

JUNE Issue

Nexus

Connecting the University community



ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN

Furthering global connections

Student experience is top of the agenda

RGU excels in national league tables



Faculty of Health and Social Care Building

Artist's impression of the proposed new site at Garthdee.

Masterplan 2009 gets thumbs up

Staff and students got the chance to comment on the University's revised Masterplan when it was unveiled at two events held at Garthdee and Schoolhill during May. Feedback was very positive, with a general consensus that the time spent in revisiting the original Masterplan had been worthwhile and the proposed plans for Garthdee were worthy of one of the best modern universities in the UK.

Masterplan 2009, which will be submitted for planning permission this month, will see 34,000m² of new buildings at Garthdee over a period of 10 years, with existing areas within Aberdeen Business School and the Faculty of Health and Social Care being modified for new use.

The decision to revisit the Masterplan was taken following feedback from staff and students in 2008 and the acquisition of an additional 50 acres of land on the south side of the River Dee. As a result, it was agreed that the University's architects, Building Design Partnership, should review the project. This identified a number of benefits, including:

- A major entrance to the campus with all academic activity and student services consolidated within a short walking distance from what will be the heart of the University;
- Reduced disruption from construction to existing facilities;
- A shortened construction programme and economies in the construction costs;
- Reduced costs and disruption from moving staff out of existing buildings;
- A stunning view of the river from many of the new buildings.

Once planning permission has been approved, enabling work is expected to

start on site in early 2010, with phase 1 of the Masterplan construction programme scheduled to commence in September 2010.



The proposed main entrance to the new build.

THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the June edition of the University's revamped newsletter, Nexus, which was changed in April this year to be brought in line with new corporate branding for the University.

Bringing forward a range of staff, student and graduate achievements, initiatives and events, and collaborations with industry, this issue also includes a feature on the updated Masterplan for the Garthdee campus, as well as news on the many industry collaborations which are helping to strengthen RGU's position as The Professional University.

We would be pleased to hear your suggestions for Schools, support departments, and specialist research centres around the University to feature in the magazine in 2009. Get in touch by emailing your ideas to newsdesk@rgu.ac.uk. You can also use this email address to contact us if you would like copies of any photos included in the magazine.

The deadline for articles to be included in the July issue is Wednesday 3 June. Deadlines for the rest of 2009 are available on the newsletter website.

Katy Jones
Communications Officer

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FURTHERING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Seminar explores business opportunities with Japan

Aberdeen Business School, in conjunction with the Japanese Consul General to Scotland, delivered a free business development seminar on Monday 27 April, exploring the business opportunities available in Japan to organisations in the North-east of Scotland.

Japan is the second largest economy in the world and has a population of approximately 125,000,000. It has many similarities with Scotland, including an ageing population, high demand for further and higher education, a 'pop culture' amongst young people and interests in golf, history, whiskey, tourism and high quality consumer goods. Opportunities for businesses from the North-east of Scotland could include joint research and development; direct marketing and selling, including internet sales; packaging in-bound vacations; joint ventures and franchising.

Professor Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School, said, "In the current economic climate we need to be more creative and proactive about how we develop our business opportunities. It is therefore incumbent on all sectors of the economy to try to find new markets with which to do business."



Dramatically improving business performance

Aberdeen Business School Professor, Dennis Tourish, has recently published the second edition of an acclaimed book on communication in organisations, co-edited by a former colleague at Ulster University, Owen Hargie. The first edition of this book has sold widely in Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand and distinguished scholars from all these countries have contributed to the new edition.

Professor Tourish said, "Since the book was originally published, further work has shown that organisations who prioritise how they communicate with people inside and outside their ranks dramatically improve their business performance."

The book explores what the best performing companies do to build committed and engaged workforces. A key factor, Professor Tourish argues, is that senior managers take the time to talk to people. Entitled 'Auditing Organisational Communication: A Handbook of Research, Theory and Practice', the book is published by Routledge and is available from www.amazon.co.uk at £23.70 per copy.



Delegation leader, Professor Qi Gaodai, and Shona Cormack, Vice-Principal, sign the Agreement of Cooperation.

Agreement signed with China University of Petroleum

An Agreement of Cooperation has been signed with the China University of Petroleum (CUP), Huadong, following a visit led by the Director of the Education Development Centre and Dean of the College of Distance and Continuing Education, Professor Qi Gaodai.

The agreement, signed by RGU and CUP, will allow students who have completed the second year of their studies in selected engineering and business courses at CUP to transfer to stage three of equivalent RGU courses and to complete an Honours degree here. This is an important first stage in what both universities hope will be a broader range of co-operation covering teaching, training and research in both Aberdeen and in China.

Shona Cormack, Vice Principal (Student Experience and External Relations), who signed the agreement on behalf of RGU said: "We are looking forward to developing close and productive links with CUP. We see real opportunities by bringing together their understanding of the Chinese petroleum sector and our own global oil and gas experience."

The delegation toured the School of Engineering as well as the Garthdee campus, and discussions were hosted by Professor John Harper, Senior Vice-Principal, and Shona Cormack. Professor Qi was accompanied by Mr Lui Shaowei, Deputy Director of the Centre and Deputy Dean of the College of Applied Technology; Mr Shi Zhimin, Director of the International Cooperation Department and Mr Shi Jinhua, Deputy Chief of the International Communication Section, CUP International Cooperation and Communication Department.

Thanks are due to Chang Lu at the Business School, Dr Chaozong Liu at the School of Engineering and student Nancy Zhang for helping to make the visit such as success.

RGU furthers link with the University of Stavanger

RGU and the University of Stavanger are now working towards a new era of collaborative working and signed a Memorandum of Understanding during April, covering the multiple disciplines that both institutions teach and research.

Oil and gas production in the North Sea has seen extensive British-Norwegian collaborations over the last 30 years and, for both Norway and Scotland, petroleum has been and will continue to be, a source of wealth and prosperity.

In the first instance the collaboration will include the development of joint curriculum development and delivery, student and staff exchanges, educational and research solutions capitalising on the

unique positioning of both Aberdeen and Stavanger, the development of combined solutions to the rurality issues faced by both cities and an investigation into new sources of co-funding. The collaboration will also provide a bridge for students and employees looking to advance their skills and knowledge across either side of the North Sea.

RGU Principal, Professor Mike Pittilo said, "To compete successfully in a knowledge-based global economy, we have to do more to help and support the way we develop and deliver learning, teaching and research. The education world is shrinking and universities with global partners don't just open academic connections between countries, they create new opportunities for economic development as well."



Iraqi Ministry of Oil representatives visit RGU

The University recently hosted a visit from the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, the Oil Research Centre and the Kirkuk Oil Training Institute. Accompanied by representatives from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the delegates took the opportunity to view the Garthdee campus, as well as learning about RGU and how we engage with the oil and gas industry worldwide.

The visit was part of the Iraqi Skills Initiative, allied to the Prime Minister's Global Energy Initiative. There is a missing generation of oil and gas expertise in Iraq and rebuilding the industry's infrastructure and production capacity will go hand-in-hand with a sector-specific skills development programme.

This is a long-term Government initiative and is likely to move forward through the format of a joint Iraq-UK steering group. The delegation, led by Nihad Ahmed Moosa, Director General, Skills and Development, from the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, was given an overview of RGU and its capabilities by Shona Cormack, Vice-Principal (Student Experience and External Relations), and this was followed by wide-ranging discussions with the Senior Vice-Principal, Professor John Harper, and other senior University officers.



Guests from the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, the Oil Research Centre and the Kirkuk Oil Training Institute are joined by senior staff at RGU.



Gokay Deveci

Exploring innovative thinking in sustainable housing

An ongoing series of free public lectures at RGU continued on Tuesday 5 May with a Professorial lecture by Gokay Deveci, a chartered architect based at the Scott Sutherland School.

Professor Deveci leads a practice-based research unit at the School, making major contributions to innovative housing design, specifically relating to low-energy and low-cost solutions using appropriate technologies and building materials. His designs, including houses without heating systems and using innovative building materials whilst emphasising minimal impact on the environment, have won him a series of awards from both regional and national organisations, including the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and the Saltire Society.

During his lecture, Professor Deveci presented his most recent practice-based research initiatives to a packed-out crowd of local architects, colleagues and students, explaining how he endeavours to bring new thinking to projects commissioned by housing associations, local councils and other housing providers.

Professorial lecture explores the TV that learns

Professor Iain Richardson delivered a lecture entitled 'The TV that learns' on Wednesday 22 April, exploring the research being carried out at the University's Centre for Video Communications. His research team is pioneering a stunning new concept that could transform the multi-million dollar digital video industry.

Their revolutionary invention is capable of learning the latest video compression techniques and evolving to produce the best possible picture quality. The system allows a digital TV to upgrade itself automatically, which results in video images of maximum possible clarity. This exciting concept is attracting international attention and the team have been demonstrating it in Rochester (USA), France, Taipei, Chicago and Madrid over the last few months.

Researchers underline effects of drinking during pregnancy

Eilidh Duncan, a researcher at the School of Applied Social Studies, has pioneered important research into the effects of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Eilidh carried out the research as part of her PhD and found that even women who drank only small amounts of alcohol took an extra day to recover from birth in hospital and were also less likely to have formed a strong maternal attachment or 'bond' with their child. Meeting expectant mothers at ARI while they attended their 20-week scan, Eilidh began working with 130 women who were all first-time, non-smoking mothers, none of whom were heavy drinkers.

Following up three months after labour, Eilidh explored a number of issues including delivery type, length of hospital stay, pregnancy and labour complications, and 'bonding'. Dr Katrina Forbes-McKay, Eilidh's PhD supervisor and Lecturer at the University's School of Applied Social Studies, said, "This research confirms that drinking even small amounts during pregnancy has negative outcomes for women. Alcohol use during pregnancy not only lengthens the mother's stay in hospital, but can be directly associated with lower levels of mother-child bonding."

Eilidh, who presented her findings at the British Psychological Society Annual Conference in Brighton added, "I'd be very interested to see how much even infrequent drinking costs the NHS in terms of maternity care."

These findings are in keeping with NHS guidelines regarding drinking during pregnancy, which have recently changed. Previously one or two units once or twice a week was thought to be unlikely to do any harm, but now abstinence is recommended.

Fifth John Gray Award supports range of University projects

Five University projects have been awarded a total of £20,000 as part of the fifth John Gray Award. The generosity of John Gray, one of the founding fathers of the University, helped set up Gray's School of Art, and the five innovative submissions to benefit from this year's funding represent a broad cross section of the University's academic faculties.

Jo Royle from Aberdeen Business School and Kim Eason from Gray's School of Art have been awarded £5000 to pay for their Fashion Management and Fashion Design students to exhibit at the 'College Forum' of national Clothes Show Live and launch the University's fashion brand.

Gray's School of Art has also received £4890 to encourage wide exploration of the role of writing in art and design education. An analysis of outcomes will contribute to the design of future written assessment, and is aimed at widening current options.

Dr Douglas Cruickshank from Aberdeen Business School has been given £5000 to investigate the potential for greater use of 'action learning', in essence learning by doing, in business programmes. Doug would be pleased to hear from any staff in other Faculties who have experience of using Action Learning.

Dr Yash Kumarasamy, Dr Stuart Cruickshank, Dr Lesley Diack, Mrs Toni Simpson and Dr Helen Vosper from the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences have been awarded £2300 to create a suite of interactive tools to stimulate the development of skills which will help students develop crucial skills, such as problem solving, negotiation, thinking, reasoning and risk-taking.

Finally, Roger McDermott, Gordon Eccleston, Garry Brindley and Colin Beagrie from the School of Computing have been given £3000 to develop a blog to record the learning experiences of the University's foundation year students. This will allow the academics to record the 'student voice' as they develop through their studies and should better capture the concerns and successes of students.

Further details of the award can be found at <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/celt/quality/page.cfm?page=8719>

Engineering futures: international competition sees school pupils grasp underwater robotics

School pupils from across the North-east took part in the Scottish regional final of the annual international ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) design challenge at the beginning of April, with the team from Dyce Academy coming out on top this time round.

The regional competition is the only one of its type in Europe and is coordinated each year by RGU in conjunction with the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Centre, USA. Principal sponsorship from BP Exploration and Production, North Sea and leading seabed-to-surface engineering and construction contractor, Acergy, is key to making sure the event is a success. This year, Subsea UK also stepped up to support the event, as well as helping the University to secure funding from a number of the industry body's members - Trittech, SMD, Triton Group and Nylacast. OPITO – The Oil & Gas Academy, also contributed to the competition.

The MATE Centre co-ordinates the international competition, with a network of 16 regional ROV contests taking place across the US, Canada and Hong Kong. Student teams from primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities participate in the events, which consist of two different classes according to the sophistication of the ROVs.

The winning school team is now set to travel with the RGU student team this month to Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, to vie for their success against the world's best.

Professor John Watson, Dean of RGU's Faculty of Design and Technology, said, "In addition to being fun and educational, these competitions connect students and educators with employers and working professionals from industry, highlight oil and gas related career opportunities, and promote the development of technical, problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork skills."



From left to right: Judges Mark Collins, Sales Manager, SMD, and Vernon Fawcett, BP, join the Dyce school team with their winning certificate and their teacher Dougie Simpson (second from right), as well as Richard Marsh, Vice Chairman, Trittech, who was also acting as a judge for the event.



School pupils hunt for clues at the new scene of crime facility at St Andrew Street.

Pupils investigate forensic science

Pupils from Aberdeen City and Shire were given the chance to solve a crime at RGU during April, as part of one-day workshop run by the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences.

The secondary school pupils heard Stuart Waddell, former forensic chemist with Grampian Police, talk on how to investigate a crime scene and then got kitted out in scene of crime suits to gather evidence at a mock crime scene.

Dr Andrew Morrisson, Associate Head of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, believes that forensic science courses open up a wide range of career choices for graduates. He said: "While there can be strong competition for forensic science jobs, a significant percentage of forensic science graduates go on to work in industry. In fact, an understanding of forensic science prepares graduates for any scientific laboratory-based career, including jobs in hospitals, oilfield chemicals, pharmaceuticals, other industry, and research institutions."

Engineering education: Honorary Professor adds value to learning

The beginning of the year saw a number of newly appointed Honorary Professors assigned to the School of Engineering.

Professor Alistair Oag has a great deal of specialist expertise from industry that makes him fundamental to RGU's goal of producing work-ready graduates. As well as contributing lectures at the School of Engineering on a part-time basis, he is Director of Curriculum, Drilling and Well Engineering for the Network of Excellence in Training (NExT) – an industry and academic partnership that is delivering tailored competency assessment and related training programs around the globe.

Professor Oag's career started with the British National Oil Corporation in 1978, immediately after he had completed postgraduate studies at RGIT. Following this he worked for Britoil, before becoming Head of Land Drilling for BP. Leaving the ranks of the operators in 1993 to pursue a new career with Schlumberger Ltd, he went on to create Schlumberger's embryonic Drilling Engineering function in Aberdeen, which later went global. He reached one of the highest professional levels achievable within Schlumberger, Drilling Advisor, which he maintains to this day.

Professor Iain Steel, Head of the School of Engineering, explained: "It is important that we recognise the important work that our Honorary Professors contribute, especially with such a wealth of industry experience behind them. Their professionalism, industrial contacts and knowledge have helped to firmly establish the University at the heart of the oil and gas industry and I hope that our strong relationship with them continues for years to come."

STUDENT EXPERIENCE IS TOP OF THE AGENDA



57'10 members celebrate on the night of the ball.

RGU excels in national league tables

The University has excelled in national league tables, with strong performances in graduate prospects and research helping the University to be one of only three modern universities to break into the top 50 of UK universities. RGU is hot on the heels of some of Scotland's more established universities, including Aberdeen, Stirling and Dundee.

Graduates of RGU are amongst the most sought after by employers in the UK according to The Complete University Guide 2009 published at the end of April. Only the London School of Economics and Bournemouth University have a better record for students going in to graduate-level jobs, with both Cambridge and Oxford Universities lagging behind RGU.

The University was also picked out for special mention by the Guide, along with Hertfordshire and Nottingham Trent, for being one of only three modern universities to break into the UK top 50.

Principal Professor Mike Pittilo explained, "In the current economic climate where the job market is increasingly competitive, it's important that new graduates have the skills that employers want. The University has been particularly successful in engaging with companies in the health, business and industry sectors to ensure that an RGU graduate is well equipped for their chosen profession."

Going for Gold

The Scarlet and Gold Awards Ball was held at the Hilton Treetops on 10 April, celebrating student achievement in volunteering, student societies and student representation throughout the year.

The highly contended Society of the Year accolade was awarded jointly to the 57'10 Architecture Society and Voice Debating Society. The New Society of the Year award went to the RGU: Singers and there were also prizes for Society Person of the Year and Volunteer of the Year.

Shona Cormack, Vice-Principal (Student Experience and External Relations), presented the awards said: "It's a credit to the Student Association that the Scarlet and Gold Awards - and volunteering, student societies and student representation which they celebrate - go from strength to strength. The innovation of student representation awards enables the University to recognise those who make a significant difference to the student learning experience."



Professors John Harper and Mike Pittilo congratulate the winning students.

Inaugural Student Rep Awards

The first Student Representative Awards took place on Friday 17 April as part of a scheme which has been introduced at RGU to formally recognise the outstanding achievement of individual Student Representatives who are working to improve the student learning experience.

The awarding panel consisted of internal and external staff and was convened by Senior Vice-Principal, Professor John Harper, who provided formal recognition for the first 15 recipients. The panel was particularly impressed by the quality of submissions and achievements evidenced by the applicants, ranging from a consistently high level of involvement within their course to engaging with enhancement at a wider University level.

The award recipients were Jamie Addis, Glenn Buchan, Jennifer Cadiz, Emma Clarke, Mark Cunningham, Louise Conaghan, Paul Ezeudoh, Calum Martin, Gillian McLean, Matthew Middler, Julia Philips, Satish Shanmuganathan, Ronan Sheridan, Hana Walderova and Konrad Zdeb.

University sports stars honoured at annual Blues Awards Ball

The highlight of the sporting calendar for students, the annual RGU: SPORT Blues Awards Ball, sees the achievements of sports clubs and talented individuals being recognized and celebrated.

This year the event was sponsored once again by Technip and guests were treated to a speech by former Scotland rugby player, Doddie Weir, taking some time out of his role as BBC Scotland pundit to star as guest of honour, presenting the most prestigious awards of the night - the Full Blues.

Director of Sport, Filippo Antoniazzi, said he was delighted to recognise the contribution of all those who make the sporting triumphs possible. He said: "The Ball provides us with an opportunity not only to enjoy the year's achievements, but also to thank all the supporters, funders and volunteers who sponsor, support and run the clubs, making fantastic contributions to initiatives like Street Football and the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme."





The winning team with Iain Galloway, Bank of Scotland Corporate (centre).

Students compare health services during exchange visits

A group of RGU students travelled to Wisconsin during April to compare occupational therapy education and delivery in the UK and the US.

The nine third year occupational therapy (OT) students spent five days at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, following a visit from a group of Wisconsin students to Aberdeen in March. The student exchange is part of an ongoing collaboration between the two universities to learn from best practice in occupational therapy delivery.

During their visit, the American students attended the University and visited OT departments in hospitals and in external facilities, covering a broad spectrum of OT service delivery. RGU occupational therapy lecturer, David Robertson said, "The exchange benefits the students from both universities by giving them the chance to experience a different healthcare and teaching system. Our students noticed a stronger emphasis in the US on enabling patients to return to work, as most healthcare is paid for by employers through private insurance schemes. The students from Wisconsin highlighted the drive for occupational therapy to be delivered in community settings, including the patient's home, as being something that they had yet to experience to any great extent in the US."

Student entrepreneurial skills put to the test

Three teams of students at RGU battled it out on Thursday 23 April for the Bank of Scotland Corporate Award for the best business plan presentation.

The winning team received a cheque for £500 and had their names engraved on a special cup which dates back to the inaugural Award in 1985, as well as having their idea highly commended by the judging panel. The third year students, from a range of ABS courses, worked in teams to develop a new business idea as well as a viable strategy for the business venture.

The top teams faced a judging panel which included lecturers Susan Moulton and Dr Janice Freeman, along with Dr Simon Fraser, Regional Business Advisor for the Scottish Institute for Enterprise, and Iain Galloway, Associate Director of Bank of Scotland Corporate.

The aim of the New Business Project is to assist students in the bridging process between their separate areas of study through the creation of a viable business plan. Dr Janice Freeman, who co-ordinates the project, said: "The aim is to equip students with the skills necessary for new venture creation and small business management. The challenge for participants this year, in the present economic climate, was to come up with low cost, low risk start-up business ideas."

Management students soar in prestigious national competition

Two of three Aberdeen Business School teams entered into the IBM Universities Business Challenge competition made it to the semi-final stages of the contest at an event in Edinburgh during February.

The early stages of the Challenge gave participating students the opportunity to run a virtual company over a period of eight weeks in order to put their business skills to the test. The ABS teams' efforts were so profitable that they were invited to attend one of 10 semi-final rounds held at various locations throughout the UK.

Emma Brebner, one of the students who took part, said: "Members of my team were given executive roles in a simulation perfume company and this has helped us to develop key business skills. We were able to accomplish commercial success through the Challenge and we are all happy to have gone so far in the competition."

Julie Strachan, a senior lecturer who has been acting as a mentor to the students, said: "The challenge offers great learning opportunities for all participants and we are delighted to be able to offer our students an annual opportunity to enter the competition. We are extremely proud of both RGU teams for making it so far in such a prestigious and competitive event."



Christine Buchanan (far right) and Gayle Scott from RGU's Careers Centre (front row, centre) with the participating students from RGU who attended the awards ceremony.

Students receive BP Student Tutoring Awards

Students from RGU, the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen College have successfully completed the BP Tutoring Scheme, a 14-week volunteering experience as student tutors in primary and secondary schools throughout Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

A total of 87 students from the three institutions took part in the BP Student Tutoring Scheme, which aims to improve education in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (including 46 students from RGU). A number of the RGU participating students attended the BP awards ceremony to be presented with certificates of participation from their institution, BP, and Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils.

Lucy Bremner, a third year Management with Human Resources student from Aberdeen Business School, commented, "I have been accepted for my PGDE teaching course and I think I owe a lot of this to the practical experience gained from the BP Student Tutoring scheme."

As Chair of the BP Student Tutoring Steering Group, Christine Buchanan, Dean of Students at RGU said, "The Scheme provides an exceptional volunteering opportunity. For all participants, students, school pupils and classroom teachers, it provides an outstanding opportunity to share experiences, contribute expertise and enhance the school curriculum."



Sian and Daniel get their models ready to pose in their tartan designs.

Students bring tartan with a Japanese twist to life

More than 100 years since the 'Scottish Samurai', Thomas Blake Glover, became the first non-Japanese to be accorded the honour of receiving the Order of the Rising Sun, Japan's appetite for all things Scottish remains stronger than ever. With this in mind, fashion students at Gray's School of Art are playing their own part in nurturing the Scottish textile industry by bringing to life a new, specially-developed collection of Japanese tartans.

Sakura Scotland, a social enterprise based in Edinburgh, was set up in conjunction with International Tartans, when David McGill, Chief Designer of International Tartans, teamed up with Shizue (Ichikawa) Melvin, who is part of a successful online shopping business for Japanese interested in western fashion. The duo first created the Sakura, or Cherry Blossom, tartan and this has since expanded into a 'Four Seasons Collection', which draws on the flowers associated with Japan and the national colours of both Scotland and Japan.

Working with the vibrant colours of the Japanese tartan collection, and having the option of fusing this with the traditional tartans of Smith's of Peterhead and Kinloch Anderson, the second year fashion students at Gray's were set the task of creating a coat with a design that would satisfy the requirements of clients; in this case their three sponsoring companies.

Budding fashionista Daniel Crozier used a whopping 25m of Sakura tartan fabric to create a long pink and green Marie Antoinette-inspired coat. The contrast in structure between the tight bodice and flowing skirts of the garment was an essential part of the design. Sian Parker combined the Japanese tartan with that of Smith's of Peterhead for her part in the exhibition. Sian explained: "Fashion at Gray's pushes boundaries and I feel I was encouraged to think outside the box and produce a beautiful and flattering final piece."

Originally linked to Gray's School of Art through the Thomas Blake Glover Foundation, Sakura Scotland is hoping to showcase the students' work in Nagasaki, as part of a Scottish Week being organised by the Tourism Department there in September. It is hoped that a fashion show will be possible inside Glover House, a major attraction in Japan which attracts around two million visitors each year.

Students transform shop window with inventive theme

At a time when the Aberdeen retail industry wrestles with the choices posed by a new shopping development, as well as coping with the downturn in the economy, textile and surface design students at Gray's School of Art transformed the shop window of one local store, in the hope they could entice more customers through its doors.

Ethnic Style, on Schoolhill, was happy to oblige when the second year student cohort went looking for shop windows in which they could create something effective and that suited the needs of a client. Famous Dutch fashion label, Victor and Rolf, was the focus of the students' group creation, with grotesque dolls and white Venetian-like masks playing a major part.

Kim Eason, Programme Leader for Fashion and Textiles at Gray's said: "This has been a great opportunity for the students to get out there and make links with members of the local community, as well as making their work visible to a much wider audience."

Gearing up for Gray's Degree Show

Final year students at Gray's School of Art are powering ahead preparing for this year's Degree Show, sponsored for the sixth year by BP.

For its many visitors, Gray's annual Degree Show is the ideal opportunity to see emerging talent and engage in discussion about the ideas behind the work. Over the years, the Show has become a firm favourite with the Aberdeen public, giving people the opportunity to see a range of final year undergraduate

projects, spanning fashion and textiles, 3D and product design, graphics, digital media, visual communication, painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography and electronic media.

The Show will be launched on Friday 12 June and open to the public from 13 to 20 June (10-5pm on the 13th, 14th and 20th, and 10-8pm from the 15th-19th).

For more information, visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/degreshow



Three of the students who took part pose with some of their designs.



Ashton Robb models Julia's stylish design.

"Scottish on Scottish" wins first prize in UK-wide design award

Another promising trendsetter from Gray's School of Art has been recognised for her flair in fashion design, this time as first-prize winner of the Clothworkers' Foundation Award.

Julia Maclean has been recognised for her ability to combine innovative textile processes, which could be developed for the fashion market. Her knitted blazer jacket is all about putting "Scottish on Scottish", as she says; sponsored by Smith's of Peterhead, Julia first knitted a tartan base for the garment and then embroidered additional tartan patches of tweed and hand-knitting onto it.

Julia is just about to complete her third year of a degree in Textiles and is thrilled to have her work given such prestigious recognition at this stage in her career. The Bradford Textile Society runs a design competition on an annual basis and Julia's design was selected for first prize in the Clothworkers' Foundation Award from around 700 entries submitted to the overall competition.

Kim Eason, Course Leader for Fashion and Textiles at Gray's, added: "This award is absolutely deserving. Julia put a lot of hard work into this project and I am delighted to see her determination is paying off. Clearly she is a talent to keep an eye on in the future."

Reality check for Gray's students



Seven up-and-coming sculptors from Gray's School of Art, alongside two students joining them from The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, held an exhibition at The Academy Shopping Centre during April. 'Chèque de Réalité' showcased the recent works of third year sculpture students taking part in their first ever group exhibition. Linking everyday

themes that we can all relate to, the exciting show included short films, projection and sound pieces.

Christine Spence created an installation which draws the viewer into the life of a 1950s family. She put together a living room space, made up of pieces of furniture she was able to find in charity shops, with a short story about the family's life running on a TV as the centre piece, and even a few biscuits to make visitors feel at home!

Allan Watson, Course Leader of Sculpture at Gray's said: "The last 20 years has seen considerable growth in artists' bypassing the established gallery circuit in favour of alternative exhibition spaces, and emerging artists from Gray's will be central to the future cultural environment of Aberdeen and beyond."



Shirley with samples of her work.

Leather award for design student

Shirley Buchan, who studies Textiles and Surface Design at Gray's School of Art, has won first prize in the Bridge of Weir Leather Competition and will have her work exhibited at 100% Design, the UK's leading contemporary interiors event, as well as being awarded £160.

The Gray's students who took part in the competition were asked to be as creative as possible with leather, a material they are not normally familiar with. Shirley was awarded first prize on behalf of Bridge of Weir, who supplied the leather for students to use in the project. Her work explored the positive and negative aspects in nature, looking at parts of a plant or leaf rather than translating the positive and negative impressions onto the leather itself.

Lecturer Isobel Mowat who oversaw the project said, "Shirley is a mature student who will really get a confidence boost from this recognition of her talent. Bridge of Weir produce bespoke luxury items and therefore the items that the students produced could actually be used in the real world, so it's very exciting!"

Exhibition provides high point for part-time Gray's students

A collection of work by part-time students of Gray's School of Art was displayed in the School's foyer gallery earlier this year.

Featured as part of Gray's Short Course Student Exhibition, Arlene Searle created some exceptional pieces of art by incorporating photographs of herself into fantastical, emotional snapshots. Arlene, who gave up high-profile work with the BBC in order to concentrate on her art very recently, took part in the creative imaging short course and has been working to portray feelings and ideas, both personal and symbolic, through her unique pieces. She is also now studying at Aberdeen College and hopes to move on to a degree-level course at Gray's in the next year or two.

The exhibition reflected the diverse range of disciplines offered by Gray's. For more information on the range of short courses available, visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/shortcourses



From left to right: Penny Armstrong, Andrew McKie from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and Kerrjellen Vroman.

Student volunteers dig deep for garden project

Over the course of a weekend during April, a team of enthusiastic University student and staff volunteers transformed a patch of land on the grounds of the Royal Cornhill Hospital into an outdoor therapeutic space and garden for the Hospital's young people's department.

Working with the ARCHIE Foundation and in collaboration with local companies, the Ben Reid Garden Centre and Hunter Landscapes, the students endeavoured to make the space more appealing with a brand new log cabin, vegetable patch, fruit trees and lots of colourful shrubbery.

Sourcing a lot of materials from the creative waste exchange, the group also greatly appreciated support from Deeside Cabins, Sigma Coatings, Chap Quarries, Dobbies, Garden Craft Products, Raemoir Garden Centre and Subsea 7.

President of RugRag, the University's Charities Committee, Kirsty Johnstone helped come up with the idea of building a garden. She said: "We wanted to show that charity is not just about giving money, and give the students who take part in fundraising a chance to make something they'll be able to see flourish as time goes on."

Peter Hutchison, Community Fundraising Manager at the ARCHIE Foundation added: "The new garden is providing an opportunity for young patients to experience what horticultural therapy can offer in terms of both assessment and treatment."

Two American scholars visit Faculty of Health and Social Care

Penny Armstrong, a Nurse-Midwife from Maine, and Dr Kerryellen Vroman, an Occupational Therapist from the University of New Hampshire, visited the Faculty of Health and Social Care during March. The purpose of their visit was to discuss the place of the arts and humanities in professional health care education, as well as participating in classes. The duo also delivered a presentation at the School of Nursing and Midwifery's research seminar on the 'wise birth'.

International student continues fundraising efforts during exchange

Laurent Courbon, a French exchange student who has enjoyed a semester at RGU this year, has managed to continue a humanitarian project to raise money to help build a school in Baba Garage, Senegal, by way of a series of events that took place during April.

generating € 5100, he was determined to help hit the €6000 target even though he was studying in Scotland. He planned a party at Liquid nightclub in Aberdeen, as well as an evening for international students at RGU: UNION and a raffle packed full of great prizes he sourced locally.

Laurent has been involved in fundraising during his studies in France for over a year and having already contributed to

Laurent now hopes to help supervise the build in Senegal later this year during his free time while on a work placement.

Painting in high places

Stephen Shankland, a graduate of RGU and now a part-time lecturer at Gray's School of Art, has completed two paintings of Peter Chapman, Lay Canon of St Paul's Cathedral London. The main painting was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's to honour his work as their first Lay Canon. During Peter's nine years as Lay Canon he has helped raise an astonishing £40 million to help clean and restore the Cathedral.

Stephen commented: "For me, the painting was like a double portrait of St Paul's and Mr Chapman side by side. The main portrait will be unveiled later in the year at St Paul's and the smaller study will be on show at this year's Royal Society of Portrait Painters' annual exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London."

Microsoft Partners converge on RGU

During April, around 20 delegates converged on RGU for an Aberdeen Microsoft Partner (APM) meeting. It is hoped that the University's St Andrew Street Building may become a regular base for the group as the School of Computing endeavours to support its many talented graduates.

Microsoft Partners in the Aberdeen area, these regular meetings will give staff of the School of Computing a chance to build links with partners in industry. Bob Collier, Chief Executive of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Vicky Reddington, Director of Worldwide SMB sales, and Sharon Park, Director of Sunnyside Consulting who is also a graduate of RGU, were among those who delivered presentations at the last event, with another round of experts to give their insight at the next.

Katherine Rutherford, a First Class Honours graduate of the School, now works as Sales and Marketing Manager for Codify Ltd – the company which organises the meetings. With over 50



The volunteers join contributors at the garden site.



Eilidh Middleton



Trainee of the Year accolade for part-time student

Louise Nicol, a trainee construction engineer at Aberdeenshire Council who is also studying for a degree at RGU on a part-time basis, saw off competition from across the UK to be named 'Trainee of the Year' at a national awards ceremony recently. She is currently in her fourth year of a five year degree in Construction, Design and Management and won the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Local Authority Apprentice/Trainee of the Year 2009 for Highways and Street Lighting.

Louise started working at Aberdeenshire Council in July 2007 and carries out bridge maintenance work in Banff, Buchan and Formartine. The award-winning trainee is responsible for pricing and supervising minor construction works and also provides assistance to engineers on larger construction projects.

She said: "I didn't expect to win, I was pleased and have put in a lot of work into university so the award made it all worth it! I get a lot of support from the Council and it helps that I can study and do my degree too."

For more details on the APSE Local Authority Apprentice/Trainee Awards, visit the APSE website on www.apse.org.uk

Making the jump: RGU horse riders claim victory

Four students from RGU jumped to the top of the field at the regional finals of the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) horse riding competition held at Hayfield Equestrian Centre during March, before going on to triumph at the national finals held in Lincolnshire just a few weeks later.

Two of the team members, Eilidh Middleton and Rebecca Stephen, benefit from the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme with funding from Technip, but it is a credit to all four participants that the team was placed second overall of all student horse riding clubs from across the whole of the UK.

Eilidh was competing at university level for the first time at the event and is delighted to have claimed the Championship

Individual Show Jumping title. She took on current Young Rider Gold Medalist, Emily Llewellen, in a closely-fought battle for the award. Eilidh said: "I have noticed a huge difference as a result of the strength training I receive as part of the Scholarship Programme – I can last much longer without tiring. It is also great knowing that I have support behind me from coaches, sponsors and fellow scholars."

Eilidh's outstanding performance as an individual at the event means that she has also been selected to join Rebecca as part of the prestigious British Universities team when the squad travels to France for an international competition in July. Usually, riders are expected to have taken part in several national universities events before going on to international competitions but Eilidh has been sought out as a rising star.

International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy recognises student's work

The work of Christopher Todd, an undergraduate pharmacy student, has been recognised by the ACPPE/ESCP International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy. Christopher took part in a research study alongside Adam Sutherland, a Senior Clinical Pharmacist at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow last summer. As part of the study, he conducted an audit within the Hospital's Critical Care Unit on Vancomycin levels and presented the results to key pharmacists there. Adam was then able to develop a paper on the findings, which was accepted by the ACPPE/ESCP International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy.

Denise Hansford, a Senior Lecturer and MPharm Programme Leader at the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, who works closely with Christopher, said: "Having work deemed worthy to be presented at a major pharmacy conference is a tremendous achievement for an undergraduate student. Christopher shows real promise as a budding pharmacist and agrees that the skills and knowledge he has developed on the course have helped him enormously in reaching these new heights."



Jane (centre) with her winning medal alongside runners up.

Down to a tee: RGU golfer tops national tournament

An up and coming Scottish golfer, who is being supported by the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme to continue competing at the top of her sport while studying, claimed first place in the British Universities & Colleges Sport Golf Women's Individual Strokeplay Finals, which took place in Nottinghamshire during April.

This marked the first time that Jane Turner has competed in the event and she is absolutely delighted with the result. She said: "I could see myself going from strength to strength but I never dreamt I'd come so far in this national event! I am really, really grateful for all the encouragement I've been given by RGU:

SPORT staff, Scholarship Programme sponsor Technip, the Grampian Institute of Sport and my personal coach, Stephen Murray of Aspire Golf Centre."

In order to qualify for the event, Jane had to be placed among the top seven players in the Scottish Universities Order of Merit, and she excelled herself by finishing first. Neil Brown, who is Sports Programmes Manager at the University and has been training Jane in strength conditioning, commented: "It has been fantastic to see one of our rising stars doing so well. It's times like these that I am especially proud to be part of the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme, helping young athletes to compete to the best of their ability."



Internationally-renowned architect's work exhibited at RGU

The work of internationally-renowned architect, Zaha Hadid, is currently being exhibited at the Georgina Scott Sutherland library at Aberdeen Business School.

Zaha Hadid's dynamic and innovative projects build on over thirty years of revolutionary experimentation and research. In 2004, Zaha became the first woman to be awarded the Pritzker Prize, considered to be the Nobel Prize of architecture.

Two members of her resilient and committed international team are graduates of the University's Scott Sutherland

School. Jim Heverin, who graduated in 1994, is Associate Director of Zaha Hadid Architects and also project director on the 2012 London Olympic Aquatic Centre. Simon Yu has recently been made an Associate of the company and is currently project leader of the impressive Guangzhou Opera House, China, which is due for completion in 2010.

The library is open from 9am - 9pm Monday to Thursday, 9am - 5pm on Fridays, 1pm - 5pm on Saturdays and 11am - 6pm on Sundays. The exhibition will run until 20 June.

Police leadership explored

A seminar entitled 'New Directions in Policing: Policing, Entrepreneurial Leadership and Change' took place at RGU on Thursday 7 May.

Delivered in conjunction with the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), the event was opened by Mr Colin McKerracher, Chief Constable of Grampian Police, and attracted around 70 delegates with backgrounds in both policing and academia. Professor Dennis Tourish and Dr Robert Smith, both experts in leadership from RGU, were among those to deliver keynote presentations at the event.

The second SIPR Leadership Seminar to be held at the University, the event was important in highlighting new trends in police leadership, including the emerging concept of 'Entrepreneurial Policing'.

40 years of librarianship education

2009 marks the fortieth anniversary of students first graduating in Librarianship from RGU (then RGIT). To mark this milestone, the Department of Information Management is to host a Friends and Alumni Reception on Tuesday 23 June at Aberdeen Business School from 6pm. The event will include guest speakers, as well as an exhibition about Department's activities through the years. New student prizes will be inaugurated to mark the contribution of three long-serving former members of staff - Douglas Anderson, Michael Head and Ian Johnson.

The reception will coincide with the i3 conference (www.i3conference2009.org.uk), which is being hosted by the Department. Anyone interested in attending the reception should email imopen@rgu.ac.uk.

Research student takes part in Antarctica expedition



Jireh Seow poses with a specially commissioned RGU flag in Antarctica.

Jireh Seow, a research student from Aberdeen Business School, ventured to Antarctica on an important expedition from the end of March to early April, to develop his knowledge of climate change, sustainable energy and leadership alongside some of the world's top researchers.

Camping on ice and exploring the continent and its wildlife, Jireh was one of 50 selected from 1700 students worldwide

by Vivienne Cox, Vice-President of BP Alternative Energy. He took part in pre-expedition lectures before venturing out by boat to take in glaciers, parts of the mainland, the scientific bases of a few nations, Wordie House, and the team even carried out humanitarian aid by taking food supplies to the Ukrainian base.

Leading the expedition was world-renowned polar explorer, Robert Swan, OBE, who was the first person to walk to both the South and North Poles. He now also heads up 2041, an organisation hoping to preserve Antarctica for scientific research beyond the limit of the current Antarctic Treaty, which will expire in the year 2041.

Jireh said: "It was the most fantastic expedition I have ever had the privilege of taking part in. I think the expedition story deserves a book and hope that I can continue my link with the 2041 organisation, perhaps to benefit others in future."

EVENTS DIARY 2009

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

JUNE

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| 12 – 20 | Gray's Degree Show 2009, sponsored by BP |
| 13 – 26 | Scott Sutherland School Degree Show |
| 22 | CUSP one-day conference at the Faculty of Health and Social Care |

JULY

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| 15 – 17 | Summer Graduation Ceremonies at His Majesty's Theatre |
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OCTOBER

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| 8 | Professorial lecture by Paul Spicker at the Faculty of Health and Social Care |
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NOVEMBER

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| 12 | Leadership lecture by Lord David Trimble at the Faculty of Health and Social Care |
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