A word from the Principal

One of the really important experiences for any student is being in the middle of a diverse, international, multicultural community.

University learning should not consist solely of a formal curriculum, but should also be a journey of discovery that will be enlightened by the learner meeting and sharing insights with others from many parts of the world. A student should encounter people from a variety of countries both as lecturers and as fellow-students. Every higher education institution should be at least a little international in nature.

RGU should be no exception to this, and of course we are privileged every year to welcome new participants in this journey of discovery from many different parts of the world. That is how it should be. Indeed, not just our university but our country benefits from this, and we should be willing to be vocal in support of our important international dimension. We are not comfortable with the idea of a mono-cultural institution.

It is therefore important that all of us should support and promote the international dimension of RGU, and should work to keep it a reality. This means also that we should be imaginative in identifying and pursuing opportunities for international student recruitment, bearing in mind of course that this also significantly supports and enhances the university’s financial performance.

We will be looking at effective ways of maintaining and building upon our international work in the course of this year. I hope that many colleagues will want to be part of this.
RGU has appointed Professor Chrisina Jayne as Head of the School of Computing Science and Digital Media.

Prof. Jayne joins RGU from Coventry University where she headed up the Computing Department and brings with her more than 24 years’ experience in academia teaching, designing and leading new programmes in the areas of Computing, Information Systems and Mathematics.

A senior fellow of the Higher Education Academy and Chartered IT Professional Fellow of the British Computer Society, Prof. Jayne is also co-chair of the International Neural Network Society’s Special Interest Group on Engineering Applications of Neural Networks.

She was awarded a UK National Teaching Fellowship award in 2009 in recognition of excellence in learning and teaching, including innovation and creativity in leading the design and development of computing programmes; integration of academic study with the latest technological developments; and application of consultancy experience within the industry to teaching.

Prof. Jayne said: “I am very happy to join RGU and have such a fantastic opportunity to work in a high quality academic environment.

“My research interests are in line with the university initiative to pursue Smart Data research and I particularly like the vibrant and friendly atmosphere in the School of Computing Science and Digital Media.”

As well as Coventry University, Prof. Jayne has previously worked in a number of universities in London including University of East London (UEL), London Metropolitan University, Kingston University, London South Bank University, and University College London.

She has an MSc in Computing Science from Birkbeck College, an MSc in Mathematics and Informatics and a PhD in Applied Mathematics, both from Sofia University, Bulgaria, as well as a Postgraduate Certificate of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Prof. Jayne added: “My priorities for the School going forward are to provide a dynamic, inspirational and inclusive academic environment for staff and students to learn, research, innovate, collaborate and flourish.

“I want to continue to maintain the high quality standards that are in place and build a global reputation in teaching and research.”
RGU and the Government of Mexico have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under which they will collaborate in areas of strategic significance in oil and gas.

The agreement, which was announced at Offshore Europe, will see the Secretariat of Energy in Mexico (SENER) and the university share experience in relation to energy policy and educational developments in support of the oil and gas industry in Mexico and the UK.

The MoU follows a state visit to Aberdeen by Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto in March 2015, during which he visited RGU and was provided with an insight into knowledge transfer and education for the energy sector in the UK.

The Director of RGU’s Oil and Gas Institute, Professor Paul de Leeuw, led a reciprocal visit to Mexico earlier this month where he was invited to deliver the keynote speech at the Sustainable Energy Fund Conference entitled ‘Innovation and new business opportunities in the oil and gas sector’. In his presentation he shared his insights on the opportunities arising from the deregulation of the energy market in the country.

During the visit, Professor de Leeuw met with a wide range of government organisations, research institutes and industry representatives to discuss experiences from the industry in North West Europe and emerging opportunities.

Commenting on the MoU, Mexico’s Deputy Secretary of Planning and Energy Transition, Leonardo Beltrán, said: “We are delighted to announce the signing of this agreement with RGU. The university has a well-established reputation in oil and gas education and training and we look forward to collaborating in the future.

“Mexico and the UK are key players in the world’s energy industry and we are sure the MoU will prove to be a useful link for both parties to build on.”

Professor de Leeuw said: “I am delighted that RGU and the Mexican Government signed this MoU, which will see us work closely together and share experiences in the future. It is a transformational time for the industry in Mexico and we are pleased to be building on the links, which were established during President Peña Nieto’s visit earlier in the year.”

Principal of RGU, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, added: “International links are very important for universities and so I am very pleased that RGU will be able to contribute to the discussions around the deregulation of the energy market in Mexico and help support the training of the next generation of oil and gas workers.”

The MoU will see the Secretariat of Energy in Mexico and RGU sharing knowledge and experience through meetings and conferences and seeking opportunities to support the training of Mexican personnel for the oil and gas industry.

The MoU will also see RGU included on the list of preferred universities for Mexican scholarships due to its oil and gas expertise.
RGU inspires the next generation at Offshore Europe

RGU took to the exhibition floor at Offshore Europe earlier this month to help inspire the next generation of energy industry professionals.

RGU joined the many exhibitors and delegates from around the world who gathered in Aberdeen to attend the four-day oil and gas conference and exhibition themed ‘Inspiring The Next Generation’.

Not only did the university have a very active stand as part of the Aberdeen City and Shire Pavilion, but it also took part in and hosted a variety of events during the week, as well as making a major announcement.

A number of RGU’s academic experts took part in panel sessions and presentations including Professor Paul de Leeuw, Director of RGU’s Oil and Gas Institute, who delivered a keynote session entitled ‘The Challenge of our Generation’.

Gray’s School of Art 3D design Course Leader Daniel Sutherland brought 3D printing alive for school pupils as he hosted a series of sessions at RGU’s stand which gave an insight into the impact that 3D printing could have on the oil and gas industry.

RGU’s team of remote healthcare experts stimulated new thinking in the field by leading a discussion forum entitled ‘New Thinking on Remote Healthcare: Developing Skills Beyond Immediate Trauma Care’ which highlighted the needs of employers and healthcare practitioners.

The university developed a guide to the energy industry in a nutshell for anyone who is interested in starting a career in oil and gas. The handy Z-card guide, which proved to be very popular, breaks down the various sectors of the oil and gas industry for pupils, from exploration and production to health and safety.

RGU’s Marketing Team also developed a Buzzfeed quiz on some of the more unusual terms found in the sector from pigging to Christmas trees which helped to inspire the next generation in a fun and informative way.

RGU’s Principal, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, says: “RGU is celebrating another successful year at Offshore Europe which is a key industry event for the university to attend.

“This year’s theme was very fitting for RGU which has a well-established reputation in oil and gas education. Our effective involvement reiterates RGU’s position as a leading university closely aligned with the industry.”
HRH The Duke of York visited RGU’s new campus facilities this September to discuss the steps that the university is taking to develop entrepreneurship skills amongst its students.

Colleagues from Aberdeen Business School described various initiatives that the university is involved in. This included two projects funded by the Scottish Funding Council: SCOTGRAD, which places graduates into SMEs both to improve business performance as well as to enhance graduate employability; and Talent Exchange, which is designed to ensure that the university is maximising opportunities for small businesses to work with students, either individually or in groups, on projects designed to meet the needs of the business.

His Royal Highness also visited RGU’s DART facility, a joint venture with KCA DEUTAG Limited.

Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, Principal of the university, said: “We are delighted that His Royal Highness was able to visit RGU. He was particularly interested to hear about our ambitious plans to develop our entrepreneurial offering to students.

“We were also very pleased to show His Royal Highness our DART simulator. As the only university in the world with such a facility RGU is leading the way in supporting the industry in developing drilling competency, integrating human factors and behavioural observation scenarios.”
Two new student presidents head up RGU’s Students Union

Edward Pollock has been elected as Student President for Communication and Democracy, while GianPiero Franchi has been appointed as Student President for Sport and Physical Activity.

Originally from Aberdeen, Edward moved back to his home town after living in Dubai for six years and joined RGU in 2012 to embark on a degree in Events Management.

Edward has been actively involved with RGU’s Students’ Union (RGU:Union) since the beginning of his studies so felt it was a natural transition to run for Student President where he will pursue his passion for student-led projects and ensure his peers are represented as well as supported.

Edward says: “I’ve been actively involved with RGU:Union for the last three years and I’m hugely passionate about its work and student-led projects so I felt that the role would be a great opportunity to support my peers and their initiatives, as well as strive to enhance the student experience.”

In addition to supporting student projects, Edward’s role will see him act as the key spokesperson for the student body and the media, as well as promote the democratic processes of RGU:Union.

Commenting on his campaign aims Edward says: “I would like to raise awareness about RGU:Union and enhance the student-led media at RGU (RGU:Media) while supporting other groups and societies. I am also aiming to develop and run a wide range of events for students to increase engagement.”

GianPiero, who graduated in July with a first class honours degree in Contemporary Art Practice specialising in Sculpture, is a keen football player and aims to use his Student President role to help to improve the performance of RGU’s sports teams and learn new skills.

He says: “I’ve played football for the university throughout my studies and I am passionate about sport so I wanted to be able to further support RGU Sport and help to enhance the performance of all of our student teams on the pitch.”

Gianpiero, who was born in Edinburgh to Italian parents, is determined to help RGU win the annual Granite City Challenge varsity event which sees sports rivals from RGU and the University of Aberdeen compete in a number of games with an overall winner announced.

“RGU has not won the Granite City Challenge in a number of years so I am keen to work with the sports teams to ensure we come out on top this year.”

The two presidents took up their posts at the beginning of August and were elected by their peers who voted online and across the university campus during RGU:Union’s election week in March 2015.
Edward Pollock
Student President for Communication and Democracy

Originally from Aberdeen, Edward Pollock moved back to his home town after living in Dubai for six years and joined RGU in 2012 to embark on a degree in Events Management. Having been actively involved with RGU-Union since the beginning of his studies, Edward decided to take a year out to work as a Student President where he plans to pursue his passion for student-led projects while supporting his peers.

Why did you decide to run for student president?
I was so passionate about student media and the work of RGU-Union that I felt the role would be a great opportunity to work on the projects I love, and really enhance the student experience.

What is your greatest achievement?
Setting up my own charity, The Aqua Initiative, which works to provide access to clean water to hundreds of individuals around the world.

What are your hobbies?
I love a trip to the cinema, or just lazing about in my house watching TV. Aside from that, I love to travel.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years’ time?
Ideally on a beach with a mojito and a Ferrari.

What 5 words would your friends or family use to best describe you?

Who would be your favourite dinner party guest and why?
Probably Billy Connolly because he would just be so hilarious and interesting. He’ll have a fair few stories.

Any tips for fresher’s who are just about to start uni life?
Try your best to get yourself out there and talk to as many people as you can. Get involved, as you’ll find a huge amount of friends from so many places, so make the most of your time at university! Trust me, you won’t regret it!

GianPiero Franchi
Student President for Sport and Physical Activity

Born in Edinburgh to Italian parents, GianPiero Franchi (known as G) relocated to Aberdeen four years ago to study for a degree at Gray’s School of Art. Having graduated this summer with a first class honours degree in Contemporary Art Practice specialising in Sculpture, G wasn’t quite ready to leave university life behind so decided to run for Student President and pursue his passion for RGU Sport’s clubs’ community.

What is your greatest achievement?
Being elected by my peers to be the next Student President for Sport and Physical Activity, which is a first for a Gray’s student. And winning the election with the slogan ‘50 shades of G’.

What are your hobbies?
I like to play sports. I’ve taken up bocce recently, which is quite similar to bowls, so I opened a new pitch at the front of RGU Sport and would challenge anyone to a game.

What is your favourite novel and song?
My favourite novel is Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson. Right now my favourite song is Arrivederci Roma by Claudio Villa but I’ve currently got a little thing for Norah Jones too.

What is your signature dish to cook (if any)?
My specialità della casa (house special) is pizza.

What would be your superpower of choice?
I would love to be able to time travel.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years’ time?
Ideally on a beach with a mojito and a Ferrari.

What 5 words would your friends or family use to best describe you?
A RGU academic has been recognised for her outstanding contribution in the field of Human Resources (HR) at the recent annual cHeRries Awards.

RGU Teaching Fellow and Human Resource Management Group Lead Anne Stevenson picked up the peer-nominated Top cHeRry accolade at the awards, which recognise excellence in HR, recruitment and training in the North East of Scotland.

Anne was presented her award by Alan Fergusson, employee benefits director at category sponsor Mattioli Woods.

She said: “Throughout my career I have had the good fortune to work with bright, enthusiastic colleagues and students, which has been a real privilege. I am very surprised and delighted to receive this recognition from HR professionals.”

Anne also presented an award on the evening to Chris Taylor from Subsea 7, who received the RGU Golden cHeRry. This one-off award, marking RGU’s Aberdeen Business School’s 50th anniversary, was designed to acknowledge an RGU graduate who has made a substantial impact on the HR industry and who continues to act as an ambassador for the work of Aberdeen Business School.

Professor Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School, presented the cHeRries Blossoming Award to Marie Linderoth, of Sodexo. Marie receives full funding for her Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development-accredited human resource management MSc at Aberdeen Business School.
The School of Computing Science and Digital Media celebrated its annual prizegiving ceremony earlier this summer, with more than 50 students from all courses being presented with a range of awards.

The awards are sponsored by a range of companies including ConocoPhillips, Servelec Controls, Atlas, Lockheed Martin, CISCO, TOTAL, Aventa Systems, BCS, Fugro, BP, Developers for Hire Ltd, Nexen Petroleum, Codify, Divex and Dynamic Edge.

Among the award winners was Computer Science student Scott Adams who was presented with the Servelec Controls Ltd accolade for the Best Honours Project in Software Engineering. His honours project saw him set up a hyper local trading website for a local scout group.

Scott says: “I have been involved with the Inverurie Scout Group since I was seven years old so the group and movement mean a lot to me personally. I wanted to give something back to them and have developed their idea of having a place to swap items.”

Second year Computing for Graphics and Animation student Jemma Tansley was awarded a ConocoPhillips prize for the second year in a row thanks to her outstanding academic performance.

Jemma choose to study at RGU due to the impressive technology on offer and said: “I had a couple universities in mind, but it wasn’t until I came to an open day at RGU that I fell in love with the course. I wanted something that was technical but artistic at the same time, and I think the course suits my expectations very well.”

Computer Science student, Thomas McMillan, who graduated with first class honours this July, was awarded the final year class prize for his outstanding academic performance.

Thomas moved to London when he was 16 and became managing director of a café bar which he sold 10 years later for a career change and moved back to Scotland to obtain his degree.

He said: “I chose Computer Science because it is a brilliant subject with boundless career opportunities at the end of it and opens up possibilities to work anywhere in the world.”
Budding scientists from the north-east of Scotland gained a valuable insight to the skills they’ll need to pass their secondary school exams during a recent visit to RGU.

A group of five S6 Advanced Higher Science pupils from Fraserburgh Academy spent two days at RGU this summer.

Pupils Kirstyn Allen, Kate Gillespie, Jack Clark, Lara Reid and Kai Lee joined biology and science teacher Miss Kim Allan to develop their knowledge to Advanced Higher level to succeed at the recently introduced Curriculum for Excellence.

Miss Allan, who graduated from RGU with a degree in Applied Biomedical Science in 2011, contacted RGU Lecturer Marie Goua from the university’s School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences to set up the visit.

The pupils met with some of RGU’s leading science experts and got to work in the university’s modern laboratories where they spent time culturing cells and completing DNA analysis.

Pupil Jack Clarke has been interested in science for a number of years and is keen to pursue a career using either biology or chemistry. He said: “It’s been a great visit to RGU and everyone has been very friendly and helpful. The lab facilities at the university are a step up from what we’re used to at school and it’s been good to have had some independence to carry out our own experiments. The sessions have definitely helped us all.”

Lara Reid is aiming to study Pharmacy or Biomedical Science at university after she has finished her sixth year at Fraserburgh Academy. She said: “I’m amazed by the facilities at RGU, the labs are very well equipped and there is enough space and resources for everyone to work on experiments at the same time so we can work with each other and learn together.”

Class teacher Miss Kim Allan said: “With the recent change to The Curriculum for Excellence

I’ve been keen to address the content change between Higher and Advanced Higher and our visit to RGU has definitely helped.

“The staff at RGU have been great and tailored the two-day visit to cover the ground the pupils need to learn and help build their confidence.”

Dr Marie Goua, Lecturer in biosciences and biomedical sciences, said: “We were delighted to have the pupils from Fraserburgh Academy doing experiments in our labs. It has allowed us to show them what they could expect from RGU if they wish to pursue biomedical science or pharmacy for their degree.”
A safe taxi scheme for students is being launched in Aberdeen.

RGU’s Students’ Union (RGU:Union) is working with Rainbow City Taxis to ensure vulnerable students without cash from both of the city’s universities get home safely.

Launched to coincide with Freshers’ Week and the new academic semester, the scheme will allow students from RGU and the University of Aberdeen to get home safely in a Rainbow City Taxi by using their student cards as payment.

Students who find themselves in an unsafe situation without any cash can access a designated ‘Safe Taxi’ by calling Rainbow City Taxis and quoting their university and student number.

Rainbow City Taxis will take a valid student card as a temporary payment and return it to either RGU:Union or the University of Aberdeen’s Student Association (AUSA), where the student will repay the cost on collection of their card.

Edward Pollock, RGU’s Student President for Communication and Democracy who has led the scheme’s establishment in Aberdeen, says: “The scheme has been hugely successful in a number of other cities and we are glad to be able to make it a reality here in Aberdeen.

“Therefore, whilst we hope the scheme doesn’t need to be used often, we are hopeful that this emergency provision will provide students with the support and comfort that they have the option to always get home safely.”

RGU:Union, which is working with the AUSA on the scheme, chose to partner with Rainbow City Taxis based on its reputation as a safe taxi which operates a GPS tracking in all of its vehicles, as well as ensuring that all of its drivers apply for a PVG check.

It also operates a text system that verifies the booked taxi’s colour, make and registration plate, ensuring that students only get in the designated taxi where there will be a clear record of the booking.

Gordon McKay, General Manager of Rainbow City Taxis, says: “The student population is a vibrant part of Aberdeen City. Rainbow City Taxis, which already support a number of local organisations, is delighted to be working in partnership with RGU and University of Aberdeen in providing a service that will support vulnerable students in an emergency situation, giving a safer alternative to walking home.”

For more information, visit www.safetaxiaberdeen.co.uk or contact Edward Pollock on prescd@rguunion.co.uk or 01224 262295.
Business brains boosted by new work experience scheme in Aberdeen

A unique work experience scheme targeting the region’s small and medium sized businesses is underway in Aberdeen.

Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), including the third sector and social enterprises, can now engage with Talent Exchange, a new initiative which provides opportunities to access the skills and knowledge of RGU students in ways that are tailored to the specific needs of an organisation.

Established with funding from the Scottish Funding Council, Talent Exchange is designed to offer flexible ways of working with a business to meet its need including one-off challenges, short-term projects and placements of varying lengths.

The initiative, which is partnering with SCDI, FSB Scotland and the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, is aimed at organisations looking for help with a specific business challenge such as website development, events, design, photography, corporate social responsibility policy, IT solutions or a marketing strategy.

Yvonne Cook, Project Manager for Talent Exchange who is based at RGU, says: “Talent Exchange is a new initiative which aims to make it easy for SMEs to engage with RGU and to provide valuable work related experience opportunities for students which are tailored to the specific needs of a business.

“SMEs which have a specific business challenge ranging from marketing to IT to analysis, and either lack resources, time or specialist knowledge to solve it, now have the opportunity to flexibly access a pool of new talent which can bring specialist skills and fresh perspectives.

“RGU is a distinctive university for employability and has an established track record in industry engagement and so understands the specific needs of businesses.

“Talent Exchange facilitates easy access to the university and the skills and knowledge of RGU students who can put their learning into action to help a business grow.”

A number of SMEs have already engaged with Talent Exchange including well control training specialist, Aberdeen Drilling School, which was looking for expertise in graphics and design.

Phil Burge, Chief Operating Officer at Aberdeen Drilling School, says: “We were looking for additional expertise in graphic design with specialist knowledge in the technology that would enable us to produce our desired training material and so we thought that engaging with students who are currently studying the subject would be a good solution – and it was.

“We took on two students who were fantastic and exceeded our expectations. They were very skilled and worked on their projects autonomously with very little guidance, and were able to bring new ideas which further allowed us to expand the scope of the different projects we were working on.

“There is no doubt that the business has benefited hugely from their support. We got a whole string of new static graphics, animations and videos which are going to significantly increase the quality of the various training programmes that we run.

“We were so impressed with the students’ contribution to the company that we placed an advert on the RGU website to recruit a full time Graphic Designer from the same course and we were very lucky to employ a graduate who has been a great contributor to the company.”

Find out more about Talent Exchange.

To talk to a member of the project team about a work experience opportunity email talentexchange@rgu.ac.uk or call 01224 262046.
Student resident life enhanced at RGU

RGU’s student experience offering has been further enhanced with the launch of a ResLife (Residence Life) initiative for the university’s halls of residence.

RGU is among the first higher education institutions in the UK to adopt the ResLife model which places a focus on socialisation and engagement within student accommodation.

ResLife at RGU (RGU: ResLife) seeks to improve the student experience through identifying and fulfilling the student demand for a unique identity and community within the university’s accommodation.

As part of the adoption of RGU: ResLife, the university has established Community Assistants who work alongside Residence Assistants and are responsible for organising events and activities to promote student interaction and socialisation in halls of residence.

Headed up by Terry Knight, Accommodation Welfare Manager, and RGU’s newly appointed ResLife Co-ordinator, a team of senior student Residence and Community Assistants will be on hand to help residents integrate socially and provide support and out of hours care.

RGU’s ResLife Co-ordinator, Donny McCormick, explains: “RGU: ResLife is here to ensure that all RGU students benefit from the university residence experience and have all the available resources on hand to help them succeed personally, socially and academically.

“We are committed to improving the student experience through the provision of a comprehensive social calendar for student residents, as well as access to support services, within and out-with the university itself.

“While living with us at RGU, students will become part of a university community that encourages and supports them in every aspect of their personal development.

“This is achieved through peer signposting and support as well as access to a dedicated team of full-time student welfare and advice professionals.

“Ultimately, the greatest support network that a student will have at university is other students, and RGU: ResLife seeks to facilitate this.”

Donny joins RGU with extensive experience of working within student welfare and engagement having been an integral part of the accommodation welfare team at the University of Stirling for six years.

Donny is responsible for much of the Residence Assistant and Community Assistant training, and works alongside RGU’s Accommodation Welfare Manager to provide a drop-in service for any student, in accommodation or otherwise, looking for advice on any issue.

Explaining the different roles of the ResLife Team, Donny adds: “Residence Assistants are primarily responsible for welfare and discipline, while Community Assistants will be the softer side of the ResLife team promoting events and being more visible and accessible to the student community.

“However, RGU: Community shall also be ideally placed to identify welfare concerns proactively through increased contact with the student community.”

Find out more about RGU: ResLife and its team visit www.rgu.ac.uk/reslife or email Donny at d.mccormick@rgu.ac.uk
RGU has completed the second phase of its £120m Garthdee campus project as the new £16m Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment welcomes its first students this month.

The completion of the School, built by Kier Construction, follows the first phase of The Sir Ian Wood Building development, which houses the university’s School of Engineering, School of Computing Science and Digital Media, School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, as well as its new library and research facilities.

The purpose-built £16m facility was completed over 16 months and boasts a number of bespoke, flexible studio spaces that enable creative exploration and enquiry across all the school’s professional disciplines.

It has a dedicated spray booth for model construction, new workshop facilities and a high spec AV (audio visual) system with the ability to interlink projector systems throughout the large studio spaces.

The building also incorporates a number of energy efficiency features, including solar panels on the roof to help heat water, full LED lighting installation and automatic lighting level controls, which adjust internal lighting depending on external light levels.

Head of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and the Built Environment, Professor David McClean, said: “The new building is a fantastic addition to the campus and has been designed to provide a bespoke, dedicated environment for students. Emphasis has been placed on flexibility in response to the constraints imposed by existing spaces, and the fact that over time, course cohort sizes expand and contract at different rates.

“At a more strategic level, the new spaces offer greater opportunity for collaborative working and for cross-fertilisation between professional disciplines, something that has been high on the industry agenda for many years, and which students and employers alike are increasingly interested in.

“The new facility provides bright, well-serviced spaces that encourage new ways of working while supporting the continued development of strong individual disciplines within the collective of the School.”

He added: “Importantly, the building provides a learning environment the quality of which can be matched by few schools of our kind in the UK, and which is highly prized by students and staff.

“We are very much looking forward to settling into the building during the forthcoming academic year.”
RGU Foundation news update

Ena Baxter Memorial Scholarship in creative arts

The RGU Foundation is delighted to announce that a new access scholarship to honour Mrs Ena Baxter has been set up.

Ena Baxter, who graduated from the university in 1948 with a degree in painting and drawing, is known in homes across Scotland as the face of her family business, Baxters, which is famous for its quality food products. She was an accomplished artist and continued painting until her death in January this year.

Through a generous donation from The Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation, a scholarship package will support an undergraduate student through their degree course. The access scholarship will be available as part of the ACCESS RGU scholarship opportunities which provide a financial commitment and tailored support from the Study Skills and Access Unit.

Stephanie Miller, Development Officer at the RGU Foundation, says: “We are extremely grateful to The Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation for its generosity, and are delighted that that the university is able to create such a fitting tribute to one of its alumna.”

Student job opportunities with the RGU Foundation

The RGU Foundation is currently recruiting RGU students to work as Telephone Fundraisers for its autumn campaign. They are looking for energetic and confident students to phone graduates of the university, inform them of current university news, and seek donations to support its current priorities. Students with an interest in marketing, business, psychology or philanthropy are especially invited to apply.

Please encourage your standout students to apply. Full details of the job are available on www.rgu.ac.uk/mycareer, and application forms are available by emailing s.miller@rgufoundation.org.

The closing date for application is Monday, October 5 2015

Annual Fund update

The RGU Foundation would like to thank all the alumni who have donated to this year’s annual fund through the telethon, appeal letters, and online. The team is delighted at the level of support from RGU alumni and friends.
RGU is adding to its green credentials with its latest fleet of new campus vehicles.

In a bid to reduce its carbon emission output as part of its sustainability strategy, the university has recently purchased a new fleet of vehicles which have more carbon efficient engines.

The new fleet, which includes two electric vehicles, will significantly reduce RGU’s transport footprint with an annual saving of 1.67 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions output.

Four of the new vehicles are available to hire for a small fee by schools and departments across the university, including a small electric van, a medium transit van, a large Luton van and a minibus.

The small vans are fully powered by electricity, adding to RGU’s growing number of electric vehicles following its move to use an electric mail van to transport post and other goods on a daily basis between the university’s Garthdee and Schoolhill campuses.

The university has also recently installed additional electric charging points on campus, bringing the total to four which can be used free of charge by any electric vehicle owner.

Two of the charging points are located in one of the Sir Ian Wood Building carparks at the east end of the campus, with an additional two situated between the Faculty of Health and Social Care and RGU Sport.

Judith Logan, RGU’s former Transport Manager, says: “RGU is committed to sustainability and we are delighted to have taken delivery of the new energy efficient fleet of vehicles which will help to drive down our carbon footprint while making substantial savings on the cost of fuel.

“Moving to electric and more energy efficient vehicles is an example of the many small measures which can be put in place to help ease the environmental impact of modern life, in particular transport.”

For more information on the vehicles and to enquire about hiring them, please contact RGU’s Transport Team on transport@rgu.ac.uk

Judith Logan with campus Facility Officers proudly show off the new fleet
RGU students, alumni and friends gathered in Qatar recently to attend a workshop led by an RGU academic and an international law firm.

Over 80 people attended the workshop which was hosted by David Christie, Course Leader for the LLM/MSc in Construction Law and Arbitration at RGU’s Law School, and Pinsent Masons, a full service international law firm.

The workshop, which included practical legal skills sessions in the morning followed by a group exercise in the afternoon, has been hailed a huge success and has led to RGU researching the possibility of establishing a forum that enables alumni to build an invaluable personal network of business and social contacts.

David Christie said: “I was bowled over by the warmth of the welcome I received and the enthusiasm of the students and alumni who I met. I think those attending were similarly surprised to find out that there were so many others involved who knew about RGU and had taken part in the course.

“I am keen that we build on that to provide ways to enhance the experience for everyone who is involved – and has been involved in the course.

“It was great to get feedback on the event and on the masters programme – and even better that so much of it was positive. Students seem to really understand what we are trying to do in terms of building knowledge and expertise which they can use in their everyday work. While the feedback looked at things we can improve, I was actually happy that so much of it related to ideas that I have — and discussions which are on-going internally.”

This is the third event hosted by Aberdeen Business School in Doha this year which shows an appetite to establish a local group that will provide further networking opportunities.

Claire Shaw, Head of Alumni Relations at RGU, said: “We estimate there are at least 200 RGU alumni living in Qatar. A significant number of these live in Doha and have studied the LLM Construction Law and Arbitration course.

“Our alumni are our greatest ambassadors and, through their support, significantly contribute to the reputation and success of the university.”

Find out more information about the LLM/MSc in Construction Law and Arbitration.
UK Hippotherapy course accredited with RGU

Specialist health professionals from across the country can now develop their skills thanks to a unique training course in Hippotherapy which harnesses horse power and physiotherapy to deliver rehabilitation to patients.

RGU’s School of Health Sciences and the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding (ACPTR) are working together to deliver two newly accredited postgraduate modules for qualified physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

The modules – Hippotherapy Practice and Equine Assessment – are available in Aberdeen and are the first of their kind in the UK.

Hippotherapy is an integrated holistic therapy using the characteristic movements of an equine to provide carefully controlled motor and sensory input to allow patients to achieve specific rehabilitation goals.

It is used to provide therapy for neurological conditions in children and adults. The technique has also been used for those with muscular skeletal disorders such as back pain and pelvic pain.

Collaboration with RGU will now allow therapists to gain postgraduate credit for their continuing professional development as well as a professional qualification in hippotherapy.

Dr Valerie Cooper, a former RGU lecturer, is now Course Coordinator and co-tutor on the ACPTR hippotherapy course with Lynne Munro Director of STAR hippotherapy at Clwyd Special Riding Centre and Perry RDA Group.

She said: “There is a growing interest in the effectiveness of hippotherapy as a treatment for a number of conditions and it is an exciting area for practicing physiotherapists and occupational therapists to develop their skills.

“The modules have been designed to offer specialist training in practical skills which can be used to provide hippotherapy for a range of conditions to provide this rehabilitation for those who need it most.”

RGU will be responsible for quality assurance and enhancement as well as award of credit, which equates to 15 credits per module at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11.

Liz Hancock, Head of RGU’s School of Health Sciences, said: "We’re proud to work alongside our colleagues at the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding to deliver these new modules which are the first of their kind in the UK."

Aberdeen youngster Allissa Archibald was diagnosed with cerebral palsy which has severely affected her movements and balance and she is not yet able to walk unaided.

Allissa now has regular hippotherapy sessions with Dr Cooper at Aberdeen Riding Club to encourage normal balance reactions, movement and interaction, something her mum Linda-Jo says is extremely beneficial for her health and wellbeing.

For more information about the modules, please contact Dr Valerie Cooper via valeriecooper@btinternet.com or visit the ACPTR website: http://acptr.csp.org.uk
New chairman takes the helm of RGU: RAG

A new chairman has been appointed to head up RGU: RAG (Raising and Giving), the fundraising arm of RGU’s Students’ Union.

Second year nursing student, Marty McGouran, has taken over the reins of RGU: RAG which organises a whole calendar of events for RGU students to help raise money for local, national and international charities.

Marty first got involved with fundraising when he relocated from Belfast to study for a degree in nursing at RGU, and has since taken on all manner of charitable work including two skydives, an abseil, two Belfast Marathons and two Santa Fun Runs.

He has also spent a lot of time volunteering, including back home in Belfast at his local hospital, and during his first year at RGU he was the fundraising and PR officer for RGU:Nightline, a student-led peer to peer helpline, an athletics coach for Volunteer for Sport, and a member of RGU:Union’s sustainability initiative as well as its student Mental Wellbeing Society.

Marty says: “From dressing up in a bear costume to running around campus in my underwear dressed as Maggie Simpson to parading through Aberdeen as Spiderman, you could definitely say I enjoy charitable work.

“I had heard some amazing stories about the work of RGU: RAG and all that it’s achieved over the years and so I wanted to be part of it, helping it to continue to make a difference to those who need it the most while inspiring others to get involved with volunteering and fundraising.”

In his role as chairman, Marty will run and manage RGU: RAG which involves organising a raft of activities and events to raise money for various charities throughout the academic year, raise awareness of its work and encourage students to get involved.

RGU: RAG will also be involved in Children in Need Week, street collections, Movember, Christmas food bank and toy drive, Santa fun run, bag packs, collections on campus, walking on hot coal for charity, as well as participating in the national RAG Week.

“It is important to remember that although we have this set calendar, a student or group can propose an event at any time and we will work to their needs and wishes,” continues Marty.

“We are always looking for new raggies to get involved and we are entirely student led which means students get to decide what happens. “There are many benefits of working with RGU: RAG including supporting worthwhile causes, meeting new people, developing new skills, trying once in a lifetime opportunities and boosting CVs - so get involved.”

For more information on the work of RGU: RAG and to keep up to date with its events and activities, visit its facebook page at www.facebook.com/rguunion.co.uk

Students looking to get involved with RGU: RAG can contact Marty via ragchair@rguunion.co.uk

Marty has spent the summer organising a number of events which will begand using Freshers Week with a city-wide student hall BBQ tour and a Freshers Team auction to raise money for CLAN. “We already have quite a few activities in the pipeline so there is a lot to get involved with including challenge style fundraising events where we hope to send students to Africa to teach first aid, send a group to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and get a team together to run in the Prague Marathon May 2016,” says Marty.
RGU helps to enhance the student transition experience at Scottish institutions

RGU is celebrating a successful presence at a national conference aimed at enhancing the student learning experience at Scottish institutions.

RGU turned out in force for the 2015 Conference on Enhancement and Innovation in Higher Education which encourages staff and students across Scottish institutions to share good practice and collectively generate ideas for innovation in learning and teaching.

Each year the conference focuses on specific areas (themes) for development to enhance the student learning experience identified by the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC).

The ‘Enhancement Theme’ for this year’s conference, which was held in Glasgow earlier this summer, was ‘Student Transitions’ which focused on transitions into, during, and out of a programme of study at universities in Scotland.

A group of 15 staff and students from RGU attended the conference to deliver a mix of presentations and panel sessions which were very well received.

In attendance was James Dunphy, Head of Delta, Lecturers Tracy Pirie and Elliot Pirie, Teaching Fellows Anne Stevenson and Dr Bill Sutherland, Senior Lecturer Dr Moira Bailey, Learning Enhancement Co-ordinator Kate Goodhand, Senior Educational Developer Catherine Ogilvie, Study Skills and Access Unit Project Co-ordinator Rhona McComiskie, Subject Leader Carolyn McNicholas, Programme Leader Craig Leith, Head of Teaching Futures Hilaire Graham and students Ana-Maria Bogdan, Isla Elliott and Lukas Podhrazky.

First year Contemporary Art Practice student Jade Gilbert also provided support.

Among the various presentations delivered by the group was a ‘dual’ paper produced by Craig Leith and Elliot Pirie in conjunction with Event Management students Ana-Maria Bogdan and Isla Elliott. Entitled ‘Student Perspectives on Transitioning from FE to HE’, the paper investigated underlying aspects of the transition process direct entry students experience in order to reveal improvements from the student perspective.

Elliot and Craig, who also produced and delivered a comparative study on the subject, explain: “At times it can be easy to forget the perspective that students can provide on the teaching and learning process. By actively involving these students in our research the combined results have given us renewed insight, which has led to some alterations in the induction programmes and throughout the studies for our direct entry students.”

MSc Digital Marketing student, Lukas Podhrazky, who is now employed by RGU’s Study Skills and Access Unit, took part in a panel session where he shared his transition experience with the conference.

Originally from the Czech Republic, Lukas relocated to Aberdeen to study Interactive Multimedia Creation at the North East Scotland College before joining RGU through the ‘2+2’ direct entry route to the BSc Multimedia Development. He then transitioned from an undergraduate to a postgraduate student to embark on a MSc Digital Marketing at Aberdeen Business School.

Commenting on his panel experience, Lukas says: “Being a panel member at the Enhancement Themes Conference was a fantastic opportunity to represent the North East of Scotland and RGU in particular. It was a privilege to share my experience with the audience and I was keen to participate as I believed that I had quite a unique story to tell having experienced many student transitions in the past five years.”

All of RGU’s presentations and papers can be accessed on the Enhancement Themes Conference website.

Led by James Dunphy, RGU is beginning to prepare for next year’s conference which will again focus on student transitions as part of the SHEEC’s three year theme. If you are interested in getting involved, contact j.dunphy@rgu.ac.uk
New book is the cherry on top for RGU lecturer

RGU Lecturer Chris Yuill has set out the recipe for sociology success in a new book which hit the shelves this summer.

Mr Yuill was one of the conceptual editors and contributors to 'The Sociology Book (Big Ideas Simply Explained)' which features more than 80 ideas from the world’s most renowned sociologists.

Published by D&K, a multinational publishing company which counts food writer, TV presenter and The Great British Bake Off star Mary Berry among its authors, the 352 page book takes a bite in to what society is and what makes it tick.

Making use of eye-catching graphics, pithy quotes and step-by-step ‘mind maps,’ readers are brought up-to-date on sociological ideas with easy to navigate step-by-step summaries which explain each idea in a nutshell.

Covering topics as diverse as issues of equality, diversity, identity and human rights; the effects of globalisation; the role of institutions, and the rise of urban living in modern society, the book details the key concepts of sociological thought.

Mr Yuill, a lecturer at RGU’s School of Applied Social Studies, has been published several times over the years in a collection of sociology books.

He said: “I’m very proud to have developed and contributed to the latest book on sociology and to have been included amongst many of the leading thinkers in the field. The whole idea behind the book was to communicate what can be complex ideas in a simple and straight-forward manner.

“When I started writing books on sociology I never expected that I’d be a publishing label mate with baking’s leading lady Mary Berry.”

‘The Sociology Book’ is out now and available to buy on Amazon.
Researchers from RGU recently hosted a multi-disciplinary delegation from Japan to mark the latest stage of a collaborative international project.

The team from Nagoya University visited the university at the start of September to discuss further projects to develop the relationship with the RGU IPE research group which began in 2012.

Three medical students from Japan also joined the team who spoke about their Interprofessional Education (IPE) experiences at the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) Conference in Glasgow.

Professor Lesley Diack from RGU’s School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences and Dr Sundari Joseph from the university’s School of Nursing and Midwifery, are two of the members of the RGU / University of Aberdeen IPE Research Group.

Professor Diack said: "We were honoured to welcome our colleagues from Nagoya University to RGU to discuss our research projects and what we can work on together in the future. "We have built strong links between the two universities which has helped us develop and strengthen International Interprofessional Collaboration for the joint project team."

There have already been two successful funding bids to the Sasakawa Foundation for projects developing International Interprofessional Collaboration.

In 2013, the joint team received funding to develop a Japanese version of the IPE game designed between RGU and the University of Aberdeen.

The team were subsequently funded for another project to celebrate International Diabetes Day on November 14, 2014 when two groups of students from each of the countries worked to put together a care plan for a diabetic patient and then discussed the plan online in a webinar.

This allowed the students, working in interprofessional teams to have access not only to more professions but also to an international perspective. The webinar was very successful with the two groups of students learning about diabetes, diversity and team working.

RGU’s IPE research team has hosted a number of overseas visits this summer from Spain, Qatar and Japan.

Later this year four members of the research team are presenting at the First Interprofessional Conference on IPE in Doha in December. Professor Diack and Dr Joseph are part of the advisory group for the conference and Professor Diack is part of a keynote panel presenting on the development of successful IPE.
Students from around the world joined RGU for the summer

Around 100 students from around the world came to RGU this summer to enjoy various classes, activities and experience some of Aberdeen's culture.

Aberdeen Business School (ABS) hosted a number of summer schools for overseas universities, some from as far as China and Delaware.

The Summer School Programme at ABS is part of the Europe-wide Summer Schools in Europe initiative. Participants of the Summer School have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills and also experience some of the culture, social activities and magnificent scenery that both Aberdeen and Scotland have to offer.

A number of summer schools were offered by ABS for students from various universities including: Delaware Technical Community College; Central Georgia Technical College; China University of Petroleum; Qingdao Agricultural University; Hebei University; Qingdao University of Science and Technology; Hochschule Mainz; Nova Scotia Community College; and the Humber Institute.

Richard Barnes, Head of the Global Engagement Centre at ABS, said:

“The Summer School courses are designed to provide visiting students with a full educational, cultural and social activity programme which enables them to experience the very best of Scotland.

"Each course included individual and group activities, company visits to renowned local and multinational businesses and invaluable presentations and relevant case studies. They enjoyed courses in Creative Industries, Energy and Entrepreneurship.

“Each Summer School has been hailed a huge success by the participants, I think everyone involved learned a great deal about different cultures and made new friends, indeed a number of student visitors are planning to return to RGU to further their studies”

Each summer school had a different focus – Delaware Technical Community College joined RGU’s MBA cohort for some leadership week activities, as well as attended classes on Business Culture and Leading Industries in Scotland. They also spent four days in Edinburgh carrying out cultural activities.

The Central Georgia Technical College learned about golf tourism and the whisky industry, as well as visiting Crathes and Balmoral castles. They also attended a number of business classes.

The Chinese Summer School had more than 30 students who undertook an introduction to what life is like for ABS students and attended taster workshops hosted by staff from each ABS programme. They also visited the Town House and spoke at length to the Lord Provost. Their main project was to identify cultural differences between Scotland and China.

The biggest summer school was run for Hochschule Mainz, Nova Scotia Community College and the Humber Institute, Toronto, which had almost 40 students enrolled. Their overall topic was Business Creativity and in groups the students had to come up with a new business idea and pitch it to a panel in a ‘Dragons Den’ style event. They also spent one week based at The Burn in Edzell.
RGU rower bags silver medal at U23 World Championships

A RGU rower is celebrating success after clinching a silver medal at the U23 World Rowing Championships.

Applied Sport and Exercise Science student, Lewis McCue, won the medal in the Men’s Coxless fours final at Plovdiv in Bulgaria.

The RGU Sport Scholar, who finished fifth in the race last year, worked with his team to win silver, just behind a team from Romania.

Lewis raced with Richard Clarke (University of London), Ross Jarvis (Harvard University) and James Johnson (Harvard).

He said: “We had the best race we could have hoped for in the final and the silver medal is an awesome result. The Romanians had looked strong throughout the heats and we were in the lead of the last race until the final 300 meters when they kicked on ahead of us.

“It was a great experience leading the race, all of the training and hard work we put in throughout the year had paid off and it feels great to have a medal from the U23 World Championships.”

Filippo Antoniazzi, Director of Sport at RGU, said: “This is a fantastic achievement for Lewis who is a great student athlete. To win a silver medal at the U23 World Championships is a huge step in his sporting career which keeps going from strength to strength.”

Streetsport recognised for volunteering impact

A unique sports and creative activities programme for young people in Aberdeen has scooped an award for its positive and supportive approach to volunteering.

The Denis Law Legacy Trust ‘Streetsport’ programme, which is delivered in partnership with RGU, has been awarded ACVO’s prestigious ‘Volunteer Friendly Award.’

The initiative, which actively reduces instances of youth crime and anti-social behaviour, is the first of its kind in Scotland to receive the award for excellence in Volunteer Management Practice.

The project deploys mobile activity arenas into locations throughout Aberdeen, offering free doorstep sports and other events directly to young people within their own communities.

Mark Williams, Streetsport Development Officer, said: “We are delighted to receive the Volunteer Friendly Award from ACVO which recognises the hard work and commitment of all of our volunteers and the difference they make on a daily basis to many young people in Aberdeen.”

The Streetsport programme which is based at RGU Sport in Garthdee is close to entering its tenth year of operation. RGU Sport’s Director of Sport, Filippo Antoniazzi, is also a co-founder of the initiative.

He said: “The team of volunteers that have worked with the Streetsport programme over the years have played a huge part in the impact and success of the programme across Aberdeen. This award is well deserved and I know the team are keen to build further on their success.”

Find out more about Denis Law’s Streetsport

 RGU academics review legal position of weightism victims

Two academics from RGU’s Law School have contributed to a prestigious journal on equal rights.

Reader in Law Sam Middlemiss and Senior Lecturer Margaret Downie, who are authors of the 2012 title ‘Employment Law in Scotland’, have co-written a substantial article which has been published in the Equal Rights Review this September.

The article, which is entitled ‘Anglo-American Comparison of Employers Liability for Weightism in Employment’, is a milestone for the Law School as it’s the first time its academics have had anything published in the prestigious bi-annual journal on equality produced by the Equal Rights Trust.

Sam Middlemiss said: “We are delighted with this success. This is a highly topical article which highlights the practical realities for victims of weightism (discrimination because of someone’s weight) in employment in the UK and the limited legal remedies that apply to them.

“As a point of comparison the legal treatment of victims of weightism in the US is also considered.”
Autumn events at RGU

C3: Collaborative Contextual Conversations Exhibition
4 to 11 September
Gray’s School of Art
‘C3: Collaborative Contextualised Conversations’ showcases the work of current Masters students at Gray’s School of Art.

An exhibition of all kinds of textiles, made by hand in Aberdeenshire
5 September to 4 October
Georgina Scott Sutherland Learning Centre
The Grampian Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers (GGWSD) present their latest work to the public.

Non Medical Prescribing Conference 2015
22 September
Faculty of Health and Social Care
NHS Grampian and RGU hold the sixth annual conference for non-medical prescribers in Grampian.

TechFest: #SocialMediaScience
22 September 2015
The Sir Ian Wood Building
Professor Sarah Pedersen will give an introduction to social media, outline some of the challenges and opportunities for teens offered by social media and discuss how they can stay safe at a TechFest event.

Freshers’ Fayre
24 September
RGU Sport
An annual Freshers’ Week highlight for new students looking to bag a free giveaway from retailers, bars, banks, shops, clubs and societies.

Part-Time Jobs Fair
30 September
The Sir Ian Wood Building
The Careers and Employability Centre holds its annual Part-Time Jobs Fair to help new and returning students find opportunities for part-time work.

Develop North
2 and 3 October
Garthdee campus
A new two day mini-festival celebrating photographic practice across Scotland and the UK, and will see a series of free talks, workshops, screenings and exhibitions.

Open Days
3 and 7 October
The Sir Ian Wood Building
A chance for prospective students to find out about the courses and facilities on offer at RGU.

ABS Placement Fair
21 October
The Sir Ian Wood Building
A range of companies will be present at the Aberdeen Business School Placement Fair.

Professorial Lecture: Can Integrated Learning Communities Create a Relevant Ecosystem of Knowledge Generation, Application and Acquisition?
21 October
The Sir Ian Wood Building
Professor Chris O’Neil will demonstrate how and why some successful learning communities have an impact that is sometimes both critical and surprising.