

April 2010

# Nexus

Connecting the University community



ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN

Report reveals University's economic impact

Absoft lecture

MSc Asset Integrity Management course  
launched

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## New report quantifies University's £300 million contribution to Scottish economy

An independent report has revealed that the University currently contributes over £300 million annually to the economy of Scotland.

The total contribution to the economy of the North-east is £227.5 million every year, while the total national contribution is calculated at £302.2 million.

In addition to core impacts such as staff employed, student spending and capital projects, the report identified a number of sources of impact distinctive to the University. The study goes on to stress the long-term impact of the University's graduates on the economy.

The report emphasised the impact of the University's relationships with business and industry. Its strong links with both local business and the public sector enable a high proportion of students to

undertake work placements as part of their course. Indeed, 18% of the total economic contribution is directly related to student placements. This, combined with the University's provision of corporate training programmes to industry, not only enhances graduate employability, but also improves workforce skills and provides opportunities for knowledge transfer.

The University also impacts positively on the health of the community both nationally and internationally, as it trains healthcare professionals, undertakes healthcare research and provides sports and exercise facilities for staff, students and the community. It houses the Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology, and is

recognised internationally for its research into obesity.

Professor John Harper, Acting Principal of the University, welcomed the report's findings, saying, "The University has a long tradition of engaging with industry to ensure we produce graduates with the skills that companies need to grow their business. We wanted to quantify this and the many other ways in which the University contributes to the Scottish economy, including our increasing research portfolio. The results of the economic study show the significant impact that the University has on both the North-east and national economies, providing excellent return on investment for every £1 of Government funding received by the University."

## THIS ISSUE

Welcome to April's issue of the University's magazine, Nexus. This month features a four-page spread celebrating student success. Along with three pages focused on business and academic developments, a feature will explore the breadth of events that the University has opened its doors to the public for.

Please get in touch if you have any suggestions for stories or features for the magazine. Email your ideas to [g.caie@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:g.caie@rgu.ac.uk). You can also use this address if you would like copies of any photos included in Nexus.

The deadline for articles to be included in the June issue is Tuesday 4 May.

Gail Caie  
Senior Communications Officer



## Professor Ken Mackinnon appointed Head of Law at ABS

**Professor Ken Mackinnon has joined the University as Head of Law at Aberdeen Business School, leaving his previous role as Head of Law at the University of Waikato in New Zealand.**

Ken previously taught at the University of Aberdeen and as a member of the Social Security Appeal Tribunal in Aberdeen in the 1980s, where he formed an enduring interest in access to justice and in alternatives to the court system.

In 1990, Ken moved to New Zealand as a foundation staff member for Waikato's new Law School. He was involved in an effort to bring more Maori people into the legal profession by developing a curriculum, ensuring personal support for students, and most recently by increasing distance learning options. When he left, more than one quarter of the student population studying law were Maori.

During his time in New Zealand, Ken also authored the Social Welfare volume of the encyclopedic Laws of New Zealand. In 2003, he spent a year as Reviewer (first level of appeal) of Accident Compensation Corporation decisions in New Zealand, and then took a year out from New Zealand as Head of Law at the University of Derby in the UK.

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## New Face at Univation



**David Brand has joined Univation as a Business Development Manager. He will be responsible for developing current and new relationships within Latin America and the emerging markets in West and East Africa. David replaces Mick Rash, who is returning to the International Office.**

A former Business Development Manager for ESD Simulation Training, David also has medical sales experience with Schering-Plough and Astra Zeneca. He has extensive experience of travelling and working within Africa, some of which was gained during his five years in the military.

Ian Campbell, Managing Director of Univation, said, "David has solid selling experience in oil and gas training as well as knowledge of African markets. He is also inheriting the South American market from Mick, who has been with us for two years. My thanks go to Mick for his positive contribution and I extend a warm welcome to David who has some big boots to fill!"



## University director appointed Chair of Moray Tourism Development

Andrew Martin, Director of the Scottish Centre of Tourism (SCoT) at the University, has been appointed Chair of Moray Tourism Development.

The official launch of Moray Tourism Development took place on 24 February. Sponsored by VisitScotland, the event entitled 'Making the Connections Work', was held at the Robbie Dhu Centre, Glenfiddich Distillery. The event was attended by local businesses, communities and other organisations, united in their aim to continue to develop and promote the region's tourism offering on both a national and international scale.

Peter Lederer, Chairman of VisitScotland, said, "The newly-formed Moray Tourism Development group will encourage people to think about the great range of tourism opportunities in the area. Moray offers visitors many unique experiences, from whisky tasting to wildlife watching, and it is now more important than ever that as individuals we work together to identify opportunities for collaboration and growth."

Andrew said, "I am delighted to take up this post as I am passionate about what the Moray and Speyside area, and of course Scotland more generally, has to offer. I am confident that we can generate a real sense of pride and belief in our product, which, combined with clever marketing, will lead to success for Moray."

## Charity project for textiles students puts 'grand designs' on shopping bags

Textiles and Surface Design students from across the North-east and beyond are enjoying the benefits of taking part in a live project looking at the seven wonders of the world.



(from left to right): Anna Shannon, Art Materials Shop Manager; Leah Stewart who achieved second place; Laura, winner; Eilidh, who was given third place in the competition; Rachel Singer, tutor, and Katie Lilford from CHILDREN 1ST.

Each student created three bags to enter into the contest, highlighting their own personal seven wonders, be that favourite films, celebrities or even high-heeled shoes! The winning design by Laura Bain took inspiration from her favourite films, looking in detail at the characters in Pan's Labyrinth. Leah Stewart claimed second place for her artwork based on seven iconic shoe styles and Eilidh Neilson was awarded third place in recognition of the design she came up with based on the seven wonders of the human world.

Anna Shannon, who is a graduate of Gray's and now manages the School's Art Materials Shop, put forward the idea of the competition and has had a lot of fun co-ordinating the judging and selling of the completed bags.

Open to the public, the Art Materials Shop is based at the heart of the School, to the left of the entrance on the ground floor, supplying an array of paints, paper and other utensils. Opening hours are from 9am until 3.30pm all year round, offering competitive prices on a range of art, craft and modelling materials.

Run as a competition by the School's Art Materials Shop, in collaboration with Scottish children's charity CHILDREN 1ST, the project invited 20 students to come up with designs for canvas shopping bags based on the theme of 'The Seven

Wonders of the World'. The students had nine weeks to come up with their creations and these are now being sold to the public from Gray's Art Materials Shop, with 70% of the proceeds going to the CHILDREN 1ST charity.



# STUDENT SPORTING SUCCESSES



## Huntly skier in Olympic debut

**RGU: SPORT scholar and cross country skiing champion, Peter-James (PJ) Barron, has recently returned from representing Ireland in the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.**

Sports and Exercise Science student PJ took part in the Men's 15km individual cross country ski. He finished in 91<sup>st</sup> place in the gruelling race, with a time of 43 minutes 50 seconds. The race was won by Dario Cologna of Switzerland, with Italy and the Czech Republic claiming silver and bronze respectively.

Although he was disappointed with his finishing position, PJ described it as "a great experience and a huge learning curve."

He said, "I skied quite strongly for the first kilometre, but then a competitor from USA came past, and skied away. It was a confusing day, as technically I felt I was skiing well, but didn't have the speed I wanted."

"When I hit 10km a coach roared at me, which forced my head into the game, and suddenly I found power and started to pull back time on two skiers who had passed me. I finished really strongly but felt that I could have skied another 15km and put in a better performance."

"I was somewhat disappointed with my performance and my finish position, but it was the most enjoyable race I have ever been in. I had amazing support from the crowd and the Irish team. The highlight for me was having my family out on the course supporting me during my Olympic debut. The whole experience has been amazing."

PJ concluded that the experience had given him the drive to push on for the rest of the current season, and to endeavour to qualify for the next Winter Olympics in Sochi 2014.

## Two golds for record-breaker Hannah

**RGU: SPORT Scholar Hannah Miley continued her unstoppable rise to success with two record-breaking performances at the 2010 British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) Long Course Swimming Championships in February.**

The second year Sport and Exercise Science student competed in three separate events over three days at the Championships held at Ponds Forge, Sheffield.

Hannah got off to a strong start and came in second place out of all students competing in Friday's 800m Freestyle, coming in just three seconds behind first place. She then stormed on to take first place in Saturday's 400m and Sunday's 200m Individual Medleys, making new British Universities Record times for both.

Hannah's success was also recognised with the 'Women's Performance of the Competition' award.

Hannah added a second gold to her name in the final of the 400m Individual Medley at the British Gas Swimming Championships (50m) which took place from 29 March to 3 April.

Hannah had a two second lead by the 200m mark which she continued to extend, and as she entered the final leg she was four seconds in front. Touching in a season's best, she secured her second title of the Championships, the second-best time recorded in the world this year.

As one of the region's brightest stars for the 2012 Olympics, Hannah is sponsored by Aberdeen City and Shire through the RGU: SPORT Scholar programme, where she benefits from a package of tailor-made programmes devised to support her needs, sports discipline and academic course requirements. Hannah trains at RGU: SPORT, which enables her to successfully combine her training schedule with her lectures at Garthdee.



# Student Achievement Awards 2010

**Over 100 staff and students attended the annual Student Achievement Awards (formerly Scarlet and Gold Awards) at the Hilton Treetops Hotel on 26 February.**

The newly renamed awards celebrate outstanding achievement in student volunteering, societies and by class representatives at the University.

After a three course meal, students were welcomed by Vice-President (Union and Societies) Rachel Watson, and presented with their awards by Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Shona Cormack.

Awards included Half and Full Scarlets, awarded for outstanding contribution and national acclaim, and the Student Volunteering Scotland Gold Award, the highest award for student volunteering in the country.

This year's winners of Gold Awards were Jennifer Cadiz, fourth-year Corporate Communication student and Marketing and Communications Officer at RGU: Union, and Nora Ni Fhlannagain, third-year Nutrition and Dietetics student.

Nora, RGU: RAG (Charities) Society President and founder of 'Cumancraic', the University Gaelic Society, cleaned up at the Awards, winning a Gold, a Full Scarlet and a Millennium Volunteers certificate for over 200 hours volunteering.

This year, Society of the Year went to RGU: RAG, who under the leadership of Nora have achieved great success, raising just under £5000 for various local and national charities. The New Society of the Year title was awarded to CSI: RGU; Societies Person of the Year to Ros Brown of the Toast Society; and Volunteer of the Year to Steph Dowling, Union Volunteering Officer.

A number of students received certificates for 50, 100 and 200 hours of volunteering under the Millennium Volunteering Awards Scheme.

Lydia Fyall, Student Development and Volunteering Co-ordinator said, "It's great to see the students rewarded for all their accomplishments and hard work. The number of student volunteers and societies are at an all-time high and this is testament to the contribution students make with their free time. Well done to all our winners!"

After all the awards were duly presented, a night of Scottish country dancing and disco entertainment followed into the wee hours.



(From left) Jessica wearing the dress beside designer, Amanda.

## Success for budding designer

**Amanda Montague, a student from Gray's School of Art, created a dress made entirely from roses which was worn at the official launch of the new Dobbies Garden World, on the Lang Stracht, in February.**

Dobbies approached Kim Eason, Programme Leader for the Textiles and Fashion Design course, to help provide them with a high-impact design for the launch. Amanda is one of Kim's students. Her work focuses on femininity, the celebration of the female form and her desire to make fashion a much 'prettier' place. For this reason Kim thought Amanda would be perfect for the task.

The 'Rose Dress' was designed in keeping with the history of the new Dobbies as it has been built on the former Cockers Roses site. Dobbies itself started as a famed rose grower in the late 1800's, making the dress of particular significance.

Amanda enlisted the help of Aberdeen model and Gray's student Jessica Brown, who wore the dress at the launch. Jessica was assisted by Dobbies longest serving Aberdeen staff members, Jimmy McRae and Mike Dodds who have collectively worked on the site of the Aberdeen store for over 80 years.



## STUDENT SUCCESSSES



### 'Gray Area' for student artists ahead of Gray's Degree Show 2010

Gearing up for Gray's Degree Show 2010, final year Painting students from Gray's School of Art launched the most important exhibition of their careers so far, at Peacock Visual Arts in Aberdeen's Castlegate.

Entitled 'Gray Area', the pre-Degree Show exhibition showcased a diverse and striking collection of work by 25 talented classmates. The work incorporated a range of different styles, from oil on canvas to mixed media on wood and even painting on glass. The reference to 'Gray' in the title of the show not only illustrated the students' connection to the School, but also that their work is still a process of experimentation.

One of the students exhibiting was Stephen Thorpe who is interested in breaking the boundaries of paint. The oil painting on wood piece he featured in the exhibition has rough edges,

illustrating the idea that painting is a search for something that resonates with you. Stephen said, "The piece I included in the exhibition showed a collage of nostalgic items from my childhood – a beach ball, patterns I remember... It was almost as if I was looking for something in my painting."

The Show, which is sponsored by BP, launches on Friday 18 June. It will then be open to the public from 19 - 26 June from 10am-8pm on weekdays and 10-5pm at the weekend.

### Double gold for Nutrition and Dietetics student

Third year Nutrition and Dietetics student, Alison Wylie, recently proved to be a woman of many talents by sprinting to double gold medal success in the 2010 Scottish Universities Indoor Athletics Championships.

Alison flew the University flag in the championship which took place on Saturday 20 February at Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. She achieved a personal best (PB) in the 60m, taking the gold medal in 8.04 seconds, and then going on to claim a second gold title in the 200m, with a near PB of 26.68 seconds.

Alison has been involved in athletics for 10 years and now competes for the Aberdeen Amateur Athletic Club (AAAC), focusing on sprints including 60m (indoor), 100m and 200m. She is also a regular member of the 4x100m relay team who have been successful in regional leagues and have won gold twice and silver once at the Scottish relay championships.





## First Minister and Big Brother Winner Share Panel at Aberdeen's First Youth Summit

Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond addressed the next generation of private and public sector leaders at Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future's (ACSEF) first economic summit for young people at the Aberdeen Business School on 26 of February.

Entitled Future Makers, the event was designed to attract a range of University and College undergraduates, young professionals and senior secondary pupils. The summit combined presentations on ACSEF's plans to grow the economy and enhance its quality of life with interactive workshops to find out if those plans meet young people's expectations for the future.

Big Brother Celebrity Hijack winner John Loughton, who was the youngest ever chairman of the Scottish Youth Parliament, also attended to encourage the next generation to take an active role in shaping Aberdeen City and Shire's economy now and in the future.

## University sees double at overseas graduations

**The University has held two overseas graduations for the national oil companies of Venezuela and Algeria since December.**

The second cohort of delegates from Venezuelan national oil company, PdVSA, has graduated from the University with Masters Degrees in Oil and Gas Engineering, Drilling and Well Engineering and Petroleum Production Engineering, including six students gaining Distinctions

Professor John Watson, Dean of the Faculty of Design and Technology, travelled out to Caracas to present the awards at a special ceremony attended by HE Catherine Royle, UK Ambassador to Venezuela. Senior management from PdVSA were present to celebrate the students' achievements, including the Internal Director of Research and Development with responsibility for Corporate Education and Training, Dr Hercilio Rivas, and the newly appointed

President of Intevep, PdVSA's research establishment, Miguel Ford.

The University won a major, five-cohort contract with PdVSA for the delivery of professional education and training in 2006. The taught part of the Masters programmes was delivered in Aberdeen for the first two cohorts. Subsequent cohorts are being taught in La Tahona, Venezuela.

In January, another University graduation ceremony took place in Algeria. A total of 52 successful graduates from the Algerian national oil company, Sonatrach were presented with their awards. 33 graduates received a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), 13 achieved the degree of MSc Project Management and six were awarded the MSc Purchasing & Supply Chain Management.

At the first graduation, held at IAP in December 2006, for the MSc Asset Management programmes, Dr Chakib Khelil, Minister of Energy and Mining of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and past OPEC President, was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

## Gaelic Football team crowned British Champions



**The University's Gaelic Football team were crowned British Champions at the British University Ladies Gaelic Football championships that were held in Manchester from 20 – 21 February.**

They beat Liverpool's Hope and John Moore's Universities, before triumphing over St Mary's of London in the final, 0-4 to 0-2.

Team member and Vice-President of the club, Elizabeth Breen, who is studying Pharmacy, said, "All the girls were a credit to themselves and the University throughout the entire weekend. Their heads never went down, and they fought for every ball the minute they stepped onto the pitch.

"The final was possibly the toughest game I've ever had to play, due to a combination of the pitch conditions, the quality of the opposing team and the fact that we were so close to winning the British Championships."

RGU: SPORT scholar Brianne Leahy was awarded Player of the Tournament and nominated as the UK University All-Star Captain to play the All-Star game in April. The All-Star team will play against the London Ladies Gaelic Football Team.

Brianne concluded, "Over the past three years the University's Ladies Gaelic Team has improved in skill and fitness, and has worked incredibly hard to achieve such a high standard of Gaelic Football."



Photo of Mark taken when he won the Sandy Menzies Achievement Award.

## Alumnus returns as lecturer at Scott Sutherland School

Construction Design and Management graduate, Mark Cunningham, recently swapped sitting in the student ranks for standing at the lectern as he delivered a lecture to students in the Scott Sutherland School.

First class Honours graduate, Mark, spoke about his dissertation topic, 'Procurement routes in Central and Eastern Europe' on 22 February. The talk was organised by lecturer, Rod McLennan.

Mark said, "It's a unique feeling standing giving a lecture in a room where I was once taught. I feel privileged that Rod has given me the opportunity, and would like to thank him for his support."

Rod went on to say, "This has proven to be a great opportunity for both Mark and our students. The students enjoyed the opportunity

to hear from someone that had recently graduated from the University, and we all benefited from the discussion that developed after the lecture."

Following on from the success of Mark's inaugural lecture, Rod has invited him back to deliver a number of lectures on 'Strategic Procurement' in the future.

Mark will join Simmons & Company International Ltd in Aberdeen, as a Graduate Analyst, starting in September.

## University ranked top in Scotland for student experience

**The University has been ranked as the overall top new university in Scotland and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the UK in the Time Higher Education Student Experience survey.**

The University was also placed joint 1<sup>st</sup> in UK for 'industry connections' alongside Loughborough, out of the 104 institutions listed.

Professor John Harper, Acting Principal, said, "While we consistently perform well in league tables which measure our success as an institution, to know that our students rate their experience with us so highly is extremely gratifying.

"These results back up the findings of the 2009 National Student Survey where 84% of the University's final year undergraduate students who responded were satisfied with the quality of their course. We will ensure this positive feedback is used as a benchmark to improve on in the future."

## Paull and Williamson secure five year contract with University

**The employment team at Paull & Williamsons LLP, one of Scotland's leading commercial law firms, has secured a five year contract to provide employment legal services to the University. The six figure award was secured following a competitive tender.**

Sean Saluja who heads the firm's 12 strong employment team said, "We have experience of working with a number of education establishments throughout Scotland and are delighted to have the opportunity to work closely with such a forward thinking and innovative institution."

David Briggs, Executive Director for the University, added, "As a professional, business facing University, we face the same employment challenges as any other business. Lydia Ross, Head of Human Resources at the University, will lead our partnership with Paul and Williamsons and, supported by such a strong team, this will position us well for the future".



## New MSc in Asset Integrity Management aims to create 21st century business leaders

A new course, the MSc Asset Integrity Management (AIM), has recently been launched by the Energy Centre. The course is designed to equip students with the skills and competencies to manage assets using an optimised business, safety and compliance approach.

The MSc AIM, which is accredited by the Energy Institute, fulfils industry requirements for a practical course delivering the benefits of applying a life-cycle approach to asset management.

The course is available to study as online distance learning and online tutoring, with directed study and peer to peer forums. Each area of the course has been devised to address the most important issues facing industries in the management of their assets. It tackles a full spectrum of topics including problem-solving, the application of AIM tools and techniques, such as safety, legal compliance, risk, reliability, and maintenance on brown and green field operations.

After successfully completing the eight core course modules, students have the option of completing the Master of Science by carrying out an individual engineering research project.

Dr Jesse Andrawus is one of the course leaders. He says, "Our primary concern is to safeguard human life, based on a shared desire to prevent disasters such as Piper Alpha ever happening again. Furthermore, across the world organisations are recognising the importance of not only maintaining the safety of their assets, but of doing so in a risk assured, business oriented and compliant manner, whilst remaining heedful of their reputation and public image."

The course begins in January of each year, although it is possible to study individual modules on a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) basis.

For further details visit: [www.rgu.ac.uk/energycentre](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/energycentre), or email [PostgraduateAdmissions@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:PostgraduateAdmissions@rgu.ac.uk).



(From left) Marcela Scevikova, Shannon McKeeman, Mandy Armstrong, Michael Hutchison and Elaine Stuart

## Law students represent University in UK round of International law competition

A team of law students from Aberdeen Business School recently represented the University at the UK Round of the International Jessup Mooting Competition from 18-22 February at the Gray's Inn in London.

The yearly competition, organised by the International Law Students Association in Chicago, holds heats at national and international level.

This year, the ABS team – Shannon McKeeman, Mandy Armstrong, Elaine Stuart, Michael Hutchison and Marcela Scevikova – came up against strong opponents including Durham Law School, Warwick University and University College London, who went on to win the UK round.

Team coach, Dr Elimma Ezeani from the Department of Law said, "The students' performance was a credit to the Department and to the University. The students acquitted themselves excellently and really held their own against some tough opposition from experienced teams. Well done to all who took part!"

The University was also represented on the judging panel by Derek Auchie, Senior Lecturer in Law.

## KM for UN

**Dr Roderick Smith and Simon Burnett of the Department of Information Management (KM) delivered a series of Knowledge Management workshops to the United Nations staff in Geneva.**

The purpose of the workshops was to explore and help develop a KM strategy. It focused on the development of a strategy statement and an action plan.

Initially the group, which consisted of 15-20 members of staff, were split into three groups and tasked with producing a strategy statement which was then circulated by one member of each team to the other teams as part of a World Café exercise. The object was to identify a single statement that was representative of the opinions of all stakeholders.

Participants were then asked to consider how they might achieve the objective inherent within the statement. They identified five

main strengths and weaknesses which were displayed as post-it notes on the walls. Two team members were asked to categorise them and in doing so identify the key priorities.

For the UN team the key priority was to look at their perception of KM as a function of the service and to create a rich dialogue within which to explore their role within the UN generally and their own understanding of their primary tasks.

These final recommendations were received with some surprise but appreciation that the embedding of a KM strategy had quite specific implications for them.

It is hoped that there will be further workshops to help the team progress their KM agenda. The workshops themselves will form the basis of a paper outlining the development of a KM strategy within organizations.

## BUSINESS AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

# BUSINESS AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS



## National Instruments deliver event in Aberdeen

National Instruments, one of the world's leading providers of software and hardware for measurement and control, hosted the company's Academic Seminar at the start of the year.

The School of Engineering hosted the event, which included a hands-on workshop on data acquisition and virtual instrumentation, as well as a series of talks by leading practitioners and academics. Topics included green engineering, signal processing, teaching and research, and real time applications.

Dr Gunaratne, who is a Reader and Technology Consultant within the School of Engineering and who was involved in organising the event, explained, "Virtual instrumentation transforms the way engineers and scientists around the world design, prototype and deploy systems for test, control and embedded design applications. From testing next-generation gaming systems to creating breakthrough medical devices, National Instruments technology is used to continuously develop innovative technologies that impact millions of people. We were delighted to welcome NI experts to the University.

"I believe that this event was the largest of its kind to be organised by an academic institution with National Instruments. This was possible due to the dedicated support extended by many people in the School of Engineering, in particular, our technical services, computing, engineering applications and secretarial staff, to whom I would like to express my sincere gratitude."

## Group enters expertise sharing partnership with the University

Scottish business technology solutions provider Amor Group has entered into an innovative new expertise sharing partnership with the University.

The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) agreement is the start of a two-year project that will bring together academic expertise in information management (IM) and the experience and skills of companies working in the energy sector.

The aim is to improve IM through sharing best practice and taking a group approach to problem solving. This innovative development helps businesses save money and represents a move away from the more common consultant led approach.

Last year, Amor joined forces with Ovum, incorporating the Butler Group, a renowned provider of IT research, analysis and advice, to launch an IM Energy Forum. Since then a number of North Sea operators have now signed up for the Forum, which comprises industry analysts, academics and technology provider to give members direct access to information, industry best practice and networking opportunities.

Neale Stidolph, Account Director at Amor Group, said, "This partnership cements our long-standing relationship with the University and will bring together academic expertise and our knowledge and capabilities in the global energy sector."

Dr Peter Reid, Head of the Department of Information Management at ABS, said, "We are delighted to have secured this KTP and to be able to work more closely with the Amor Group, and in particular Amor Pragma, which has such a strong track record in delivering technology solutions for the oil and gas sector.

"Industry partnerships such as this as are very important to the University on a number of levels, including enhancing our links with practitioners as well as ensuring a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and expertise."

## The University achieves new Standard in IiP accreditation

**The University has retained its Investors in People (IiP) accreditation and is the first University in Scotland to gain recognition under the new Standard. The new Standard not only demonstrates the organisation's ability to meet the IiPs core criteria, but supports continuous improvement in key strategic areas.**

IiP is achieved in recognition of an organisation's commitment and investment in its staff. Organisations are assessed through inspection, assessment and interviews with employees chosen by the IiP. The University was one of the first to achieve accreditation since the IiPs inception in 1995.

David Briggs, Executive Director of HR at the University, said, "The fundamental underpinning of the IiP process is based on what employees say about their organisation, and how it engages with and supports them. This is what gives the IiP standard such significance.

"Research also suggests that organisations which test themselves against the standard, and respond accordingly with improvements, perform better than those which do not. This gives the process additional merit."

Speaking about the University, Philip Williamson, Chairman of IiP UK, said, "You have shown real commitment to adhere to the rigorous standards set when the University first became an Investor in People. Your continued success is testament to your management and employee team and the effort that you have together invested in pursuit of improvement."



(From left) Police cadet with Rhona Cameron from the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA), Scene Examination Branch who is also a Robert Gordon University graduate.

## Crime Scene Cadets

**A group of young police cadets from Grampian Police got to grips with crime scene examination techniques when they undertook a practical exercise at the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences in February.**

During the exercise, cadets had the opportunity to learn practical skills in the University's crime scene rooms, including the appropriate methods of approaching a crime scene and how to preserve and collect footwear marks and finger prints. The exercise was co-ordinated and supervised by University staff and members of the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) Scene Examination Branch based at Queen Street.

This exercise is part of an ongoing pioneering collaboration between the University and Grampian Police. Similar exercises have been conducted with school pupils and it is hoped that a more comprehensive version will become part of the 19 week probationary officer training programme. In return, the University has benefited from access to specialist guest lecturers and first hand experience from officers in the field.

The Grampian Police Cadet programme, which was reintroduced in Grampian in 2006, is a full-time employment scheme designed for young people aged 16 years who live within the region. It gives young people a real insight into the Police and also provides an opportunity to work with community partners and develop life skills and experience.

Bruce Duncan, Senior Scene Examination Branch Manager comments, "The main thrust of the exercise is to give cadets a flavour of the training received by probationary officers which is aligned with Crime Scene Managers' teachings. As with the probationary officer training programme, we aim to produce highly-informed, well-rounded police cadets, many of whom we expect to apply to become probationary officers."

## Teachers take to the labs

**Secondary school teachers from across the region descended upon the University in February to attend an early evening event organised by the Association of Science Education (ASE).**

The Association returned to the University on 23 February following the success of a 'Meet the Researcher' event held in June 2008, this time inviting thirty teachers to undertake workshops in forensic science and renewable energies.

The group were split into two after a welcome from Professor Andrew Morrisson, Associate Head of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences. The forensics group carried out three activities relating to crime scene skills: chromatography of ink, footwear impressions and fibre investigation.

Running parallel to this, the second group took part in a series of 'renewable energies' workshops in the School of Engineering led by Dr Alan Owen, Director of the Centre for Understanding Sustainable Practice (CUSP).

"We are always pleased to host events for the Association," comments Professor Morrisson. "We find that it is important for secondary school teachers to be aware of the work we do with our students, and to allow them access to the state-of-the-art technology we have at our disposal. In return this type of exchange helps us gain a deeper appreciation of teaching science at a high school level."



## School pupils present their ideas on Fairtrade

**As part of Fairtrade Fortnight, the University underlined its commitment to the cause by hosting an event which brought together local school pupils, students and key figures in the international drive for fairly traded products.**

'The Big Swap' event took place on 2 March at Aberdeen Business School, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen College and The Aberdeen Third World Centre. The name of the event was taken from the wider national Fairtrade Fortnight campaign to encourage people to swap to Fairtrade stamped products, and school pupils from across Aberdeen City and Shire presented their poster ideas around the campaign on the day.

Sponsored by Co-op, who provided prize vouchers for the school pupils, the event also encompassed participation from Aberdeen City and Shire Councils.



Niccolo Capanni (second from left) with pupils from Aberdeen Grammar School at the event.





(From left) Abharana Bhatt, Dr. Laura Muir and Professor Iain Richardson.

## University team comes second in national technology prize

**A team of University academics were awarded second prize in the 2009 Thales Scottish Technology Awards for Data Imaging and Processing at a ceremony held at Thales' head office in Glasgow.**

The entry, titled 'VClear: Perceptually Optimised Video Compression' was submitted by Dr Laura Muir, Professor Iain Richardson and Abharana Bhatt. It is a design concept for software that would allow for better quality of visually important video image content. The perceptually optimised video technology would be able to integrate into any system or instrument that makes use of video coding, streaming and display.

Eight finalists representing Universities throughout Scotland were selected for

the award. The University's team received £2,000.

The Thales Scottish Technology Prize acts as a platform for dialogue and engagement between the organisation, the UK's second largest defence electronics supplier, and the Scottish academic community.

Representatives from Thales will visit the University's team in May to discuss the technology and attempt to identify any areas of mutual interest.

## National badminton championships come to the University

RGU: SPORT hosted many of the UK's top student badminton players when it was the venue for the Scottish Universities Sport Badminton Championships in February.

The University's Sports Vice-President, David Hegarty, said, "I think it's a testament to the growth of RGU: SPORT's clubs that we are now hosting these prestigious national and international events on campus."

## Competition success at IBM Challenge

The team at the Challenge:



**A group of management students from Aberdeen Business School returned triumphant from the IBM Universities Business Challenge, as the highest performing Scottish university team.**

The Challenge gives participants the chance to work as management consultants in a series of realistic, simulated companies, making all the critical business decisions that affect the company's performance. The simulations vary and range from manufacturing to service businesses to ensure a rounded experience.

Layla Ali, Anna Gonera, Robert Totok and Simona Jonikaityte, who all study Management with Finance, joined up with Fashion Management student Lucyna Delmaczynska to go head to head with 72 semi-finalists at RBS headquarters in Edinburgh on 26 February.

The second year cohort was up against seven other University teams, beating teams from Strathclyde and UWS, coming fourth out of over 280 teams who initially entered.

### EVENTS DIARY 2010

For further information on all events, visit: [www.rgu.ac.uk/news/eventsdiary](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/eventsdiary)

APRIL	
21	Built Heritage lecture series 'Holding Up the Past'
21	Non-Medical Prescribing Conference
28	Richard Noble talk
MAY	
5	Built Heritage lecture series 'Remnants of Settlement – Scottish Stone Buildings in Nova Scotia'
13	IDEAS launch
20	IPE Conference
JUNE	
18	Gray's Degree Show
22	Scott Sutherland End of Year Show
JULY	
1- 16	Summer Graduation ceremonies
OCTOBER	
6	Open Day
NOVEMBER	
6	Open Day

