

September Issue

Nexus

Connecting the University community



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

Summer Graduation 2009

Research funding boost

Sports scholars triumph



Dr Pamela Stephenson-Connolly

Top achievers in Science, Business and the Arts honoured

Robert Gordon University conferred seven Honorary Degrees at this year's Graduation Ceremonies, held for the first time at His Majesty's Theatre, on 15, 16 and 17 July.

Dr Pamela Stephenson-Connolly

Dr Pamela Stephenson-Connolly received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science in recognition of her achievement in the field of human sexuality, where she has made a marked, sustained and international contribution.

Dr Stephenson-Connolly initially pursued a successful career as an actress and comedienne, which led to a fateful meeting with her husband, Billy Connolly. Hollywood and a number of film roles beckoned, before a change of career saw her graduate with a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the California Graduate Institute (CGI) in 1996.

Dr Stephenson-Connolly has had a successful private practice in Beverly Hills for 16 years. Her main specialism is in the field of human sexuality, and she holds a post as Adjunct Professor at the CGI, where she teaches in advanced human sexuality and sex therapy. She is also Founder and President of the Los Angeles Sexuality Center.

Lord Alderdice

Lord Alderdice received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws in recognition of his achievements in psychiatry and the significant role he has played in the Irish peace process.

Lord Alderdice was appointed as Ireland's first Consultant Psychotherapist in 1988. He is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast, and holds an Honorary Chair in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of San Marcos, Lima.

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THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the September edition of the University's magazine, Nexus.

Despite the summer break, there has been no lull in the quality and quantity of achievements by our students, staff and alumni, not least of which were recognised during our Graduation Ceremonies in July. Although we can only feature a select few of the hundreds of graduates in our centre-page spread, their stories of hard work, perseverance and determination will no doubt strike a chord with all the members of staff who facilitated their success.

Please do get in touch with us if you have any tips for stories or features for the magazine. Email your ideas to newsdesk@rgu.ac.uk. You can also use this address to contact us if you would like copies of any photos included in the magazine.

The deadline for articles to be included in the October issue is **Wednesday 2 September**. Deadlines for the rest of the year are available on the magazine website.

Pauline Smith
Communications Officer

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RGU PEOPLE



Senior Vice-Principal appointed to national health regulator

Professor John Harper, Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University, has recently been re-appointed to the Health Professions Council (HPC) for a period of three years.

The HPC is an independent, UK-wide health regulator which maintains a register for 13 different health professions, including physiotherapists, radiographers and dieticians. It registers the individuals who meet the standards it sets for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health, with the primary function of protecting the public.

Initially appointed as a Universities Scotland nominee on the Council when this regulatory body was first formed in 2001, Professor Harper's tenure was then extended by the Privy Council. In June of this year, the composition of the Council was reconstituted and he was re-appointed through the Public Appointments Agency as one of only 10 UK lay members of the Council.

As part of the Council, Professor Harper will play a role in setting strategy and policy to ensure the HPC fulfils its statutory duties. He will, in addition, take up a position on the Education and Training committee, which focuses on the approval and monitoring of courses leading to registration and sets standards of education and training, and the Finance and Resources committee.

Professor Harper said, "I have enjoyed my time on the Council to date, and derived particular satisfaction from seeing how a UK-wide regulatory body goes about developing procedures across all four countries.

"I now look forward to contributing to the Council's future agenda, particularly the challenges of regulating an increasing range of healthcare practitioners, in order to protect the public as fully as possible."

Funding deal is a first for any UK modern university

Robert Gordon University has become the first individual modern university in the UK to secure the establishment of a dedicated private equity fund for investment in intellectual property.

The RGU Ventures Investment Fund LP (the RGU Fund) has been established by Frontier IP, a subsidiary of asset management group, Sigma Capital Group plc. Specialising in the commercialisation of university intellectual property, Frontier IP has committed £300,000 to the RGU Fund, with the University committing up to £800,000.

Frontier IP has a 25 year partnership with the University. In addition, the RGU Fund has secured partnership status with Scottish Enterprise's Scottish Co-investment Fund. This means that the Scottish Co-investment Fund may invest alongside the RGU Fund in individual university spin-out companies, matching, pound-for-pound, the investment made by

the Fund, and thereby potentially doubling the total funds available to £2.2m.

The RGU Fund will help to accelerate the development of commercial opportunities emerging from the University's research programmes, and the Fund has the first right to fund any spin-out company across any of its faculties.

The establishment of the Fund recognises the University's strong research base across three multi-disciplinary research institutes: the Institute of Health and Welfare; the Institute for Innovation, Design and Sustainability Research; and the Institute for Management, Governance and Society Research. It is expected that the Fund's portfolio will be broadly

spread across a range of technology and life sciences companies, reflecting the patentable research base within the University.

Professor Peter Robertson, Vice-Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor, commented, "After our significant success in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008, the establishment of the Fund reflects the growing recognition of the excellence of our research, as well as confidence in our ability to support economic development through innovation. In the current economic climate, the Fund, combined with our relationship with Frontier IP Ltd, provides a support mechanism for young technology companies, which is unique among modern universities."

Nursing researcher is 'Lost in Translation'

Pamela Kirkpatrick, a Lecturer within the School of Nursing and Midwifery, has had a joint paper published in *The Open Nursing Journal*, an online publication which can be accessed by anyone across the globe.

Working alongside Professor Edwin van Teijlingen from Bournemouth University, Pamela has been analysing the translation and interpretation issues faced by researchers and health professionals when trying to help people in some of the poorest areas of the world.

The joint paper, *Lost in Translation: Reflecting on a Model to Reduce Translation and Interpretation Bias*, focuses on public health research and enabling health professionals to get the right meaning from translations.

Pamela undertook public health research in Nepal as part of her MSc in Health Services and public health research. She worked

with a team of translators, in challenging terrain, during the political uprising of 2006. Just five days after Pamela and the team left Nepal, conflict broke out which eventually led to Nepal becoming a republic. As a result, Pamela was able to see first-hand the cross-cultural issues facing health professionals in such locations, combined with the lack of any real infrastructure to deal with health issues proactively or reactively.

Pamela highlighted that, "Dealing with issues around translation and interpretation in international research is vital, not just in relation to working abroad, but also when working with non-English speaking groups in the UK."

'Narratives of Addiction' presented at conference

Hector Williams, a Research Fellow in the School of Applied Social Studies, presented a paper entitled *Ontological Revelations in Narratives of Addiction* at the Third Annual Narrative Practitioner Conference held at Keele University from 22 - 24 June.

The paper presented illustrates the use of narrative in understanding ontological dynamics in processes leading to addiction and recovery from addiction. While the primary ground of discourse for the paper is theology, the implications are of relevance to a wide-range of practitioners engaged in social policy.

Through the narratives of individuals recovering from addiction, a critical and holistic understanding of spirituality as an integrative force is put forward. For practitioners in the field of addiction and health promotion, this provides a useful framework to critically appraise policies based on theories of rational choice.

Head of School has chapter published

Professor Joyce Lishman, Head of the School of Applied Social Studies, has had a chapter published in a new book, highlighting the varied ways health and social care professionals learn in practice settings.

Educating Professionals: Practice Learning in Health and Social Care by Mark Doel and Steven Shardlow describes how practice learning has recently changed in the UK, and the ways these changes have affected students' expectations of working with practice users and other professionals. Professor Lishman's chapter concentrates on the experiences of social workers.



Professor Stuart MacDonald

Head of Gray's School of Art retires

Professor Stuart MacDonald OBE has retired as Head of Gray's School of Art after three years at the helm.

A native of Dundee and a Gray's graduate himself, Professor MacDonald joined the University after a period working on the more commercial aspects of the creative industries, a sector in which he is an internationally respected figure. He spent eight years as Director of The Lighthouse in Glasgow, Scotland's National Centre for Architecture and Design.

Throughout his career he has played a leading role in several key networks, including the European Forum on Architecture, The Bureau of European Design Associations, the Art Nouveau and Gaudi networks, and the European Design Forum. He was awarded an OBE for services to design and architecture in 2006.

During his time at Gray's, Professor MacDonald significantly enhanced the School's national and international profile through connections to key networks and developments in the creative industries. In particular, he increased the design dimension of Gray's, supporting the development of the Centre for Design and Innovation (C4DI), and contributing to the School's recent research success. He also strengthened Gray's external links with local and national creative and cultural organisations. He was made a Design Champion by the City of Aberdeen, and has enjoyed leading roles on the boards of Peacock Visual Arts and the Scottish Sculpture Workshop.

Professor MacDonald said he was particularly proud of, "Making Gray's integral to the vision of the University; putting the creative/cultural industries centre stage; connecting the School to strategic developments, and broadening Gray's research base to encompass design and innovation."

Dean of the Faculty of Design and Technology, Professor John Watson, said that, "Both the School and the University have benefited significantly from Professor MacDonald's wealth of knowledge and experience, which he has used to great effect in revitalising Gray's and laying the foundations for its continuing success.

"He will be greatly missed by his colleagues both in the School and across the Faculty, where his leadership, management skills and commercial awareness have been invaluable. We all wish Professor MacDonald every happiness and success in his retirement."

Nurturing the next generation of nursing talent

For the second year running, senior secondary school pupils from across the North-east enjoyed a Nursing Summer School as the result of a collaboration between NHS Grampian and the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

A group of fifth and sixth year secondary school pupils from Speyside, Banff, Aberdeen and Huntly took part in the week-long programme aimed at helping interested school pupils make an informed decision about whether nursing is the right career choice for them.

With workshops and placements at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Woodend Hospital, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, Royal Cornhill Hospital and the University's own state-of-the-art Clinical Skills Centre, the pupils had the opportunity to learn and practise core nursing skills, learn more about the student experience, observe nursing work within real clinical settings and interact with the nurses and patients of NHS Grampian.

In a new addition to the programme this year, a number of NHS Grampian staff members, who had been awarded Mentor of the Year Awards for supporting students during placements, gave a presentation on what nursing provision is all about.

The week culminated with the pupils undertaking some simulated nursing practice with members of the public who acted as volunteer patients.

Tackling Timetabling

In recognition of the fact that timetabling has a major impact on students, colleagues and the usage of our estate, the University has been working on a project which seeks to deliver more stable, student-friendly timetables earlier, makes better use of the space we have available on campus, and ensures staff have protected time for research and other scholarly activity.

In the latest development to come out of this project, the University's Academic Council has endorsed a series of policies on timetabling matters. Coming into immediate effect, the policies have been designed to address some of the key timetabling issues, which include:

- Late changes to timetables;
- Poor room utilisation;
- Protection of Wednesday afternoons.

The policies set out priorities, principles and responsibilities for students and staff in a range of timetabling areas, from general procedures covering deadlines and teaching patterns, through to teaching times, timetable changes and student engagement in sport.

Staff and students are asked to make themselves familiar with the policies, which have been published on the timetabling website at:

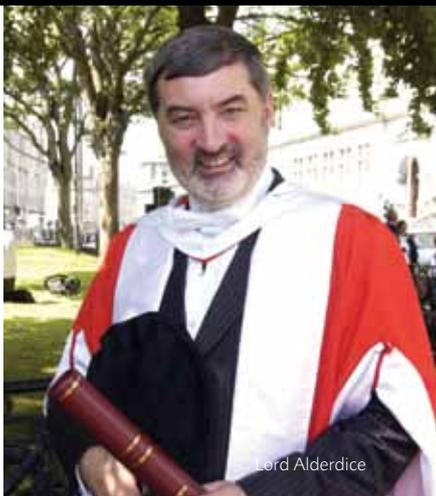
www.rgu.ac.uk/timetabling/policies.

For questions or clarification on any aspect of the policies, please contact the Timetabling Manager or a member of the Timetabling team at: timetabling@rgu.ac.uk.



Debbie Banks, Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, explained, "NHS Grampian and RGU want to provide school pupils with experiences that will inform their decisions about their future careers. The Nursing Summer School is an excellent way of investing in local young people who have the potential to become the health professionals of the future."

TOP ACHIEVERS IN SCIENCE, BUSINESS AND THE ARTS HONOURED



Lord Alderdice

Continued from page 1

Lord Alderdice led the Alliance Party delegations at the various Inter-Party and Inter-Governmental talks on the future of Northern Ireland, and in 1996 was elected to the new Northern Ireland Forum, leading the Alliance delegation there and in the multi-party talks chaired by Senator George Mitchell.

Lord Alderdice was raised to the peerage as Baron Alderdice of Knock in 1996, and is one of the youngest ever Life Peers. He played a significant role in the Irish Peace Process, being one of the key negotiators of the Belfast Agreement signed on Good Friday 1998.



James Sugden

James Sugden, of Johnstons of Elgin, received an Honorary Degree of Business Administration on Thursday 16 July for his role and influence in the Scottish textiles industry.

James recently stood down as Group Managing Director of Johnstons of Elgin, one of Scotland's leading luxury brands, famed for its production and design of fine cashmere and woollens.

During his time as Managing Director, he presided over a period of unparalleled growth for the company with its turnover rising from £6 million per annum to £39 million. The company has twice received the Queen's Award for Export. He has also successfully overcome serious challenges including the prevailing market downturn and the catastrophic flooding which devastated the mill in 1997.

Jack Webster, who describes himself as a 'wee boy from Maud with a real passion for life' received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters on Thursday 16 July for his contribution to journalism and Scottish culture.

Local journalist, author and film writer, Jack's career spans the gamut from the Turriff Advertiser, to the Press and Journal and the Daily Express. As a features writer with the latter newspaper, Jack came into contact with some of the legends of the twentieth century and conducted interviews with many stars, including Charlie Chaplin and Elizabeth Taylor.

Jack has also written seventeen books, from autobiographical tales of the North-east to biographies of the rich and famous, as well as a definitive history of Aberdeen Football Club, and a poignant tribute to Lewis Grassic Gibbon's life for the stage.



Jack Webster

Internationally-renowned designer **Ben de Lisi** received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts on Friday 17 July.

Ben de Lisi is a designer celebrated across the globe for his understated approach to style and glamour, from red carpet events to interior design, spanning a career of nearly 30 years during which he has built a brand which is internationally recognised.

In 1994 and 1995 he was presented with the coveted British Glamour Designer of the Year award. He continues to work on numerous TV projects such as Project Catwalk, as well as designing childrenswear, fashion accessories and the 'home at Debenhams' brand.



Ben de Lisi



Stuart Johnstone

Gray's School of Art's own Stuart Johnstone crossed the stage along with many of his students to receive an Honorary Degree of Master of the University on Friday 17 July.

Stuart's award was for his remarkable 40 year career and contribution to both the University and Gray's School of Art.

Stuart was Gray's first photographic technician and in that and his current post as Applications Supervisor in Photography, he has helped transform photography within the School into the creative industry it is today.

His contribution to the field of photography extends beyond the University - he has photographed the Queen and Royal Family, been involved in numerous coffee table publications and worked on his own creative photography, which he has shown widely in exhibitions.

In 1997 he was the first recipient of a John Gray award for exceptional service to the University.



Jamie Oag

RGU alumnus, Jamie Oag, received an Honorary Degree of Master of the University on Friday 17 July.

In 1999 Jamie established his own company, Optima Solutions, which develops and installs offshore rig cooling and fire safety systems. The company went from strength to strength, and in February 2008, Jamie sold 55% of Optima to Northern Industries for an eight figure sum. By this time Optima had grown to over 50 employees from the one person who established it in 1999. Today Optima has 70 employees and Jamie is still in a significant leadership role.

The professional degree

Head of School joins student ranks to graduate



Dr David McClean, Head of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, joined the student ranks to graduate with a PhD on Wednesday 15 July.

This marked the fifth time that Dr McClean has graduated from the University, having also completed undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Architecture, an MBA and a teaching qualification. His doctoral study entitled, 'Embedding Learner Independence in Architecture Education: Reconsidering Design Studio Pedagogy', grew from his receipt of a John Gray Award.

It's a family affair for Social Work graduate



Antonia Panetta graduated on 15 July with a BA (Hons) in Social Work, watched on stage by her aunt and Godmother Alison McLennan, who is also Senior Lecturer at the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Antonia said, "I couldn't have graduated without my Auntie Alison as she provided me with a hot meal once a week and supported me at times of stress! She was the one who encouraged me to go to Robert Gordon University in the first place, a decision that I've never regretted!"

Doctorate success for mum of two

Rita Enwere combined her research with organising two weddings and having two children, before graduating from the school of Pharmacy and Life Sciences with a PhD in Environmental Sciences.

She said, "Thanks to the support, understanding and encouragement I received from the Research Degrees office, the Marine Laboratory, my sponsors Petroleum Technology Development Fund Nigeria, and family and friends, I was able to progress in my studies, and I feel extremely proud to have met my target."



Rita had her daughter Jessica during the course of her research, and gave birth to her second child, a baby boy, Ikenna, on 30 June.

First Radiography Assistants graduate



June Grant was one of the first people to graduate with a Cert HE Radiographic Studies on Wednesday 15 July.

The new course provides a development route for existing NHS employees. It not only produces Assistant Practitioners who make a valuable contribution to patients, but also provides excellent career opportunities for the individual students.

Eight students from across Scotland joined the course in January 2007, including June, who had been working as an Assistant Technician at Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin for 14 years.

A Scotsman in New York

An exciting work placement in New York was another step towards achieving a First Class Honours Degree in Management with Marketing for Jordan Hewitt.



Jordan carried out his year-long paid work placement at VisitBritain, the National Tourist Board for Britain, based on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. He spent time in Business Development in the Trade, Business Tourism and Consumer Marketing teams in VisitBritain Americas.

Jordan has been able to use his experience to secure a Trainee Sales Executive position at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre.

First Class success for Dean's daughter

Madeleine Marcella graduated with a First Class Honours degree in Corporate Communication, watched proudly from across the stage by her mum, Dean of Aberdeen Business School, Professor Rita Marcella.

Madeleine declared that she had thoroughly enjoyed her time at the University, one of the highlights being the student fashion show she was involved in last year, which raised over £6000 for CLAN. "It was great fun and a really valuable learning experience for us all. I also got the chance to carry out a brilliant placement as a Communications Consultant at Fifth Business, a position that related really well to my course," she said.

Madeleine has been accepted to the Human Resources Management Masters course and aims to study part-time whilst working full-time.



Graduation success for Alison



Alison Lawman, a member of staff at Aberdeen Business School, has qualified with a Graduate Certificate in Project Management. Although she has a background in financial services, Alison opted for a change of direction, and has been working as Personal Assistant to Professor Rita Marcella.

Alison said, "The opportunity to study at the University has allowed me to pursue my interest in project management. The course teaches skills that are applicable across a range of industries, which makes it an extremely versatile qualification."

Alison is about to embark on her next project – a Masters degree.

Graduate secures dream job in Aberdeen



Graduating with a Master of Public Administration (MPA) enabled Alun Williams to land his dream job with Aberdeen City Council, as part of the Major Projects Team of the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Service.

Speaking about the MPA, Alun said, "It's a magnificent programme of study. The fact that it was available by distance learning made it a feasible commitment for me living in the Central Belt, and allowed me to fit in my study commitments while holding down a full-time job."

"What was also good was the vibrancy of the MPA online community. There were people on my course from different authorities and there was a great international flavour too."

Gray's graduate tackles isolation among the elderly

Tracy Gray leaves the University with not only a First Class Honours degree in Visual Communication, but also with this year's Mary Davidson Smith Award.

Tracy exhibited her 'Inevitable Alphabet', which consists of large posters with hand-drawn imagery and photography of objects typically associated with the elderly, as part of Gray's Degree Show 2009, sponsored by BP, last month. Tracy's aim is to break through stereotypical ideas of old age in order to encourage younger people to mix with older people.

She hopes to join The Royal College of Art next year to complete a postgraduate qualification in Communication Design.



Ewan's Shipyard project proposes regeneration

Ewan Ogilvie, who graduated on Friday 17 July with a Masters in Architecture, developed a Masterplan to regenerate Buckie Shipyard during his final year project.

As he explains, "Once the home to a thriving shipbuilding company, the Shipyard is now quite run-down. My proposal aims to create a new use for the Shipyard and surrounding buildings with the creation of low-cost artist studios and workshop spaces."

Ewan is currently working for Ritchie Dagen + Allan Chartered Architects in Dundee.



2+2 success for Women in IT delegate

Moira Donald graduated on Friday 17 July with a BSc (Hons) Computer Network Management Design, after successfully completing Aberdeen College's Women in IT initiative.

Moira worked as a Lab Technician at the University of Aberdeen for 30 years, before taking voluntary redundancy and returning to education. She took advantage of Aberdeen College's Women in IT initiative, which was set up through a grant from the European Social Fund (ESF) to encourage women into the world of IT – an area where women are still under represented.

Moira is concentrating on renovating her house before looking for employment in the IT industry.

Second Robert Gordon University degree for Corrie



Corrie Ewart knew the drill when he graduated on Friday 17 July with an MSc Oil and Gas Engineering, as it was the second time he had graduated from the same institution with Distinction.

The first time Corrie graduated from Robert Gordon University was in 1993, when he completed a degree in Quantity Surveying at RGIT, as it was then known. After working as a Surveyor for several years, Corrie decided to embark on a change of career, leaving surveying in 1998 to join the growing area of subsea engineering in the oil and gas industry.

Corrie juggled full-time work with BP and a young family to complete his Degree. He cites his family and his colleagues at BP as being instrumental in his success. He has now set his sights on becoming a Chartered Engineer.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE



Top communication and media students pick up industry prizes

Students within the Department of Communication and Media were awarded industry prizes in recognition of their success on Wednesday 15 July. Professor Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School, presented the prizes to the top students from undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Communication with PR, Media Studies and Publishing.



Most of the winners and sponsors

Aberdeen College, winning the Grampian PR Group prize for the top PR student at the College, before entering the third year of the Corporate Communication degree at RGU. Martin went on to graduate with a first class honours degree on 16 July.

Morven Mackenzie, Co-convenor of Grampian PR Group and Director of Mackenzie PR, said, "The Grampian region boasts a wealth of PR talent and experience, and as a group we are delighted to support new graduates coming into the profession, and recognise the hard work which goes into forging a career in this competitive industry. We wish the students well for their future careers."

Professor Marcella praised the students' success saying, "Creativity, academic rigour and the highest standards of professional competency are the attributes shared by these talented young students. The awards also demonstrate the high regard in which our students are held by the communication and media industries. I wish them all continued success with their future study and careers."

Martin Wright won the Grampian PR Group prize for the top PR student at Robert Gordon University. He completed an HND in Communication with Media at

The hallmark of success

A number of this year's top performing graduates were the first cohort to benefit from the Achievement Awards instituted by Gray's alumnus and successful local jeweller, Sandy Menzies.

The Awards recognise one student from each of the University's ten schools, each of whom has excelled academically or overcome adversity to graduate. Each recipient will be given a piece of Sandy Menzies Graduation Jewellery and a certificate for their efforts.

The full list of Sandy Menzies Achievement Awards recipients is as follows: Susan Adams, Gemma McMasters, Fiona Bell, Elizabeth Deschamp, Ed Slater, Mark Cunningham, Donna Wood, Alan Sedge and Jennifer Murray.

Sandy Menzies remarked, "We're delighted to recognise the achievements and hard work of the students. We hope the presentation of the new Graduation Jewellery is a fitting tribute to what has been a challenging, but rewarding period in their life."

Sandy Menzies also recently launched the University's Graduation Jewellery collection, which takes its inspiration from the famous RGU shield of arms and the landmark Aberdeen Business School, offering graduates a lasting memory of their success. Orders can be made online at www.sandymenzies.co.uk or in store at Sandy Menzies.

Graduation for first students of Shell Corporate Programme

Friday 17 July was graduation day for five students comprising the inaugural cohort of a unique collaboration between Shell International Exploration and Production and Robert Gordon University. The Shell Corporate Programme combines elements from Shell's internal staff development programme and a Masters Project to form the MSc degree.

Chris Lorenz graduated with MSc Completion and Well Intervention Engineering (with Distinction), while William Watson, Kent Foster, Hamoud Alriyami and Omolara Okubanjo graduated with MSc Well Design and Engineering.

The programme allows students to consider a Masters Project which relates directly to

their personal career development, while taking into account the wider scope of company requirements. The courses, which were validated in November 2006, combine both academic and professional disciplines, allowing students to develop and apply theoretical concepts to real case-studies within the company.



Laurie Power, Senior Lecturer, graduates Omolara Okubanjo and William Watson, and Angela Smith, Learning and Development Leader, Shell

BJ Services employees graduate

Eight employees from the Process and Pipeline Services group of BJ Services in Aberdeen were awarded a Graduate Certificate in Project Management at this year's Graduation Ceremonies.

These graduates were the first to complete the company's new Project Management training programme, developed by Univation and Aberdeen Business School in conjunction with BJ Services.

The programme was launched in February 2008, and the candidates completed four 12-week modules, through a combination of classroom and online learning.

"We're very pleased with the feedback from our first class of graduates," said Les Graves, BJ Services, Process and Pipeline Services Product Line Manager. "Not only did they learn new techniques that improve the way they manage projects, but they also cultivated stronger working relationships across BJ Services' global network."

Looking ahead, it is expected that BJ Services will be offering the Project Management course to a new group of employees in the near future.



Julia with her certificate.

A Vision of the Future

A member of staff from the International Office recently attended a national event showcasing the best examples of creativity and innovation across the whole of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Julia Kennedy, European and Overseas Exchanges Co-ordinator, was involved in showcasing the University's suite of Erasmus modules on Campus:Moodle at 'A Vision of the Future'. Held in Birmingham ICC on 14 July, the event was organised by the British Council and Ecotec, to celebrate the European Commission's European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

Robert Gordon University was one of only two institutions selected to exhibit at this event, following Julia's successful submission. Over 350 delegates from across the public sector were in attendance, and experienced a mixture of exhibitions, keynote speakers and performances.

Julia was also awarded a certificate which states that the university is recognised as an exemplar of creativity and innovation under the Erasmus programme. She said, "I believe our Erasmus modules are both creative and innovative, and this was a great opportunity to showcase the work we have undertaken to publicise the Erasmus Programme."

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

for North-east's first Film Festival

As part of Aberdeen City and Shire's first ever Film Festival, two members of staff from Gray's School of Art dedicated part of their summer to co-ordinating events at the Festival's official networking hub.

Launching on 24 July, the inaugural City and Shire Film Festival included a host of film-related events running over nine days. Fraser Denholm, Technical Services Officer, and Andy Kennedy, a lecturer within the Photographic and Electronic Media Department at Gray's, worked in collaboration with cafe-bar Five, which hosted 'The Hub' events.

The Festival showcased feature films which have either been produced by local directors, or have been made locally.

As one of the main festival venues, 'The Hub' hosted a variety of workshops, talks, screenings, visual art presentations, alongside DJ/VJ performances and late night music sessions.

Fraser himself ran a free Young Filmmakers' session, during which a panel discussed a number of local filmmakers from Aberdeen, both Gray's School of Art graduates and beyond.



Fraser explained, "The film festival was a really exciting opportunity for Aberdeen, and it is great that Gray's was involved. It gave our students the chance to have their films seen by industry professionals, and created a whole host of new and exciting opportunities for them."

ACTR Director comments on Panorama investigation into UK trauma industry

Professor David Alexander, Director of the Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research, and Professor of Mental Health in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, recently featured on the Panorama documentary, 'The Trauma Industry'.

Aired on 27 July and presented by BBC war correspondent, Allan Little, the programme investigated the growing prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Britain, and the lucrative role this plays in the country's £7 billion a year personal accident industry.

Some psychiatrists now believe that the disorder is diagnosed far too liberally, especially when it comes to cases involving compensation.

Professor Alexander, a world-leading expert in the field, commented, "It's a money spinner; let's be blunt about it. If you've got, at the end of the road, the prospect of £100,000 by continuing to have headaches, flashbacks and insomnia - you can see why people may not find it easy to relinquish those symptoms."

Swine flu update

The University has updated its web page on swine flu to include frequently asked questions for both staff and students. This web page will continue to be updated as appropriate and should be the first point of reference for staff and students who have any concerns about swine flu.

This can be accessed at www.rgu.ac.uk/swineflu.

A HIVE OF INDUSTRY



Margaret and Jennifer display their award-winning creations.

Future is set in stone and precious metals for award-winning Gray's students

Two 3D Design students from Gray's School of Art have been recognised for their talents by experts in their respective fields, securing placement opportunities as a result.

Margaret Gray, who specialises in ceramics, has had her work recognised by established ceramics company, Highland Stoneware. In addition to receiving the Highland Stoneware Prize and being offered a two-week placement at the company's workshop in Lochinver, Margaret will also benefit from a travel bursary. The University's Caroline Leiper Travel Bursary, worth £500, will enable Margaret to gain ceramic print experience at a workshop at the International Ceramic Research Centre in Guldageraard, Denmark, in October.

The live project with Highland Stoneware is run as a collaboration with Gray's,

and aims to inject new ideas into the company while simultaneously giving the students the experience of working to a real life brief.

Classmates Laura McLean and Rachael Murray were also commended by Highland Stoneware, and the duo have been offered a week's placement opportunity to create a permanent mosaic piece to enhance the exterior of Highland Stoneware's purpose built workshop.

Fellow 3D Design student Jennifer Paterson, whose specialism is jewellery, has also secured a placement following her efforts on a live project this year. Tasked with coming up with some unique designs for Sandy Menzies Jewellery, based at The Academy Shopping Centre in Aberdeen, Jennifer created a cast silver pendant inspired by deer skulls and the 'uncanny'.

Building strong foundations for the next generation of Scottish architects

Kraft Architecture, a small creative studio based in Glasgow, is working alongside the University to create an outreach programme for schools in the North-east of Scotland.



The thinking behind the initiative is that pupils from across the region can be supported by professionals in learning about solutions for the built environment, and be encouraged to take a hand in shaping the future landscape of their nation.

A full programme of future workshops will be announced shortly but most recently, Bruce Newlands, Director and founder of Kraft Architecture, organised a design workshop for senior pupils from Buckie Community High School. They were given time to design canopy structures before presenting some of their work.

Bruce explained, "The idea is to expose more young people to concepts of spatial awareness, structure, surface, materiality and visualisation techniques. The workshops we have run so far are very much producing a prototype that we can build on. We believe that collaboration enhances our work, and our strong affiliations with a number of universities help us to create an integrated design process."

Funding boost for city transport study

A partnership project to assess ways of lessening the environmental impact of transport in Aberdeen city centre is set to get underway after clearing a key funding hurdle.

The joint initiative – featuring Aberdeen City Council, the regional transport partnership Nestrans and Robert Gordon University – has been approved for European financial support.

The work will investigate the benefits of a formally designated Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for Aberdeen city centre to help address air quality issues in the area. Within a geographically-defined LEZ, access by specific polluting vehicles is restricted or deterred, with potentially only low or zero emissions vehicles allowed entry.

The University's Professors Richard Laing and David Gray will be working to engender public engagement in the project, and liaising with European partners to develop models for improving levels of carbon emissions in the area. This work builds on previous studies by the University which have dealt with both transport strategy and public participation in urban design.

Professor Laing said, "Robert Gordon University is committed to working with partners in industry and local government, and two of our newly-established research institutes will be central to the project. It is vitally important that we address environmental issues now as the need to reduce carbon emissions in both transport and urban environments is of central importance to sustainability across the whole of Europe."

The study will also examine opportunities for the creation of a city car club – a 'pay-as-you-go' car rental membership scheme – and possible bicycle rental points.

The European Union's Interreg IV programme will match-fund an estimated joint contribution of £175,000 over three years by Nestrans and the City Council to fund the Aberdeen project.

It will be part of a wider Euro initiative entitled 'Carbon efficient access in the North Sea Area' (CARE North), a multinational scheme looking at ways of reducing the impact of pollution and carbon emissions from transport in a number of regions around the North Sea. It is hoped the work will get under way later this year. For more information, visit: www.care-north.eu.

ABS Professor engages with industry and academia

Justin Greenwood, Professor of European Public Policy at Aberdeen Business School, was recently invited to join the judging panel for the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Trade Association Forum UK Best Practice Awards.

There are 17 different categories of awards, including the coveted 'Trade Association of the Year', won by the British Insurance Brokers' Association. The prizes were announced at a ceremony on 29 July at the Intercontinental Hotel, Park Lane, London.

The purpose of the Awards is to foster the search for excellence, recognise and reward achievement, and encourage the communication and adoption of best practice.

For a full list of the prize-winners visit: www.taforum.org/showarticle.pl?id=3147;n=4533.

Chair of ESRC Panel

Professor Greenwood has also been appointed Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Advanced Quantitative Methods Assessment Panel for 2009. There are eight members appointed to the 2009 Panel from universities across the UK. Professor Greenwood has served on the Panel since it was established in 2006.

The panel assesses applications under the ESRC Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) Enhanced Stipend Scheme, designed to support the development of advanced quantitative methods skills during PhD research.

Professor Greenwood undertook a detailed assessment of the scheme for ESRC's Training and Development Board in 2008, which resulted in a number of modifications to it.

Engaging with practice

Professor Greenwood has recently completed a review of the EU framework for trade associations for the 'Voice of British Business' report, commissioned by the UK Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

Since its formation in 1997, the Trade Association Forum has been encouraging the development and sharing of best practice among UK trade associations, and promoting the role of effective associations to government, industry and the wider public.

Indeed the University's Department of Public Policy's work in engaging with practice was recognised in this year's results from the UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise, where the Politics and International Studies assessment panel awarded it a 100% 'international excellence' rating in the 'esteem' section, one of the best results of its kind in Scotland.

Library staff first to deliver corporate training overseas



Anne Nichol and Victoria Farmer, Library Faculty Liaison Advisers for Aberdeen Business School and the Faculty of Design and Technology respectively, visited Algeria in March to deliver hands-on library access training to corporate clients Sonatrach.

Many of the 188 RGU students at the Algerian Institute of Petroleum, Sonatrach's training organisation, had been experiencing difficulties accessing and using the library resources. A visit by the Library was arranged not only to assess the problems but to enhance the learning experience of the students. A series of workshops was scheduled to cover searching and using the library catalogue and e-books, searching databases and referencing.

Both Anne and Victoria agreed that the ability to offer first-hand help and advice was a positive opportunity to work more closely with the client, and a chance to really understand the problems and issues that pure email contact can mask.

Unfortunately the trip was not a complete success due to circumstances completely beyond Anne and Victoria's control! Damage to the subsea fibre optic cable carrying the internet between Algeria and Italy meant that there was a countrywide access problem that disrupted the planned classes.

Despite this, they both enjoyed the experience, with Anne saying, "The students were really bright, friendly and very eager for our help. Both the organisation of the visit and security were excellent and the staff at Force, the Univation representatives in Algeria, looked after us really well."

Homecoming role for ABS students

Two students from Aberdeen Business School have beaten off stiff competition from across Scotland to take up a prestigious work placement with VisitScotland.

Joanna Molek, a BA (Hons) International Tourism Management student, and Leanne Donaldson, who is studying BA (Hons) Management with Marketing, managed to secure two of only three available positions. They recently embarked on a 48 week placement, where they will both be working within the UK and Ireland Marketing department.

After initially applying, the girls were invited down to Edinburgh for an interview at Visit Scotland HQ. They were also required to complete a short written exercise as part of the recruitment process.

Leanne said, "I expect the placement year to be busy as well as extremely rewarding, and I am looking forward to putting theory into practice. With lots of events and marketing taking place around Homecoming 2009, it is an important year for VisitScotland, and one I am looking forward to playing a part in."

Placement Manager at ABS, James Robertson, added, "It is fantastic that two students from ABS have been chosen from students across Scotland for these placement opportunities. I am confident that both Joanna and Leanne will embrace the opportunities they have been given and learn a great deal from their placement with VisitScotland."

Sports scholars riding high on track and field

National call-up for equestrians

Two student horse-riding champions represented their country during July at the International University Equestrian Federation's Student Riders Nations Cup in Lyon, France. They were two of just three individuals who were selected for the GB team from across the UK.



Eilidh Middleton

Eilidh Middleton, a three-day-eventer, joined seasoned competitor Rebecca Stephen as part of the national squad for the first time, after claiming the individual show-jumping title at the British universities competition in April. The squad came second overall, while Eilidh also came second on an individual basis.



Rebecca Stephen

Both members of RGU's student horse-riding club, Eilidh and Rebecca have already enjoyed joint success this year after their four-strong team won the regional heat of the BUCS Equestrian Championship, and went on to be placed second in the team section of the national finals.

About to embark on her third year of a degree in Sports and Exercise Science, Rebecca has been supported by Technip as part of the Scholarship Programme for two years running. Since joining the programme, the former Ellon Academy pupil has enjoyed some of her most successful achievements to date.

Physiotherapy student hammers his way to the top

A rising athletic star, who is also being supported by Technip under the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme while studying for a Masters degree in Physiotherapy, is taking his Celtic sporting heritage to a new level.

Padraig White, whose main event as a track and field competitor is the hammer throw, has been selected to represent Ireland in the European Cup for the fourth year running as the number one ranked Irish hammer thrower.

So far this year he has claimed the Scottish Universities title in the hammer throw and is the current Irish Senior Champion.

The former Belvedere College student, who holds the Irish senior schools record, the Irish U20s record and the Irish universities record, climbed the ranks as a talented athlete while studying Pharmacology at University College Dublin.

All three athletes are currently sponsored by Technip under the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme at Robert Gordon University, and benefit from a range of tailor-made programmes designed to suit their individual needs, including strength and conditioning sessions, financial assistance and lifestyle management.

Katrine Sharp, HR Director at Technip, said, "These scholarships aim to enhance the athletes' chances of success in their respective sports, which will have direct benefits for the students themselves, the region, and ultimately, the nation.

"With the focus on the 2010 Commonwealth Games and 2012 Olympics, many of the future British Team are likely to be entering university over the coming years and will be greatly aided by initiatives of this kind. We are avid supporters of nurturing future talent and are extremely pleased to once again have the opportunity to support both sporting and academic excellence."

Further information on the scholarships, including how to apply, is available from: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/rgusport>.



Padraig White

EVENTS DIARY 2009

For further information on all events, visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/news/eventsdiary

OCTOBER

6	Professorial Lecture - Professor Paul Spicker
7	Open Day
21	Careers Fair

NOVEMBER

7	Open Day
12	Leadership Lecture - Lord David Trimble

DECEMBER

3-4	Winter Graduation Ceremonies at the Music Hall
16	Christmas Carol Service

