Dear colleagues and friends,

At the time of writing, we have just learnt that the University has had its position as one of the UK’s top universities confirmed by The Guardian 2012 league table which rated us 23rd out of 119 institutions for teaching excellence.

I was pleased to see the tables reflected our strength in a range of student support activities. This is particularly pertinent at this time of year when students are focusing on both their exams and their future careers. The Guardian also highlighted our high levels of student satisfaction. I think I can speak on behalf of my colleagues when I say, this sense of satisfaction is reciprocated when we see the great things that our students achieve both personally and academically.

Whenever I meet alumni I am invariably impressed by their commitment to Kent, and I hope that once our students graduate, they will all continue to stay in touch with us through our Alumni Office. One of the things I find most impressive is the generosity of the many alumni who are supporting current students through their philanthropic donations. Equally, generosity is also displayed by both current and former members of staff. Through such support we are able to provide more bursaries, better facilities and buildings and are able to support specific activities in, for example, sports and music. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to everyone who has supported the University over the past year.

In addition to philanthropic support, many of our international alumni play an important role in raising the profile of the University overseas. We have a particularly strong and loyal alumni community in Hong Kong, members of which have provided invaluable advice and support to the Hong Kong alumni association and our innovative Hong Kong and China Portal. We have also had an active alumni association in the United States for a number of years and, more recently, we have established our first alumni committee in Malaysia.

As most people are aware, one of the main challenges we have faced this year has been to plan for the forthcoming change in undergraduate fees for UK and EU students in 2012. At present, all UK universities receive a block grant from the government. This is set to change and the funding will be transferred to individual students in the form of loans, so universities are facing a substantial funding gap. Like many other leading universities, Kent has had to raise its fees to £9,000 per annum from 2012. This will allow us to continue to offer future students a high-quality experience and to increase the levels of support we already give to a broad range of students as part of our long-standing widening participation activities. Alumni, students and staff are all obviously concerned about these changes, and this issue of KENT magazine contains an interview with me so I could answer directly some of the questions alumni in particular have raised.

However, it is important that the issues around fees do not overshadow the fact that Kent is thriving. We have continued to manage our finances prudently – always essential in a time of upheaval and cuts – and, as we can see from the recent Guardian league tables and our increasing student applications, we continue to be popular with students, whose academic achievement goes from strength to strength. Our research is also on an upward trajectory and in the past year we have received some significant external funding for our activities. We have been joined by some excellent new members of staff, not least the new professors at Medway, and staff have received numerous awards and recognition for their academic work.

We undoubtedly are in an uncertain time, but as I said in my interview, I am confident that here at Kent we are going in the right direction. I am sure that whatever we face in the future, Kent will remain a university that we can all be proud of.

Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow, DBE, CBE
Vice-Chancellor
£5 million investment in Arts at Medway

The University is investing over £5 million in its Arts at Medway initiative, to provide its Fine Art, Music and Audio, and Event and Experience Design students with the best possible study environment. And new postgraduate degrees in Fine Art and Music and Audio will mean the University will have one of the strongest creative and performing arts course portfolios in the UK.

The move comes as all universities face losing public funding for arts and humanities courses following the government’s move to cut the teaching budget for higher education.

But University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow said Kent’s investment was a ‘clear signal’ that it placed high value on arts and humanities courses.

The University is developing a number of buildings at the Chatham Historic Dockyard, which forms part of its Medway campus. Over the next two academic years new facilities will include flexible spaces for painting, sculpture, printmaking, film and photographic studies, as well as new music and audio studios and performance areas.

University of Kent teaching ranked among best in UK

Teaching at the University of Kent has been ranked among the best in the UK by The Guardian University Guide 2012.

The Guide, published on 17 May 2011, has ranked the University 23rd out of 119 UK institutions for teaching excellence, a rise of four places from the previous year. The Guide also ranks one-third of Kent’s subjects in the top 12 nationally for teaching. Kent is also highly rated for student support and student satisfaction.

The news was welcomed by the University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow, who said: ‘Kent’s position among the top universities in the UK is a reflection of the high quality of our academic provision and student support. This confirms the excellent student experience that the University offers.’

The Guardian University Guide 2012 covers full-time undergraduate courses at higher education institutions in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is aimed at those wanting to start university in September 2012.

The University’s ranking has also risen four places in The Complete University Guide 2012 where Kent is ranked 34th out of 116 UK universities. The University has also achieved a top 10 position in three subject areas: Hospitality, Leisure, Recreation & Tourism; Art & Design; and Social Work. Overall, 82% of the University’s 33 subjects have appeared in the top 30.
Chinese Minister Counsellor for Education extends scholarship agreement with Kent

Tian Xiaogang, Minister Counsellor for Education at the People’s Republic of China’s Embassy in London, renewed two Chinese government scholarships for the University of Kent during his visit to the Canterbury campus on 13 April.

The scholarships will enable two undergraduate or postgraduate students to spend a year in China learning Mandarin and taking academic modules as appropriate. The new scholarships will be introduced for the 2011-12 academic year, with students having the option to select from a wide range of Chinese institutions. Tuition fees and accommodation will be among the expenses covered by the scholarship.

The scholarships were formalised with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was co-signed by Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow, Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Alex Hughes, the University’s Pro-Vice-Chancellor External, attended the signing and accompanied the Embassy delegates throughout the visit.

The visit also allowed the Minister to tour the University’s School of Electronic and Digital Arts, during which he learned about its research, facilities and equipment, with researchers Dr Gary Lu and Yiqing Lang providing demonstrations. The Minister also met with the heads of Kent Law School and the School of Politics and International Relations, as well as representatives from Kent Business School, the International Office and the Centre for Actuarial Science, Risk and Investment. Dr Peter Boenisch, Humanities Faculty Director of Internationalisation, discussed current and forthcoming internationalisation opportunities with the Minister and Professor Hughes.

Vice-Chancellor Goodfellow said: ‘This is a wonderful opportunity for our students and I would like to thank Minister Counsellor Tian Xiaogang and the London Embassy for their renewed commitment to these important scholarships.’

Professor Hughes commented: ‘We are extremely pleased that the London Embassy of the People’s Republic of China is, through these generous scholarships, continuing to help us enhance our academic offer and increase the employability of our students in the global marketplace.’

The University recently launched its Hong Kong and China Portal (HKCP), a five-year fundraising project aimed at generating £1 million to support new scholarship, student exchange and research initiatives. Further information on the HKCP is available at: www.kent.ac.uk/hkcp

Vice-Chancellor appointed to Science and Technology Facilities Council

Vice-Chancellor, Dame Julia M Goodfellow, has been appointed to the Council of the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC). She was appointed by the Minister for Science and Innovation and will serve until 2014. The STFC is an independent, non-departmental public body of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Formed in 2007, the STFC has a broad scientific portfolio keeping the UK at the forefront of international science and tackling some of the most significant challenges facing society. It operates or hosts world-class experimental facilities, and works with the academic and industrial communities to share its expertise.

Green Impact success

Environmental best practice was celebrated at the University’s Green Impact award ceremony in April.

Over the past six months, staff and students from 15 departments have been taking practical steps to reduce their impact on the environment. At the ceremony, all 15 departments achieved accreditation ranging from Bronze to Gold. Special awards were also given to the School of Engineering and Digital Arts for its innovative environmental projects for students and to Information Services for a 90% energy reduction of idle PCs around campus. The Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching’s Barbara Criddle was named Green Impact Environmental Hero 2010/2011.

For more information and to see the full list of awards, please visit: www.kent.ac.uk/estates/sustainability or email greenimpact@kent.ac.uk

MBA students connect to county’s local authorities

Master of Business Administration (MBA) students at Kent are about to begin joint projects with a range of local authority organisations in the county under a new scheme aimed at transferring business skills.

The new link will see the University’s Kent Business School and Kent Connects – an alliance of the county’s public sector service providers – working in collaboration to bring together organisations and MBA students on a wide range of projects.

The Kent Connects MBA Cohort Programme aims to enable councils and other local authority agencies to access the students’ expertise – and provide students with invaluable practical experience of the public sector.

Kent Business School MBA Director, Rajendra Shirólé said: ‘This really is a superb opportunity for our students to engage with a number of project challenges and deliver solutions for these local authority agencies.’

Lecturer’s book a ‘must read’

Congratulations to Oliver Double, whose book, Getting the Joke: The Art of Stand-up Comedy, was recommended as essential reading for budding stand-up comedians in The Independent’s ‘Reading List’ feature.
They thought it was all over... it isn’t now!

Congratulations to the University’s staff football team for finishing second in the Canterbury and District League Division 3 and for reaching the semi-final of the cup competition in the same league. The club is almost as old as the University, having been founded in 1967. Dr David Wilkinson, Lecturer in Psychology is the team’s player manager, he said: ‘Given that the team was about to fold a season or two ago, divisional promotion feels especially sweet. The club continues to provide one of the few, informal means by which people from all quarters of the University can meet to engage in common social activity.’

Public consultation now closed on Kent’s Chaucer Fields’ plan

Public consultation on the University’s application to Canterbury City Council to develop new student accommodation, hotel and conference facilities at Chaucer Fields closed at the end of last month.

The scheme features a village-style design, sitting within a clearing in the campus woodland and will retain as many trees as possible, particularly those of high quality and good age.

The existing landscape character will also be enhanced by the planting of a mix of native trees such as oak, field maple and hazel, and vegetation to enrich the woodland and improve biodiversity.

It is expected that the City Council will make a decision on the application by the end of June.

Orphan chimpanzees released into the wild

The 2008 release of 12 orphan chimpanzees into the wild using sophisticated GPS tracking technology has been deemed a success.

The release was the first of its kind to use VHF-GPS store-on-board ARGOS tracking collars to monitor the progress of the chimpanzees. The ARGOS system emits GPS points to satellites downloadable via the internet. It is also the second time that rehabilitated chimpanzees have been released back into the wild in an area where other wild chimpanzees live.

Dr Tatjana Humle from the University’s School of Anthropology and Conservation is the scientific adviser to the project, which is being carried out by the Chimpanzee Conservation Centre in the Haut Niger National Park, Guinea, West Africa.

Six males and six females between eight and 20 years old were released in June 2008. Over two years after the release, nine chimpanzees remain free-living with two males and three females forming a group at the original release site. Two of these females gave birth to healthy offspring and another female successfully integrated into a wild chimpanzee community.

The release project has brought significant conservation benefits to the local area. Environmental education and awareness raising programmes have been established in and around the park, illegal logging activities have stalled and illegal hunting and fishing activities have been reduced.

See the International Journal of Primatology at http://www.springerlink.com/content/3x307609x4361x1q/ for more information.

Marlowe hub makes big impact

A social and creative hub designed by students and staff at the Kent School of Architecture has been selected for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Higher Education Design Quality Forum (HEDQF) Small Budget-BIG IMPACT! Design Exhibition 2011.

The aim of this exhibition and initiative is to celebrate small projects of high quality which have made a significant positive impact on life in universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs).

Located in the Marlowe Building, home to Kent School of Architecture (KSA), the hub was inspired by a survey on social spaces conducted by the University’s Creative Campus team. Creative Campus then presented a brief to a group of fourth-year KSA students who worked alongside Creative Campus, the University’s Estates and Hospitality departments and MELD Architecture (a commercial practice involving tutors from KSA) to come up with a series of proposals to redevelop the space into a multifunctional area with broad appeal.

The hub will now be included in a rolling slide show and a short film, both of which will be shown by RIBA and at the 2011 Association of University Directors of Estate (AUDE) Conference. It will also be displayed on RIBA’s Client Forum website and form part of a publication to be distributed to HEIs nationwide.

Space School

Is there life beyond Earth? Children can find out during this year’s Space School at the University. Space School takes place at the Canterbury campus over two weekends – 6-7 and 13-14 August 2011. The intensive two-day course, led by scientists from the Centre for Astrophysics and Planetary Science (CAPS) at the University, is designed to introduce 11-18 year-olds to all aspects of space science.

Space School is sponsored by SEPnet (South Eastern Physics Network) and STFC (Science and Technology Facilities Council). Costs are £59 for a residential place or £39 non-residential. To find out more, visit www.kent.ac.uk/physical-sciences/spaceschool, email spaceschool@kent.ac.uk or call 01227 824178.
Fees 2012

From September 2012, all English universities will raise their tuition fees for home and EU undergraduates because the funding they currently receive direct from the government is being drastically cut. Following considerable discussion across the University, Senate supported charging fees of £9,000* a year and this was agreed at a meeting of the University Council in April. The University has also developed its plans for continued and increasing support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds through its widening participation initiatives. These plans have now been submitted to the Office for Fair Access.

Kent’s Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Alison Coles, recently wrote to alumni to inform them of this decision. Her letter prompted a number of responses and most, while not welcoming the news, acknowledged the difficulties that the University is facing. Angela Morris E72 wrote: ‘I hope you manage to continue the high standard of teaching and research at Kent and also to find the requisite funding for those students who require help.’

In an interview with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow, KENT magazine discusses some of the points raised by alumni.

Kent is among those universities opting for the maximum fee allowed. Can you explain the rationale behind the decision?

We have an ongoing commitment to provide the highest quality teaching, learning and personal development opportunities for our students and, given the type of university we are, we cannot do this for less than the £9,000 fee. Any less and we will compromise the quality of our provision which we believe is not what our students – or indeed, our staff and alumni – want.

But there are other universities which are charging less. Penelope Duggan R71 has written to us, saying she is ‘horrified’ that the University is charging £9,000.

I am absolutely confident that Kent has set its fees at the right level. Very few universities are charging less, and certainly none of those we regard as our competitors. Our fees are the same as other campus-based universities in the south-east.

I also want to say that one of the most important things about this fee level is that it will enable us to provide a package of financial support and outreach activity to support able students who would not normally aspire to study at Kent. We already have a long-standing track record for our widening participation activities, which includes our links with partner schools and colleges and our role as lead sponsor of Brompton Academy in Gillingham, and we must continue to develop these activities.

A recent survey showed that while a third of students would be put off by £6,000 fees, more than half of students in final years at top universities would be deterred by £9,000 fees. Rob Pierce E03 said, ‘I can’t support the University’s raising of tuition fees as I believe the long term effect will be to deter people from going to university. While I think it is admirable that the University awards bursaries, I’m not sure that will be a sufficient measure.’

It is understandable that people are shocked by the proposed fee levels. We all need to remember that most of our direct funding for home and EU undergraduates is being taken away over the next three years. In fact, the cuts have already started. We are just replacing the monies taken away from us. Moreover, no student has to pay the fees upfront as loans are available. You might like to bear in mind that here at Kent we have established a fund of £2.5m for 2012 to support our students. This amount will rise to £9m in 2015. In addition, the government will continue to provide loans for tuition fees, as well as grants and loans for living costs.

It is also important to note that the amount you repay depends primarily on what you earn after you graduate, not what you borrowed. This is something that people tend to overlook when discussing the impact of the fees.

Do you think that the increased fees will impact one discipline more than another?

We do not know at present. We are expecting a government subsidy for science subjects but we have not had this confirmed. In the meantime, science is on a roll at Kent – we have seen a 45% increase in applications in physical sciences, and we are equally strong in actuarial science. On the other hand, we are also extremely strong in the humanities and social sciences.
So do you think Kent’s broad spread of subjects across the disciplines will put us in a better position than some other institutions?

Undoubtedly, we are in a strong position, and we do have a good spread of subjects. However, what has put us in this position has been a consistently prudent approach to financial management, and we are going to have to maintain this if we are to have a buffer against further changes.

What are the implications for part-time students from 2012?

As they do now, part-time students will have to pay fees and these fees will increase because of the withdrawal of government subsidy. They will, however, be able to access the student loans system for the first time.

How do the new fee levels relate to those charged to international students?

What the new system is doing is putting the UK and EU students on almost the same basis as international students in that they will be paying very similar amounts. This just emphasises the real cost of a university course.

And will we see a change in the type of provision universities offer? For example, will we see more two-year degrees?

I am not sure that two-year degrees are the answer. Universities will still need to have the same input in terms of teaching and the provision of facilities so the amount we will need to charge to cover those costs will be the same. And, the many students who work part-time to support their studies will find it harder to do this. I also think that, for many young people, going to university is a chance to grow personally as well as intellectually.

But given that Further Education (FE) colleges are set to charge much less than most universities for their degree courses, do you think that more people will consider going down that route?

It’s about choice – and that would certainly be a very valid option, particularly in some subject areas. However, you would have a very different kind of experience as a student – FE colleges tend to be more school-like and most do not have a residential campus environment. But, as I say, it’s about choice and that has to be a good thing.

We have a question sent in by Karen Castle D77: ‘What is the University doing to challenge current government policy and thinking?’

Realistically, we have a democratically elected government and the changes we are seeing have been voted through both Houses of Parliament. In some ways, we are fortunate as we have been given a new mechanism to replace direct government funding that was cut in the Spending Review last year. It is notable that there is little difference between the main political parties in this area. Labour introduced the concept of raising the fees and members of all parties voted in favour of the increased fees.

What do you think your biggest challenge will be over the next few years?

It has to be about managing change – supporting both staff and students in what will be a difficult time. For example, for the next few years the student population will be split between those who are paying the current fee level and those who are paying the higher amount. This is something we will have to manage. Staff are being asked to do more and are responding very positively.

Karen Castle also asks whether there is still an intrinsic value to a university education. How would you answer that?

There is, most definitely. As well as preparing you for a career, it enhances you on so many levels and really broadens your horizons. At Kent, for example, we have over a hundred societies and, in addition to their academic work, students can take part in volunteering activities, get involved with sport, music and much more. There is no doubt that going to university enriches you as an individual.

* The fee level is subject to the approval of the University’s proposed access and widening participation arrangements by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

UG 2012 fees

- The increase in tuition fees will come into effect from September 2012. It will not affect current students or those going to university in 2011.
- The proposed changes to UK and EU undergraduate tuition fees will not apply to international student fees.
- Anyone who defers entry to university until 2012 will be charged the new level of fees.
- Students will not have to pay their tuition fees upfront.
- UK and EU students will receive a government tuition fee loan which they will only repay after they leave university and once they are earning over £21,000.
- Kent has set up a fund of £2.5m for 2012/13, rising to £9m in 2015/16, to provide financial support to students. It may include fee waivers, bursaries and scholarships.
- Part-time students will be entitled to a loan for their tuition fees on the same basis as full-time students.

Further information

www.kent.ac.uk/courses/funding/undergraduate/costs/faq.html
www.bis.gov.uk/studentfinance
The University has successfully bid to be part of two five-year policy research units funded through the Department of Health’s policy research programme. Each is worth a total of £5 million, shared between the partners.

The University’s Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) is taking the lead on the research unit in Quality and Outcomes of Person-Centred Care (QORU), which also involves colleagues at the Tizard Centre (University of Kent), the University of Oxford and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

The aim of this unit is to improve the quality of health and social care of people with long-term conditions through generating high-quality evidence about need, quality and outcomes of person-centred care. Its activities will fall under four themes: engagement, which is about improving the evidence available, particularly about hard-to-engage groups; identification and measurement of needs, quality and outcomes; application and use of such measures; and service delivery in person-centred care.

The second of the two new units, the Economics of Social and Health Care Research Unit (ESHCRU), is led by the Centre for Health Economics at the University of York, and as well as PSSRU at Kent, it involves colleagues from PSSRU at the London School of Economics. It will undertake: research into the funding and organisation of social and health care; the design and evaluation of regulations, incentives, and reimbursement policies; and measurement of quality, outcomes, productivity and efficiency.

Professor Ann Netten, Director of PSSRU at Kent, said: ‘The new units represent an exciting opportunity to expand PSSRU’s work into new fields in health and social care. ‘We are looking forward to working with new colleagues and to undertaking research that should have important implications for health and social care policy and practice.’

PSSRU is part of the University’s School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research.

Research awards list

Some recent research awards

Professor Chris Heady (School of Economics): £23,867 from the Department for International Development for ‘Support for the International Centre for Taxation and Development (ICTD)’.

Jenny Billings (School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR)): £15,000 from Kent County Council for the ‘Design of a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of integrated commissioning arrangements and their outcomes’.

Professor Ann Netten (Personal Social Services Research Unit, SSPSSR): £10,898 and Dr Julie Beadle-Brown (Tizard Centre, SSPSSR) £2,526 from Skills for Care and Development for ‘Feasibility study of development of an evaluation model for measuring the impact of workforce development in care homes’.

Professor Paul J Sweeting (School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science): £37,440 from the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries for ‘Enterprise risk management research project: a proposal for the UK actuarial profession’.

Dr Efrosyni Boutsikas (School of European Culture and Languages): £8,428 from the University of Otago for ‘Myth, cult and the cosmos: astronomy in the ancient Greek religion’.
Integration parallels between China and Europe investigated

New research from the University’s Brussels centre will study the parallels between European integration and similar moves in China, Hong Kong and Macau.

University economist Professor Roger Vickerman, who is Dean of the University of Kent, Brussels, is leading research that will see collaboration between Kent, Hong Kong and Chinese academics and other experts from around the world.

He said: ‘We will explore the parallels between European experiences, such as the reunification of Germany and the eastern enlargements of 2004 and 2007, with the processes of integration now taking place between mainland China and the Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions, as well as within mainland China itself.

‘By drawing on these parallels we can explore the potential economic, political and social dimensions of integration in the region,’ he said.

The University is forming a research network to bring together European and Chinese scholars and researchers from around the world who have an interest in such integration. The network already includes researchers from Kent’s partner institutions in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai as well as leading European, US and Australian universities.

An annual research workshop will be held to discuss findings, policy implications and future research needs. The proceedings will be published as an annual report that will be aimed at politicians, policymakers and business leaders as well as researchers.

Working to prevent rugby stars’ hamstring injuries

Hamstring problems among sportsmen and women are very common but now new research from Kent could help prevent top rugby union stars picking up the injury.

The study, involving elite English Premiership clubs and the senior England team, aims to identify how clubs currently treat and prevent hamstring injuries among their players – and to suggest new methods of preparing players to minimise their chances of picking up hamstring problems.

Sadie Jones, a lecturer and PhD researcher at Kent’s Centre for Sports Studies, is carrying out the research in conjunction with top clubs such as Gloucester, Saracens and Wasps as well as the Rugby Football Union (RFU), the sport’s governing body.

‘Little detail is known about current practice in the prevention and treatment of hamstring injuries in elite English rugby union and there does not appear to be consensus as to what constitutes best practice,’ she said.

‘I’ll be working with all the Premiership rugby union clubs to gather data on the management of hamstring injuries but it is already clear that they represent a major concern.

‘The research will involve talking to doctors, physiotherapists and strength and conditioning specialists to build the first ever comprehensive audit of current treatment and prevention practice. From this audit, I aim to provide suggestions for a best practice approach to prevention.’

Research collaboration aims to help stroke sufferers

A new Medical Research Council (MRC)-funded project, involving the University of Kent and clinicians from Kent and Canterbury Hospital, William Harvey Hospital and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital, will test the efficacy of a new treatment for stroke sufferers diagnosed with a visual-spatial impairment known as hemi-spatial neglect.

Dr David Wilkinson from the School of Psychology and an affiliate to KentHealth will be the principal researcher on the project, with Professor Patrick Pullicino (School of Biosciences), Professor Simon Coulton (Centre for Health Services Studies) and clinicians from the hospitals’ stroke and neuro-rehabilitation services assisting throughout.

Dr Wilkinson, whose research interests revolve around the cognitive and biological bases of visual perception, explained the aim of the project: ‘Advances in acute medical care have increased the number of stroke survivors, yet many are left with debilitating and refractory conditions for which there is little effective treatment.

‘Our new treatment seeks to restore lost function to damaged areas of the visual brain via trans-cranial electrical stimulation, a procedure in which sub-sensory levels of electrical current are injected through electrodes placed on the overlying scalp.’

The research is the first MRC-funded stroke study in which East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust personnel have been directly involved. The grant, which totals £313,752, represents a new phase of research activity between the University and the MRC.
For anyone familiar with the Canterbury campus, it is clear that you use it as the setting for *The End of Mr. Y*. What is it about the University campus that appeals to you?

I started writing the novel just after I began working at the University. I’d fallen in love with the campus, but I didn’t realise I was going to write about it until I went to an induction session for new staff. Someone from Estates showed a PowerPoint presentation about what happened to Cornwallis in 1974, and the story of the building collapsing into the railway tunnel under the campus. As soon as the session was over, I knew this was how I was going to begin my novel. As *The End of Mr. Y* is to some extent about the limitations of knowledge, having a university collapse in the first scene was perfect. Around the same time, older colleagues were always happy to tell me University legends, and I loved hearing their stories. However, *The End of Mr. Y* just implies this campus. Much is changed.

Do many of your readers recognise the campus?

I never name the place, so nobody knows where it’s set, but people from round here completely recognise it. It’s like a little club of people. Bizarrely, an Italian journalist once assumed the campus was an Oxford college. She asked me a long and complicated question through an interpreter about how I felt about Oxford which left me completely stumped.

Did you ever have a sense that *The End of Mr. Y* would become so successful when you were writing it?

It’s definitely my most successful book, which is weird because it was the one I thought was going to bomb completely. I thought it was going to be a really niche book that just five students would read. I decided to write exactly what I wanted to write. I didn’t think at all about what was fashionable in literary fiction at the time. I did deliberately make it a fast-paced adventure story, though, partly to balance all the philosophical stuff, but also because it was just such fun to write and I thought it would be fun to read. I do
readings at music and literary festivals, and especially at music festivals lots of people who have read the book come up to have their book signed. That is still a real surprise – I keep thinking it will stop, that everybody who wants to read the book will have read it, but it seems to keep going.

What has been the reaction to your latest novel Our Tragic Universe?

Our Tragic Universe is a much quieter book than The End of Mr. Y, but I think it’s got ideas in it that are just as big. The people who love it, really love it.

Your novels contain subject matter ranging from literary theory to theoretical physics to pop culture. How important is interdisciplinary thinking to your work?

It’s very important for all serious novelists to constantly investigate their world, I think. Knowing something about other disciplines means that you have so much more material to draw on. However, writing this way has its own stresses and limitations. You can end up feeling like a bit of a dilettante. I buried myself in mathematics for PopCo, and I loved every minute of it. But as I’m sure every researcher knows, you forget detail as time goes on, and it can feel very odd to come back to a book you have written and think, ‘Did I really once know about all this stuff?’ I suppose the subject I know a lot about is writing fiction – but one always needs something to write about. For my next novel, The Seed Collectors, my research plan involved doing an MSc in Ethnobotany.

Why did you decide to study for an MSc in ethnobotany?

I was sick of feeling like a dilettante, and wanted to know a subject in more depth. I have wanted to write about evolutionary theory for some time, and I am fascinated by plants, but I knew nothing about botany and too little about biology. I have learnt such a lot on the MSc. Some of the classes are held at Kew Gardens, and I got a lot of inspiration from being there and seeing how people classify and identify plants.

How do you come up with ideas for your novels? Where do you start?

Douglas Coupland, a novelist and friend of mine, once said to me that you become sort of pregnant with your next book when you’re still working on your last one. I try to find one word, or even a cluster of words that can help me focus on what I want to investigate. For example, will my new novel be about evolution or inheritance? I try to immerse myself in the world of the novel. I also read lots of other novels that I think will be helpful. At the moment I’m re-immersing myself in some of the classics such as Middlemarch, Great Expectations and Anna Karenina.

How will you approach your next novel, The Seed Collectors?

In Our Tragic Universe, I completely took apart the process of writing a novel and now in The Seed Collectors I’m going to cover it all back up again. It will be a really good story with no reflection on its own construction. Well, that’s what I’m planning – I always say this type of thing and then the novel turns out completely different. But I feel as if, maybe, I’ve earned the right to tell an old-fashioned narrative. Some of it will be quite cutting-edge in terms of the biology and botany of the moment, but essentially it is going to be stories about falling in love, the past and finding out about one’s parents.

Is it beneficial to be surrounded by fellow novelists and academics at the University?

Yes, it’s great. I’m always stimulated by hearing other people’s ideas. The School of English is full of exciting research and I always learn something from attending research seminars, or even just having lunch with a colleague. Donna Landry’s work on the agency of animals, for example, is absolutely fascinating. David Stirrup’s work on the concept of the border is also something that is turning around in my mind. Several colleagues, including Jennie Batchelor and Catherine Richardson, are doing exciting work on material culture. A friend of mine who was in the School of Computing told me all sorts of interesting things about his research into proteins. And Laurence Goldstein’s work on paradox has been inspiring too.

Are there similarities between the research that you do when writing a novel and academic research?

There are similarities, I think. Having a clearly focused question is important for both novelists and scholars. And having an ‘argument’ is very important as well. The scope of a novel might be similar to the scope of a monograph. But there are huge differences as well. In the end, great novels are about feeling much more than thinking.
Hong Kong

In April, a delegation from the University visited Hong Kong to meet with a number of alumni, and to hold the first meeting of the Hong Kong and China Portal Board, chaired by alumnus Dr William Lo E80. The Hong Kong and China Portal is an exciting new fundraising project which supports the internationalisation of both students and staff at the University of Kent and aims to raise funds to be used in three specific areas:

• to provide scholarships and a hardship fund for Hong Kong and mainland Chinese students coming to Kent
• to support funding for exchange students on short-term or one-year exchanges between Kent and universities in Hong Kong and mainland China
• to raise funds to support staff and research interaction between Kent and universities in Hong Kong and mainland China.

The Hong Kong and China Portal aims to raise £1m over five years to support these key areas, and we are delighted that so far over £800,000 has been donated and pledged towards the Portal, which attracted widespread media coverage in Hong Kong at its launch in October 2010. To find out more about the Hong Kong and China Portal and the latest news on the project, visit www.kent.ac.uk/hkcp

This year, staff from the University have visited Hong Kong and the USA, where we already have formal alumni associations, and Malaysia, where we now have an alumni committee, to host events and to meet with alumni and friends of the University. In this issue, we bring you an update on the work of these three groups. Also this year, we have had informal alumni gatherings in Paris and in Australia and hope to increase the number of international alumni groups in the future.

Professor Alex Hughes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor External, said: ‘It is always a great pleasure to meet our international alumni and to hear their views and their memories of Kent. We are always honoured by the warm welcome that we receive, and the commitment of our alumni community is testament to the many strengths of the University – our international outlook and our inspiring student experience that prepares our graduates for the future. We look forward to working closely with our international groups in the years ahead.’

For further information about becoming involved with one of these groups, or to find out more about starting a group in your country or region, email alumni@kent.ac.uk

The Hong Kong Alumni Association has been a loyal and committed supporter of Kent for many years, and staff from the University were delighted to join members of the association for an alumni dinner at the Hong Kong Jockey Club on 8 April. Professor Eddy Fong R66 welcomed assembled guests and introduced the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Julia M Goodfellow, who hosted the event. In her speech, she detailed some recent developments at the University and thanked alumni for their support, particularly in providing the Hong Kong Alumni Scholarship which supports one student each year from Hong Kong or Mainland China.

The Vice-Chancellor particularly thanked Dr William Lo for his leadership of the Hong Kong and China Portal Board and Professor Eddy Fong for his leadership of the Hong Kong Alumni Association. She also highlighted the significant contribution to the University made by Dr Kennedy Wong K81, who is an alumnus of Kent Law School. Dr Wong will make a £500,000 donation over the next five years as part of a major fundraising initiative to develop the University’s legal studies facilities.
United States of America

On 1 April 2011, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Alex Hughes hosted a dinner for over 80 Kent alumni in Malaysia at the Equatorial Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Professor Hughes gave a speech of welcome and three members of our Malaysia alumni community, Dato Johari Razak R72, Datu Harun Datu Mansor R75 and Rueben Mathiavaranam R84 spoke of their memories of Kent and their wish for a Malaysia Alumni Association.

Kent has over 1,000 alumni in Malaysia, and it is hoped that a Malaysia Alumni Association will help us to make contact with alumni who may have lost touch with the University over the years. A committee has been established to bring the Association together and the University is honoured that Dato Johari Razak has agreed to lead this committee in its first year, along with Datu Harun Datu Mansor, Rueben Mathiavaranam and David Paul D84.

To find out more about the Malaysia Alumni Association, or to volunteer, please email alumni@kent.ac.uk

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United States of America

The University of Kent in America, Inc. (UKA) is Kent’s alumni group in the USA and they are delighted to welcome a new chair this year, John Hern (K80). John follows in the footsteps of John Covell (K67) who has been instrumental in creating and developing the organisation and steps down with our grateful thanks.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Keith Mander attended the most recent meeting of the Board and also hosted a number of alumni events across the United States, meeting alumni and spending time with the Board to hear about recent developments. This included the foundation of an alumni supported scholarship fund to support American students with aspirations to study at Kent.

For more information about how to get involved with the activities of the UKA, to hear about upcoming events, or to join or start a chapter in your area, please contact Julia Baxter at J.E.Baxter@kent.ac.uk

John Hern, Chair of University of Kent in America, Inc.
Poetry please

A University of Kent lecturer’s first poetry collection has been chosen as a ‘summer recommendation’ by the Poetry Book Society.

Tokaido Road, published by CB Editions, engages with visual images and associated texts based on Hiroshige’s woodblock print series, Fifty Three Stages of the Tokaido. Nancy’s collection is described by poet and publisher, Charles Boyle, as ‘A road movie in verse… the poems discover a freedom to move beyond the frames established by Hiroshige, not least in their voicing of regret and longing, grief and desire.’

Nancy has published a number of poems in magazines and anthologies, but this is her first major collection. She completed the MA in Creative Writing at Kent in 2009.

The Poetry Book Society was founded by TS Eliot and friends in 1953. Promoted as ‘the book club for poetry lovers’, it is the biggest dedicated poetry bookseller in the UK.

The future of journalism

Professor Tim Luckhurst, Head of the University of Kent’s Centre for Journalism, has contributed a chapter on the effects of the internet and digital media on journalism in the recently published book, Face the Future: Tools for the Modern Media Age.

Professor Luckhurst, whose chapter is called, ‘Dr Hack I presume: Liberal Journalism in the Multimedia Age’, was joined in contributing to the book by his Centre for Journalism colleague, Ian Reeves.

‘The book is a collection of chapters by leading media experts considering the effects of digital and social media on modern journalism and exploring where it may go from here,’ said Professor Luckhurst.

Face the Future: Tools for the Modern Media Age features a foreword written by BBC Radio 2 presenter, Jeremy Vine and is edited by John Mair and Professor Richard Keeble. It is published by Abramis Academic Publishing.

40th anniversary facelift for landmark book

A landmark book on the role economics can play in developing nations has been revised by Kent’s Professor Tony Thirlwall – 40 years after he first wrote it.

Economics of Development is seen as a ‘landmark text’ and the revised book includes new materials and case studies to provide students with an updated overview of the economic aspects of growth and development.

Professor Thirlwall, of the University’s School of Economics, said: ‘It is very gratifying to complete this ninth edition, which is the most thorough revision to date, some 40 years after the first edition appeared. I’ve included new material and data to help provide students interested in economic development with a clear and comprehensive overview of the subject.’

Former Kent law lecturer attempts charity climb

Alan Thomson, retired senior lecturer and founding member of Kent Law School, is to undertake a momentous challenge – climbing one of the world’s very high mountains to raise money for Scope, the cerebral palsy charity.

Alan will be facing the challenge with his daughter, Mary-Kate, as part of an expedition which will attempt to climb the 6,462 metre high Mount Illimani; a mountain in the Bolivian Andes which is almost 600 metres higher than Mount Kilimanjaro and is a technical snow and ice climb. The father-daughter pair are already in training – with assistance being given by the University’s Sports Centre team – with Alan, at 67 years old, preparing for the demanding three-week climb that will involve extremes of temperature and endurance.

The climb will start in the last week of July, and will see Alan and Mary-Kate attempt to raise £6,462, the same amount of money as metres they will climb, for the charity Scope. The challenge is a deeply personal one as Alan’s son, and Mary-Kate’s brother, Jack, is severely disabled as a result of cerebral palsy. The family team are raising money as a way of thanking the charity for their help, particularly in Jack’s early years.

Former Director of Learning and Teaching and much-loved former teacher, Alan retired from the Law School in 2010. Alan is fondly remembered by many law alumni as the passionate long-time teacher of Introduction to Law and the Law of Obligations (Tort) within the Law School, and is one of the few members of staff who will have taught almost every law student who studied at Kent until his retirement last year.

People are warmly encouraged to donate to support the climb and to raise money for Scope. To donate, go to: http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/UnBoliviable
What made you decide to come to Kent?
I visited the Canterbury campus on the University’s Open Day. I was deeply impressed and I loved the environment. It was the perfect campus to spend my three years of university life. I did some research and found that The Times ranked Kent’s Computer Science department at 6th place out of all the universities in the UK, and I made my choice!

What is your favourite memory of Kent?
My list is endless. I enjoyed every moment. From the day trip to Leeds Castle at orientation to the graduation ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral. During my first lecture at Kent, the professor asked us to look at the person sitting next to ourselves, and told us this person would be our lifelong friend. He was absolutely correct.

What have you been up to since graduating?
I worked for internet and IT companies and experienced the internet bubble. I worked with several start-up companies and saw them grow rapidly and eventually be publicly listed on the Hong Kong, London and Australian stock markets. After the bubble, I decided to give it a go myself and started my own IT company. Since then, my company has grown steadily and got local and international recognition by winning various competitions, including a worldwide competition hosted by Nokia. Currently, we are doing iPhone/Pad and Android software development and e-books and e-publishing on mobile devices.

What would be your perfect day?
My perfect day would be waking up early in the morning, looking forward to working with very good people and creating new things that I believe may make a change to the world.

What was your earliest ambition?
I was hoping to make a change in the world and create something that makes life better and easier.

What was your first job?
I joined an IT subsidiary of Jardines in Hong Kong, and helped a young manager to build a new department to provide internet solutions for enterprise customers. It was a very ambitious idea back in 1997!

What (if anything) would you like to change about yourself?
I wish I could get more sleep and workout for one hour every day.

Which country would you most like to visit?
Japan.

What is your greatest achievement since graduating?
Training to finish a 10km run without walking. I couldn’t do 2km when I was 18!

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
Do not seek fairness. The world is not fair. Live with it. (My dad told me when I was 10, it saves me a lot of thinking.)

Who or what inspires you?
Bill Gates and Microsoft, Steve Jobs and Apple.

Where do you see yourself in ten years time?
I can’t really tell. This is the fun part of life!
In the autumn of 2010, students from across the University took to the phones, speaking to over 1,600 alumni in the UK about their experiences of student life at Kent, catching up on the latest news, and raising money to support students in their studies as part of the Kent Scholarships Campaign.

Over £57,000 was raised over four weeks, every penny of which will go towards providing support for the best and brightest students at Kent, or to those who find themselves in financial difficulties through no fault of their own. Alumni support means a great deal to the students who benefit from this incredible generosity. It means all the more to the Scholars to know that it is former Kent students who have made this difference to their lives.

Everyone involved in the Campaign would like to pass on their thanks to all alumni who were contacted. It was wonderful to hear your stories, to receive valuable advice on a huge range of subjects, and simply hear about what your time at Kent meant to you. Thank you.
Small gifts make a big difference!

If everyone who receives this edition of *KENT* magazine were to give a gift of just £1.50, this would support the full three-year cost of the prestigious Postgraduate Alumni Research Scholarship for a talented student.

This research opportunity benefits students, the University and, more importantly, society at large as the research often tackles areas of social or scientific importance. It is an award based on academic ability and includes a maintenance award which ensures that the Scholar is able to focus on their studies, without financial pressures.

The Alumni Postgraduate Research Scholarship is entirely reliant on voluntary donations. Please make a real difference to a Kent student today by giving as much as you can. It would not be possible to continue awarding this Scholarship without the support of alumni and friends of Kent. On behalf of today’s Scholars, and those of previous years, thank you.

To make a gift, you can:
- Complete the donation form enclosed and return in the prepaid envelope provided
- Donate online at www.kent.ac.uk/scholarshipscampaign
- Or phone us on 01227 827380.

Colyer-Fergusson Music Building

Plans for the new Colyer-Fergusson Music Building, which will adjoin the Gulbenkian Theatre on the Canterbury campus, are proceeding swiftly, with construction set to begin in early June. The first sod was cut on 27 May in a ceremony performed by Jonathan Monckton, Chairman of the Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, which donated £5.2million to the project, in memory of the late Sir James Colyer-Fergusson, a strong supporter of Music at Kent. The building will provide a dedicated performance and rehearsal space enabling students and staff and the community to participate in a wide-ranging programme of musical activities.

Susan Wanless, Director of University Music, said, ‘We are so excited that the project has come so far, and we are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported us: alumni, students, staff, former staff and members of the local community. We’re looking forward now to seeing the building take shape, and to welcoming you all to what will unquestionably be a fantastic space for making music!’

To find out more about supporting Music at Kent, visit www.kent.ac.uk/music/newbuilding.html

Bob Friend Memorial Scholarship

Tania Steere, a first-year student on the BA Journalism course at the University’s Medway campus has been awarded the 2011 Bob Friend Memorial Scholarship, which will see her spending a month working at the Sky News Centre and having her first-year course tuition fees paid by Sky.

A delighted Tania said: ‘I still have not come back down to earth after winning the Scholarship. I am overjoyed about this amazing opportunity which will give me invaluable experience and help shape my professional career.’

Tania is the third student to be awarded this Scholarship, which is the largest prize available to first-year students on the BA in Journalism. To apply, students must submit a detailed proposal for communicating a news item using a variety of media. Shortlisted candidates then undergo a test set by Sky News, and competition is fierce!

Alison Coles, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, said: ‘We are delighted for Tania, and for all the Scholars that have so far been supported by the Bob Friend Memorial Scholarship. These links between organisations and academic Schools at the University allow us to reward excellence and for our students to acquire valuable work experience that will enhance their employment prospects and give them a valuable insight into industry.’

For information on setting up a named scholarship please contact Alison Coles, Director of Development and Alumni Relations on 01227 824929 or A.J.Coles@kent.ac.uk
Campaigns, elections and sporting success

Kent Union Officers have had a busy few months, with the campaign against the rise in tuition fees nationally and at the University.

While the campaign was unsuccessful in its main objective to prevent a rise in fees, it has meant that Officers have gained a better understanding of the concerns of both current and prospective students and the support that will be required for the UK/EU undergraduate students who will be paying the increased tuition fees from 2012. A new team of Officers was elected in March, many of whom included pledges on their manifestos to improve the student experience at Kent in areas such as quality of teaching and feedback, housing, improving graduate employability and enhancing the experience of students while they study through non-academic activities such as sports clubs and volunteering.

The Officer elections saw 3,700 students vote for the candidates they wanted to represent them in 2011/12. Below are the Sabbatical Officers who will be serving the student community in the next academic year:

Union President, Tom Ritchie
Vice President Education, Lauren Crowley
Vice President Welfare, Colum McGuire
Vice President Activities, Kenny Budd
Vice President Sports, Hannah Davis.

RAG (Raise and Give) have had an absolutely cracking year of fundraising and, as we go to print, have raised over £53,000 for local and national charities – the highest amount that anyone can remember! Over £3,000 of this was raised by the student newspaper, InQuire, and the student radio station, CSR, in aid of Japanese tsunami victims.

There have also been some great recent sporting achievements, including: the Kent Table Tennis team which made it through to the European Universities Championship competition; Kent Snow (Kent’s snowboarding society) which won Gold in the Universities National competition; and the University of Kent American Football team, Kent Falcons, which made it to the playoffs, but, unfortunately, were beaten by Bristol, the eventual winners.

Alumni will also be pleased to know that Kent once again reigned supreme in the annual varsity tournament against Canterbury Christ Church University. Go Kent!

Sports

VC’s Cup update

The Vice-Chancellor’s Cup is an interdepartmental staff competition for all abilities, organised by Kent Sport and backed by the Vice-Chancellor. It aims to encourage staff to get active and take part in fun events that are not just for sports enthusiasts.

The second event featured racket sports and took place over four lunchtimes in the week of 18 April. Members of staff took part in table tennis, badminton, tennis and squash competitions for beginner, intermediate and advanced players. Kerry Halpenny from the Student Union shop staff team, Uniquely Essentials, said: ‘Thank you to you and your team for organising this competition. Although it is becoming quite competitive, it is so much fun!’

The table tennis event was won by The K Team from Kent Sport, badminton by Estates All Stars, and tennis by Uniquely Essentials. In the squash competition, IS All Stars (Information Services) and Biocelona (Biosciences) were joint winners. The overall standings after two events have Biocelona leading with 61 points, The K Team second with 57 points, Campus Cops (Campus Watch) third with 55 points and ARE All Stars fourth with 54 points. The competition is still very open with all departments still in with a chance of winning.

The next round is the School Sports Day which takes place week commencing 27 June. It will be great fun and give everyone the chance to relive their school days.

SummerZone

SummerZone, the University’s week-long summer camps for 5-12-year-olds, is back. Run by double Olympian Mel Clewlow, the camp is packed with activities including football, tennis, kwik cricket, rugby, hockey and much more.

The camp runs from Monday 8 – Friday 12 August and Monday 15 – Friday 19 August with prices starting at just £99 a week or £25 a day. Early drop-off and late pickups are also available and there are discounts for friends and family, two-week bookings and University of Kent staff.

Further information is available on the website at www.kent.ac.uk/summerzone or from the Sports Centre and the Pavilion receptions.
Impressive attendance at business event

Over 150 businesses attended the Joint Preliminary Supplier’s event hosted by the University of Kent and one of Europe’s leading energy suppliers, Vattenfall on 6 May at the Canterbury campus.

Vattenfall is applying to extend the Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm, approximately nine kilometres north of Herne Bay and Whitstable, by an additional 10 to 17 turbines to produce 150,000 megawatt hours of clean electricity.

The event’s aim was to inform local businesses, across various sectors, of the procurement process, project timings and introduce key Vattenfall staff. The energy company is enthusiastic to collaborate with, and take advantage of, the large network of local companies available through the University, over the duration of the project and beyond.

Göran Loman, Vattenfall’s Project Manager for the Kentish Flats Extension proposal, said: ‘With the construction of our Thanet Offshore Wind Farm we contracted with 70 companies and around half were local to Kent. So there should be something in it for the local economy, if we get permission to build an extension to Kentish Flats.’

Telecare workshop shows way forward

The Kent-Health and International Centre of Excellence in Telecare (ICE-T) workshop, ‘Prototype to Market: Innovation in Telecare’, was held at the University in March.

The ICE-T project, which fits under the University of Kent’s Health Strategy, aims to create collaborations between industry and academia in telecare and is facilitated by South East Health Technology Alliance (SEHTA).

Over 30 organisations from a range of sectors attended the forum to discuss suggestions to take the telehealthcare initiative forward for Kent and to lay the foundations for a suitable supply chain. Presentations to the delegates included the Kent Whole System Demonstrator Pilot, the NHS perspective as well as the University’s expertise, highlighted by five academics presenting their research in this area. Businesses also had the opportunity to showcase some of the projects they have been developing.

This was an excellent opportunity for relationships to grow and strengthen and beneficial partnerships are now being considered between the NHS, academia and industry.

Are you an ICE member?

Become a member of the University’s open innovation network and take the opportunity to:

- Discover the latest innovative research and news relevant to business from the University
- Enjoy entertaining and thought-provoking networking evenings with our academic experts, discussing a wide range of business themes
- Find out about Think Tanks, or request one – they can be arranged for organisations to meet academics to discuss ideas and possible collaborations
- Participate in innovative training that will inspire your workforce and drive success in your organisation
- Join the ICE network for free today at www.icekent.co.uk

Lasting relationship leads to major project funding

Building relationships with potential partners is the key to developing a successful portfolio of enterprise projects. The more you understand the needs of your potential partner and the more they know about the excellence of your School, the more likely you are to be able to devise mutually beneficial projects and so increase the likelihood of receiving project funding. Kent Enterprise offers advice and support to Schools to help build relationships with external organisations and develop suitable projects and funding proposals.

An example of how an ongoing relationship can lead to a new enterprise project is the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) funding of £124,776 recently awarded to the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Sciences (SMSAS) to work with KROHNE Ltd. Dr Xue Wang, lecturer in statistics at SMSAS, has worked with the research and development department of KROHNE for many years, helping to solve their statistical problems in various situations, with one case resulting in a useful patent being filed in Germany. The new project, to develop model-based regression methods for calibrating and verifying vibratory measuring devices in order to improve measurement performance and reduce manufacturing and maintenance costs, is the School’s first KTP success.

In addition to the benefits the project will bring to the School, the KTP funding has allowed the School to employ Kent graduate, Christopher Eves, as the KTP Associate. Lesley Chater, Knowledge Transfer Manager said: ‘Hiring a Kent Graduate as a KTP Associate is not unusual but continues a trend which provides a fantastic opportunity for our students. Chris now hopes to continue study at PhD level with support from the KTP scheme and with the 50% discount available to Kent employees.’

For more information on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, contact Lesley Chater, email: L.E.Chater@kent.ac.uk or call 01227 827376.

To find out more about the Kent Graduate Internship Scheme, contact Barry Maydom on 01227 827701 or email B.C.Maydom@kent.ac.uk
Internships make their mark

The University is celebrating its 50th recruit to a unique internship scheme.

Oscar Walheim, a first-year Architecture student, has joined the Web Consultancy and Solutions Team in Information Services (IS) as an intern designer. He will combine his studies with 12-15 hours a week working on web design projects and providing support and advice for University web publishers.

The IS intern scheme has been developed over the past five years and provides skilled work opportunities for students across the University. Interns are able to develop both their technical and interpersonal skills in a real-life work environment, and so enhance their long-term job prospects.

Antony Barron, Head of Requirements and Solutions in IS, oversees the scheme and explains why it was launched: ‘We needed help designing, developing and supporting the University and departmental websites and students were the ideal candidates. They have a rich skill-set, great enthusiasm and, importantly, understand what appeals to other students. We started off employing around five students, but the scheme’s been so successful that we now have around 20 working with us at any one time.’

The internships are advertised across campus and students are recruited not just from Computer Science, but degree courses ranging from English and History to Psychology and Politics. Contracts are initially for one year, and both roles and working hours are extremely flexible – students could be working on anything from developing a School website to supporting the rebranding of the main University site, for a few hours in term-time or longer in holidays.

Flexible approach

According to Rana Dayoub, Web Consultant and Support Officer, who manages the IS internships with Antony, ‘it’s that flexibility that has proved so popular with students. ‘They can earn a good salary while doing something worthwhile that fits around their studies,’ she says.

Another attraction is the chance to gain valuable work experience. Rana says: ‘We offer skilled employment and the chance to develop and learn. The role develops as students’ experience grows – they are inducted, trained, appraised and promoted just like any other member of staff. We act as a bridge between university and employment.’

In the early days of the scheme there was, according to Rana, some customer apprehension about the lack of experience of student workers, but that has completely changed. ‘Our students are now seen as a professional part of our team and a unique asset that we are making increasing use of.’

Antony agrees: ‘The feedback from departments is exceptionally good, because they’re getting a quality product and professional support and a lot of that is directly down to our students.

‘We really do get the cream of the crop with our internships – the kind of people we hire are bright and get up to full steam very quickly. They’re ambitious, enthusiastic and care about the work they’re doing.’

He adds: ‘Our students find it exciting and useful to develop their skill-set working closely with all levels of University staff on many different types of academic, research, professional, commercial and social web projects. Interns receive praise, not only for their design and development work, but also their consultancy, client and project management skills.’

100% employment

Further evidence of the scheme’s effectiveness is seen in the pathways of interns after they graduate. ‘Our employment record is 100%.’
Employability

Employability says Antony. ‘The scheme attracts some of our most able students and their experience with us helps them develop still further. As a result, our students often get first class degrees and then go on to work for top organisations such as Nokia, Morgan Stanley, Hewlett Packard and Ernst & Young.’

Rikki Carroll, for example, graduated with a degree in Computer Science in 2009 and now works as Head of Web Development at FXhome, managing development and maintenance of web-based services. He says: ‘Working in the IS Web Team provided the additional challenges I needed. It gave me the confidence to take the initiative, lead technical projects and manage others.’

Latest recruits

Oscar is one of four latest recruits to the IS intern scheme and is looking forward to broadening his skill-set. ‘There’s a lot of overlap between architecture and web development and having experience in both will look good on my CV. I’m hoping that, eventually, it will open different doors for me.’

Another new recruit is postgraduate, Etienne Donzelot who started working with IS on their helpdesk. ‘This is my first time working with the Web Team, but it’s good experience. I’m adding to my skill-set – my CV is already two pages long – and this should help me build my career in IT consultancy.’

Developing skills

Final-year Computer Science student, Dave Clark, has been an intern for the IS Web Team throughout his studies. ‘Over time,’ he says, ‘my skills have been recognised and I have been given more complex tasks. For example, I developed the architecture and development for the web engine powering all University websites. It was a huge responsibility but I had a lot of fun and, because of it, was promoted to senior level.’

‘When I haven’t got any studies – like in the summer holidays – I work full-time. If there’s a lot on, I do one day a week. It’s extremely flexible and has fitted in well with my studies.’

Year in Industry

The success of the IS scheme has been recognised by the School of Computing which is now promoting it as part of its Year in Industry programme. The first Year in Industry student, Luca Macis, started working for the Web Team in July 2010.

He says: ‘I love the job – it’s really good fun and has improved my skills dramatically. I have picked up tips and techniques which will come in very handy for my final-year degree project. I would recommend the experience to other students without a shred of doubt.’

Everyone’s a winner

According to Rana, the IS intern scheme, including Year in Industry placements, will continue to grow. ‘For the department, our interns have proved a real asset and enabled us to achieve much more. For the students, it’s a fantastic opportunity for them to work in a field they are interested in and gain valuable real-life working experience.’

Antony agrees and believes that other parts of the University could learn from the success of the IS intern scheme. ‘Web design and development is a specialised area, but there’s a huge amount of student skill across campus and our experience could be replicated in other areas.’

He adds: ‘IS has been very proactive and forward-thinking in setting up and supporting this scheme. All parts of the University benefit from access to our team’s high-quality, flexible services, while our students get a massive boost to their portfolio and work experience. Everyone comes out a winner.’

Homepage: www.kent.ac.uk/web
Portfolio: www.kent.ac.uk/web/services/portfolio

Careers Employability Award

The first students at the University of Kent to complete the Careers Employability Award were congratulated by John Greer at the Careers Advisory Service (CAS) on 6 April. They were Martha Barber (Psychology first year), Asim Iqbal (Accounting & Finance, final year), Rebecca McKee (English, second year), Asher Summers (English, final year) and Richard Tang (Maths, final year).

So far, during the 2010/2011 academic year, approximately 200 students from many academic disciplines have undertaken some of the quizzes and assignments from the Careers Employability Award on the Moodle Virtual Learning Platform. Twelve students completed it in full. From 2011/2012, the CAS Moodle pilot will be developed further to involve more participation from specific academic schools as well as individual students.

Any member of academic staff interested in taking this initiative further, with their students or within their school, can take a look at it at www.kent.ac.uk/careers/moodle.htm

For further information or an informal discussion please contact Bruce Woodcock, Careers Adviser, on ext 7594 or email B.E.Woodcock@kent.ac.uk

Also, see the University’s Employability website at www.kent.ac.uk/employability
Staff at the University continue to make a strong contribution to international, national and regional news. Over the past few months, there have been contributions from, among others, Kent Law School (KLS), the School of Politics and International Relations (POL&IR), the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR) and the Centre for Journalism (CJ).

International law expert, Professor Nick Grief of KLS, has been in demand for comment on the ongoing crisis in Libya. Professor Grief was mentioned in the Chinese Xinhau News Agency, demanding comment on the ongoing crisis in Libya. Professor Grief is the Centre for Journalism (CJ).

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Medway-based Professor of Journalism Tim Luckhurst, of the CJ, was another to feature prominently. He took part in a number of broadcast interviews, including those on BBC Radio Scotland on arming the Libyan rebels and LBC on the News of the World’s apology over phone hacking.

Also featuring in broadcast interviews was Professor Frank Furedi, of SSPSSR, who was interviewed on BBC Radio Bristol on the subject ‘children and the outdoors’, on BBC Radio Kent on ‘Sarah’s Law’, and on BBC South East on ‘victims of crime’. Dr Ben Seyd, of POL&IR, was interviewed by BBC Radio Kent on the voting system referendum, while Professor Julia Twigg, of SSPSSR, who was interviewed on BBC Radio Bristol on the subject ‘children and the outdoors’. This is just some of the recent coverage gained by the University. For more information, visit Kent in the news on Campus Online or contact the Press Office at PressOffice@kent.ac.uk.

Other coverage saw Professor Chris Heady of the School of Economics quoted in Your Tunbridge Wells for his research on switching the tax burden from personal and corporate income towards housing and consumption, while research led by Dr Luke Lavan from the School of European Culture and Languages into urban living, late-Roman style, featured in Your Canterbury.

The University’s plans to build new student accommodation and a hotel and conference centre on land at Chaucer Fields at its Canterbury campus was covered in the Kentish Gazette and Kent on Sunday.

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In memoriam
Since the last issue of KENT went to press, the University has learned of the deaths of the following alumni, honorary graduates and staff. If you would like to be put in touch with families or friends of anyone listed here please let us know – we may be able to help.

Philip Buss D66, Margaret Church E84, Peter Connolly D79, Colin Cutmore D68, Nilesh Dodhia E80, Carol Harding K76, Barbara Harris (former Bursar), Colin Hawkes K69, Ian Keay R97, Pamela Lunnon D96, John Martin (former Director of Institute of Languages, later School of European Culture and Languages), Trevor Miles K03, James Molloy K38, Malcolm Pitt R96, Professor Brian Simpson (honorary graduate 2003), James Gordon Smith E65.


1990s
Cook, Christopher (D91) I have recently started a new job working within the Williams F1 group as a simulations engineer, helping to develop the Flywheel Energy Storage device. Very interesting and great to get into the F1 world, so that is both my dream jobs ticked off, Space and F1! Still living in Wiltshire. I would be interested in hearing from (almost) anyone else from UKC who remembers me. Wiltshire, January 2011.

Casal Giménez, Jose (E93) I’m now working on two different projects. One is as a Technical Director and partner at Everything Limited (based at the Canterbury Innovation Centre) and also as an Agile Transformation Consultant for Evening Coders Limited (sub-contracted to RADTAC, a London-based consultancy, and working on several locations in the UK). Kent, January 2011.

Hill, Andy (E98) I left the University in 2002 and joined the civil service in early 2003. I’ve worked for the Department for International Development and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and I now work for a joint government unit involved in stabilisation and development in Afghanistan, running our support to the UK civilian and military stabilisation teams across Helmand. My work has taken me to Yemen, the West Bank and Afghanistan and it’s been an interesting time. I’m living in south-west London, near Sutton and still wishing I could get a seat on the train to work. Surrey. November 2010.

2000s
Parsons, Adam (D04) Was elected to Canterbury District Council just before graduating in Politics in 2007 and am still serving the Barton Ward as best I can. I have served a lot in sales since leaving, from mobile phones to pharmaceuticals. Currently studying for a PGCE in 11-18 Citizenship at Canterbury Christ Church University. If you want to contact me, email adam.parsons@canterbury.gov.uk Kent, December 2010.

Only Connect
Lost touch with an old friend? The Kent alumni database may be able to help. If we have a current address for them, we would be happy to forward a message from you. If we too have lost touch, Only Connect, which is printed in Kent twice a year and broadcast on the web monthly, may get a response. And please, if you do connect, let us know.

1960s
Tamara Dragadze (E66) wltf Helen King (K67)
Sarah Roberts (Mitchell) (E66) wltf Amanda Farquhar (R66) and Petra Dolby (K66)
Eitan Rehan (R67) wltf Jan Williams (D67)

1970s
Phil Williams (E71) wltf Malcolm Bent (E71)
Heather Carlyle (R73) wltf Malcolm Fish (D73)
Richard Page (R73) wltf Eddy Monteiro (R73)
Claude Houacinc-Michel (Houacinc) (R79) wltf Tony Mullen (D79)

1980s
Lynne Cronin (Gould) (D80) wltf Karine Hetherington (E80)
Matthias Kutzscher (E85) wltf Geoff Wails (R85), Robert Pearce (E84) and Anthony Watt (K83)
Gary Steele (E86) wltf Catrin Davies (K94)
Robert Sturgeon (K86) wltf Rika Ishii (K86)

1990s
Roger Chantler (R91) wltf Robert Levy (K73)
Philip Thomas (E92) wltf Fay Gibson (D92)

2000s
Victoria Joyce (D03) wltf Jonathan Angel (R05) and Andrzei Ornelanski (R05)
Demetris Demetriou (E05) wltf Dmitry Bragin (E05)

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What’s on

Music events

Wednesday 8 June, 7.45pm, Gulbenkian Theatre. The University of Kent Big Band is joined by alumni and special guests including Jarrod Coombes and Jim Knowler (Hullabaloo) for an evening of soul, swing and ska. Tickets £13 Students £7, available from the Gulbenkian Booking Office, T: 01227 769075, Online booking www.thegulbenkian.co.uk

Friday 10 June, 7.30pm St. Vincent's Church, Littlebourne. The University Chamber and Cecilian Choirs present Music for a Summer's Evening, conducted by Daniel Harding. ArtsFest leaves campus for an evening of choral repertoire, including music for the two choirs combined. Tickets £10 (including wine and nibbles) available from T: 01227 721798 and 01227 721456

Sunday 12 June, 3pm Eliot College Hall. Music for a Summer’s Day features Kent’s Concert Band, Symphony Orchestra, Chorus and Chamber Choir in a celebration of our musical year. Featuring music by Vaughan Williams, Parry, Shostakovich, Johann Strauss and finishing with Elgar’s rousing Pomp and Circumstance March. Followed by al fresco (we hope!) cream teas included in ticket price. Tickets £15 (adults), £8 (students and children) and £5 (balcony – standing only) available from University Music Office T: 01227 827335, E: musictickets@kent.ac.uk

Gulbenkian Theatre highlights

Sunday 12 June. 7.45pm, Anything Goes! UKC Musical Society presents its final showcase of the year with show-stopping numbers from a wide range of musicals.

Thursday 9 June. 7.45pm Verve 2011. Energetic, thought-provoking contemporary dance performed by some of Europe’s most talented young dancers.

Friday 10 June. 7.45pm, comedian Rob Rouse presents The Great Escape (16+).

Wednesday 15 June. 7.45pm, Gyles Brandreth in The One-to-One Show.

Friday 17 June, 7.45pm, LipService present Withering Looks, a cult Brontë spoof taking an ‘authentic’ look at the lives and works of the Brontë sisters – well, two of them actually, Anne’s just popped out for a cup of sugar.

Monday 27 June 7.45pm, Blazin’ Fiddles, from remote village halls to the Royal Albert ‘Village’ Hall, fiddles and bows blaze away with guitar and piano.

Thursday 7, Friday 8 July, 7.45pm, Request Stops (16+), comedian Mark Watson performs a mixture of old favourites and new material, experimental stuff and greatest hits.

Friday 22 July, 7.45pm, Wayne Sleep in Precious Little Sleep, an eclectic mix of energetic dance routines from Sleep’s acclaimed repertoire spanning three decades.

For full details of times and ticket availability please go to www.kent.ac.uk/gulbenkian

Alumni events

7 July 2011, Law Alumni Reception, at the Law Society, London

Autumn 2011, we are hosting networking events for alumni in business and in the creative industries. If you are interested in attending either of these events please let us know by emailing alumni@kent.ac.uk to be sure of receiving an invitation.

Discover Japan

The University’s Centre for English and World Languages is launching a new summer short programme, Discover Japan, which has been designed to provide an exciting insight into Japanese language and culture. There are two courses: Course A runs from 4-7 July 2011 and is for people who have no prior knowledge of Japanese; Course B runs from 11-14 July 2011 and is for those who have some knowledge of the language.

Full details of the courses, their structure and how to apply can be found at www.kent.ac.uk/cewl/courses/discoverjapan Each course costs £295, with 5% of the fee donated to the Japanese Tsunami Appeal. For further details, contact Maria Parkhurst on mp408@kent.ac.uk