CONGRATULATIONS to Helen Wood for being elected Union President in the biggest election the University of Kent has seen.

Her new role is a demanding one, as of the beginning of the next academic year; Helen will be the "Chief Representative of Kent’s Student body to the University, local community and at a national level". However, Helen is not new to the concept of balancing academia with extra-curricular activities; she made her competencies clear in her manifesto. Being Kent Union President is a full-time role for one year in which Helen will lead the Sabbatical Team and act as the Delegation Leader of Kent’s NUS Delegates which entails attending significant conferences and line managing the Union’s Managing Director, among other significant responsibilities.

Here’s what Helen had to say about her experiences at the University of Kent so far:

“I became involved in extra-curricular activities with the University in my first year. I joined Eliot Student Committee where I met a great bunch of people who are my closest friends now; we wanted to make university life better for everyone. My time at Kent has been very hectic, as well as studying for a Psychology degree, I have done over 300 hours of volunteering, worked part-time in Mungo’s (on-campus bar and bistro), and have held posts in Eliot Student Committee. Last year I was elected Eliot President, which was the start of a brilliant year of Welcoming week planning and directing a charity Panto where we raised £700. Making a difference by being active in the national campaign to keep a cap on top-up fees and South East weighting for student loans was also a part of my role as Eliot President.

During my final year, I decided that I wanted to do a lot more for the students that go to this University. From talking to students, it was clear that there is not much understanding about Kent Union and what they provide for us. Also, it was interesting to find that a lot of the students are not interested in the politics of the Union but are willing to learn if someone taught them. With this in mind, I decided to run for Union President. My manifesto concentrated on the everyday student and what they want from the Union and from their time at University. After a long week of campaigning in March, talking in a lot in lectures, and an unsuccessful ploy to get UCAS visitors to vote for me on open day, I was elected Kent Union President.

My last year has been a challenge. Meeting course deadlines and keeping up-to-date with the committee and its demands has been a great experience. As well as learning what the course is teaching, I have also learnt some valuable skills that will set me up for life, for example, writing and organisational skills, public speaking and my Maths skills which have grown in the past three years. I honestly thought I would not have to do Maths again after leaving school but as I found out early in my first year, it is important to the course and I am glad I have now. The departmental staff are very helpful and always reply to e-mails and questions on request as well as guiding you in your studies as much as they can.

Looking back at my time at the University of Kent, I could have not asked for a more enjoyable and exhilarating three years of my life and I hope the new students feel the same when they reminisce in their final year after ordering their cap and gown and thinking about the years ahead."
Staff vs Students Rounders Match

The Staff-Student Rounders Match was held on Monday 18th May on the Sports Field.

Kate Gresham, the Student Rounders Captain, had this to say about the match:

It was that time of the year again, where the students within the Psychology Department and the staff go head to head in the annual Staff v. Students Rounders Match. After the staff won last year, by just 1 rounder I might add, the students had to ensure a win this year, to save our pride. Therefore, on a sunny evening in May, we took to the fields in Parkwood and began our challenge.

After attempting to remind people of the rules of Rounders, a few of which were later broken by certain people (we all know who don’t we Dirk?), the match began with the staff fielding first. Each set of innings lasted 20 minutes which was clearly enough as people were dropping like flies, leaving only two or three people trying to get round in time for their next go. Despite obvious cheating from staff, which included distracting questions about exams, the students managed to show that last year’s staff win was just a fluke with overall scores after two innings being 52.5 to students and 48 to staff.

As is now the tradition, afterwards we all headed off for a much needed drink in Woodys, with staff apparently suffering the next day – think students win again with that, we can handle our drink…sometimes!

Thank you to everyone who was involved, and to all those who came to cheer us on. Many thanks to Carly Bloomfield for organising this event; umpire Georgina Randsley de Moura and staff captain Dinkar Sharma.

And a huge well done to all the students, we WON! The success of this event over the past 2 years hopefully means it will continue for many years to come!

Research Experience Scheme

The Department of Psychology’s new Research Experience Scheme for students in Stage 2 is proving incredibly successful. The aim of the scheme is for students to get involved in a variety of research topics and for them to observe and assist academic staff and get a real sense of life as a researcher. Dr Ulrich Weger is Coordinator of the Scheme and he is very impressed with the input he has had from students in its first year of running. There are some great advantages to participating in the scheme such as gaining greater expertise in a specific research area or improving methodological and communication skills. Furthermore, if the member of staff agrees, students could get a reference letter at the end of their project.

Here’s what some of the 19 students who took part in the scheme this year had to say about the RES.

‘Having an ambition to enter the research field of Psychology, this Research Experience Scheme (RES) was a golden opportunity for me to see what goes on in the working day of a researcher. Having looked at the options available to me I decided to work with Dr. Sutton, looking at whether time constraints affect how we perceive climate change. Dr. Sutton set me a lot of work to do, in terms of research and preparation of the materials for the study. But I thoroughly enjoyed it. Seeing how ideas develop into a coherent study was fascinating. It gave me a completely different perspective for research.

Dr. Sutton allowed me to be the researcher handling the participants. In my first year, I was fed up of having to acquire RPS credits, but since taking part in RES, I appreciate all the time and effort put in by all the researchers, albeit 3rd year undergraduates or postgraduates. I had fun testing my fellow colleagues and dealing with data. Data entry was very tiring and repetitive, but I am fully aware that that is a core part of the research process.

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it has strengthened my desire to reach my goals. I would thoroughly recommend anyone to take up this unique and fulfilling opportunity regardless of where their future ambitions lie. I look forward to doing my final year project, and hope, despite the strains and stresses of final year work, I will once again enjoy being the researcher in the labs.’

Dominik

‘I thought the scheme was really interesting as it gave me an insight into how real research is conducted, which will find useful when I have to conduct my own research in the third year. I also enjoyed working with a member of the department, learning what they do and getting to know them’.

Michaela

‘I have found the research scheme very useful, mainly in working with a supervisor, time management, lab bookings and study preparation, and familiarisation with SPSS’.

Donna

‘The scheme was a fantastic opportunity. Not only does it allow you to gain further knowledge of a specific area of psychology that interests you, it also gives you first hand insight into how research is carried out, from actively gathering to analysing data. I would thoroughly recommend it, not only to people considering going into research but to all psychology students in general, as it can provide you with some interesting ideas, as well as a great deal of confidence for when you tackle your own final year project’.

Ben
Congratulations...

Rachel Calogero who has been awarded an Early Career Investigator Travel Fellowship from the Academy of Eating Disorders and the National Institute of Mental Health. This will enable Rachel to present her research on mindful exercise at the next conference for the Academy of Eating Disorders in Cancun. The fellowship will cover $1,500 for travel-related costs.

Well done to Roger Giner-Sorolla recently become an editorial board member of the journal Basic and Applied Social Psychology. This journal was founded on the idea that social psychologists can explain and help to resolve many problems in society. The journal contains research articles, literature reviews and methodological advances.

Well done to Dominic Abrams and Hazel Wardrop who have been awarded £5,000 from the Equality and Human Rights Commission for a project entitled “Good Relations Measurement Framework”.

Congratulations to Roger Giner-Sorolla and Mark van Yugt who have just been awarded £167,855 from ESRC for a project entitled “The social guilt hypothesis”. This research will investigate the social guilt hypothesis: that the emotion of guilt will most effectively promote self-restraint when other people are involved, in particular members of a common social group.

Congratulations to Richard Crisp for having been elected Deputy Chair of the British Psychological Society’s Research Board. The Board reports to and advises the Board of Trustees on policy, the funding of psychological research, the submission of evidence to public or private bodies and other matters relating to the promotion and advancement of psychological science.

Ulrich Weger has been awarded a Research Project Grant by the Leverhulme Trust worth £137,344 to investigate how social climate influences human behaviour. The trust makes awards for the support of research and education in all subjects and is among the largest providers of research funding in the UK awarding around £40m in a typical year.

Richard Crisp has been appointed Associate Editor of Journal of Experimental Social Psychology. This journal is one of the most influential journals in social psychology. It publishes original research and theory on human social behavior and related phenomena, emphasising empirical, conceptually based research that advances an understanding of important social psychological processes.

More excellent news for the department, Dominic Abrams has been elected onto the council of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, which is also a division of the American Psychological Association. This is a highly prestigious appointment and further enhances the influence of Kent psychologists in the discipline.

The introductory textbook “Essential Social Psychology” by Richard Crisp and Rhiannon Turner has recently been translated into Chinese (Peking University Press, Wunan Book Inc) (Pictured above).

Well done to Joachim Stoeber to being appointed as consulting editor to the editorial board of the Journal of Research in Personality.

Congratulations to Nicolas Dumay who has been awarded £1,964 by the Experimental Psychology Society for a project entitled “Comparing neighbourhood effects in speech perception and production.”

Well done to Jane Wood who was awarded £15,000 from Kent Probation, Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team for a project entitled “Integrated services for managing prolific offenders: a longitudinal perspective.

Congratulations to Tirza Leader, Dominic Abrams and Adam Rutland whose report to the government Department for Communities and Local Government on the REACH Role Model Programme was warmly received. The policy report and full report (over 200 pages) are to be published by DCLG on July 14th. They would like to thank Alison Benbow and the many others who worked on this major project. Comments from the peer reviewers were enormously positive, for example, “This was an impressive piece of applied social psychology. Would that more government agencies and NGOs commission work like this to evaluate the policies they are attempting to implement.” “...this research is an excellent example of social psychological research at the intersection of theory and practice.”

The department would like to congratulate all Psychology students for their hard work this year and wish you all a happy summer!

Recent Publications


Farewell Keith

Keith Franklin, Experimental Officer, has left the Psychology Department to pursue a new career path. Besides all the wonderful technical things Keith did for the department, there are plenty of other reasons as to why he will be missed by all of the Psychology Department staff and students alike. Always smiling and happy to help, Keith was more than a work colleague to members of the department.

The Psychology Department would like to thank Keith for all his hard work over the last four years.

Third Year Student Matt Harvey Looks Back

I arrived at the university with a BTEC in forensic science having already dropped out of two colleges, so it felt like I had some catching up to do!

Having read around psychology casually for a few years, I knew I wanted to study it, but had no professional aspiration except maybe to teach.

I (foolishly) hadn’t been to an open day, so seeing the campus for the first time was a pleasant surprise; part of the reason I applied was because Canterbury looked so picturesque. In the first few weeks, I came to love how refreshing Canterbury was (and still is) in comparison to my comparatively average hometown.

I also loved learning new things, particularly about biology and physiology. That interest was fulfilled in the first year when we studied biological and general psychology, and again in the second year as we studied more advanced biological psychology.

The choice of wild modules also allowed a taster of what other departments had to offer, making the first year more flexible and interesting.

While this was going on, I had a lot of free time, and decided that the number of prospective psychology students increasing year on year was enough reason to take on something voluntary for my CV. An opportunity appeared when an ad requesting course representatives went out, so I volunteered along with my flatmate Emma. I also became involved in the Psychology Society and went for a committee position as Vice President, which I also managed to get. More of my time started disappearing, and balancing the voluntary hours with coursework was a new challenge which was difficult at first as I learned some time management, but definitely worth it. One benefit was the opportunities to discuss student issues in meetings with the brilliant staff in the department, which doubled up as an experience of what academics get up to when not lecturing. It was also nice being able to represent students and canvass their issues, which meant involvement in improving the learning experience; another added bonus!

Outside actually learning, one of the best things about uni is the independence it allows. I had already lived alone through college, yet living on campus was a different experience. There’s something about living with 7 other people in close quarters that you might expect to be a bit too personal, but things went so well that I’m sure some of the friends I made at Kent will remain friends for years to come.

I remember writing somewhat cheesily on my UCAS application that I wanted to come here to inscribe something great on a blank slate, and it’s pretty full now! Studying in the Psychology Department has been incredible, an important experience and the best thing I could have done with my life. So when graduation day is over and the slate is turned over, I hope that the bittersweet feeling fades quicker knowing that Kent’s Psychology Department offered me some great opportunities that have really helped prepare me for life!

Open Day 2009

The 2009 Canterbury campus Open Days will be held on Saturday 4th July and Saturday 10th October.

There is no better way to find out about the University than to see it for yourself. Our friendly and informative Open Days are a perfect opportunity to get to know us better! This is open to all students, undergraduate or postgraduate, full-time or part-time, all are welcome!

Visiting Kent on an Open Day is a great idea, you can meet the Psychology staff and students, go to departmental talks and discuss student accommodation and finance.

To find out more please visit: http://www.kent.ac.uk/studying/open-day/openday/index.html

Kent Psychologist

The Department of Psychology’s Newsletter is for students and staff. We welcome contributions from both staff and students for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Bloomfield.

Department of Psychology, Keynes College University of Kent, CANTERBURY, Kent. CT2 7NP

Email: C.Bloomfield@kent.ac.uk

Telephone: 01227 824775