society and the UK arms trade. Arts C233.

4pm Neuroscience seminar: Gay Gibson (Greenwich), Singing mosquitoes. GDSC seminar room.

4.15pm Language and Linguistics seminar: Paul Dandon (Sussex), Style counsel. Arts D440.

4pm Heath seminar: Carrie Lowery (Sussex), Illness and treatment perceptions after diagnosis with head and neck cancer. Pevensey 1, 183.

5pm Education seminar: Louise Morley & Sarah Ayres (Sussex), Employers, quality and standards in higher education: Shared values and vocabularies of inequities or inequalities? Arts E419.

TUE 14 NOV
12noon Biochemistry seminar: Geoff Kireale (Portsmouth), Structure and mechanism of the genetic switch regulating restriction-modification systems. JMS LT.

2pm SEI seminar: Nat Copesy (Sussex), Foreign policy and public opinion in south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine. Arts C233.

4pm Chemistry seminar: Pramesh Kapoor (Delhi), Syntheses of metal oxide/mixed metal oxide and their application as novel adsorbents for air purification. Anurad 401.

4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Oran Lolgen (Lund), Materialities of motion and emotion: Catching a train, boarding a flight. Arts C233.


WED 15 NOV

1pm SPRU seminar: David Ockwell (Sussex), Policy ignoring evidence: A discursive interpretation of the policy process. Freeman Centre social space.

2pm Meeting Minds: Farooq Chaudhry (Alwan Khan Dance Co), Helen Gould (Creative Exchange), John Holden (DEMOS) & Peter Jenkinson (Channel 4), What value, the arts? GAC.

3pm Politics seminar: Dan Keith (Sussex), Political party organisational change among post-communist parties. Arts D109.

5pm Migration seminar: Simon Green (Birmingham), Modelling naturalisation policies in western europe. Arts C233.

FRI 17 NOV
2.15pm SPRU seminar: Hubert Schmidt (IDS), The organisational decomposition of the innovation process: What does it mean for the global distribution of innovation activities? 4pm South Asia seminar: Mallarika Sinha Roy (Oxford), Women's memory of the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal, India. Russell 35.

SAT 18 NOV
10am CCE lecture: Various speakers, Climate change, the environment and you. Chichester LT.

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Clare Potter, with contributions from Jacqui Bealing, Jessica Mangold 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 17 November, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 10 November. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.

Arts events

PERFORMANCE

Tue 7–Wed 8 Nov
8pm Stan Won’t
Dance – Revelations
Combining text, dance and aerial choreography, performers risk life, limb and soul to demonstrate the consequences of revealing our secret, darkest desires. Contains adult material. Gardner Arts Centre (GAC).

Mon 13–Tue 14 Nov
8pm Théâtre Sans Frontieres – Como Agua Para Chocolate
Like Water for Chocolate
A tale set in revolutionary Mexico in 1910 talk caytignt, masks and live music. In Spanish with a little English. GAC.

Sat 11 Nov
2pm The Black Sheep – Professor Bumm’s Story Machine
Mayhem, mirth and mess as two eggheads race to turn words and ideas from the audience into new stories. 7+ GAC.

EXHIBITIONS

Until Sun 26 Nov
Walker Evans, England, 1973
These photographs - presented as a projected sequence - are an intimate personal travelogue of the friends of American photographer Walker Evans and the places he visited on a trip to England, including Brighton Pavilion and the Palace Pier. GAC.

Small ads

E a.e.dumont@sussex.ac.uk.

Se busca: Coordinadora/nativa/ de actividades en español para niños/niñas 4-8 años. Para más información: E mer21@sussex.ac.uk o T Aleceia 270047.

Wanted: Female singer who can read music, for small group singing 16/9th English & Italian madrigals. Rehearsals in B'n'B Thurs + occasional low-key performance. T Simon Mathews on 0842599.


For sale: Red Peugeot 205 GTI 5 reg. MoT Sep 07, £520. T Natalie on ext. 9036 or 719409, E n.roggchild@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Compact computer desk in birch. T Claire on 077941 834916.

For sale: Portable Thomson 10" colour TV with Scart socket & remote. £30. E r.roberts@sussex.ac.uk or T Ext. 8235.

Wanted: Typist to type 200-page poetry manuscript. Spend up to 040 '07 deadline. T Arman 620394 or 0776@sussex.ac.uk.

Slimming club: Interested in attending a Rosemary Conley or other slimming club if I can get it organised? Joining & weekly fee. E I.davis@sussex.ac.uk.