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*ADR - ASSOCIATE DEAN RESEARCH

Editor Anna Higson

Out of your head | Quality Research | Chemistry Roadshow | and much more ...
you’ll hear the phrase ‘Real World Research’ around the halls, lecture theatres and libraries here at the University of Salford because that’s what we do. We strive to make our research applicable to the needs of our partners in health, business, media, social justice and the law, construction, energy and art.

Here most of all the University aims to encourage new partnerships and projects working especially with our local partners such as NHS Trusts and new and developing researchers. One prime example of such a partnership is our lead story in this issue, not as you might think one of our high ranking research rated professors but one of our newly graduated PhD students Mark Holland. Mark’s research as a PhD student has highlighted their carers and families and the lack of good information that can give sound advice and offer ways forward. Have a look at Mark’s article or visit the Dual Diagnosis website for more information on this condition.

Also in this issue we celebrate a clutch of new and developing researchers. One prime example of such a partnership is our lead story in this issue, not as you might think one of our high ranking research rated professors but one of our newly graduated PhD students Mark Holland. Mark’s research as a PhD student has highlighted their carers and families and the lack of good information that can give sound advice and offer ways forward. Have a look at Mark’s article or visit the Dual Diagnosis website for more information on this condition.

Also in this issue there’s a glance at the research work on going in the School of Health, Sport and rehabilitation Sciences and an article on a research project being undertaken by Professor Paul Haywood and his team on the work they are doing with Greater Manchester Police in recycling guns into fashion wear!

Please do contact us if you feel that our research is of interest to you, is applicable to your needs or can support your business, policy or processes in any way. The University of Salford’s door is always open to conversation, collaboration and new partnerships.

All are welcome!

Professor Ghassan Aouad
Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation)
The link between the University of Salford and local Healthcare Trusts is a strong one and over the years these links and partnerships have delivered good healthy practices backed up by strong research, the strength in these real world research partnerships are highlighted in the work of a recent University of Salford PhD Graduate Dr. Mark Holland, Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust and his University supervisor Dr. Tracey Williamson, Research Fellow, User Involvement Research, Faculty of Health and Social Care.

This research partnership began several years ago as Mark, a then community psychiatric nurse, found himself searching for information and education materials to give clients (and their carers) who experienced concurrent serious mental illness and who also used street drugs or alcohol (often called a dual diagnosis). Mark found very little information available for his clients and what existed was pretty weak. The reason his clients used drink or drugs was not very clear, the effect drink or drugs had on them was varied and almost always detrimental, and the response from substance misuse and mental health services was often counterproductive; they tended to pass the client on to other services claiming either the mental illness was the cause of drug use or drug use was the cause of mental illness. Clients got passed from pillar to post. It was this lack of available information, and after discussions with local consultant psychiatrist Dr. Tim Garvey, that Mark headed down the pathway of a part time research PhD in exploring service users. Mark found through his research a major theme emerging that showed a high degree of motivation amongst his client group to recover from their illness, a view at odds in many ways to the public, and often professional, viewpoint that drug and alcohol users lack motivation and the will to recover.

Mark’s research had a secondary objective which was to produce useful information for service users and carers in relation to substance misuse and mental health. Commencing individual interviews and focus groups within Manchester Mental Health inpatient and community services, Mark found this research was important in a number of ways. Firstly it created an environment and opportunity for service users to express the positive aspects of their drug and alcohol use despite both research evidence and received wisdom (and the law) suggesting such aspects were insufficient to justify continued drug use. Secondly, it forged an opening for service user participants to convey their life aspirations; which were largely about helping others recover and receiving help to recover themselves. Interestingly the former view was most frequently given. This was suggestive of a stronger faith in personal ability to help peers than oneself. And thirdly, the formal research partnership between an NHS Trust, a voluntary sector drug organisation and the University of Salford added validity not to the findings necessarily but to the issue itself of substance misuse in mental illness populations.

With the insights and guidance of Dr Tracey Williamson and Professor Duncan Mitchell (Manchester Metropolitan University), Mark’s research retained a mainstream mental health perspective and goal by conducting his PhD in a dual role of practitioner-researcher; the people around Mark therefore played key roles in both the conducting of the study and also ensuring its place within practice.

With the aid of Lifeline Publications drug expert and illustrator Michael Linnell, who brought humour, appeal and stunning illustrations to the storylines of the cases highlighted, Mark produced information literature that is applicable, useable and challenges conventional thought on those experiencing mental illness and substance misuse.

If you would like to know more about Mark’s research contact him at: mark.holland@mhsc.nhs.uk

Or visit the dual diagnosis website at: www.dualdiagnosis.co.uk
When New Labour promised to ‘bring human rights home’ in 1997, even they could not have anticipated the impact that the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) would have on so many aspects of our everyday lives. In June this year, The University of Salford Law School hosted a successful two day international conference with over 130 people discussing the impact of this landmark piece of legislation.

As the HRA turned 10 years old, the cross-university conference committee comprising Lis Bourne (School of Nursing & Midwifery), Nicolas Kang-Riou (Salford Law School), Jo Milner (School of ESPlaCh) and Suryia Nayak (School of Social Work, Psychology & Public Health), posed the question “has the HRA improved human rights protection in the UK?”.

The answers drew on multiple perspectives encompassing academics from a range of disciplines and judges of different nationalities. However, what made this conference unique were the personal testimonies of human rights activists which consistently connected the lived experiences of human rights with its legal framework and reminded us of the many gaps that can only be filled by effective political and legal activism.

Over the two days of the conference, the objectives of the Act were discussed, as were the types of changes that had been hoped for and expected, and who or what had been the main beneficiaries. If the government’s original goal was to ‘bring Human Rights home’ from Strasbourg, where UK lawyers had been instrumental in drafting the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, it was paradoxical that some delegates thought the Act would do little to enhance the protections already afforded by Parliament and common law. For others the Act heralded a new era of human rights protection in the UK by creating a new legal remedy.

Lady Hale, the only female Justice of what is now the Supreme Court, suggested that decisions of the final court of appeal reached both high and low points in protecting individual rights, even if overall her assessment, like that of Francesca Klug, was that some progress had been made thanks to the HRA. But we were also reminded by Angela Nhonga, a former asylum seeker turned human rights campaigner, and by Dave Smith, a blacklisted construction engineer and trade unionist, that there are still many areas where the practice of public authorities and private entities has a long way to go to be HRA compliant.

Over the two days of conference more than 20 papers were presented in five different streams: Feminism and Human Rights; Surveillance, Control, Health and Social Care; Activism, Testimony and Social Change; Human Geography, Environment, Culture and Human Rights; and Terrorism and Security. Two-thirds of these papers came from six different schools within the University, highlighting the diversity and quality of the research conducted in Salford in the human rights field.

If you would like to know more about the conference and the research behind papers visit Salford Law School’s conference website at: www.law.salford.ac.uk/hrconference.php
Patients’ Perceptions

Research into health practices are key to providing the evidence base for future development of services, and Dr. Tracey Williamson, Research Fellow (Public Engagement/User Involvement in Research) here at the University has been conducting studies into the older generation’s perceptions and experiences of changes in the appearance of their medication, via a project entitled ‘Older People’s Experiences of Changed Medication Appearance due to Generic Prescribing’ after being approached by Rochdale User Carer Forum members.

The forum members had anecdotal evidence of a problem whereby prescribed branded medications were frequently being dispensed in their cheaper generic (non-branded) version as a cost saving exercise e.g. Panadol dispensed as Paracetamol. This usual pharmacy practice is supported by EU legislation which results in frequent changes in size, colour and shape of medications. The EU and National Patient Safety agency said they could not act until there was an evidence base indicating a problem. Tracey and her colleagues knew such a problem existed and set about organising a study.

Funding was secured for two studies involving Tracey and University colleagues, Leah Greene, Michelle Howarth and Arvin Prashar and together they conducted a postal survey of 2000 older adults in Greater Manchester and video recorded/audio-taped interviews with 32 older adults. The survey findings indicate many older people are indeed affected affecting their confidence, anxiety and medicines management. Almost all of those interviewed could successfully and safely manage the changes but had concerns for other older people and themselves in later life, should their capacity to manage their medicines reduce. Ultimately recommendations centre on looking at ways to better identify and support those at risk plus training for staff.

These findings have fed directly into the University’s pre-registration nurse training including Medication Administration and Health to II Health Continuum sessions and post-registration Non-Medical Prescribing modules. Students have really enjoyed these sessions as they were exposed to real world patient stories about their experiences. Whilst it is yet to be seen how these findings will impact on clinical practice, they have already been included in the teaching modules and widened the student understanding of the value of public involvement in research.

Tracey and her colleagues’ interview-based study clearly demonstrates the benefits of high quality public involvement in research and the Department of Health, who recently conducted a consultation on generic prescribing, have requested a copy of the findings of this study.

If you would like to know more about Tracey’s research contact her at: t.williamson@salford.ac.uk

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Passionate about carers!

One of the University’s Senior Health Researchers, Julie Wray, has been involved in a very important conference recently, that of the Compassion and Value Based Care Conference, held by the School of Nursing & Midwifery in celebration of National Carers Week.

The Service User and Carer Forum within the School organised the event to raise awareness of compassion in caring alongside patient experience, and in support for the almost six million carers in the UK. This year’s National Carers theme, ‘Carers, a Life of Our Own’ recognises the importance for carers being able to enjoy activities outside of their caring role, activities that many of us take for granted. Recent research found that that more than three-quarters (76%) of people looking after an ill, frail or disabled loved one do not have a life outside of their caring role, and many feel isolated and lonely. In addition, Julie, who is also a Senior Lecturer as well as Researcher at the University said: “National Carers Week is an excellent opportunity to learn and gain further insight into the patient’s journey and that of their carers, and will continue to be an integral part of all that we do in the School. We could not do this work without the hard work and commitment of the Service User and Carer Forum, they are amazing people to work with”. Over 130 people attended this event to listen to keynote speakers, participate in workshops and enjoy a magnificent drama performance by Kate, Carolyn, Craig and Jane, second year drama students.

If you would like to know more about Julie’s research contact her at: j.wray@salford.ac.uk

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Top award for Geography Professor

Professor Richard Knowles, Professor of Transport Geography in the School of Environment & Life Sciences here at the University, holds the honour of receiving the 2004 Edward Ullman Award in Transportation Geography from the Association of American Geographers, the only European Geographer ever to receive this prestigious award.

Richard’s research focuses on critical issues of society’s current problems with transport and sustainable urban development. His work has taken him all over the world and recently to a collaborative research project with Professor Christian Matthiessen from Copenhagen University. This project involved an examination of the barrier effects of international borders on traffic generation with special reference to the Øresund Fixed Link between Copenhagen and Malmö, exploring the difficulties in accurately predicting traffic using new transport links across international borders.

The Øresund business community, regional and city government, town planning and transport development experts were all involved in both Denmark and Sweden. The Danish Great Belt Fixed Link was used as a control case. International borders impede interaction because people continue to experience them as dividing lines between ‘familiar and unfamiliar’ societies.

Subsequent trans-Øresund traffic growth is attributed mainly to a tax agreement between the Danish and Swedish governments which benefits cross-border commuters, to complementary labour and housing markets and to discounted tolls.

Nearer to home Richard has been collaborating on a research project with Professor Ian Docherty and Dr Danny Mackinnon, from Glasgow University and Professor Jon Shaw from Plymouth University, examining links between transport connection and competitiveness in the UK Regions. Richard and his colleagues’ research highlight, that, due to the historic underinvestment in the UK’s cities transport networks, leading to congestion, unreliability and environmental impacts, our major city regions have much to do to match the best of their competitor locations in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Planning for the country’s future transport networks? This research concludes that sustained transport investment in key radial fixed links and interchange nodes plus effective and efficient governance structures facilitates sustainable economic growth.

For more information on Richard’s research contact him at: r.d.knowles@salford.ac.uk

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The Øresund Bridge

# Salford hits the Silk Road

University of Salford Professor, David Eaton, from the School of the Built Environment, along with 20 academic staff from 8 European Universities and a group of 65 postgraduate students all took part in an E-BiHu-MC11 - Master Class recently in Adapazari and Istanbul, Turkey.

The theme of the Master Class was to create a feasible and viable alternative transport solution to relieve the pressure on the Bosphorus Channel connecting the Black sea and the Mediterranean. The students from many countries, including China, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Columbia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Ireland, Spain, Czech Republic, Portugal, Libya, Netherlands, and Nigeria were required to investigate and make presentations of their proposals.

Working in international and multidisciplinary groups, the students had two weeks to research and develop their own solutions. These ranged from a ‘big dig canal’ about the scale of the Panama Canal, an overland oil and gas pipeline, an overland freight rail link, and an underground tunnel. They considered the social, legal, economic, environmental, political and technological issues associated with their proposal.

The project was a great success! With one attendee commenting: “My mindset and horizons have been drastically broadened. I have really learnt a lot on this trip”. David, who is the Project Director, said: “although the event was incredibly difficult to organise, the learning experience for all of those participating makes it enormously satisfying – now full speed ahead for the E-BiHu-MC III in Tomar in Portugal next year – but please no more volcanoes whilst we are away!!”.

If you would like more information about this research project contact David at: d.eaton@salford.ac.uk

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Research Innovation and Internationalisation News RISE

Research Innovation and Internationalisation News RISE

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RISE
The research environment in the School is highly multidisciplinary, with members drawn from the health professions, including physiotherapy, podiatry, sports rehabilitation, prosthetics and orthotics, occupational therapy, and radiography. These are joined by staff from engineering, sport and exercise science, and computing science backgrounds. The research draws staff from across the University including the School of Computing, Science and Engineering and the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The world class research facilities include three gait and human performance laboratories, a clinical imaging suite, sports and podiatry clinical facilities, and sports strength and conditioning rooms.

In this school you won’t find academic researchers sitting in ivory towers, but researchers who have real improvements in health practice, health technology and the underpinning science in their sights. Current areas the teams are researching include: posture and balance assessment in rehabilitation, understanding mechanisms for normal human walking, biomechanics of the foot and ankle, insole and footwear design; electrical stimulation of muscles; wearable systems for motion measurement; strength and conditioning training in Sport; orthotics for osteoarthritis of the knee; programmes for enhanced vocational rehabilitation; development and evaluation of community based exercise and nutrition programmes; patient experience in breast imaging; and care programmes for hand arthritis.

Working with those on the frontline of patient care is key for research staff in this School. At the recent Salford Orthopaedic Series experts from around the country gathered to listen and engage in discussions around the most up to date advances in treatment of the shoulder. This provided an expert forum accessible for GPs, trainee surgeons and therapists to listen to and engage with consultant surgeons and other key experts. Another area involves working with people who have knee arthritis and the development of novel approaches to reduce pain and avoid knee replacement surgery. Other areas of research directly impact on the care for those with stroke or rheumatoid arthritis.

Partnerships with external agencies are critical to research and development in the School. Salford City Reds Rugby team and Lancashire County Cricket work closely with experts in the Human Performance Lab, measuring the body and its movement in sport tasks. Another key partner is SSL International Ltd, which owns the Scholl foot health care brand. The ‘Feet Matter’ partnership is an investment worth £1.8 million to the University over three years, involving research of new products by the team at Salford, and educational developments related to improving the care of severe foot problems in India.

With over £3.6 Million pounds of research funding, over 40 postgraduate research students studying to PhD or Masters level, a clutch of world published Professors, Doctors and Researchers, a host of international collaborations and partnerships with many health care organisations, sports clubs, private industry partners, charities and user organisations, this School is the place to move health, sport and rehabilitation sciences into the future.

If you would like to know more about the research in this school contact Chris at: c.j.nester@salford.ac.uk

Healthy movement, how we move our body up the stairs, run for a bus, swim, dance, jump, balance or sit, is central to an independent and healthy lifestyle. These are all functions that the majority of us take for granted, and don’t give a moment of thought to, unless it goes wrong. For one group of people here at the University the way we move and function is the topic of their daily research activities. Welcome to the School of Health, Sport and Rehabilitation Sciences!
In the February/March issue of RISE we highlighted the University’s plans to build an Energy Hub, a place where academics, researchers, industry, students, businesses and the community can interact and develop solutions to address the global energy crisis, with at its heart the development of a European first the ‘Salford Energy House’. Our house is a very very very fine house ...

The University recently held a highly successful media launch of the Hub which took place at the end of May. At the centre of this event was the announcement of the Salford Energy House project – the construction of a full-sized, traditional-style terraced house to be built inside a completely enclosed and environmentally controllable laboratory within the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Environment.

The house has been specially designed to reproduce accurately the traditional features and build of an early 1900’s home and will be constructed utilising original bricks and roofing tiles. These are being provided by Salford Council from one of their housing regeneration projects. It is intended the house will also be totally furnished and fitted as a world, with at its heart the development of a European first the ‘Salford Energy House’.

The University’s ground-breaking approach is in response to the sustainability challenge presented by the UK’s ageing housing stock. According to the Government’s Communities and Local Government English House Condition Survey conducted in 2007 over 70% of the country’s current residential property will still be inhabited in 2050 and 91% of all UK homes would benefit from improvements in energy efficiency. Improved insulation and boiler upgrades alone could see heating emissions reduced by 22%.

Catherine Monaghan, Head of Energy Saving Trust North West, has said that the Energy House is: “A great addition to Salford and indeed the city region and its designation as a low carbon economic area. The Salford Energy House fits in perfectly with the aspirations of the domestic retrofit programme currently planned for Greater Manchester.”

Speaking at the launch event Tony Juniper, environmental campaigner and former director of Friends of the Earth, said: “Domestic energy use accounts for a huge proportion of emissions. If we are to have any chance of meeting targets to cut greenhouse gas pollution from UK homes by 29% by 2020 we must focus on improving energy efficiency in all kinds of properties, including the millions of terraced houses like this one. The Energy House offers the opportunity to measure energy-saving measures, but it will also address behavioural change.”

Construction is due to be completed by the first week of December 2010 and a grand public unveiling is being scheduled for February 2011 to coincide with an external conference being organised by the University and centred on the theme of sustainable housing retrofit. By studying the different ways in which energy is consumed within the house, the University will be able to devise techniques to improve its energy efficiency. Beyond simple testing of new types of insulation materials, double-glazing and low-energy appliances the unique cross-disciplinary approach to research will also involve the University’s psychologists, health experts and sociologists working alongside designers, engineers and scientists to develop sustainable solutions.

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New and exciting developments in technology are the bread and butter of research people here at the University of Salford and never more so than in the Centre for Virtual Environments and Future Media (CVESM).

Professor David Roberts is currently experiencing one of his busiest times as he oversees the massive upgrade in the acoustics and VR facilities in the University’s OCTAVE, with the introduction of high quality acoustics in conjunction with Professor Yiu Lam in Acoustics. Yiu said: “While Virtual Reality (VR) systems all over the world necessarily have some elements of spatial audio, the OCTAVE upgrade is arguably the first that will provide the capability for highly accurate spatial rendering of sound field that has sufficient directional, breadth and depth details required for truly immersive VR presentation.

The current OCTAVE research platform employs two capture systems; optical motion tracking is used as the default input for viewpoint update, object manipulation and avatar control. A camera system is integrated for vision based reconstruction. For display the octave currently has 8 screen modules that can be moved into different spatial configurations. As well as a full octagon, the following standard configurations can be approximated within the space: 2 CAVES, or 1 CAVI, 1 panorama and 1 wall. Collaboration can be supported across a group split between displays in the same room, or by connecting other display systems in different locations, optimally via the dedicated 10Gbit campus research network already installed alongside the octave.

With the new upgrade the potential for advancing research is enormous. Accurate audio clues are essential in immersive VR applications such as telepresence, teleconferencing, virtual workspaces, and generally any simulation that involved social-human interactions. From the acoustics point of view, the upgraded OCTAVE will allow us to advance further into research that involves multimodal interactions that define human and social response to sound. This includes all sorts of psychoacoustics and human factor research. For example, in the research into soundscape and urban comfort, it’s generally accepted that visual and audio components work together to mould a community’s perception of the quality of the environment. This has important implications for sustainable urban planning - an area that the University is very strong at.

The upgraded OCTAVE will allow us to construct a variety of simulated scenarios to explore this interaction between visual and audio in sufficient accuracy and detail that would enable tangible grounded theories to be defined, and would be likely to change the way that future planning is considered. Another example is in future media research, where the design and production of the content, and the delivery platform would be likely to benefit from VR construction. The unique audio and visual capability of the upgraded OCTAVE, the close proximity and relationship with MediaCity together with the knowledge, expertise and global contacts available here at the University generate a whole spectrum of exciting research and new developments”.

If you would like to know more about the work in CVEFM or feel your business could benefit from their expertise contact Professor David Roberts at: d.j.roberts@salford.ac.uk.

If you would like to know more about Peter’s research contact him at: p.s.bradon@salford.ac.uk

The Futures Virtually Real

Research Goes Well Down Under!

Professor Peter Brandon’s expertise was called upon recently on the other side of the globe! Peter, from the School of the Built Environment, recently travelled to Australia where he was invited to keynote at the Universities Australia 2010 Conference.

Every two years Universities Australia (UA) hold a conference of senior University Staff including Vice-Chancellors, Presidents, Registrars and others to examine national policy on key issues relating to University Governance. The 2010 conference was held in Canberra and addressed by the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, Deputy Prime Minister and other members of the Government, along with three international speakers of which Peter was one. A key theme of this conference was sustainable development, Peter’s area of expertise. Following on from his input into drafting the G8 Tunin declaration on sustainable development for the G8, G20 University Summit in 2009, Peter was asked to address how universities should approach sustainable development as part of their strategic thinking. He suggested examining each university’s approach under three main headings of: Technology, Procurement and Behaviour.

Technology seems to be the main focus of the current debate across the world but Peter argued that Procurement Policy was equally important and changing the culture and behaviour of the Institution was likely to have the greatest benefit. He then went on to suggest that university policy could be categorised as either: Leader, Lover or Laggard. Leadership was rare and also risky (it’s the second mouse that gets the cheese!) and few universities would be in a position to invest in this way. Laggards are those who will focus on compliance but not show initiative and Lovers are those who want to contribute beyond compliance but are not sure how far to go! Most universities would be in this latter category. Peter’s address was well received with general acceptance of the ideas put forward.

If you would like to know more about Peter’s research contact him at: p.s.bradon@salford.ac.uk

‘Poetry is the Spontaneous Overflow of Powerful Feelings…’

Powerful feelings have certainly been overflowing in the School of English, Sociology, Politics and Contemporary History (ESPACH) here at the University, where not one nor two but seven of the University’s poets and creative writers have been launching collections, producing books and recording poems recently!

Neil Campbell has a poetry collection released entitled Birds, and Professor Antony Rowland has had his work recorded in The Poetry Archive, which is the world premiere online collection of poems reading their work, and last but not least Judy Kendall has led several renga (linked verse sequences) for Alec Finlay’s White Peak/Dark Peak project, a series of renga on various key landscape features in the Peak District. White Peak/Dark Peak is the largest work of public art in the UK.

If you would like to know more about the poetry being written and researched into in ESPACH contact Dr. Judy Kendall at: j.kendall@salford.ac.uk
A team of researchers at the University of Salford, led by Professor Paul Haywood, are working with the local community to fight crime not just through the usual channels of police and community action, but with brains and business sense. Through enterprise and creative engagement with the local community, the team are supporting young people in the Inner Greater Manchester area in a campaign against gun crime, by removing gun metal from the stress to recycle into fashion tags and accessories.

The research project that started this whole idea is called WEARPEACE and is part of an AHRC-funded Knowledge Transfer Fellowship entitled ‘Supporting Arts and Enterprise Skills in Communities through Creative Engagement with the Local Area’. The WEARPEACE project brings together multiple agencies including the GMP Xcalibre task force and CARIMA (Community Alliance for Renewal, Inner South Manchester Area) whose shared aim is to support young people in leading campaign initiatives that will improve their life experiences and opportunities. WEARPEACE makes use of Art, Fashion, and Design for Manufacture and Enterprise skills, transferred from the University of Salford and its students, to address and counter issues of gun ownership and gun related crime affecting communities in the Inner South Manchester Area. By utilising the bank of knowledge and expertise available at the University, Paul and his team are working with young people in the Greater Manchester area who have been affected by conditions in their local environment to develop a positive voice and influence their futures. Through business knowledge, artistic and creative intervention, young people can be empowered to change their futures and the conditions in their local environment.

Gun crime, the resultant fatality rate and the community impact, is the main topic in the sites of this project. 48 School pupils recruited from Cedar Mount, Trinity and Whalley Range High Schools took part in fashion design workshops in November 2009 responding to the fashion brief to create a range of street wear clothing under the WEARPEACE label. All pupils produced designs that have been progressed with the help of fashion graduates into originals. The WEARPEACE logo has been cast into a metal relief badge, the initial production removing 45 Kilograms of metal from the police armoury to produce 500 logo designs in metal. The project will move forward with design workshops looking at new marketing tools and accessory designs, interpretations of the ‘Save a Life, not take a Life’ motto and the umbrella, ‘Guns to Goods’ ethical brand. WEARPEACE are working with manufacturing industries and retail businesses to create and disseminate their produce. As a result the campaigning voices of young people are reaching a wide and supportive audience. As their produce becomes available for sale it will directly address the consumer as both audience and supporter. The eventual goal is to raise sufficient return from the collective efforts of all involved in WEARPEACE to be able to move on to develop new product concepts and a sustainable business model.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Paul at: p.haywood@salford.ac.uk

Crime and the results of it are studied at the University of Salford, whether it’s the socio-economic aspect of crime, the health effects of crime, or designing against crime by better planning of our towns and cities. The University works with Greater Manchester Police to ascertain best practice in research to counter issues of crime and to encourage the younger generation to plan and work towards a better, safer, crime free future.
This grant will enable Mustafa and his team to establish a Built line with the University of Salford’s strength in the Built Environment. CEBE will not only encourage multidisciplinary research (which is almost non-existent in Iraq) between engineering, environment, computer science and management, but will also play an important role in upgrading the current curriculum in line with the strategic needs of the country.

For Mustafa and his team, the Basra Centre of Excellence is the start of things to come as the Salford’s School of the Built Environment is working hard to establish a network of Built Environment Centres of Excellence around the world.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Mustafa at: m.a.alshaw@universityofbasra.ac.uk

The future in the past ...

The project recently celebrated an important staging post by producing a documentary charting the history of people in the locality. Over the past five months over one thousand learners have been involved in contributing to the project through activities such as filming, writing, photography and a range of vocal contributions. In May the Lowry hosted an event to celebrate these contributions with the premiere of the film. New Mornings Old Streets is a unique collaboration between the Business Services Unit, MMP People’s Voice Media, Community Service Volunteers and several local community partners. Together they have delivered a project that helps extend the university’s reach into the community as well as helping underline its value to the locality as a broker. One of the most significant elements of the project has been the innovative approach it represents to documentary making. New Mornings Old Streets was in part inspired by a film about the people of the North-West made fifty years ago by Dennis Mitchell and Norman Swallow entitled ‘Morning in the Streets’. However on this occasion the project took the decision to utilise all the tools of social media to invite the community into the film-making process. Crucial to this was the work of partners such as People’s Voice Media, Community Service Volunteers and Salford Arts Theatre amongst many others. Over four months these organisations sought to develop their links with local people by eliciting contributions that helped evoke the history of the era. It is anticipated that this work will soon bear fruit in more projects involving collaboration between the community and the university.

If you would like to know more about this innovative piece of work contact Jane at: j.mcdermott@universityofbasra.ac.uk

A Celebration of Research

Staff and students from the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Environment at the University, gathered together recently to celebrate and review the Faculty’s research highlights from the last academic year and to enable the researchers in the Faculty to spend some time together to discuss current research activities and plan new and exciting areas of collaboration.

Each year the Dean awards a prize to an early career researcher who has made an exceptional contribution to research in the Faculty through the production of significant new research findings, high quality publications or by achieving a prestigious grant. This year’s Dean’s Prize was awarded to Dr James Christian, from the Materials & Physics Research Centre for research in multi-disciplinary science within a theme of complexity. James is a Salford graduate, and is currently funded as an RCUK Academic Fellow.

In addition to the Dean’s Prize the student offering the best poster, from each of the four research strands within the Faculty, was awarded a £100 prize. After a difficult judging process prizes were made to Snejzh Karthikyan of the University’s V’C’s Early Career Research Scholars.

The posters gave an indication of the immense amount of high quality research carried out in the Faculty including studies of anti-cancer drugs, parasites, mosquitoes, glaciers, biomaterials, nanostructures, wind turbines and energy storage. All of which prompted the phrase “I didn’t know we did so much!” to be heard many times over lunch!

If you would like to know more about this innovative piece of work contact Professor Sue Kilcoyne at: s.kilcoyne@universityofbasra.ac.uk from the Centre for Parasitology & Disease Research for a poster on inflammatory bowel disease. It was impossible to determine a single winner for Informatics & Acoustics Research and so the prize was split between Jane Mooney of the Virtual Environment & Future Media Research Centre for her work on emergency mapping and Rodolfo Venegas from the Acoustics Research Centre for his work modelling acoustical properties of multi-scale porous materials.

If you would like to know more about this innovative piece of work contact Professor Sue Kilcoyne at: s.kilcoyne@universityofbasra.ac.uk

The School of the Built Environment here at the University, which was ranked number one in the field of the Built Environment in the UK 2002 RAE and number one at the Research Power Table in 2008 RAE, is not just passionate about the research it conducts but passionate about the implementation of their findings, about sharing their knowledge to create a better more informed living environment, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The grant project, called DelPHE-Iraq, was funded by the British Council, to establish a Centre of Excellence around the world. These passions and beliefs will travel internationally over the coming months, as Professor Mustafa Alshawi, Associate Dean Research and his team have recently been awarded a DelPHE-Iraq grant (£100k) by the British Council, to establish a Centre of Excellence here at the University of Salford (CEBE) at the University of Basra in Iraq. The Centre of Excellence project is also a critical mass of staff and support staff within the University of Basra working hard to establish a network of Built Environment Centres of Excellence around the world.

The posters gave an indication of the immense amount of high quality research carried out in the Faculty including studies of anti-cancer drugs, parasites, mosquitoes, glaciers, biomaterials, nanostructures, wind turbines and energy storage. All of which prompted the phrase “I didn’t know we did so much!” to be heard many times over lunch! If you would like to know more about this research contact Mustafa at: m.a.alshaw@universityofbasra.ac.uk
La Dolce Vita Bologna 2?

Andrew Wootton and Melissa Marselle from the University’s Design Against Crime Solution Centre were recently invited to be keynote speakers at the General Assembly of the Italian Forum for Urban Safety.

The seminar was held in Calderara di Reno, a small Italian city near Bologna’s international airport nicknamed ‘Bologna 2’. The city is currently involved in a major regeneration of a concrete high-rise public housing apartment complex that had become a major hotspot for crime and social problems.

Built in the 1970’s, the development housed 200 apartments on eight-stories, with over a kilometre of internal communal corridors. Thirty years later, crime, social problems, and environmental decay have devastated the building fabric and the lives of its residents. Environmental crime prevention theories to prevent crime and improve community safety are being applied to its reconstruction and the area’s regeneration.

Andrew and Melissa’s keynote highlighted Manchester’s approach to Design Against Crime. From community engagement projects such as the Northmore regeneration projects to the University’s Design Against Crime community engagement programme to the evidence-based crime prevention of the City Centre Crime project and Greater Manchester Police’s Planning for Security consultancy.

Manuscripts and Salordi are a well-known pair of the leading researchers in the field of high-rise public housing developments—but it is sobering to find that Italy, with its classical heritage and la dolce vita, has experienced the same problems.

For more information about the Italian Forum for Urban Safety, visit: www.fisu.it

Collaboration in Business and Art

Dr. Maria Burke, Senior Lecturer from Salford Business School, has had a busy time recently. Maria and colleagues working on the research project concerned with the ‘Internet of Things’ (www.talesofthings) were recognised by the world of scientists as the project was featured in a recent issue of New Scientist Magazine (April 2010).

The New Scientist regularly features projects on the cutting edge of contributions to research. Maria then travelled to sunny climes as she was invited to participate in the International Information Resources Management conference held in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Maria presented a paper on the Emerging Knowledge Economies which looked at three different scenarios of the future and the related roles of Knowledge Management. The conference was hosted by Mona Business School of the University of West Indies and Carleton University, Canada. The theme of the conference, “Collaboration and Community in a Global World” attracted delegates from many nations with interesting workshops on topics such as “Practitioners Forum on Business Intelligence” and “Building IS Research Scholarship with relevance to the Caribbean and Latin America”. As a result of her presentation at the conference Maria has been invited to visit the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (National University of Colombia) which is located in Bogota, to undertake collaborative research and present seminars on her work.

Maria has also been asked to present in another area as well, but not that of business, lecturing or academic research but at the Royal Academy of Arts in London no less! Maria, an amateur artist, had one of her paintings chosen, and another shortlisted, to be exhibited at the Academy’s Summer Exhibition. The room Curator’s final decision out of the two was Maria’s painting ‘At a Guatemalan Market’. Also showing in the Summer Exhibition are renowned artists David Hockney and Tracey Emin. Maria is thrilled to have had her painting chosen and for the work to be hung opposite the Hockney highlighted the experience even more!

If you would like to know more about Maria’s research contact her at: m.e.burke@salford.ac.uk

New Talent New Horizons!

The University of Salford is one of 6 North West Universities collaborating in the Unite with Business project to provide support to local Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs).

This is an £8m project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the North West Development Agency (NWDA), and is thus the most significant project of its type in the region. Salford’s contribution to the project will be to support 120 SMEs over a three year period. The main method of support will be to match graduates and final year students, with appropriate skills, to SMEs requesting support, paid for over a period of 4 weeks by project funds.

Congratulations go to Professor Steven Shardlow, who is the Chair of Social Work here at the University and has been awarded a prestigious honorary degree, Doctor of Social Science by the University of Kuopio, Finland.

Steve was awarded the degree in recognition of his contribution to the field of comparative social work in respect of: evidence based knowledge for social work, applied professional ethics, professional education and his international collaborations that have informed social work policy and practice in the several countries including the UK and Finland.

University of Kuopio degree ceremonies are held at the University once in five years. At the ceremony Steven attended, 138 doctorates were presented to ‘young doctors’ (i.e. recently completed) and 16 honorary doctorates including one to Nobel Peace prize winner and ex-President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari.

Steven is currently leading a major three-year national research project into the professional development of newly qualified social workers with children and families along with his work as editor-in-chief of Journal of Social Work. Steven is currently on sabbatical leave at City University, Hong Kong.

If you would like to know more about Steven’s research contact him at: s.m.shardlow@salford.ac.uk
Knowledge Strengthens the Core

In the last few issues of RISE we've brought you research news on the activities of Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh from the Centre for Disaster Resilience one of University's research centres from the School of the Built Environment.

The Centre for Disaster Resilience research work had achieved the honour of being identified as one of the five academic partners of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Campaign. Dilanthi and Richard have recently been further honoured by being appointed as Advisory Panel members of the UNISDR. Individuals are appointed as Members based on their expertise and recommendations from partnering organisations in the Campaign, Dilanthi and Richard are the only panel members representing the academic community. The overall goal of the campaign is to achieve resilient, sustainable urban communities, with a growing number of local governments that are taking actions to reduce the risks to disasters, to invest smarter in risk reducing measures, to better prepare for, better respond to and recover from disasters.

In line with the UNISDR Resilient Cities Campaign, The Centre held an International Workshop on Disaster Risk reduction and Resilient Cities in Batticaloa, Eastern Sri Lanka in June 2010. The workshop held discussions around establishing continued academic support and delivery of national and international collaborative research support to encourage future research proposals in support of the UNISDR campaign.

Whilst in Sri Lanka Dilanthi, Richard and part of the Salford Centre team (Dr Chaminda Pathirage and Dr. Kaushal Karamanijage), were invited by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate an International Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Assessment and Management for the Coastal Zone of Sri Lanka: Developing a knowledge base on Hazards, Vulnerabilities and Capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction. Several sessions were led by Salford team members such as: knowledge management and best practice sharing in disaster risk management; concept of empowerment; use of virtual networks and other mechanisms in capacity building and risk reduction. A further two training workshops were also led by the Salford team encompassing the concept of stake holders in disaster risk reduction and management and capacity building for disaster preparedness and reconstruction.

Chaminda and Kaushal were in Sri Lanka to not only take part in the provision of workshops but as part of their Vice Chancellor's early career Scholarship data collection activities and they both emphasized the importance of the opportunity they received from UNDP to be facilitators of this international event. The Salford Disaster Centre will continue its research work in Sri Lanka, indeed is working towards a further major initiative lead by Chamber of Construction for Sri Lanka, on the use of construction craftmen programmes for Conflict Transformation commencing in November 2010.

If you would like to know more about the research in the Centre contact Richard at: r.haigh@salford.ac.uk

USA conference and potential new partners

Dr. Bingu Ingrige of the School of the Built Environment, here at the University, was recently awarded an international travel grant from the Royal Academy of Engineering to participate at the International Conference on Innovation in Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEIC) 2010 held at The Penn State University, USA.

Bingu co-chaired a special session on innovations in construction e-Business at the conference and met with leading academics and industrialists, discussing potential collaborative research initiatives with key conference delegates, including Professor Chmyay Anumba, the Conference chair. Bingu’s current research interests are around IT collaborative environments and knowledge transfer.

He has published and secured research funding in areas of project and organisational collaboration leading up to industry level collaboration. At an industry level, Bingu has secured EPSRC funding to improve small business collaboration in facing up to extreme weather events – a major stakeholder engagement initiative.

If you would like more information on Bingu’s research contact him at: M.J.B.Ingrige@salford.ac.uk

Crescent Network

The Crescent Network, a network for early career researchers continues to develop and expand. Now with over 60 members, it is attracting members from all the HEIs in the Greater Manchester region.

Set up in Jan 2010 to offer early (and not so early) career researchers a resource where they can be guided to create a public engagement profile, it also contains information on public engagement grants and training opportunities. More recently, the Network has begun to offer its own training events delivered by members of the network. Always pleased to welcome new members, and given that August is generally a quiet month at the University, now is the ideal time to join if you are an early career researcher who may or may not be thinking of pursuing a career in academia. Just visit http://crescent-network.org.uk/ and sign up – it is easy to do and you will be contacted by a network representative within 48 hours to see how they can support you.

The network aims to encourage its members to support each other so if you feel you have a skill that is related to public engagement and would be happy to share it with others, or if you need any more information on the Network contact Caroline Whalley at: C.Whalley@salford.ac.uk

From Dartmouth to the Oxford Union

Professor Eric Grove, School of English, Sociology and Contemporary History at the University was recently asked to substitute at the Oxford Union debate for his old friend and radio colleague, Christopher Lee, author of ‘Sceptred Isle’, the popular and very well received history of Britain. Eric spoke for the proposition ‘This House believes that the British Empire was a good thing.’

Eric’s side arguing for the point was led by Lawrence James, a well known Imperial Historian, and Conservative politician Kwasi Kwarteng. This opposition was led by Churchill biographer and former Keeper of the Churchill Archive at Cambridge, Piers Brendon and Piers was supported by the television historian Professor Michael Wood and His Excellency Waiz Shamul Hasan, High Commissioner of Pakistan. Sadly, Eric’s side lost!

Eric’s major research interest is the Royal Navy linking into his former role as member academic staff at the Royal Naval College Dartmouth. He first met Christopher, when, as Defence Correspondent for the BBC, the latter was researching a programme on Nelson. This contact also led Eric to be a regular contributor to Strep, a defence current affairs ‘round table’ produced by Chris for the British Forces Broadcasting Service. Eric not only researches into naval history and contemporary security matters, but is also the Director of an Enterprise Centre, the Centre for International Security and War Studies, whose activities include visits by the Chiefs of Staff and lectures by distinguished speakers at Imperial War Museum North.

Appointed as one of the historians on the ITN Factual/Channel 4 ‘Hunt for the Hood and the Bismark’ Eric had to spend a month at sea finding and examining the wreck. On this expedition much new knowledge was gained especially about the catastrophic loss of HMS Hood. This resulted from a journal article and a chance meeting on a train! Since then, Eric has become a confirmed ‘teledon’ on naval matters and last year was involved in helping make a number of programmes. The most notable was with National Geographic Television who came to England with their American and Japanese experts to utilise Eric’s expert knowledge for a major programme on Japanese submarines.

Eric says of his old time friend and media colleague, Christopher, ‘my high profile - and my performance in Oxford in February can be traced to that meeting long ago with Chris at Dartmouth and his kind patronage since’.

If you would like to know more about Eric’s research contact him at: e.grove@salford.ac.uk
he paper entitled ‘Designing a stress management intervention in social services’ was published in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management. Every year Emerald invites each journal’s Editorial Team to nominate what they believe has been an Outstanding Paper from the previous 12 months and this paper was chosen as an Outstanding Paper Award Winner at the Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2010.

The background to this research project emanates from the major changes to the British public sector system during the 1980s and 1990s with the arrival of new public service management, an emphasis on performance management, devolution of responsibility from central to local government and the pressure to increase effectiveness of management. These factors coupled with a shortage of staff in the public sector and more so in an area that requires high skill level and competency such as social services and poor working conditions, have led to a workforce that experiences high levels of stress on a day to day basis.

Organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence have highlighted the importance of reporting on the design of health interventions as well as health outcomes. The purpose of Lindsey and the team’s research was to evaluate the design of a stress management intervention, rather than evaluating the implementation of an intervention and the outcomes of this programme. The research study was carried out in three phases: phase 1 (diagnosing the problem) via questionnaire and; phase 2 forming focus groups to develop, through participation with members of groups, interventions from an agreed starting point or baseline; phase 3 to evaluate processes involved in phase one and two. The research team found that there were difficulties in moving forward but that the key barriers included the major changes that were taking place within the organisations. These changes led to staff being distrustful of management and sceptical of the value of any research. There was a distinct lack of resources and this led to difficulties in translating any findings into actions. Key factors for successful interventions would include a strong commitment from senior management; a willingness by staff to participate; realistic expectations, responsibilities and time-frames agreed at the outset of the initiative and cooperation from relevant unions. The study demonstrated that there would be benefits to a successful implementation of the stress management intervention including: improved health literacy, changes to organisational policies and practices and staff empowerment and participation.

Few can doubt the high stress factor of working in social services today, research such as this of Lindsey and her team proves the benefits of evaluating and refining an intervention before it is implemented ensuring that practice really is good practice and saves time, resources and staff time.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Lindsay at: l.dugdill@salford.ac.uk
The Future of Learning

Mid career academic Professor Jim Newell has girded up his past, assessed the present and walked into the future. Jim has launched his own web page and blog -

It’s academia Jim but not as we know it...

It is now widely accepted in academic circles that the onus of new media, the changes in the way our society acts and interacts socially and professionally through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, that some kind of social change has acquired a heightened significance for the successful continuation of the academic trade.

Jim, a Professor of Politics at the University said: “There are at least four reasons for this. The first is the development of the Internet itself, with the first generation of web technologies having been overtaken by the second we now have a medium that allows users to be the producers and contributors of information as well as its consumers. Through blogs and social networking sites, such as Myspace, and SoWe, users can comment in a way that has resulted in decentralisation, the generation of information from the ‘bottom up’. Through these and other sites, such as ‘YouTube and Wikipedia, users can now share ideas and interact as information providers, rather than being the passive recipients of information provided to them. Second, the internet now offers students and scholars unvalued opportunities to share research findings, to engage in discussion of their work and participate with others in the development of scholarly communities. Thirdly it offers unparalleled opportunities to engage in dialogue with those outside the academic community and to demonstrate the relevance of what we do to those outside the ‘ivory towers”; it enables us to be ‘visible’. Finally, for all of the foregoing reasons, a web presence seems likely, at a certain point, to become an essential prerequisite of the capacity to engage in the ordinary processes of social interaction at all”.

In creating his website and blog Jim has been aided by Cristina Costa, the University’s Research Technologies Development Officer, who is keenly enthusiastic about networking for students, lecturers and researchers at the University, introducing new ways of talking, teaching, connecting and communicating research.

So far Jim’s development of his media presence is going well especially in his own area of Politics, in fact he says: “Blogging seems particularly well adapted to political reflection insofar as a blog’s distinguishing features are commentary or news on a particular subject, and the ability of readers to engage with that commentary through comments of their own. Politics, after all, is carried on through the medium of discussion. The writing of commentary, I have found – offering as it does the opportunity immediately to publish unfiltered reflections on a topic – is every bit as satisfying as writing for any other kind of outlet”.

If you would like to know more about Jim’s research contact him at: j.newell@salford.ac.uk or visit his blog at: www.jlnewell.com/

Innovative ways of working

The School of the Built Environment’s (SOBE) EXCEL-DL project has been selected to participate in the HEA Discipline-focused Learning Technology Enhancement Academy programme for 2010.

The project is supported by the Higher Education Academy’s Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) and is one of the current round of projects, focusing on strategically improving the use of technology to enhance learning, teaching and assessment.

The EXCEL-DL project aims to evaluate the use of Illuminate Live, a synchronous online collaboration and delivery tool which is currently widely used with postgraduate distance learners studying in the School of the Built Environment. The project team is carrying out detailed research into the use of Illuminate within SOBE to discover and learn from the insights of staff and students who use this software regularly and investigate how postgraduate HEI provision can be aligned with the delivery and educational needs of situated learners, employers and other stakeholders.

From this initial research, examples of good practice will be identified and collected and use to extend pedagogic and technical training provision and to form an evidence base for extending its use.

The EXCEL-DL project team have organised an Illuminate webinar and one-day conference on the 10th of November 2010 from 1pm till 4pm, and will disseminate the findings of the project through the ECE Learning Technology Good practice event in January 2011 and the Salford ECE conference later that year.

If you have experience using Illuminate or other virtual classroom systems as an educator or learner and would like to help with EXCEL-DL’s research contact Brodie McAdam at: b.mcadam@salford.ac.uk

Skype Research Supports Students!

Melanie Stephens, International Link Lead and Lecturer in Adult Nursing, from the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Salford is moving her action research practice into an educational virtual future.

Melanie is currently leading on a research project which is evaluating the effectiveness of Skype as a tool for promoting internationalisation of the nursing curriculum. In the past, the University of Salford’s School of Nursing students on international placements used a blog to communicate with their peers and tutors, this practice originally developed from a Socrates Erasmus initiative to allow research participants on their peers’ and tutors’ visits and thus aid the students’ learning ‘as it happened’, thus aiding their development of analysis and deep reflection. The additional value of using a blog was the provision of an international perspective of nursing care to the action research group. The evaluation from the first cycle of action research made many recommendations, which will be included training ground rules, level of support and visual improvements to the blog appearance and regular student contribution. A crucial factor was that students still prefer face to face communication and missed this interaction whilst on their international placement, as the students still felt socially isolated which reduced their motivation to continue with their studies. In the second cycle of this research project, Melanie and her colleagues, Dawn Hennefee, Mike Barker, Denis McGrath and Annabella Glöster, will aim to gain an insight into the effectiveness of Skype as a medium for student support whilst said students are on international placements, enabling them to continue their other Skype uses nationally and internationally, enhancing the international experience of the students and staff and increasing their virtual mobility. Academics who are involved as a modular team member, personal tutor or part of the international strategy group will also take part in this research.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Melanie at: m.stephens@salford.ac.uk

Bellcurve

An European Union (EU) labour force survey in 2008 reported that there is a mismatch between graduate skills and labour market requirements, the report highlighted the need for university programmes to be structured to enhance the employability of graduates and to offer broad support to the workforce more generally in order to overcome this persistent mismatch between graduate qualifications and the requirements of the labour market.

Universities also should be able to offer innovative curricula, teaching methods and training/retraining programmes which include broader employment-related skills along with the more discipline specific skills. This requires a much clearer commitment by universities to lifelong learning opportunities. Lifelong learning presents a challenge, in that it will require universities to be more open to providing courses for students at later stages in the life cycle.

With this EU Report in mind, here at the University of Salford, a research project led by Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Dr Charminda Pathirage and David Baldry along with others at the School of the Built Environment and supported by the European Commission have embarked on a project called BELLCURVE (Built Environment Lifelong Learning Response to Vocational Education). This project considers ‘student engagement’ as a continuous through-life process rather than a traditional engagement limited by the course duration.

This through-life studentship defines the essence of the new innovative ‘lifelong university’ concept, whereby providing an environment for learners to acquire and develop skills and knowledge enabling responding to changing construction labour market needs on a continuous basis.

BELLCURVE aims to promote the concept of ‘lifelong university’ in modernising Higher Education Institutes (HEI) to be more responsive to labour market skills and needs. ‘Lifelong university’ encourage graduates who are either employed or unemployed to inform their university on the labour market skills requirements. This will provide the opportunity for HEIs to be appropriately responsive, to provide the right mix of skills, training and retraining programmes.

The project will also focus on governance reforms in HEIs delivering Built Environment programmes across the EU emphasising the need to contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in systems and practices. One of the main objectives of the project is to develop a framework for HEIs to promote the concept of lifelong university in capturing and responding to lifelong learning skills needs in the Built Environment and to provide recommendations on governance reforms for HEIs to become ‘continuing education centers’ for graduates while responding to labour market skill needs.
Universities Nuclear Technology Forum

The up and coming brains of the nuclear industry, new areas of research, and volcanic ash sunsets setting over the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, created a vibrant start and a beautiful end to the Universities Nuclear Technology Forum (UNTF)!

Delegates attended from University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, University of Manchester, and other UK Universities involved in nuclear technology including Salford. Professor Martin Hall, University of Salford Vice-Chancellor, opened the event and took the opportunity to announce that Salford University is about to appoint a Director of Nuclear Safety to lead the planned expansion of teaching and research in the area as part of the Energy Theme.

The Conference Dinner speaker was Dame Sue Ion, who was previously Research Director of British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) and now involved in many aspects of the new nuclear power programme and an old friend of Salford Physics. A crowded and exciting programme of presentations was given over the even, 48 presentations in total. The Nuclear Institute prize for the best presentation by a research student went to Prashant Selvaratnam, from Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge for his talk on “Materials for Nuclear Waste Immobilisation: A Case Study of Fluorapatite and Xenotime”.

All agreed the conference was a success and highlighted the exciting and new research arising out of Nuclear Technology.

If you would like to know more about the research behind this conference contact Professor Keith Ross at: d.k.ross@salford.ac.uk


effects of the budget: a political forecast

James Newell, a Professor of Politics here at the University of Salford, has been studying the possible effects of the new Coalition Government Budget, read on for his fair or foul weather political forecast!

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This new project "URBAN RETROFIT" Re-Engineering the City 2020-2050: Urban Foresight and Transition Management will address the critical challenge for contemporary urbanism: how do cities develop the knowledge and capability to systemically reengineer their built environment and urban infrastructure in response to climate change and resource constraints? This new research initiative will respond to the challenge in a purposive and managed way by bringing together two disconnected issues and asking: "What" is to be done to the city (technical knowledge, targets, technological options, costs, etc) and "how" will it be implemented (institutions, publics, governance).

The project starts from the perspective that the processes of urbanisation which underpin the development of cities are complex and that urban environment can best be understood as complex socio-technical systems. Cities become ‘locked in’ to particular patterns of energy and resource use - constrained by existing infrastructural investments, sunk costs, institutional rigidities and vested interests. Understanding how to better re-engineer our cities and urban infrastructure, to overcome ‘lock in’ and facilitate systems change, will be critical to achieving sustainability.

The core rationale for the project was developed in the ESRC/ARUP funded placement programme undertaken by SURF with ARUP offices in both the UK and internationally (previously reported in RISE). This involved SURF undertaking a programme of work with the different professional disciplines involved in the retrofitting agenda in ARUP and policy communities in selected city-regions. This project revealed that the critical challenges was the need to develop the knowledge and capability to overcome the separation between the "what" and "how" of urban scale retrofitting in order to promote a managed socio-technical transition in built environment and urban infrastructure.

The technical component of the research will explore urban scale retrofitting as a managed socio-technical transition, focusing on prospective developments in the built environment - linking buildings, utilities, land use and transport planning - and in so doing will develop a generic urban transitions framework for wider application. The geographical focus will be on two of the UK’s major ‘city regions’:

Understanding how to better re-engineer our cities and urban infrastructure...will be critical to achieving sustainability

The team from the University's research centre for Sustainable and Urban Regional Futures (SURF) are celebrating after recently securing a large (£2m) EPSRC Sustainable Urban Environments (SUE) funded project working with four other academic partners, these being: the Low Carbon Research Institute at the Welsh School of Architecture (WSA) at Cardiff University; the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) at Oxford Brookes University; and the University of Cambridge; Department of Engineering, Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD). The project was amongst just four funded in the final round of SUE.

Cardiff/South East Wales and Greater Manchester. Both areas have a long history of urbanisation and post industrial decline, and are actively seeking to manage a purposive transition to sustainability through harnessing processes of master planning, regeneration, and economic development, and driving through significant programmes of retrofitting and infrastructural development, together with institutional and governance innovations, such as the establishment of Low Carbon Zones. The proposal brings together an experienced, interdisciplinary team of leading academic researchers, with commercial and public sector research users. Commercial collaborators will include Corus and Arup. Regional collaborators will include Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot Borough Councils, WAG and AGMA/ Manchester City Region Environment Commission. National dissemination will take place through the BRE, Core Cities, CABE, RICS, and the National Science Advisors of key Government Departments.

If you would like to know more about this research project contact Simon at: s.marvin@salford.ac.uk

For further details about his project and other research see: www.surf.salford.ac.uk
Community Cohesion
Or Social Engineering?

The programme was designed to support Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households to move from traditional BME areas where they experienced poor housing conditions and relatively high levels of overcrowding in the social housing sector to more suitable properties in predominantly white areas of the two towns. The type of support provided ranged from: accompanied viewing of the property; introductions to neighbours; rapid response to incidents of anti-social behaviour and racial harassment; and access to support staff. Between 40 and 60 BME households, predominantly Asian, have been supported to move out of their traditional area over the last few years. A range of residents and other stakeholders were interviewed as part of the evaluation. The evaluation identified a number of critical factors which impacted on the potential success of this type of intervention. The development of less invasive techniques for a variety of surgical procedures can tell a thousand different stories and give the rest of us a totally new perspective on life, on our immediate surroundings, and our global environment, whose images can transport our everyday lives way into the future.

Anaesthetic Concerns

Dr. Mark Mitchell, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health and Social Care at the University, has recently had a paper published in the Journal of Advanced Nursing, highlighting his research into anaesthesia and the psychological impacts of today’s predilection to short stay hospital treatments.

The scope and quantity of surgery now possible in day and short stay facilities is increasing on a global scale. In the United Kingdom on average 62% of planned surgery is now undertaken on a day case basis and this figure continues to rise. In a matter of a few short hours patients can undergo general anaesthesia, complex surgery, recovery and be discharged home later the same day. Recently, 674 patients undergoing both general anaesthesia (GA) and local anaesthesia (LA) for a variety of surgical procedures were interviewed to gain insight into the psychological impact of such a “clinically streamlined” approach to surgical intervention.

Community Cohesion
Or Social Engineering?

The University’s Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHSU) recently undertook an evaluation of a Community Induction Programme for The Oldham and Rochdale Pathfinder.

The programme was designed to support Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households to move from traditional BME areas where they experienced poor housing conditions and relatively high levels of overcrowding in the social housing sector to more suitable properties in predominantly white areas of the two towns. The type of support provided ranged from: accompanied viewing of the property; introductions to neighbours; rapid response to incidents of anti-social behaviour and racial harassment; and access to support staff. Between 40 and 60 BME households, predominantly Asian, have been supported to move out of their traditional area over the last few years. A range of residents and other stakeholders were interviewed as part of the evaluation. The evaluation identified a number of critical factors which impacted on the potential success of this type of intervention. The development of less invasive techniques for a variety of surgical procedures can tell a thousand different stories and give the rest of us a totally new perspective on life, on our immediate surroundings, and our global environment, whose images can transport our everyday lives way into the future.

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If you would like to know more about the research behind the Photography Festival contact Lawrence at: Lg.giles@salford.ac.uk
Exploring Leisure Lives Workshop

The University’s innovative research space, the Think Lab, was the venue for a groundbreaking bid planning workshop, led by Dr Carolyn Downs of Salford Business School and facilitated by Dr Joanne Tipit (University of Manchester) using the KETSO kit.

KETSO provides a set of tabletop tools that can be used to capture and display people’s ideas. It consists of colourful ‘branches’, ‘leaves’ and other materials, which can be placed on a felt workspace and easily moved around in response to changing discussions. This innovative approach allowed workshop participants from diverse backgrounds to participate as equals in a discussion that generated new ideas, structures and themes for the Exploring Leisure Lives bid.

This new bid has grown out of the Iconic Salford project ‘Keep it in the Can’ and Carolyn’s work with the Mass Observation Archive in Sussex and Bolton. The reason for a workshop was to incorporate the ideas of the Greater Manchester-wide consortium involved in this exciting project that aims to document the leisure lives and their meanings of young people in Greater Manchester and to compare them with archival records of past leisure lives; exploring aspects of continuity and change using a participatory action research (PAR) model.

Participatory Action Research requires the involvement of stakeholders from the earliest stages and the workshop was attended by young people from Walkden High School, academics from the University of the Basque Country, Bolton, Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan and Salford Universities, representatives from the People’s History Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Salford Museum, Mass Observation (Bolton) and Renaissance NW as well as staff from the PCT (healthy schools) and local youth services. The workshop was funded by the Centre for Enterprise and Innovation Research. It is envisaged that outputs from the research will include policy briefings on youth leisure in the 21st century, exhibitions of photographs, a DVD, book and conference with the possibility of a subsequent DVD, book and conference with the possibility of a subsequent academic journal publication.

Socio-Legal Olympics

Dr Mark James, Director of the Salford Centre of Legal Research, at the University together with co-author Professor Guy Osborn of the University of Westminster are the first Law Researchers to be asked to contribute to a new website launched by the British Library. The Social Sciences Collection of the Library has recently launched ‘Sport & Society – the Summer Olympics through the lens of social science’. This new bid has grown out of the Iconic Salford project ‘Keep it in the Can’ and Carolyn’s work with the Mass Observation Archive in Sussex and Bolton. The reason for a workshop was to incorporate the ideas of the Greater Manchester-wide consortium involved in this exciting project that aims to document the leisure lives and their meanings of young people in Greater Manchester and to compare them with archival records of past leisure lives; exploring aspects of continuity and change using a participatory action research (PAR) model.

The aim of the website is to draw attention to and act as a portal for the British Library’s extensive resources on the Olympic Movement in general and the London 2012 Games in particular and to act as a historical record of the research likely to be carried out over the next three years. There are also discussions ongoing between the Library and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) for the collection to form part of the Games’ legacy and for it to act as a repository for all of the official documentation generated by the 2012 Olympics. On completion of the project, likely to be in mid-2013, all materials will be permanently electronically archived.

An integral part of this project has been the commissioning of original articles by leading academics on Olympic-related issues, and that’s where Mark and Guy came in. They have both written extensively on the legal regulation of sport and have worked together previously as founding editors of the Entertainment and Sports Law Journal. Their article, ‘Consuming the Olympics: the fan, the rights holder and the law’ critically analyses Parliament’s reasoning behind the creation of a new offence of ticket touting that will criminalise the reselling of tickets to Olympic sporting and cultural events without the permission of LOCOG. In particular, it questions why the Olympics is considered to be so different from other popular sporting and cultural events, such as the Wimbledon tennis championships, rugby union test matches and the Glastonbury music festival, that it alone requires legislative protection from ticket touting.

You can find out more about the British Library initiative at: http://www.bl.uk/sportsandsoc/index.html

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Or visit the KETSO site at: www.ketso.com/what.html

A welcome visitor

International partnerships creating innovative working relationships are key to producing good research, that’s the belief here at the University of Salford, and to this end we take pleasure in welcoming Professor Ilene Alexander from the University of Minnesota on sabbatical at Salford from September to December 2011.

Ilene is a Teaching Consultant at Minnesota’s Centre for Teaching and Learning, a Preparing Future Faculty Instructor, and a Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Career Planning Consultant. Ilene’s research, drawing on training and teaching in political science, English (literature and composition), women’s studies and American Studies, focuses on incorporating multicultural teaching and learning, teaching with writing, and engaged course design in graduate as well as undergraduate courses.

While in Salford, Ilene will be working with Research and Graduate College and the Education in a Changing Environment conference committee.

If you would like to know more about Ilene’s research contact her at: ilene.dawn@gmail.com or visit: http://writewhatyoureallythink.blogspot.com/
New Appointments

Professor Vian Ahmed has national and international recognition within Built Environment education, particularly in the fields of Construction Management, IT, and e-learning. Vian has produced a significant number of quality publications in journals and conference papers, as well as contributing respected editorials to a number of international journals. Vian has demonstrated significant initiative in growing the number of candidates registered on the School’s on-line PhD programme from 4 to 23 and has generated significant research income, including prestigious projects funded from the EPSRC and the European Social Fund. She is a member of a number of national and international scientific and organising committees and over the last three years has run two very successful International Postgraduate Conferences.

Professor Lindsey Dugdill has been appointed as Professor of Public Health. Lindsey is the Director of the Centre for Social Justice and Homelessness Research. She has published work on health evaluation in the workplace for the World Health Organisation and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Programme Development Group for Children’s Physical Activity and has contributed to several prestigious editorials to a number of international journals. She has been a member of the Department of Health in the UK, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Programme Development Group for Children’s Physical Activity and has been involved in several prestigious editorials in leading journals such as Employee Relations, Public Personnel Management, The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of World Business, Human Resource Development International, Leadership and Personnel Review. She has recently taught leadership and cross-cultural HRM in China, Malaysia and the Middle East in such journals as Employee Relations, Public Personnel Management.

Professor Alison Hammond holds the lead position in the UK in terms of the number of research and influence in the field of Rheumatology. Her novel approach to patient and public involvement in research has led to a number of international collaborations. Alison’s research and findings are used as evidence to support national and international guidelines for rheumatoid arthritis by the Department of Health as well as professional bodies in the UK and internationally. Alison has also secured regular and increasing research grants from the only UK rheumatology research charity and has been invited to contribute to over 30 national or international meetings in the past decade.

Professor Howard Foster has made a major contribution to the teaching and research in microbiology and is recognised as a “major influence” in the development of student potential. With a strong track record in obtaining enterprise funding, Howard has taken a lead in new developments in biotechnology, propelling Salford to a centre of excellence in the microbiology of cutting edge development and disease. Howard referrers for a very diverse range of biological science publications, including high impact journals and has international connections as an external examiner and invited visiting professor.

Professor Peter Dwyer has been promoted to Professor of Social Policy in the School of Social Work, Psychology and Public Health. He joined the University in 1997, having been Professor of Social Policy at Nottingham Trent University and Senior Lecturer at the University of Leeds. Two key themes that underpin much of Peter’s research are the changing character of social citizenship and the implications that migration (in its various forms), may have for migrants’ rights and also host communities. He is currently working on a project exploring multiple exclusion homelessness jointly funded by the ESRC, IRC, and the DCLG.

Professor Aris Syntos has been appointed as Professor of Contemporary Fine Art in the School of Art and Design for his practice in Experimental Performance and Knowledge Exchange. He is currently Associate Head for Enterprise and Engagement, Wider Engagement Partnership and contributes to the MA in Contemporary Fine Art and the new work based learning Masters in Creative Education. Paul joined the Department of Design, Manufacture and Technology at University College Salford 14 years ago, before the University merger, as a demonstrator/technician. He spent his early working life, part Masters, in a mixture of self-employment and fixed term contracts. Paul has gained an international research profile from his public realm projects working with artists, local authority professionals and regeneration practitioners. He is collaborating with Sam Ingleson and Jo Clements on a three year AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship developing a method of creative social campaign activism. The key project (“Guns to Goods”) is a partnership with the charity CARRI and the Greater Manchester Police to develop community leadership in an enterprise that will convert gun metals, reclaimed from the police armoury, into design concepts and, finally, into mass production, thus enabling a direct source of potential income to sustain the action.

Professor Chung Mun Yip has been appointed as Chair in Optional Finance at the University of Salford Business School. Chung joined the University in 2003, first as a Lecturer and then in 2007 as Reader in OR and EM. His research interests relate primarily to statistical demand forecasting and its interface with inventory management and he has contributed substantially towards bridging the gap between the two disciplines. His research has been supported by an amount totaling £8.6M from the EPSRC, Royal Society, and the Technology Strategy Board. All projects have run with the support of many industrial organisations ranging from local SMEs to International Manufacturers and IT service providers. Aris has published widely in the top international OR and OM journals and he is currently holding the chief editorial position (with Professors Scratf and Mamor) of the IMA Journal of Management Mathematics (Oxford University Press); he is also Associate Editor (Viewpoints) for the Journal of the Operational Research Society (Palgrave Macmillan). Since 2007, his research has been presented in more than 30 symposia and 15 Universities worldwide.

Professor Sarah Tyson leads neuromuscular rehabilitation research in the School of Health, Sport and Rehabilitation where she has led research in clinical practice, understanding postural control and mobility problems of individuals with a range of current and novel physiotherapy interventions and assistive devices in people with neurological conditions, particularly stroke. She has over 60 publications and £1million of research funding from the Dept of Health, research councils, medical charities and professional bodies. Outside the University, Sarah is President of two national clinical research organisations and works closely with the NHS to re-design and improve stroke rehabilitation services and promote rehabilitation research.

Professor Arto Kiviniemi has been appointed as Professor of Digital Architectural Design. After his career of 24 years as a designer/architect, Arto has 13 years experience in R&D. In 1996-2006 he worked at YIT where he in 1997-2002 led the Finnish technology programme which established Finland’s position as a leading country in utilizing Integrated Building Information Modelling (IBIM) in Real Estate and Construction industry. In this period Arto also established a leading role in the global IBIM development and deployment of the integrated BIM. Arto has made an active role in the international IBIM standardisation in IAV buildingSMART since 1998. He acted as the Chairman of the Steering Group of SCI 2002-2009, as a member of Industry Board and Technical Committee of CIE 1999-2005, and as a member of the Scenarios Working Group at BuildingEnvelope.org project at Harvard University 2001-2004. In 2006 Arto was appointed as the Research Professor for ICT Built Environment and Research Coordinator for ICT. In 2012 and built IBIM development in Finland’s largest building services engineering company Granlund. In 2008 Arto Kiviniemi was awarded with IATECH CTEI Outstanding Researcher Award for his national role in the development and implementation of integrated BIM. a.kiviniemi@salford.ac.uk
These are some of the issues that Krisanthi Seneviratne, PhD Student in the School of the Built Environment, is examining in her research into socio economic conditions and housing needs within post conflict housing reconstruction.

Krisanthi, who is supervised by Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh in the Centre for Disaster Resilience, is researching into post conflict reconstruction of societies, focusing especially on the area of housing. Housing is an essential asset to the well-being and development of societies and housing shortages and inadequate housing constitute a severe and pressing problem for many individuals and governments alike. Housing though in many parts of the world is an extremely vulnerable asset and destruction of homes, or their loss through displacement or dispossession, is one of the most visible effects of conflict. Post conflict housing reconstruction is crucial; as a means of incentive to repatriate and rebuild a devastated area, to rebuild the community and as an essential part of the wider effort to rebuild towards peace.

However it is found that post conflict housing interventions, that are planned and implemented too rapidly pay little attention to beneficiaries’ needs, expectations, local conditions, socio-economic or cultural issues. These approaches to reconstruction, pre-fabricated technology, imported materials and professional judgements on what people need are used, in urgency, to produce mass housing units to re-house the victims.

Consequently, the outcome of these initiatives are housing projects that in time need to be remodelled to suit citizens’ needs or even become abandoned, wasting time, effort and precious resources.

Krisanthi’s research aims to examine the needs of citizens in a post conflict society, not just immediate needs such as temporary shelter, but to take into account all areas of life, to develop a theoretical model which explains the beneficiaries’ socio economic conditions and their housing needs, to construct a clear pathway and develop usable strategies to deliver appropriate housing reconstruction post conflict.

This study is mainly concerned with subjective meanings of housing needs and takes a qualitative approach to data collection. Among many approaches of conducting social research, this study selects the grounded theory as the most appropriate research strategy as it is well suited to the needs of qualitative, exploratory, studies of human interaction and small-scale research. Data collection will be done through unstructured interviews with beneficiaries who need housing and with professionals, practitioners and policy makers who are involved in post conflict housing reconstruction within the context of post conflict reconstruction.

If you would like to know more about Krisanthi’s research contact her at: t.k.k.seneviratne@pgr.salford.ac.uk
Cross Discipline Research

As the newly appointed Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Salford, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the August/September issue of RISE Postgraduate Research News. I am looking forward to welcoming you to future issues, and for you to experience the exciting and emerging research being produced by our postgraduate students. Cutting across disciplines, working interactively and strengthening the future of research is one of the University of Salford’s continual commitments to our belief that research should be applicable to the real world and the surroundings that we live in.

In this issue you will see such research emerging from our PhD students, for example Krisanthi Sarvevalle a PhD student from the School of the Built Environment is researching into the post disaster environment and examining measures that are currently being implemented post disaster, for instance these measures implemented too hastily, hindering recovery rather than helping it? Our research students look at the past as well as the future, Helen Tither a Masters student working with colleagues Eli Modestou and Brynjia Dogg-Fridrikssdot have researched and made films into child poverty in the area concentrating on the Wood Street Mission in Manchester, a place that has been providing help for the poor since Victorian times and is still doing so today. Does the future get better? For some maybe, but what will the future be like? That’s something that Antonio Espinargardo, who has appeared in the Postgraduate News in previous issues, is looking into. His research into the ethics of robotics examines the possibilities in the future of robotics and robots and their inclusion in our everyday lives.

Another success for the postgraduate community here at the University was the recently held Salford Postgraduate Annual Research Conference (SPARC), this year was the 15th anniversary of this conference and was marked with its largest ever attendance. It’s not just Salford students that attend this annual event, this year saw postgraduate students attend from Bristol, Exeter, Canterbury Christ Church, Reading and the Open University.

As my colleague Professor Erik Knudsen mentioned in this section in the May/June issue of RISE, the University is keen to encourage the many ways in which our research students can engage their work with the wider community, the fact that these relationships both nationally and internationally are going from strength to strength is a true indication of the quality research being produced by our students.

Professor Vian Ahmed
Director of Graduate Studies

The Directorate of Graduate Studies (DGS) was established to provide a champion for graduate studies across the University. The office, in Faraday House, looks after all aspects of central Postgraduate provision, including Postgraduate Skills Training, e-learning and careers, and has responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement of Postgraduate programmes, as well as representing the University externally, in particular on graduate organisations such as vitae and the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE).

Members of the Team

The current Director, Professor Vian Ahmed, School of Built Environment. Email: v.ahmed@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 6937

Linda Kelly is the Graduate Studies Office administrator, and responsible for running the office as the DGS PA, as well as organising the SHRt programme. Email: l.m.kelly@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 3841

Cristina Costa is the Learning Technologies Development Officer, and looks after all e-learning resources on postgraduate research programmes. Email: c.mendesdacosta@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 6751

Fiona Christie is the Careers advisor with responsibility for postgraduate researchers, and is based in Careers within the Student Life division. Her PhD careers blog can be found here. Email: f.christie@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 5668

Jaye McIsaac is the Educational Developer responsible for teaching and learning development for Graduate Teaching Assistants and other Postgraduate Teachers and is based within the Research and Graduate College. Email: j.mcisaac@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 3747

Dr Victoria Sheppard is the Research Skills Coordinator. She oversees the provision of skills training, the SPARC postgraduate conference and other events and resources to support postgraduate researchers. Email: v.m.sheppard@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 4452

Addendum: Professor Les Ruddick, School of the Built Environment, acted as Interim Director of Graduate Studies from 1st May 2010 to 31st August 2010.

Research Innovation and Internationalisation News

The Human Robotics Interaction

PhD Student Antonio Espinargardo continues his research in the ethics of robotics, supervised by Dr. Samia Nefzi-Mezian. Antonio’s research delves into the possibilities of robots in our everyday lives. Antonio says: “As machines cross the boundaries of the big industrial players, we must be long until they reach our houses with the most varied forms and functions. An important factor for the success of robotics is based on a deep analysis about the human requirements and behaviours before any project is developed.

This process involves exhaustive research on the ethics associated to the Human Robotics Interaction (HRI) which has to continue far beyond the deployment stage of the final product into the market. As robotics and automation devices are expected to be deployed to do more directly with humans than normal day PCs, mobile phones etc this imposes much higher challenges, challenges that we haven’t seen in the past.

One of the biggest issues in this area has to do with privacy of people regarding the use of intelligent devices in their homes. A large amount of personal information stored in a robot is as precious as any ordinary material objects that we use in our lives. The coexistence of humans and machines is already possible through many forms of interactions that we use unconsciously (e.g ATMs, parking systems, automatic checkout etc) however this area of research is just starting to take off and further investigation is needed.

Ultimately it’s important to understand robotics as a technological paradigm that can improve our quality of life whilst we transform ourselves into more ethical beings. So the exercise of designing, developing and using robots represents a long journey to the roots of humankind and suggests how can we improve ourselves into the future generations”.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Antonio at: a.m.c.espinargardo18@psr.salford.ac.uk

Travelling the Blogosphere

Phil Student (and full time member of staff) Gareth Morris based, in the Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit, is researching into place attachment and currently setting himself on a pathway to travel through the blogosphere! Below he tells us about the thoughts behind his research, how he started and what being an academic blogger means.

Travelling through the blogosphere is not a journey to be taken lightly. The paths are frequently rocky and steep, sometimes there is no pathway at all and so you have to fashion one. Like any journey worth undertaking the destination is largely irrelevant because it’s the adventure of the trip, the unexpected twists and turns that make it worthwhile. But there is a point to the journey – it is for knowing, sharing, learning, and exchanging. If you already know everything then you’d better stay at home, this journey is not for you!

The blogosphere is a place in the online world. It has a sibling in the offline world which we know better as face-to-face interaction, as conversation with friends, colleagues, rivals and the people we share proximity of geographical space. These interactions include some people and exclude others, after all, not everyone can share physical space, it’s just not possible to squeeze all those people into one place at one time. The blogosphere transcends physical space and time, and offers a degree of inclusivity, of continuity and of reciprocity.

To be a blogger is to blog and to blog is to think, to write, to question and to answer. It’s a thinker’s paradise. My own journey first began with a blog on homelessness and has since continued with a second on the psychological phenomenon of place attachment. It encourages me to think, reflect, write, question, and probe others for information and feedback for my sometimes loose and roughly considered ideas.

But the journey of your own blog is only half the trip. Just like driving to Dover you need to traverse the Channel to really end up somewhere exotic. This is because you need to influence and be influenced by the others you meet on the way and you can’t do this in your own backyard.

You need to meet the wise masters, the apprentices and those who just tread the path in a different way to what you do. It’s about crossing disciplines and finding the bridges and connections that link them together while carefully sidestepping the cracks and fissures that will forever lie in the landscape. This is where the treasure is hidden – this is the true domain of the academic blogger.

If you would like to know more about Gareth’s research contact him at: g.j.morris@salford.ac.uk or visit his blogs at http://placeattachment.com and http://homelesssinstitute.com

Postgraduate research news

RISE

Research Innovation and Internationalisation News
The conference has always been an excellent opportunity for dialogue between postgraduates from North West institutions, and this year the remit was expanded nationally. There were over 160 delegates, and alongside presenters from the Universities of Bolton, Chester, Cumbria, Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores, Salford welcomed researchers from the Universities of Bristol, Exeter, Canterbury Christ Church, Reading and the Open University. Offering a full and varied programme over the two days, there were a number of parallel sessions of paper presentations. Several of these sessions reflected the University’s six strategic themes while others promoted research strengths in international business, literature, translation, e-learning, and digital applications in banking and education. The full programme of the conference and the abstracts for all the sessions and paper presentations can be viewed on the Salford Postgraduate Research website. Professor Ghassan Aoudad, Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation and Professor Paul Hannon from Arts, Letters, Translation, and Technology offered two very different perspectives on research in action. Ghassan opened the conference with a valuable discussion of best practice for those currently going through the PhD process, based on his own experience of research and supervision, and that of several other researchers in the Built Environment whilst Paul’s pre-dinner evening talk provided an engaging example of taking research outside of the university. Paul encouraged audiences to think about the meanings of community identity and the relationship between practice and research, drawing on his own research experiences and his ongoing community engagement through art which have been recognised with an AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship. This year for the first time the poster session was voted for by the conference delegates, based on a session in which presenters gave a 60 second ‘pitch’ to the delegates. Poster submissions were drawn from a wide range of disciplines, from music and biology through to health and life sciences. The overall winner was Sally Bull from the Open University for her poster on understanding personal identity and breast feeding and second prize went to Nick Breems from Salford for his poster on computers and procrastination. The SPARC delegates got to experience a ‘speed presentation’ session, where researchers had the challenge of condensing their main research ideas and questions into a 5 minute pitch! Also on offer for delegates was a range of workshops on research practices and on the final afternoon a panel of recent PhD graduates from the Universities of Salford and Liverpool led an insightful and motivating discussion about completing a doctorate and balancing it with demands of employment and family. There were plenty of opportunities for socialising and networking, with a pre-SPARC reception and quiz on the eve of the conference organised by the Students’ Union, followed up on the Thursday with a conference trip to Old Trafford football stadium for a tour and meal. The Postgraduate research studies team worked exceptionally hard to achieve such a successful conference and a special mention goes to Dr. Victoria Shepard for organisation and achieving such a successful research event.

If you would like to know more about the SPARC conference visit the Postgraduate Research pages at:

www.pg.salford.ac.uk/page/sparc

The conference programme is available on the website below:

www.pg.salford.ac.uk/SPARC

For pictures of the day and details of workshop presentations visit:

www.careers.salford.ac.uk/students/phd /blog/  
Or for specific information contact Tahira Majothi at: t.majothi@salford.ac.uk

If you would like to know more about this training event or Jenna’s research contact her at: j.condie@pgr.salford.ac.uk

Good research forms the basis of many a policy, political decision, health implementation or working practice, and postgraduate researchers as the ‘new’ research community need to hone current research skills and develop new ones.

One such event that addressed these needs was attended by Jenna Condie a Postgraduate Researcher in the School of Environment & Life Sciences at the University, who attended an event recently hosted by the North West Enterprise School Four day residential course, with training in various areas of business and IT and the opportunity to get support from renowned experts. Jenna’s workshop was entitled ‘What doing a PhD is really like’. One of the guest speakers, Faza Zitouni, spoke of undertaking a second PhD (yes really!). This workshop included personal experiences of current PhDs as well as useful tips to help possible postgraduate students plan for success. More details can be found on the website below:

www.pg.salford.ac.uk/SPARC

Delegates thoroughly enjoyed the interactive day discussing topics ranging from the research funding landscape, teaching, academic and career planning and advice on the academic careers toolkit.

For pictures of the day and details of workshop presentations visit:

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The Hive is an interactive and virtual space, which is being developed as part of Alex’s MA Creative Technology course as his final project. It will allow people associated with the University and beyond to set up a web space, blog and share their creative ideas. There are already students feeding into the Hive from the likes of Salford, Bradford and the University of Cumbria.

Alex, who also works for the University as a web developer with EDInteractive said: “The Hive is a way to enhance communication and to help people to form new ideas, connections and opportunities. It’s a really effective way to showcase projects, to create sub-groups of people with similar interests and it’s a platform for your work on the web and within the virtual world of Second Life.” Information added to the Hive will automatically appear on the Hive Second Life space within the Salford Metaverse. Alex said: “The Hive is a central hub which will offer individual web space to creative practitioners, including writers, designers, poets and sculptors who draws together to form a growing central space, anybody who has a creative contribution to make is welcome to join. The Hive pulls in all the different areas of social media – it interacts with Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and can complement existing websites, and we provide free technical support too”. The Hive will allow students to participate across courses, across Universities, across continents and beyond their graduation for lifelong learning and is also designed to work on mobile devices such as the iPhone. Anyone joining the Hive will have the chance to have their work displayed at MediacityUK and within Second Life.

If you are interested in Alex’s research contact him at: a.fenton@salford.ac.uk

For more information or to join the Hive, please visit: www.the-hive.org.uk

The Hive has developed out of the Salford Hive project, which is a university web space which has been developed and maintained using Second Life. The Hive is a platform that allows students to display their work and communicate with each other. It is a virtual world where students can create their own space, and it is a platform for the University’s research and innovation. The Hive is open to all students, and it is a platform for the University’s research and innovation. The Hive is open to all students, and it is a platform for the University’s research and innovation.

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With the government pledging to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and halve it by 2010, what are the real stories behind the headline statistics? One team of postgraduate students from Salford University's Masters programme in Television Documentary Production, Helen Tither, Efi Modestou and Brynja Dogg-Fridriksdottir researched into the human tales behind those targets for their postgraduate film project ‘Dressing It Up’.

With its haunting gargoyles, old factory pulleys, and moss-covered cobbles, taking a walk down Wood Street in Manchester is to wander back in time. Just metres from the hustle of Deansgate, or the shiny glass and steel slickness of Spinningfields, this dingy Victorian street seems largely undisturbed by the passage of over a century. A forgotten street. At its heart, certainly, lies a forgotten story, one of childhood poverty and the continuing battle to eradicate it. In 1999 the Labour government certainly, lies a forgotten story, one of childhood poverty and the pledged to halve those living in relative poverty by 2010 and eradicate child poverty completely by 2020. This Spring’s Child Poverty Act, with David Cameron promising to continuing battle to eradicate it.

The arrival of a new government at Number 10 earlier this year has revealed the issue once more, with revelations in March that 2.3 million children are still living below the poverty line. In June to lead an independent review into UK poverty levels, recruiting two families who visit the centre as case studies, the students have recently completed their four-week observational documentary. Following the stories of two children whose parents can’t afford to buy them clothes, the 23-minute film is designed to provoke further debate on the issue by highlighting their hopes and dreams against a backdrop of deprivation.

Records show that the number of families referred to their services by social workers or vulnerable child co-ordinators within schools has actually increased over recent years. Recruiting two families who visit the centre as case studies, the students have recently completed their four-week observational documentary. Following the stories of two children whose parents can’t afford to buy them clothes, the 23-minute film is designed to provoke further debate on the issue by highlighting their hopes and dreams against a backdrop of deprivation.

This research team will be sending copies of ‘Dressing It Up’ to Frank Field’s office and other child poverty campaign groups.

If you would like to know more about this research contact Helen at: helen.tither@hotmail.co.uk
A passage to India

The University has a strong record of recruitment of Indian students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and currently have over 400 Indian students at the University across several discipline areas including Computing, Science and Engineering, Business, Environment and Life Sciences and the Built Environment. We also have numerous research collaborations in some of these key areas.

This is a great platform to build on, and moving forward and looking to the future, the University is working to further our engagement with India beyond a recruitment focus to include further partnership activity such as staff and student exchanges, further research collaboration as well as teaching and learning collaborations.

Future activity within India will be focused around the six Key University Themes comprising: The Built Environment, Energy, Health and Wellbeing, Human Rights, Social Justice & Security, Enterprise and Innovation and Media, Digital Technology and the Creative Economy.

In order to spearhead these initiatives, Professor Hall will lead the delegation to India this year his agenda will include: meeting with key government officials in order to ascertain governmental trends and needs in the HE arena, engaging further with key alumni, visiting potential partner institutions, meeting with key British Council personnel and delivering the keynote speech at a British Council exhibition.

The University’s intention is to keep a strong focus, through any partnership opportunities and discussions, on our areas of excellence. For example, we have recently visited some prestigious Indian institutions to discuss collaboration in the area of Advanced Robotics, Automation and we are looking to further activity in this area. We have also hosted British Council led delegations of Indian institutions in order to explore general collaboration with potential partners.

One of the key areas of interest for the university is the area of PGF recruitment as we see this as an area of growth and demand, and of mutual benefit to Indian and UK institutions. We hope to gain ministry level feedback on such activity in order to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the market. A full report on the delegation will feature in a future issue of RISE. There’s been lots of activity recently across the University in support of our Internationalisation Strategy for the Indian market with some examples listed below:

Iraqi special advisor meets VC

During the course of their meeting, the Vice Chancellor and Dr Ahmed spoke about the new Higher Committee for Education Development (HCED) scholarships scheme and the students who will be receiving them who are due to arrive at Salford in September.

They also discussed the recent British Council Grant which will be used to establish a Centre of Excellence for the Built Environment at the University of Basra. This project will have a significant impact not only on establishing a strategic partnership with one of the biggest Universities in Iraq but will also help the University to promote our Excellence in the Built Environment in the reconstruction process of the country. This project has been led by Professor Mustafa Alshawi, Associate Dean of Research and Innovation in the Faculty of the Built Environment, and is part of a wider strategy to establish such centres of excellence globally.

The meeting was extremely successful and concluded with the Vice Chancellor reiterating his personal and professional interest in Iraq and his belief in the importance of developing a future relationship with the country and driving the redevelopment of the education sector forward.

For more information on this article contact Michael Lurie at: m.lurie@salford.ac.uk

In a recent important strategic meeting, Dr Hamid K. Ahmed the Special Advisor for Education to the Prime Minister of Iraq visited the University for discussions with Professor Martin Hall.

The University’s Vice Chancellor Professor Martin Hall will be leading a delegation to India in November this year.
6th September, 2010 – International Online Conference in Translation and Interpreting Studies. Keynotes include: Federico Gaspari, University of Bologna, Italy; Robin Setton, Professional Conference Interpreter and Author; Graham H. Turner, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. Venue – University of Salford. For more information contact: e.xeni@pgr.salford.ac.uk

For more information contact: doceng2010@primaresearch.org

For more information contact: p.allen@salford.ac.uk

For more information contact: h.kenna@salford.ac.uk

For more information contact: s.vadera@salford.ac.uk

10th November, 2010 – Elluminate webinar and one day conference. For more information contact: w.b.mcadam@salford.ac.uk

For more information contact: n.audren@salford.ac.uk

24th November, 2010 – SLAVE: Witnessing the Voice through Testimony and Performance – An Interdisciplinary Conference. Keynote/Presenters: Professor Antony Rowland, University of Salford; Professor Martin Hall, University of Salford; Dr. Anna Whitehead, University of Newcastle; Dr. Abigail Ward, Nottingham Trent University; Mende Nazar; Damien Lewis; Max Stafford Clarke (TBC); Baroness Cox (TBC) and Andrea Calderwood (TBC). Venue – Lowry Theatre Salford Quays. For more information contact: m.j.boswell@salford.ac.uk

6th – 8th July, 2011 – Education In A Changing Environment 6th International Conference – Creativity & Engagement in Higher Education. Keynote/Presenters: include: Dr. Alec Couros, University of Regina, Canada; Professor Glynn Cousin, University of Wolverhampton; Professor Norman Jackson, University of Surrey; Saul Nassi, Controller of BBC Learning; Professor Martin Hall, University of Salford; Professor Ghassan Aouda, University of Salford and Professor Huw Morris, University of Salford. Venue – Mary Seacole Building, University of Salford. For more information contact: a.higson@salford.ac.uk