



Buckingham Business School Newsletter

Message from the Dean

December 2011 Edition

2011 has been an exceptionally busy year for the Business School and I am delighted to say that, in what are very uncertain times for higher education generally, we are flourishing.

One measure of success at Buckingham is student numbers. In the last three years the Business School has grown from 142 students this time two years ago, to 196 last year to 280 this term. We are expecting another high intake of students in January 2012. Another measure of success is League Tables. The Business School came 15th out of 116 in the Guardian University Guide 2012. The University has re-entered The Times league table this year and been placed at Number 21 out of 116; this is because of stellar performance in student satisfaction, staff/student ratio and graduate prospects.

Of course such success brings its own challenges. In the Business School we must ensure we balance the pressures of increased student numbers with maintaining high satisfaction. We firmly believe our students are our greatest assets and we are working extremely hard to ensure we maintain the tight-knit staff – student community, our student satisfaction and the high standards of which we are so proud.

We have held our first Business School dinner to thank some of the many people who have contributed to the growth and success of the School in recent years - and of course to build on these links to help us sustain this development. The Business School has had a huge amount of support – time, effort and money - from the business community, sponsors and donors. Some give their time to deliver guest lectures to our students across a wide range of subjects and courses. Our students love meeting “real” people and learning about “real-life” business experiences. Others provide managed “consultancy” opportunities, enabling students to gain problem-solving experience, again with “real” issues in business. These not only provide fantastic learning opportunities for students, but are often tremendously rewarding experiences for everyone involved. Others have provided funding - scholarships and bursaries for students, providing talented young people an opportunity they otherwise could not afford, to come to Buckingham to study their chosen degree, as well as funding for professorships and postgraduate research opportunities. Such funding is so important in enabling the Business School to dedicate resources to scholarship activities which will be pivotal to our future success.

We will be hosting more social events in the new year, not just to say thank you, but to help us strengthen these relationships. One important date to celebrate in our history is – 30 years of teaching Accounting and Financial Management. We do hope you will be able to join us at some of these events.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Dr Jane Tapsell Dean of Business School

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MBA Marketing Futures

This term has seen the return of our speaker series, which has been a feature of our MBA programme for the past few years and forms an integral part of the Marketing in the 21st Century module. Experts are invited to run sessions on important current issues or emerging developments in marketing. These provide a great way for our students to learn about some of the latest thinking in the field.

The series kicked off with a stimulating session on social media marketing given by Graham Jones, Internet Psychologist, and regular visitor to Buckingham. We have been privileged to welcome Pavel Bogdashov (Reckitt Benckiser), who took us through the trials and tribulations of the new product development process; and Chris Duncan from Kindred agency, who revealed the 'behind the scenes' of how social marketing campaigns are developed.

Following on came Marc Rigby, Business Development Director at Receptional Ltd, a local marketing consultancy, who steered us through the ever-changing world of digital marketing. We were then taken on a tour of the future of advertising and advertising agencies by Michael Willis, advertising consultant. To round off the term, Grant Leboff, Director of the Sticky Marketing Club, gave his 'thought-provoking take' on where marketing has come from and where it will be going in the future.

Module coordinator Frances Betts sees the speaker series of special value not only to our students, but also to academic staff who teach in the field of marketing: "It's one of the many ways we keep abreast of what's happening out there".

She says, "The new MBA in the Business School will be starting in January 2012 and we fully expect to be integrating these, and other, speakers into our new programme".

Buildings Work

Radcliffe Centre and Prebend House Refurbishments

With increased numbers of students the University is taking time to renovate and refurbish some of its buildings; to upgrade and extend its teaching facilities.

In 2010 Prebend House had been restored externally to protect its Georgian façade, and now in 2011 Phase 2 of the project is to create a new learning and seminar centre focused principally for post graduate students.

With a greater emphasis on undergraduate studies the Radcliffe Centre is also in progress of being refurbished to act primarily a lecture theatre for up to 130 people. To

support its other use by the University and the Town it will also double as a concert venue and performance space.

The Centre has been completely gutted and will be refitted with new seating, improved lighting, a new heating system, and a more welcoming entrance lobby. The arrangement of the seating will be to install raked upholstered seating, so changing the configuration of the interior and to replace the fixed stage with a removable stage that can be stored under the seating. The plan is also to install full audio-visual equipment. The 'new' Radcliffe Centre is due to be completed for the Winter Term 2012.

Already an interesting outcome of the work is the 'find' of a newspaper. It was from the 1930s and discovered by workmen on the Radcliffe site when they took up some old floorboards; Roger Perkins, lecturer in journalism at the University of Buckingham explains more - watch his report on: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Gtj273Mz5E>

Prebend House (Phase 1 completed in 2010)



New Business School Learning Approach: using a Business Simulation



Winners of the postgraduate prize (Charlotte Reetze, Caitlin Baltzer, Stephanie Martin, Raj Khabra)

The Summer Term saw the introduction of a new assessed course on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the Business School – The Business Simulation. This resulted from the success of last year’s trial of the Business Simulation and was the first time students were assessed on their performance in this highly competitive business contest. The simulation was coordinated by Anne Hampton, Katie Balaam and Wondimu Mekonnen from the Business School and was led by Derek Jones of the April Training Group.



Winners of the best presentation prize (Christina Waller, Laura Marginson, Henna Stranden, Polly Richards with Dean Jane Tapsell)

The Business Simulation gave students an opportunity to gain realistic business decision-making experiences through managing their own business in teams of four. Each team took on the management responsibility to develop and implement business strategies for their business. The postgraduates worked as newly formed companies running the newly acquired European business of General Motors, whilst the undergraduates set up their own automotive businesses.

In order to succeed, the teams had to determine clear business objectives and try to maximize their competitive position through manufacturing, research and development, distribution, marketing, employment and financial investments. All decisions were taken in a real-world environment of the highly competitive automotive industry.

The student teams really entered into a competitive spirit throughout the term and made very professional presentations to the panel of judges. These included Michael Stewart, Jaguar Land Rover; Mandy Spooner, PepTalk Training; John Barker, Head of Liquidnet Inc, as well as the course tutors. All the students benefited from the expert feedback given by the panel of judges. Although there could only be one overall winning team and an award for the best presentation, the real beneficiaries are all the Business School students who participated in an experience which will help distinguish them from others in terms of their C.V. development!



Winners of the undergraduate prize (Joel Olbert, Chiraag Paul, Peter Doherty, Philip Rohr with Dean Jane Tapsell)

Barn Dance Round-up

Following the success of last year's hilarious Barn Dance, the Business School held another at the beginning of November. The event was held in Tanlaw Mill with a live 'Calling Band' named Oddsox in residence. "Wines of Portugal", the BBE student business, provided a welcome glass of wine for each person on arrival – possibly to help encourage them onto the dance floor. However, no extra enticement seemed necessary as enthusiastic attempts at country dancing were made by staff and students alike. It would be safe to say that approximately six of those people present displayed moments of real professionalism, unfortunately four of them were the band! However, this resulted in much laughter and encouraged those who may not have otherwise dared to attempt the dancing themselves to join in; resulting in a thoroughly entertaining and enjoyable evening for everyone.



Winners of the Best Dressed Cowgirl (Idalina Correia) and Cowboy (Dzingisai Makovah)



Sepand Fardghassemi and other dancers learning the barn dance ritual of the "doh se doh"

Half way through the evening, everyone took a well earned break to enjoy the delicious "Wild West Buffet" provide by Craig, Margaret and the Style Catering team. Fuelled by the delicious home-made burgers, southern chicken and chips, everyone returned to the dance floor to continue not knowing their right from their left, sometimes dancing with the wrong partner, and feeling smug for a few moments if they

mastered a particular move, until with much disappointment, the evening came to an end.

Finally prizes were awarded for the Best Dressed Cowboy & Cowgirl, Dzingisai Makovah and Idalina Correia (see picture). Student feedback – "it was excellent". Many thanks go to Debbie Stanbury and her assistants for organising such an entertaining evening, hopefully to be repeated again next year!

Photos by Sepand Fardghassemi

Peter Cooke Meets the Queen



Professor Cooke meets the Queen on behalf of Motability Professor Peter Cooke (Director of the CAM Centre of the Business School) has been a governor of the 'Motability' charity for close on two years, having both a professional interest in car fleet management, and as a wheelchair user himself.

Prof. Cooke met the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at an event at Westminster Hall in front of five hundred people.

Motability has just provided its three millionth new car to one of its' users and as Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, handed over the keys. Cooke said, "well with that number of cars one is not quite sure which is the exact three millionth so she handed over the keys to several cars". Some of the recipients were paralympian athletes to "help them in their gruelling schedule of training for the 2012 Games" stated Lord Sterling, Chairman of Motability.

Reporting for the Newsletter, Prof. Cooke said, "Motability is one of those organisations one rarely hears about – it's a charity which oversees the provision of mobility – cars and powered wheelchairs - for people with disabilities as well as providing specialist, often highly adapted cars". Operating since 1977 it oversees provision of close to 600,000 cars which represents more than 6% of new cars registered in the United Kingdom. About the tightly managed royal walkabout Prof. Cooke says. "I'm not sure what I said to the Queen, but I was presented. Prince Philip was a different matter; he talked for several minutes, and commented on my well-used wheelchair. He was amused by the story that I had half jokingly promised my wife a new hat for the occasion if I had a new wheelchair. It cost me a whole new outfit for her, and I'm still waiting for my new chair".

See other news about CAM in 'Research in Brief' below.

Photo Courtesy of Motability

First Guest Speaker for the Business Society



Heather Salter is a local business owner from Buckingham, who had previously attended one of the Business Enterprise talks (see article - Redefining Profit...). In October she presented - "Inside the Interviewer's Head" - clearly a useful subject for business students and her talk in October was well attended and well received by the audience.

Heather started by showing how she had got her first job, PA to the managing director of a large organisation in the north of England. Initially a shy person, she soon blossomed into a strong communicator and training manager, taking on the training of pub landlords whilst at Scottish & Newcastle Retail. Knowledge of her capabilities became renowned in the field of HR management, and during the course of her career she has worked for Grand Metropolitan Retailing, Apollo Leisure Group, SFX and was HR Director for Clear Channel Entertainment.

Her many years working in people management (as a director, manager, trainer, facilitator, assessor, coach, mediator, independent investigator and mentor) gave her the impetus, in 2002, for starting her own HR/ Training consultancy (Jigsaw HR). It was created to support small businesses who do not have in-house professional HR capability.

Using the experiences of her own professional development she encouraged the audience to seek out a mentor as part of their career development; to always be interested and learn (in the workplace or purely for pleasure) and to be clear about your ambitions.

The important part of her talk was to understand how prospective employers view candidates applying for jobs and being interviewed. Her advice was to thoroughly understand the company, their markets and what your role could be in the company; ensure that your profile is factual and that your capabilities match the company's requirements, and be certain that it's clear in your application. Many larger organisations put candidates through selection days with group exercise sessions; according to Heather these are great opportunities to display your capabilities and team-working skills.

The Business Society has been in development since the Summer Term, and is pleased to have created a platform for a variety of activities and speakers for students at the University. As some of the founding committee members will be finishing their programme this term, there is an opportunity for others to bring their ideas for progressing the Society in 2012 and beyond. If you want to get involved with making the Business Society a success please contact Sheila Taylor on x2238 in the Student Union.

Research in Brief

Nigel Adams and Dr Joan Lockyer of Coventry University presented the following papers at two academic conferences in September:

"Business Start-up - A means to an end or an end in itself" at the International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference 2011 at Coventry University

"Comparing the approaches of two UK Universities to teaching Business Enterprise" at the 6th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.

These two papers compared and contrasted the experience of two UK universities introducing and running innovative Business Enterprise programmes, during which students start and run real businesses as an integral part of their honours degrees.

Professor Peter Cooke and the CAM Centre has continued its research and publications programme with several new reports published over the last couple of months including:

'Disabled Drivers - A Neglected Community?' a research project on the availability of adapted daily rental cars.

'Used Car Market Report 2011;' an annual survey and review, now in its 21st year of the used car market in the United Kingdom.

'Developing Shape of the Car Market in the United Kingdom' Urban Science Annual Conference; Stratford on Avon; May 2011

In addition Peter Cooke has presented at:

'Evolving European Used Car Industry' ENG Conference - Berlin - May 2011

'International Car Fleet Management' Fleet Europe Annual Conference; Brussels - June 2011

'State of the UK Automotive Industry' - KPMG Annual Dealer Presentation; Marlow - September 2011.

Sponsored by the European Commission, Dr Ning Wu participated in the debate on "European Works Councils and transnational social dialogue: the intercultural perspective", a conference organised and held at the Catholic University of Leuven in collaboration with the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA), Belgium 6-7 October 2011. It was a policy-oriented conference that aims to discuss and debate the challenges of global intercultural issues on the performance and quality of social dialogue at the level of European Works Councils (EWCs).

Introducing...



Dr Ning Wu

Dr Ning Wu joined the University of Buckingham in September 2011 having been a researcher at the University of Nottingham. Ning has developed a research channel in Human Resource Management since her

PhD study, with a focus on the transfer of “best practice” from large organisations into SMEs.

She has joined the Business School to teach undergraduate HRM courses, with a possible future development with Masters programmes. Ning has already appreciated the friendly and supporting atmosphere at Buckingham and is pleased with her decision to move here. When not carrying out teaching or research, Ning enjoys a game of tennis.

David Ferguson

David Ferguson joined the University of Buckingham in September 2011 from the London School of Economics. His first degree was from Cambridge in Mathematics, and he continues to pursue a research path, expecting to complete his PhD shortly.



David brings a range of experiences to the Business School, having studied at Yale University in the US, and Charles University in Prague. His research theme is related to the Graph Theory - graphical representation and interpretation of networks (for example mobile phone networks).

He is currently revising the QM modules and is enjoying working with the undergraduate students in the Business School. He is pleased with his move to Buckingham, and is enjoying being able to see trees from his window rather than a brick wall.

Trisha Chakraborty

Trisha joined the Business School in July 2011, as a Project Administrator. She has been working on a range of projects relating to quality management with the programme directors and other collaborative ventures.



Her academic background is with a BA in English Literature followed by post graduate studies in Mass Communication. She has been using her capabilities at the university, firstly in the Publicity Office, and then the Law School. However, Trisha is now moving on to manage University-wide projects in the Quality Assurance Office.

Helen Miller

Helen joined the Business School in July 2011, as a Business School Admin Assistant. She is a local person having been a student at the Royal Latin School before her BSc in Geography at the University of Manchester.



Since then she has been working here on a range of projects relating to student information, and supporting the Finance and Accounting group.

Having worked at the University in her gap year and during summer breaks from Manchester she has found it interesting to be working in a ‘new’ department. “*The staff are very friendly*” she says. In the future Helen would like to travel, especially to South Africa, and to do charity work whilst there.