

Conference 2013

Ability, Stamina & Performance - Fitness for Purpose

Speaking at the AMHEC Spring conference Les Ebdon, director of the Office for Fair Access, said that the year ahead would be both testing and challenging. In looking at the new landscape, while it was clear that changes in 2006 did not deter people from going to University, Professor Ebdon suggested that this might not be true from 2012 onwards. With considerable diversity in fee levels and financial support, entry to full time and part time education in particular is an area of concern.

In looking at the Access Agreements for 2014/15 Professor Ebdon urged that institutions should take a strategic approach and to involve students in the design, implementation and monitoring of agreements. He considered it important to "involve students at an early stage in looking at plans for outreach, retention and financial support" and urged amhec members to "Be innovative, consult widely and monitor to find out what works well. Learn from the experiences of other institutions".

He went on to say that collaborations between institutions; between universities and universities, colleges and colleges, schools and universities, would be the key to success in this area.



HE Shared Legal – New National Services

HE Shared Legal offers access to experienced legal resources that can enable significant savings on legal fees. Individual subscriber institutions have saved between £200 and £3,500 on the guidance they received in relation to specific queries* and several have saved a total sum exceeding the annual subscription. For further information about the HE Shared Legal service, please contact Neil Hunter or Nafeesa Khan on 0141 548 4312 or email to: enquiries@hesharedlegal.ac.uk

HE Shared Legal is the new national shared legal service for the UK higher education sector. Since its launch in May 2012, ten AMHEC member

institutions have become subscribers, 160 items of generic guidance have been published, and over 80 individual legal enquiries have been attended to.

An AMHEC feasibility study established the need for the service in order to provide 'front-line' legal guidance and support, and reduce the HE sector's reliance on expensive, external legal advice. The aim of the service is to provide a shared team of dedicated legal colleagues with whom to raise specific enquiries; to supply general legal guidance documents, specifically designed for the sector; and to enable the sector to keep abreast of relevant changes in legislation.

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Member Profile

Anthony Parker, Academic Secretary

What is your role?

As Academic Secretary, my role is very much about supporting the Senior Management Team and the University Council in discharging their governance roles. I act as Secretary to a number of the University's Committees including Senate, and also the Committees of the University Council. My portfolio of responsibility also includes internal audit, insurance and graduation, so no two days are ever the same and the variety contained in the role makes its very interesting and challenging.

What is your background?

I studied Geography and History at the then Chester College between 1995-1998 and purely by being in the right place at the right time obtained some part-time work during the summer of 1998 working for the Bursar, David Stevens.

This work expanded and in April 1999 I was appointed Assistant to the Bursar and then in 2006 to the role of Deputy Bursar. During that time the University very kindly supported me through a Masters in Business Administration

which also led to a professional qualification as an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries.

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HE Shared Legal has guided institutions on a variety of topics - many of a substantial nature - from the more predictable employment and contractual matters to detailed transaction planning, case preparation and governance issues. Most subscriber HEIs use the service as a lower cost alternative to in-house provision, allowing them access to legal guidance on specific matters without having to consult external law firms (generally at significant expense). Others, who have an in-house lawyer, use the service as an additional resource on specific cases and queries, as required. In general, subscribers are encouraged to refer to the service at an early stage (and for more minor matters) than one would generally consult an outside lawyer. Above all, the service is an integral part of the HE sector, dedicated to its subscriber institutions, with no independent agenda or interest.

In addition to support on specific enquiries, HE Shared Legal produces general guidance material and a regular newsletter containing brief case reports and other legal updates that are of particular relevance to HEIs. Regarding these publications, Michael Johnson, Director of Finance at University of Winchester, recently said: 'At Winchester we regard this as a tremendously valuable resource and I forward each issue to relevant Directors.

Subscribers have direct access to the members' area of the service's website which contains all its guidance notes, newsletter articles and FAQs together with a dedicated enquiry page. Examples of these articles are available for view in the news section of the website at www.hesharedlegal.ac.uk. The website also contains further information about the service, including brief CVs of the HE Shared Legal team.

The service provides guidance to HEIs across eight broad areas of law:

- employment law
- charity law
- commercial agreements
- corporate and governance legal issues
- property law
- banking and financial services law
- environmental law
- tax and insurance law and pensions legal issues

Enquiries relating to information technology and intellectual property (including data protection and freedom of information) fall within the area of expertise of HE Shared Legal's sister guidance service, JISC Legal (located within the same office building). In the case of such matters, HE Shared Legal will refer the enquiry on if the subscriber is agreeable. It has also worked in conjunction with JISC Legal on several enquiries that have required the input of both services.

In the case of certain matters, it is recognised that external legal

advice and/or representation will be required, either at the outset or following a measure of preliminary work conducted by HE Shared Legal. In such cases, HE Shared Legal is in a position to assist the relevant subscriber institution with the selection, engagement on competitive terms, and instruction of a suitable specialist law firm. This can be achieved through the legal services procurement framework agreements available to the sector, whether by call-off or mini-competition, or otherwise.

It should be noted that the new framework agreements, established by APUC with considerable sector collaboration, came into operation on 3 June 2013. These arrangements complement the pre-existing agreements operated by London Universities Purchasing Consortium and Universities West Midlands, and cover the following areas of the country:

- Northern England and North Wales
- South West England and South Wales
- Central and Eastern England
- Scotland

For further information about any aspect of the HE Shared Legal service (or the new framework agreements), please contact Neil Hunter or Nafeesa Khan on 0141 548 4312 or email to:

enquiries@hesharedlegal.ac.uk.

*in comparison to the cost of the work from an external law firm.



York St John is the first post-1992 university to hit top 10 for student experience

High quality teaching and an increased investment in the student experience at York St John has seen the University rocket into the top 10 of the Times Higher Education's annual Student Experience Survey. The results showing an impressive rise to 9th place for York St John University who were placed 58th in 2012. This is the first time a post-1992 university has come in the survey's top 10 for student experience.

This year's Student Experience Survey validated by specialist youth research agency YouthSight for the THE, gathered the views of more than 12,000 UK undergraduate students. Participants, who were not told the purpose of the polling, were drawn from all years of undergraduate degree study to rate their institution's performance in 21 categories that matter most to them, from the quality of staff and lectures to social life and accommodation.

Prof David Fleming Vice Chancellor at York St John University, said: "At York St John, we put students at the heart of everything we do and always aim to provide an exceptional experience. We are delighted to hear that our students have rated us so highly, and to have made it into the top ten of the Times

Higher Education Student Experience Survey is just amazing. It's a fantastic reward for all our dedicated staff, who work extremely hard to ensure our students get the most out of their time at York St John."

Indicators in the University improved most included high quality staff/lectures, helpful/interested staff, good social life, tuition in small groups, good library and library opening hours and I would recommend my university to a friend.

Sue Reece Pro Vice Chancellor for Development commenting on the results added: "Our library and learning centre was redeveloped in 2011 in response to student feedback, so

we're thrilled to see it get such a high score in the survey. We always listen to student feedback and have invested around £7.5 million in enhancing their experience with us over the past two years. This includes the acquisition of 57 acres of outdoor sports facilities last year, and the current redevelopment of our Holgate Centre which is being designed to improve accessibility to a wide range of support services including student administration, financial advice, study support and health and wellbeing. Our future plans include multi-million pound investments in our campus and facilities that aim to further enhance the student experience at York St John over the next few years."



Self-Control – How to exercise self-control by being kind to yourself and taking up a spiritual practice

Karen Blakeley – Senior Lecturer in Human Resources Management, Winchester Business School.

Self-Control

Blaming, attacking, gossiping, criticising, complaining – we all do it. We are sense-making creatures and when something goes wrong we try to work out where the source of our discomfort might lie. Invariably, we look around for someone or something to blame.

There are other kinds of negative behaviour at work: what about indifference, scorn, selfishness, stereotyping others, patronising people and dismissing their concerns?

The workplace can be a toxic place. I suspect it is partly to do with the fact that we are all trying to meet differing needs at work and it is when these needs are threatened that the negative behaviours often emerge. Dr Miki Kashtan points out how 'blaming others' is something

we do to avoid looking inwards at our own responsibilities for the situation. Moreover, as we engage in blame, we gain a temporary relief from the stress that is triggered by the threat. It feels good to moan!

An alternative source of negative behaviours in organisations is, ironically enough, 'success'. Research by Paul Piff at the University of California showed that those with more power are less ethical.

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University of Chichester



History

The University of Chichester can trace its origins back to 1839 when Bishop's Training College was established to train schoolmasters. The College moved to new buildings in October 1850 and was re-named Bishop Otter College. The buildings that housed the College now form the heart of the University's Bishop Otter Campus.

In 1873 the College became a training College for women as a result of the campaign by Louisa Hubbard to encourage the acceptance of women as teachers.

The Bognor Regis College of Education was set up in 1946 as an emergency training College for men and women to meet the severe shortage of teachers after the war. In 1977, the two colleges merged to form The West Sussex Institute of Higher Education.

In 1999 the Institute gained degree awarding powers in its own right and the name was changed to University College Chichester. The title 'University of Chichester' was approved by the Privy Council on 12th October 2005.

Widening Participation

Chichester believes that higher education should be open to all who have the ability and potential to benefit from it, regardless of age, family background, ethnicity or disability.

The University believes that early intervention is vital in raising the aspirations of young people and runs a programme of direct intervention with secondary school children. Part of this work incorporates working with local and regional schools in areas of economic and social deprivation.

This ethos is borne out by statistics showing that 29% of Chichester students identify themselves as the first generation of their family into HE and 28% of undergraduate students were mature (over 21 years-old) on entry to the University. The supportive learning community at the University enables students to exceed their expectations, as reflected by the high completion rate.

Research

In the most recent RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) in 2008, Chichester was described as a 'rising star' with 75% of research conducted rated as 'world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised.'

At Chichester, research is made accessible through application to real-world situations in learning and teaching and consultancy. Many lecturers are involved in consultancy with private and public sector organisations, work with professional associations, acting as advisors for government bodies, and work in collaboration with academics at

home and abroad. This impacts upon the student experience as lecturers translate the applied nature of their research into their everyday teaching.

For example, Sports and Exercise Science students at the University benefit from the performance analysis research that the University carries out with the British Olympic Sailing team, enjoying full access to the state-of-the-art laboratories from the moment they arrive.

Regeneration

The University works with local businesses and community to effect education-led social, cultural and economic regeneration. Based at the University's regeneration campus in Bognor Regis, the Dome Enterprise Centre provides a range of services and facilities to support the growth of local and student start-up and small businesses.

Chichester collaborates in a reciprocal relationship with local businesses, providing students with the employability skills that will be vital to them on graduation and beyond, whilst contributing to the sustainability of the local economy.

To find out more about the University of Chichester, go to www.chi.ac.uk.



Musical Impact - Trinity Laban part of new research into musicians' health and wellbeing

A new £1 million project will see the UK's nine top music conservatoires leading the world's largest ever study into the health and wellbeing of performing musicians.

Musical Impact is a new four year research project, starting in September 2013. It aims to generate new knowledge of the physical and mental demands of music making, to contribute new insight into chronic and acute health problems and their impact over time, and to examine effective strategies for health promotion. While musicians typically have a long history of self-sufficiency in managing the challenges of performing, Musical Impact aspires to complement musicians' own ingenuity by providing comprehensive, evidence-led resources to help maximise their educational and professional opportunities.

The project will be led by Conservatoires UK (CUK) - the organisation which represents nine major UK conservatoires - and will also involve scientists from Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University. Crucially, these centres of learning will be working with professional musicians and their employers - via the Musicians' Union and the Association

of British Orchestras (ABO) - as well as health practitioners and researchers linked to the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) and the International Health Humanities Network.

This £1 million project is underpinned by a major £800,000 grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), with the remaining £200,000 coming from the participating institutions.

The project has three core strands of research:

- A longitudinal study of physical and mental fitness for performance
- The physical and mental demands of practising and performing
- Health promotion in music education and the profession

Emma Redding, Head of Dance Science at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, commented: "This is the biggest and most significant project of its kind. Its impact will be far-reaching not only for musicians but also those teaching them".



... **Self Control** continued from page 3

For example, richer individuals are less likely to stop at pedestrian crossings, are more likely to steal and also give 30% less of their income to charity than do the poor. Research by Michael Kraus, also at the University of California, revealed that those who are richer and more powerful demonstrate less empathy or concern towards others – they are more selfish, unkind and egotistical.

This could be a heady mix – corruption and selfishness at the top; aggression, negativity and resistance everywhere else. Thankfully, most organisations are not like this. But it does not take much

for the rot to set in – and this, in case you are wondering, is where self-control comes in.

If you find yourself sometimes engaging in blaming others, becoming aggressive, cynical or complaining then you might be relieved to discover that the cure is not steely self-restraint but what a friend refers to as BKTm times. 'Be kind to me' is another way of what Kristin Neff, at the University of Texas, describes as 'self-compassion'. We often blame or criticise others because we can't bear to face the possibility that we might have played a role in a mistake. We moan and

complain because we feel powerless and not valued. We project our plan outwards because the alternative is to look inwards and if we do that we can become our own worst enemies. We blame ourselves tell ourselves that we are no good, not up to the job, powerless, unimportant, not valued. We project our plan outwards because we feel powerless, unimportant, not valued..... So the source of self-control is to be kind to ourselves: don't blame others but also don't blame ourselves. View mistakes as part of the on-going process of learning and growth; view criticism as a reflection of the perpetrator's own unhappiness (as

opposed to constructive feedback which is given through empathy and love); view loss as an inevitable part of life and an opportunity to grow; finally value yourself according to your acts of kindness and celebrate every time you add to the stock of goodness in the world.

If you are in a position of power, it is easy to get sucked into the world of egotism, greed and selfishness. However, the research on leadership shows overwhelmingly that demonstrating integrity and showing concern for followers is central to leadership effectiveness. This, of course is easy to say – there are many stories of leaders who have been sucked into toxic cultures and become creatures of the system rather than leaders of it. So how can leaders demonstrate greater self-control? Well, there is some research that shows cultivating a sense of the spiritual helps leaders place the values of the material world into a better perspective and hence to

resist them. Research by Stillman and his colleagues showed that thinking of a spiritual experience reduced the desire to engage in conspicuous consumption. McCullough and Willoughby showed that having a living faith helped people resist certain materialistic temptations and demonstrative greater self-control.

Bill George, ex CEO and author of a book on Authentic Leadership, has a blog on the Harvard Business School site that explores this topic in greater depth. Why not read it and take up a spiritual practice to foster your leadership integrity and compassion?

The good news is that developing a spiritual practice and ‘being kind to yourself’ are easier, more enjoyable and much more fulfilling ways of exercising self-control than trying to demonstrate ‘will-power’. Research suggests that your health, emotional wellbeing, relationships and sense of meaning will all benefit from these two simple practices.



Karen gained her PhD from Brunel University in 2005 and subsequently published her first book, *Leadership Blind Spots and What To Do About Them*.

She is currently senior lecturer at Winchester Business School, University of Winchester and director of Waverley Learning an international change management and leadership development consultancy.

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With the retirement of David Stevens earlier this year, and a reorganisation of responsibilities within the Senior Management Team, I was promoted to the role of Academic Secretary, reporting to the University Secretary.

Why Chester?

As mentioned previously, I was fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time following the completion of my undergraduate degree and was afforded a great opportunity working in the Bursar's Office, which through hard work and I'd like to think some element of ability, I have been able to develop. During my time at Chester the institution has gone from strength to strength, due largely to the vision of the University Council and the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tim Wheeler.

Whilst the University has grown rapidly since my days as a student it has not lost sight of its Mission, Vision and Core Values and the sense of community amongst both staff and students is still very strong. The sense of belonging was an important factor in my decision to study at Chester and has been a key

reason for staying and developing my career at the institution.

What are your current priorities?

Earlier this year saw one of the most exciting developments in the history of the University of Chester when it was announced that the University was acquiring the site of the Shell Technology Centre at Thornton, Cheshire. The site was home to Shell UK's exploration and research centre since the 1940s. This heralds an opportunity for the University to apply its legacy to the continuation of world-class innovation and research in the North West, through the creation of a new Faculty of Engineering & Technology. This important development has created the opportunity for the University to develop a brand new site which will offer a number of benefits to businesses and students alike. Naturally, such a major development will require new structures and processes and I will play my part in ensuring the success of this new venture.

AMHEC

I've had quite a long association with AMHEC because when I first began to work for David Stevens he was on the Executive Committee and then

moved into the role of Secretary and subsequently became Chair. He and Chester have been keen supporters of AMHEC and greatly value the support and networking opportunities provided.

I joined the Executive Committee in 2009, becoming Vice-Chair in 2012 and then Chair following the AGM in April 2013. Over the years AMHEC has demonstrated that it offers a real benefit for its members as well as the sector but there is always more that can be done to ensure the Association provides value for money for the membership. This has been and will continue to be a key priority for me and colleagues on the Executive Committee. It would be remiss of me not to thank the outgoing Chair, Emma Wilkins, for the outstanding job she has done over the past two years in leading and promoting the Association; she will certainly be a hard act to follow.

Work-life balance

My twelve month old son keeps me entertained outside of work but I'm also a very keen golfer so if I'm not dealing with the joy of changing nappies then you'll find me on the golf course doing my level best to ensure that it's not 'a good walk spoilt'!

Newman wins digital award

Newman University has been awarded one of eight national awards provided by the 'Changing the Learning Landscape' initiative to bring about change in the strategic approach to technology in learning and teaching.

'Changing the Learning Landscape' is a ground-breaking partnership between the Association for Learning Technology, the Higher Education Academy, JISC, the National Union of Students and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. The 'Digital Literacy in the Disciplines' award is a series of mini-projects that aim to develop the use of digital literacies via discipline teaching and learning practice.

Newman's successful bid involves the use of Xerte Online Toolkits with students to produce online learning resources. Students create the resources themselves while learning about their subject, but in doing so also improve their digital literacies, and thus their ability to study in a digital age as well as their graduate employment prospects. The project starts in September 2013 and is part of a larger initiative called 'Newman in the Digital Age', which aims to improve students' digital literacies.

AMHEC Dialogue Day 2013

AMHEC Dialogue Day 2013 will be held on Thursday 10 October 2013, Woburn House, London. The day will commence at 9.30 am and close at 4.30 pm.

We would all agree that the student experience in higher education and high levels of student engagement have never been more important than they are now. So how do we as proactive and professional senior managers and leaders assist our institutions to realise the vision for an excellent and engaging student experience at the same time and win over the hearts and minds of our staff and colleagues?

With opening sessions from Andy Westwood, Chief Executive at GuildHE and Liz Bromley, Registrar and Secretary at Goldsmiths, this

workshop-style day will encourage delegates to discuss how we might create/further enhance our systems, processes, procedures and structures that are shaped around the student experience.

In doing so, explore how we raise the bar and develop a culture where students are at the very forefront of considerations across all University functions. Having done so, then reflect and consider how effective we are at leading by example and bringing about the change that takes delivering an excellent and engaging student experience from "rhetoric to reality".

Bookings are now open and to reserve your place contact Louise McGroarty, AMHEC Administrator: Tel: 01904 876654 or email: amhec@yorks.ac.uk

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Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln
Canterbury Christ Church University
University of Chester
University of Chichester
Edge Hill University
Liverpool Hope University
Newman University
Norwich University College of the Arts
University of Cumbria

St Mary's University College,
Twickenham
Stranmillis University College, Belfast
Leeds Trinity University
Trinity University College, Carmarthen
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music
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University for the Creative Arts
University of Winchester
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