

JULY Issue

Nexus

Connecting the University community



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

League tables triumph

Student successes end year on a high

MPharm re-accredited

Fifth birthday celebration of 2+2 Degree partnership



Robert Gordon University and Aberdeen College celebrated their highly successful 2+2 Degree Link Partnership by jointly hosting a 'Fifth Birthday Party' on Monday 18 May. The guest speaker at the event was Mr Tom Smith, Chief Executive of Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ACSEF), and Joint Chair of Oil and Gas UK.

The party enabled both institutions to celebrate the significant benefits their partnership brings to individuals and employers in the North-east. The theme of the event was 'Distance Travelled' - a theme that reflects the journey between College and University, which over 300 students now make each year in order to achieve their goals.

Among the distinguished guests were graduates who have gained their degrees as a result of the extensive range of subjects available via 2+2 links, including Jennifer Cadiz who gained an HND in Advertising and PR with the highest number of merit units in her class.

On 30 March, Fiona Hyslop, Education Secretary, formally launched the new Uni-link website, which showcases the extensive range of degree links now in place where Aberdeen College students can progress to an Honours degree at the University.

Professor Mike Pittilo commented, "Last year a total of 310 students progressed from Aberdeen College to the University and we believe Uni-link will increase this, helping us to deliver Government and Funding Council priorities within the North-east. This will benefit individuals, the regional economy and lifelong learning in Scotland."

Roddy Scott, Acting Principal of Aberdeen College, added, "The demographic changes affecting Scotland, and particularly the North-east, will make it more challenging for Further and Higher Education institutions to attract students. We believe that the flexibility that Uni-link offers students, in terms of developing at their own pace and choosing how far they wish to take their studies, will be very attractive, especially to those who may not have traditionally considered Higher Education."

Acting Principal of Aberdeen College, Roddy Scott, and Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Robert Gordon University, Professor Mike Pittilo, cut the bespoke birthday cake to celebrate the links between the two institutions.

THIS ISSUE

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

As usual this edition abounds with stories of staff, student and graduate achievements, as well as initiatives, events and collaborations with industry. This month we also feature The Scott Sutherland School's 'Big Crit' day, which saw a distinguished judging panel publicly critique some of the School's top students' designs.

We would be pleased to hear your suggestions for Schools, support departments, and specialist research centres around the University to feature in the magazine. 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 August issue is Wednesday 8 July. Deadlines for the rest of 2009 are available on the magazine website.

Pauline Smith
Communications Officer

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University triumphs in nationwide league tables

The University has once again performed exceptionally well in two recently published, UK-wide league tables.

The Times Good University Guide named us as the best modern university in the UK, as well as the top Scottish University for graduate-level jobs and fourth in the UK.

In addition, the University has been ranked as top Scottish Modern University and second top Modern University in the UK in *The Guardian University League Tables 2010*.

The Guardian also said the University performed particularly well in respect of career prospects, which increased to 83% - an overall ranking of joint third alongside Cambridge. Only London School of Economics and Imperial College performed better, making Robert Gordon University the best Scottish institution in terms of career prospects.

Professor Mike Pittilo, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, welcomed the results, saying, "This is excellent news and reflects the commitment and hard work of colleagues across the University. While we cannot be complacent, it is a tremendous boost to our marketing efforts, and will serve to make the University better known across the UK and abroad."

Professor John Harper, Senior Vice-Principal, added, "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."

The University's strong performance has also been aided by its recent excellent results in the Research Assessment Exercise. This recognised research in a number of niche areas across the University to be of international excellence.

Grand designs presented to distinguished panel on 'Big Crit' Day



The judging panel: David McClean, Head of School, Isi Metzstein, Alan Pert and Graham Mitchell. Not pictured are Rab Bennetts and Neil Gillespie.

The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment recently gave members of the public a unique opportunity to witness reviews of a number of student projects by high-profile members of the profession.

'The Big Crit', which took place on 14 May, had the theme of 'Architecture and Identity'. Eighteen students who were chosen for their excellence were critiqued by Alan Pert of NORD Architects; Isi Metzstein, formerly of Gillespie, Kidd & Coia Architects; Rab Bennetts, of Bennetts Associates, and Neil Gillespie, of Reiach and Hall Architects.

Neil Lamb, Senior Lecturer at the School, said, "A wide range of student work was critiqued and it was a great opportunity to see the review process in action, something which is normally done behind closed doors."



Jonathan presents his design for a new station.

Union Terrace Gardens commuter station

Third year student, Jonathan Mennie, presented his design for a regional passenger/commuter station to serve Aberdeen, freeing up the main station for longer-distance trains and creating a new, positive arrival to the city.

Jonathan incorporated some features of Union Terrace Gardens into his building design, restoring these to create a strong sense of identity.

He said, "The structure I designed is a precast concrete column and beam system that is covered in a special stainless steel mesh, with Union Street connected to the platform via a series of intersecting escalators. The roof of the building would act as a new public plaza, and would be raised to be nearer the level of Union Street."



Sara with her museum model.

The Adelphi granite museum

Also looking at regenerating an area of Aberdeen's city centre was Sara Russell. She proposed to revitalise the city's run-down Adelphi by constructing a new museum to house a celebration of granite there. A seven storey tower would take advantage of the striking views and showcase new styles of granite construction, while a collection of traditionally built granite buildings would hold the main exhibition spaces.

"There is an opportunity here for The Adelphi to become the core attraction of this area, with strong links to the harbour, shopping area and the cultural and tourist centre as identified in the Aberdeen masterplan. The area holds visual and historical importance and is a key element in uniting Union Street and the harbour, and providing the city with an exciting new asset," outlined Sara.



Cian showcases his harbour designs

Regenerating Buckie Harbour

Final year student, Cian O'Riordan, looked further afield for his inspiration and devised plans to breathe new life into historic, but underused, Buckie harbour.

Cian proposed re-using the existing industrial structures of the harbour, most significantly the Ice Tower (which has now been demolished), with its location and form dominating the skyline. This adaptation would become a symbol of regeneration, and would also accommodate the harbourmaster's office and a digital media gallery. At night, the building would transform into a giant exhibit, lit by projections designed by visiting artists.

Cian explained, "The aim of the project is to transform the way in which the harbour is perceived and inevitably used by the public. I would hope the development would act as a catalyst for the revival of the harbour and encourage future growth and activity, making the harbour an asset to the town once again."

Cian worked with Bruce Newlands, a former Buckie High student and tutor at the University, at various stages of this project. Along with other final year students, he is looking for the opportunity to apply some of his work to regenerate the town.



'International Excellence' accolade from RAE

Two of the University's submissions achieved 100% 'International Excellence' ('3') ratings in the recently released results from the 'Esteem' section of the UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

The ratings were achieved by University's submissions to the 'Politics and International Studies' and 'Art and Design' RAE units of assessment. The 'Politics' submission was the best in the region and among the very best results achieved nationally.

The submission, from Aberdeen Business School's Department of Public Policy, was particularly praised for its applied work and links with policy users. The Department has for some time enjoyed the distinction of having the only local authority-funded Chair in the UK. Researchers from the Department returned consultancy, funded research or conference related contracts or agreements with government departments in the UK and overseas, charities, and international governing bodies, on subjects ranging from transport and climate change (with a ministerial commendation) to methods of public consultation.

Members of staff have worked as Special Advisors to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, the EU Economic and Social Committee, and for a report to the Training and Development Board of ESRC which changed the governance arrangements for one of the ESRC's key funding schemes. The work of researchers included in the University's Politics RAE submission has received prominent attention in national print and broadcast media.

The Department also successfully nominated, and orated for, honorary Doctorates of the University, including the Rt. Hon Neil Kinnock, and Lord Williamson of Horton (former Secretary General, European Commission).

ACTR researches how police officers cope with trauma

Academics at the Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research (ACTR) are currently investigating how police officers cope with the exceptional demands of their day-to-day job.

The Centre is undertaking a two-year research project to identify factors associated with the 'wellbeing' and 'resilience' of police officers and their ability to cope with the demands of contemporary policing. Funded by the University and The Scottish Institute for Policing Research, this unique study involves police officers from Grampian Police and Fife Constabulary.

This latest study follows on from research involving Grampian Police, carried out by Professor David Alexander, Director of ACTR, and his team. The previous study found that police work was a demanding form of employment. Certain duties were particularly so, for example, giving evidence in court and confronting an armed individual. They also found organisational and/or managerial police work demanding.

For this study, all police officers in the participating forces will be invited to contribute their experiences through a confidential online questionnaire. Selected officers who have been exposed to trauma in the previous year will be invited to participate in follow up interviews to allow a more in-depth exploration of potential trauma-related factors associated with resilience and well-being.

This extensive and ground-breaking study will provide crucial data to develop organisational practices which will enhance the resilience and wellbeing of police officers in the Scottish Police Service. This is aimed at reducing levels of sickness absence and ill-health retirement in accordance with the targets set by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. The Scottish Institute for Policing Research and the University have funded a PhD studentship to carry out this unique study.

Further information about the ACTR or the project, is available from www.rgu.ac.uk/actr.



Computing lecturer makes connections at innovation camp

Dr Horacio Gonzalez-Velez from the School of Computing recently attended a networking event at the Royal Holloway, University of London, as part of his National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) Crucible Fellowship. Dr Gonzalez-Velez was awarded the prestigious Fellowship for his interdisciplinary research on computational science.

The 3-day networking event took place from 18 - 20 April. Hosted by the journalist Vivienne Parry, the event touched upon important satellite aspects of the scientific profession, such as dissemination, policy-making and funding.

At the event Dr Gonzalez-Velez had the opportunity of rubbing shoulders not only with the other Crucible Fellows, who come from a range of diverse disciplines, but also with the different agents who play a role in the way science, technology

and the arts are managed on a national level, including MPs, science authors, industrial bodies and policy-makers.

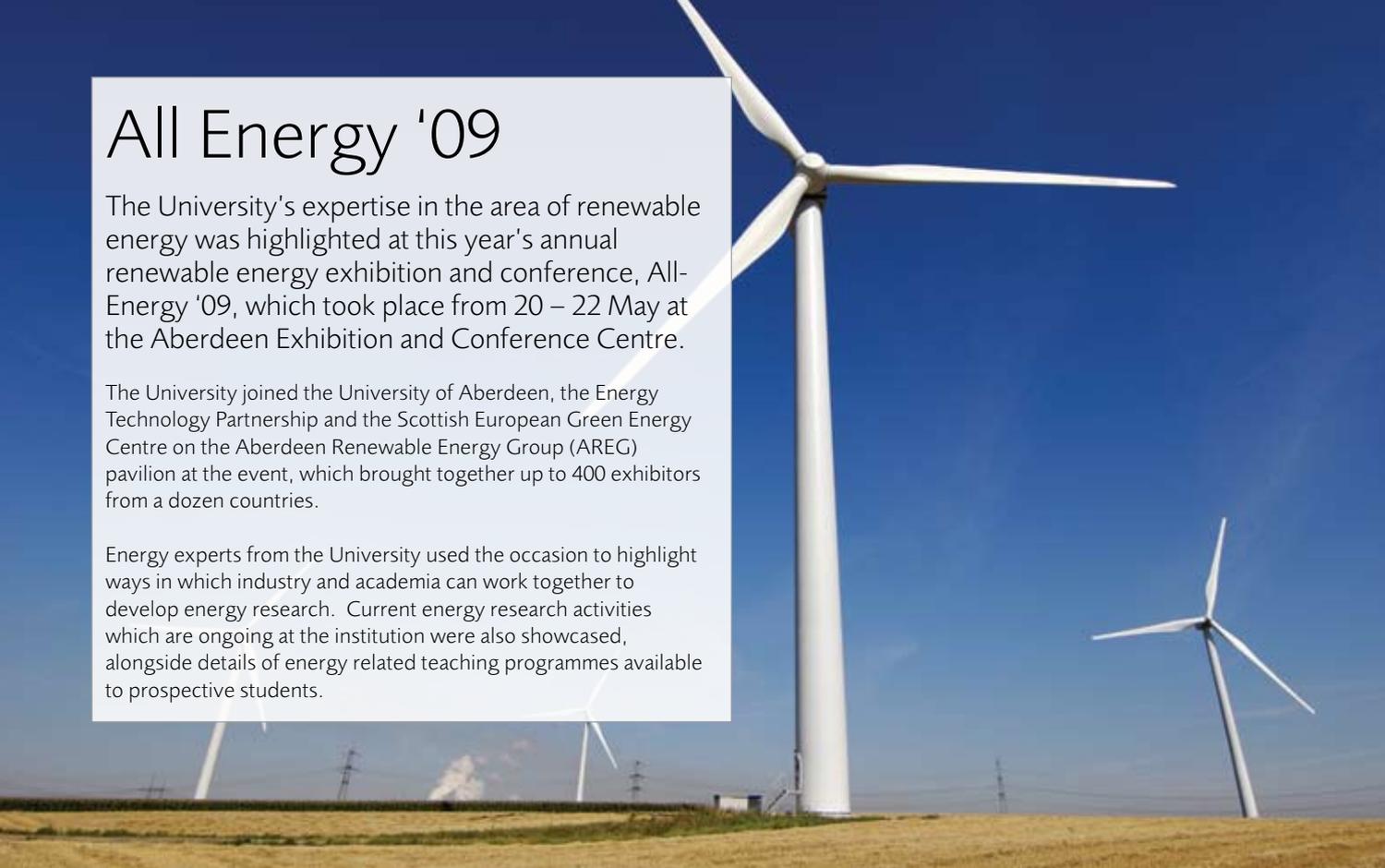
Dr Gonzalez-Velez outlined how, "Being part of the School of Computing has helped me to further appreciate how flexibility, communication, industrial awareness and scientific rigour are crucial components of every endeavour. It has enabled me to fruitfully explore a number of initial co-operative avenues, which will hopefully lead to additional links with institutions across the UK."

All Energy '09

The University's expertise in the area of renewable energy was highlighted at this year's annual renewable energy exhibition and conference, All-Energy '09, which took place from 20 – 22 May at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre.

The University joined the University of Aberdeen, the Energy Technology Partnership and the Scottish European Green Energy Centre on the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG) pavilion at the event, which brought together up to 400 exhibitors from a dozen countries.

Energy experts from the University used the occasion to highlight ways in which industry and academia can work together to develop energy research. Current energy research activities which are ongoing at the institution were also showcased, alongside details of energy related teaching programmes available to prospective students.



School of Engineering showcases research and development

Clean technology, well engineering, gas-to-liquid conversion, evolving robots and self-upgrading televisions were just some of the research and development projects on display at the University's Engineering Research Day on 27 May.

Aberdeen Science and Technology Park was the venue for talks, demonstrations and poster presentations of current projects and expertise within the School, including image processing, artificial intelligence, robotics, hydrogen production and membrane technology.

Professor Iain Richardson, Head of the Centre for Video Communications at the School, demonstrated his pioneering video compression system - 'The TV that learns'. His revolutionary technology can automatically upgrade itself in order to handle multiple video formats with the best possible image quality. Professor Richardson's revolutionary concept has already attracted international attention and been showcased in the USA, France and Spain.

He said, "The University's research focuses on providing solutions to real problems facing industry and organisations. This event provided an excellent platform for the School of Engineering's ground-breaking research, and has further strengthened our links with local businesses."

STUDENT SUCCESS

All aboard! Scott Mathieson, Joel MacDonald and Robert Paul peruse their designs.



Project helps Maritime Rescue Institute make waves

A recent project co-ordinated by Gray's School of Art on behalf of the Maritime Rescue Institute (MRI) has seen three students participate in a rebranding exercise for the Institute.

MRI is based in Stonehaven, and is recognised as a centre of excellence, providing specialist training and advisory services on all forms of waterborne emergency response to organisations and governments around the world. It also provides a 24-hour lifeboat service for the North-east coastline and now operates as an independent charity.

Shell U.K. Limited is one of the organisations which supports the charity, and was able to put MRI in touch with the Gray's students as part of the ongoing partnership it has with the University. As a result, three Gray's students - Joel MacDonald (Graphic Design), Robert Paul and Scott Mathieson (both Design for Digital Media) - have taken part in the project.

Joel has concentrated on reworking the MRI's logo and corporate branding as part of his final year Graphic Design honours project, while Robert has created visuals for a major overhaul and extension of their existing headquarters. Scott is currently working on a new MRI website.

Hamish McDonald, CEO and founder of MRI, said, "I think the corporate branding and website the students have worked on will really help to establish the Institute as an independent organisation and strengthen our position in both the local and international marketplace."

As a result of their involvement in the project, all three students recently met First Minister, Alex Salmond, at a charity dinner organised by Diced Cap in aid of MRI.



Joel's new logo design

Management student secures prestigious internship

Third year BA (Hons) Management student, Lukasz Wozniak, is one of 35 students who have been selected to participate in the Saltire Foundation Summer Internship.

Lukasz will be spending two months in Germany working on an HR project with Bayer, a chemical and pharmaceutical company.

The Saltire Foundation has been established to equip individuals with the business skills and entrepreneurial drive to transform Scottish companies into global businesses of scale. Their Internship Programme offers Scotland's talented students the chance to experience life in some of the world's top companies.

Magazine success by design

Congratulations to 4th Year Design for Digital Media students Matej Pavliceck, Graeme Sutherland and Lubos Buracinsky, who feature in the latest issue of *Web Designer* magazine / Creative Careers edition.

All three were acknowledged for their great work and high standard of output, alongside students from four other top UK and European courses.

David Crossen, Subject Leader, expressed his delight at the students' success: "*Web Designer* is the premier publication for Web creatives and designers, and demonstrates the high quality of work being generated by students on the course."

Scott Sutherland student wins Rob Hunter Prize

Architecture student, Jonathan Mennie, has been awarded the Rob Hunter Prize for his design of a violin makers' workshop in St Andrews.



Jonathan receiving his prize from Alison Hunter.

The Rob Hunter Prize commemorates the life and work of the eponymous architect.

Rob had an architectural practice in Edinburgh and taught at the Scott Sutherland School as a studio tutor for many years.

Jonathan's project involved creating a work and retail space for a three person collaboration of violin-makers from a Grade-C listed sandstone coach house and back garden in St Andrews, Fife. The inner floors and walls were stripped to leave a double height space into which a timber insert was placed to provide an upper minstrel's gallery and retail space beneath. The building has been designed to be sensitive to the surroundings, portraying a natural facade to counteract the visual impact of a new build.

Jonathan was presented with a certificate and £300 of book tokens by Rob's wife, Alison Hunter.



Rochelle Donald with her paper figurines.

Short film 'tears family apart' to impress judges

A final year student from Gray's School of Art has been selected as a runner-up in the Scottish Institute for Enterprise's (SIE) 60 Second Shorts Film Competition.

SIE invited students to film a 60-second awareness-raising video of an issue they felt strongly about. Rochelle Donald entered her powerful and thought-provoking film 'Paper Family' which shows a young family being cut out of paper, before the mother figure is crushed in full view of the child.

The judging panel, made up of representatives from SIE, Fluid Eye Productions, Scottish Screen and the BBC, were greatly impressed by the quality of Rochelle's work. She will now enjoy a two-day training course provided by sponsors, Fluid Eye Productions.

Rochelle said, "I'm delighted to have my work recognised in such a terrific competition. Children are often indirect victims of domestic abuse, with at least 750,000 witnessing domestic violence a year, and I wanted to portray it from their point of view."

First recipient of the Julian Bell Award for Outstanding Student Contribution

Applied Social Sciences student, Konrad Zdeb, has won the inaugural Julian Bell Award for Outstanding Student Contribution. The award celebrates the achievements, energy and dedication of lecturer, Julian Bell, who is to retire this year. Given that Julian has contributed so much to the School, from the founding of the Applied Social Sciences degree, and supporting staff through their careers, to the excellent guidance he has selflessly provided to students, the Social Sciences staff group decided it was appropriate to institute an informal award that recognises such contribution to the school.

Fellow sociology lecturer, Chris Yuill, said, "Konrad easily follows in Julian's tradition of contributing to the life of the School. Over the four years of the course he has represented students at School and Faculty level, as well as engaged in a host of other activities that have benefited and improved the student experience of his classmates. We wish Konrad well in his future career and Julian a happy retirement."

Konrad also picked up one of the University's Student Representative Awards 2009, along with BA (Hons) Applied Social Sciences student, Matthew Middler.

Book launch draws a 'Blank Page' for art students

A group of second year students from Gray's School of Art launched their new book at Peacock Visual Arts on Friday 15 May. Entitled 'Blank Page', the new publication includes both creative writing and visual explorations of the word made by students in direct response to ideas introduced to them over the course of the group project.

Gray's graduate, Donna Ferenth, was commissioned by the School to curate the publication, selecting and formatting pieces for inclusion from the large volume of excellent student work produced throughout the project.

The keynote speech at the launch was provided by Simon Worthington, graphic designer, writer and editor of *Mute Magazine*, a cult publication based in London.

Lecturer in Contextual and Critical Studies, Lesley Scott, led the project in conjunction with fellow members of staff, Allan Watson and Judith Findlay. She said, "We are extremely proud of all the students who have taken part in this project. From a range of disciplines, including sculpture, painting, graphic design and digital media, the students have fully engaged and come up with great results. They rose to the challenge of unfamiliar territory and have really expanded their view of the connections between the written word and creative studio practice."

Hot off the press: the new publication.





Mark Eley of Eley Kishimoto, flanked by the students' tartan designs.

Not just any 'Day of Colour' for design students

Leading figures from the world of fashion and design, and the cream of Scotland's student design talent converged on Gray's School of Art on Thursday 7 May as part of a Day of Colour, organised by The Society of Dyers and Colourists (SDC).

The keynote speaker of the day was Mark Eley of internationally renowned fashion company 'Eley Kishimoto'. He described how the brand has evolved to achieve its current reputation for intelligent and incisive design.

Eley Kishimoto, as surface decorators, have worked with numerous major brands either as print suppliers or collaborators, including Motorola, Nike, Volkswagen, Globetrotter and Louis Vuitton. Alongside partner Wakako Kishimoto, Mark was appointed as creative director of French fashion house, Cacharel, in 2008.

Other speakers included Gavin Gourlay, Visual Merchandising Manager for John Lewis, as well as Peter Diggle and Geoff Rudkin, of the SDC, with a presentation that included a practical dyeing demonstration.

The Day of Colour coincided with the launch of an exhibition showcasing a number of 'live' projects, which fashion and textiles students at Gray's have been working on. This included work that uses a selection of newly-developed Japanese tartans on behalf of Sakura Scotland, a social enterprise based in Edinburgh. The students' designs for this particular company are set to be displayed in Nagasaki as part of a Scottish Week supported by the Scottish Government in September this year.

Ringling endorsement as MPharm re-accredited

The School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences has recently been re-accredited for the full period of five years for the MPharm by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB), and in addition was commended on the following:

- The general strengthening of the School and its leadership since the Society's last visit;
- An evident emphasis on student-centred, independent learning;
- Motivated and enthusiastic staff and students;
- The integrated philosophy behind science teaching;
- A clear focus on current practice;
- A well developed approach to inter-professional education (IPE);
- The meaningful use of e-learning, including the innovative use of e-tutors.

The accreditation team also wished to convey to staff that the students felt the staff were the most positive feature of the course.

Head of School, Professor Terry Healey, welcomed the outcome, saying, "Re-accreditation is a thorough and demanding process which we have been planning for since the last visit in 2004. It is satisfying to realise such an outcome which represents the hard work of many people working as a team. The course leader, Dr Denise Hansford, and my associate head, Professor Don Cairns, deserve particular praise as they have been intimately involved in preparing the submission and ensuring that attention was paid to every detail leading up to, and during, the visit."

Scholarships for new students

The University is responding to the difficult financial circumstances currently being experienced by many students by setting up a fund of £380,000 of scholarships for new students, beginning with a range of postgraduate courses in September 2009.

The scholarships will be available to all international students and all UK students on a variety of postgraduate courses, including MSc in Intelligent Security and Surveillance Systems, International Tourism, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Petroleum Production Engineering, Drilling and Well Management, Design Management,

Construction Project Management and the LLM in International Commercial Law.

The scholarships will be available to cover partial fees, and will be judged by merit on an individual basis through an application process. A range of qualities and skills including academic qualifications, work experience and past achievements will be considered.

Gavin Douglas, Director of Student Recruitment, said, "While the University is keen to increase the quality and diversity of its students, it is also committed to providing them with the best support

possible, and these scholarships will help to alleviate some of the financial burden they face.

"They will also complement our continuing programme of industry and sports scholarships, which help to ensure we produce well-rounded graduates who have the skills and experience required to hit the ground running in their chosen career."

For more information contact: admissions@rgu.ac.uk.



ABS students smash fundraising target at fashion show

A charity fashion show held in Aberdeen Business School on Friday 22 May has raised over £10,000 for North-east cancer charity, CLAN.

A group of 60 Corporate Communication and Media students rose to the challenge of organising the fundraising extravaganza as part of their assessment, smashing their original target of raising £6000 for the charity's '123' campaign.

'Generation Fashion' saw the 400-strong audience swept along on a sartorial journey through time, from the glamorous 1950s through to the present day and beyond. Accompanied by a nostalgic soundtrack, 36 volunteer models of all ages strutted down the catwalk wearing an eclectic mix of outfits donated by CLAN charity shops, the Bon Accord & St Nicholas shopping centres, as well as original designs by students of Aberdeen College.

Support from AVC Media Enterprises, Bon Accord & St. Nicholas Centres, Aramark and Northsound Radio ensured a high quality evening of fun and entertainment.

The show was presented by Northsound DJ Yazz and included a lively performance by Aberdeen-based Karen Berry School of Dance and celebrated singer, Billy Main.

The evening also highlighted the work that CLAN does to support cancer sufferers and their families.

Duncan Charles, Fundraising Co-ordinator for CLAN, expressed his gratitude saying, "It was a fantastic evening. To have raised over £10,000 is quite amazing, but the event also helped us to increase awareness among audiences we don't always reach, which is invaluable."

CLAN offers counselling, support and relief services from its CLAN House base in Aberdeen. The money raised from 'Generation Fashion' will go towards the charity's 123 campaign - '1 Charity has 2 Years to raise £3 Million' for a new CLAN centre facility.

Student Jennifer Cadiz was part of the sponsorship team. She said, "The night was incredibly well-attended and the atmosphere was buzzing, with everyone pulling together to make the event a great success. We exceeded even our own hopes and expectations."

Professor Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School, commended the students' efforts: "It was a fantastic success to raise over £10,000 for CLAN, particularly in the current economic climate. While we had hoped to exceed the original target, the final figure has astounded everyone involved and is a testament to the hard work and professionalism of our students."

Anti-poverty policy explored at ABS seminar

Aberdeen Business School hosted a seminar for the Scottish Public Management Network on 22 May.

With anti-poverty policy as the theme, the seminar was well-attended by a mix of academics and practitioners from around Scotland. The theme was set by Professor Paul Spicker, with further sessions by Matt Lancashire of Citizens Advice Scotland and John Reid of the Department for Work and Pensions, who described the process for implementing welfare reform policies. Dr Louise Scott, from the Scottish Government, consulted the group on methods for linking policy and evidence in local government.

Professor Spicker said, "ABS has an excellent track record in research and consultancy on the management of public services, and the event has helped to cement relationships within the field."

Scott Sutherland lecturers play role in community events

Professor Richard Laing and Dr Amar Bennadji of The Scott Sutherland School recently participated in an awareness-raising event led by the Aberdeen Research Consortium. The event was designed to share knowledge on climate change research taking place in Aberdeen, and featured a series of presentations and posters. Professor Laing spoke on the topic of climate change and European research policy, including forthcoming opportunities for funding. Dr Bennadji presented a poster on the subject of improving the energy performance of existing granite buildings.

In addition Professor Laing gave an invited talk to the AGM of Aberdeen Play Forum during May. The Play Forum was established ten years ago to share information and influence policy developments in relation to the quality of play environments in Aberdeen. Professor Laing's talk was on the subject of 'Creating public space for everybody', which drew on work in School regarding community involvement in design, and the application of results within urban design.

Keith's young engineers get on their bikes

The School of Engineering has presented six mountain bikes to pupils at Keith Grammar School, following their success in a competition run by the School.

The bikes, new and used, were part of a research project headed by Dr Norrie Edward who sadly passed away last year. His family and colleagues decided it would be fitting to see the bikes continue to be used for research and for the benefit of young people.

The competition saw pupils across the North-east submitting projects in any area of engineering, science or technology, featuring a bike as an integral part.

The winners were Keith Grammar School Young Engineers and Science Club. The judges were impressed by their novel and appropriate proposed use of the bicycles, emphasising as they did the recycling nature of the project.

The School has decided to send the bicycles to Africa as part of an ongoing aid project involving them and the local community.

CONNECTING WITH ALUMNI



Caroline dusts down a glass bottle during a crime scene examination workshop for school pupils.

Crime Scene Investigation: Grampian

A shocking incident, some quirky and inevitably gorgeous characters, a few hints and twists and a neatly tied-up and highly anticipated conclusion - television series like CSI are designed to hold our attention by keeping us entertained. Delving into the life of one recent Forensic Science graduate of the University, however, it becomes clear that real life crime scene investigation is even more fascinating, albeit not quite as glamorous.

Caroline Stewart graduated with an Honours degree in Forensic Science in July 2008. In January, she took up a post with the Scene Examination Branch of the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) as a Fingerprint Development Officer, and spends her days searching for and developing fingerprints to help tackle crime in the North-east of Scotland.

Caroline is really pleased with the way her degree course, one of the few accredited

courses in the country, has helped her to prepare for forensics work in practice. "The course had great practical aspects to it as well as theory. We gained a lot of experience in scene-of-crime work, looking at the chain of evidence and making sure we had everything covered, and even went as far as providing evidence in a mock court room."

Caroline is very driven and enthusiastic about her work: "I have my own laboratory set up just the way I like it and I really enjoy working closely with other members of the Scene Examination Branch, Grampian Police and members of the community. Even if a culprit isn't matched to every incriminating fingerprint, it's really satisfying to think that I'm helping to protect people from crime in the future. On occasion, a number of crimes can be linked together through fingerprint ID, and it's a great buzz to know I've played my part in solving investigations."

Caroline hopes she can progress within the Scene Examination Branch. She is set to attend the national forensics training college in Durham later this year to complete a Fingerprint Evidence Recovery and Recording Techniques (FERRT) course and is looking forward to seeing which doors open for her professionally.

Busman's holiday as graduates reconnect at Malmaison



Recent graduates Laura Ruxton, Heather McEwan, Amy Clarke, Angelica Gwelo, Jackie Ewen, Craig Leith, Angela Watt, Claire Northfield and Katy McIntyre take in views of Aberdeen on Malmaison's private terrace.

Graduates of Aberdeen Business School's Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Management courses over the last 60 years were invited to savour the hospitality of fellow alumnus, Robert Cook CEO, on Thursday 14 May at Malmaison, Aberdeen.

An avid supporter of the Business School, Robert received an honorary degree from RGU in 2007 and continues to provide support to the institution, nurturing fresh talent by way of work placement provision. This alumni event was sponsored by Malmaison and aimed to encourage Robert's fellow graduates to support these kind of initiatives, as well as providing an opportunity for networking between graduates and University staff.

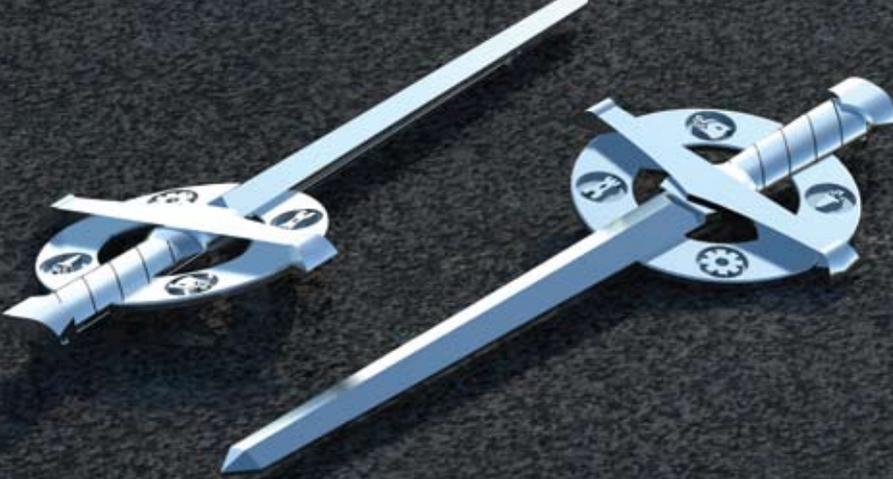
He said, "Helping to develop the next generation of graduates is vital not only for Malmaison, but for the hospitality industry as a whole. Our business thrives on new talent, and we see it as a fundamental

part of our strategy to work closely with universities, bridging the gap between academia and industry."

Bob Gammie, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes at Aberdeen Business School, hosted the event, with input from a number of high profile alumni, including Laura Ruxton, Marketing Manager for FCM Travel; Elaine Green, Business Product Executive for Visit Scotland; Eddie Abbot, owner of the Tolbooth Restaurant in Stonehaven; James Kennedy, Hospitality Manager, Gordon Highlanders Museum and Pat Dunlop, HR Director, Marriott Hotel Aberdeen.

A total of 50 guests from as far afield as Thurso and Edinburgh, came together in the luxury Slains and Balmoral suites at Malmaison to take in the fantastic views of Aberdeen on the hotel's private terrace. They were also given the opportunity to tour the facilities the rest of the hotel has to offer.

Deirdre O'Donnell, a Senior Lecturer at Aberdeen Business School, remarked that, "The evening was a great success with guests benefiting from an update on the latest developments at the School, as well as finding out how they could get involved in a number of initiatives."



Commemorative kilt-pins which form part of the graduation range.

Inaugural Admissions Conference

The first ever Robert Gordon University Admissions Conference took place on 22 April. It aimed to bring course leaders, admissions tutors and other staff involved with admissions up to speed on the importance of the Admissions Policy, as well as to inform, advise and share best practice.

Sheila Kay, Admissions Manager, delivered a presentation on best policy, with talks also from Records Manager, Keith Fraser, Annette Davidson of the Disability and Dyslexia Service and Leslie Currie, who is Senior Project Officer for Supporting Professionalism in Admissions. A number of group discussions also enhanced understanding of the policy.

Scott Sutherland School represented in official tour of Prince's Foundation development

Dr Quazi Zaman, lecturer at The Scott Sutherland School, along with students Ultan Foley and Nasir Zihni Abdul of Stage 5, received Scottish government funding to visit Poundbury Neighbourhood Development in Dorchester - an initiative of the Prince's Foundation.

Dr Zaman represented the University along with other Scottish schools of architecture, planning and urban design.

Poundbury Development is regarded as one of the finest compact neighbourhood schemes and was designed by Leon Krier on the site of the Duchy of Cornwall.

Sustainable living at RGU

The University's Transport and Waste Management Group held a two-day event at Garthdee during March to raise awareness of the initiatives that the University is committed to as part of its overall sustainability programme.

In addition to the RGU team providing information about cycling, bus travel, walking and other sustainable travel, a representative from the Energy Savings Trust was there to offer advice on eco-driving and cars with lower CO² emissions. Information on waste management and recycling was also offered by the University team in conjunction with Shanks, the company that provides the University's waste and recycling service.

More information on the University's sustainability programme can be found at www.rgu.ac.uk/governance/sustainability.

University and Sandy Menzies launch graduation jewellery

A special range of high-quality jewellery to celebrate graduation success has been officially launched, following a joint project involving University staff and students and Sandy Menzies – Jewellery by Design.

The Graduation Jewellery Collection takes its inspiration from the Robert Gordon University crest and the landmark Aberdeen Business School building, designed by world-famous architect, Lord Norman Foster.

RGU-themed cufflinks and kilt pins have been designed for men, while women can choose from a bangle, bracelet or pendant. A unisex lapel pin has also been designed. Prices range from £45 to £130.

Managing Director, Sandy Menzies, a jewellery designer for more than 20 years and a graduate of Gray's School of Art, said he had been inspired to commemorate the happy memories of graduation day. "It's been a terrific project because it has engaged my own staff, as well as staff and students at the University.

I'm extremely grateful for all the co-operation, encouragement and support from the University and I'm hopeful the Graduation Jewellery Collection will appeal to both past and present students."

Jenny Brown, Alumni Relations Manager, added, "We are really excited about the graduation jewellery collaboration with Sandy Menzies. As one of our graduates, Sandy already has a strong bond with the University and brings a personal touch to the jewellery. The project will also directly benefit the next generation of students as a percentage of the profits will be donated to the Alumni Fund and invested in projects that enhance the student experience."

For more information visit: www.sandymenzies.co.uk.

Farewell bash for second PdVSA cohort

On Saturday 16 May at the Caledonian Thistle Hotel, Univation and the School of Engineering hosted a farewell party for the second cohort of students from the Venezuelan national oil company, PdVSA. The 41 students have successfully completed the first two semesters of their Masters course and are now returning to Venezuela to continue work on their Masters Projects. The courses are being provided by the Energy Centre and the

School of Engineering, and include Oil and Gas Engineering, Drilling and Well Engineering and Petroleum Production Engineering.

Both Iain Steel, Head of the School of Engineering, and Ian Campbell, Univation's Director, gave speeches wishing the students every success with their projects and their continuing studies with RGU. The party was well represented by staff from Univation and the School of Engineering, as well as the students and their partners. An enjoyable evening was had by all, with the students providing plenty of instructions on how to salsa!

PdVSA Cohort 2 is part of an ongoing contract Univation and RGU have to deliver a series of MSc Energy Programmes both at home and in Venezuela. It is planned that Cohort 3 will start in September 2009.



Become an Ambassador for Aberdeen!

Are you currently organising or have you ever thought about leading a conference bid for Aberdeen? If so, the Aberdeen Convention Bureau would love to hear from you!

The Aberdeen Convention Bureau is inviting academics from the University to become Aberdeen Conference Ambassadors.

The Programme builds on Aberdeen's national and international reputation in industries such as medical research, food science, energy and agriculture, and was set up to provide information and to support key individuals who are able to influence their association, society or organisation to bring their conference to Aberdeen.

Becoming an Ambassador can help raise the profile of Aberdeen and the University, and provide opportunities to showcase its work and achievements.

Through the programme Ambassadors will have a wealth of resources from the Bureau at their disposal, including advice and support on bidding for a conference, venue location and reservation, site inspection and familiarisation visits, possible financial support and pre-marketing. Once the event has been secured to the area, help is on hand to book delegate accommodation, organise social events and civic hospitality

If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador for Aberdeen, please contact Nicolle Siliwoniuk, Aberdeen Convention Bureau on 01224 288837 or log onto www.aberdeencferences.com.

Award-winning graduate explores the world's stadia

Having established himself as one of the most exciting young artists in the country, Gray's School of Art graduate Steven MacIver has just completed the journey of a lifetime, taking in the world's stadia by travelling around the globe along latitude 41N. From Rome, through Spain, Portugal, America, Japan, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey and back to Rome, Steven's aim was to explore the notion of 'home ground' and prove that this phenomenon, of devotion to a team and a patch of land, can be used as a universal language.

The venture, funded by the University of Aberdeen's Arts Committee and Arts Trust Scotland, will serve as inspiration for an exhibition of work, which will be launched in conjunction with the opening of the new Aberdeen Sports Village in August.

Steven graduated from Gray's with a first-class Honours degree in 2002, before completing his Masters at the Slade School of Fine Art, London. Before leaving the Slade, Steven won the Sainsbury Scholarship in Drawing and Painting at the British School in Rome, where he lived and worked between 2004 and 2006. He has received numerous accolades for his work, including six which were bestowed on him by the Royal Scottish Academy.

Now back at his Oxfordshire base, Steven plans to create a new and ambitious body of work based on the research material he has gathered, and looks forward to exhibiting this in Aberdeen later in the year, before taking it to the Pier Arts Centre in Orkney at the beginning of 2010.

For more information about Steven's work and his progress, visit www.stevenmaciver.com.



The Gatehouse comes up trumps in Troon

Martin Parker, Studio Manager, picked up the 'University Print Managers Group' 2009 award for 'Best in-house Photography and Illustration' on behalf of The Gatehouse - Design & Print Consultancy, at its 2009 annual international conference in Troon.

"It's the first time this category has been awarded, so it was a double honour to receive it on behalf of the Gatehouse team," Martin commented. "We've put a lot of time, effort and creativity into building up the Gatehouse's image library and it was fantastic to have our efforts recognised formally by our peers, who obviously aspire to our own high standards."

The award was presented to Martin by Mark Eaton, of the Stephens and George Print Group, which sponsor the awards, and Rebecca Hanlon, the University Print Managers' Group Chair.

EVENTS DIARY 2009

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

JULY

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

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| 7 | Open Day |
| 8 | Professorial Lecture - Professor Paul Spicker |
| 21 | Careers Fair |

NOVEMBER

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| 7 | Open Day |
| 12 | Leadership Lecture - Lord David Trimble |

DECEMBER

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| 3-4 | Winter Graduation Ceremonies at the Music Hall |
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