

The weekly magazine
for higher education



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Does academic sisterhood
exist – and could it redress
male advantage?



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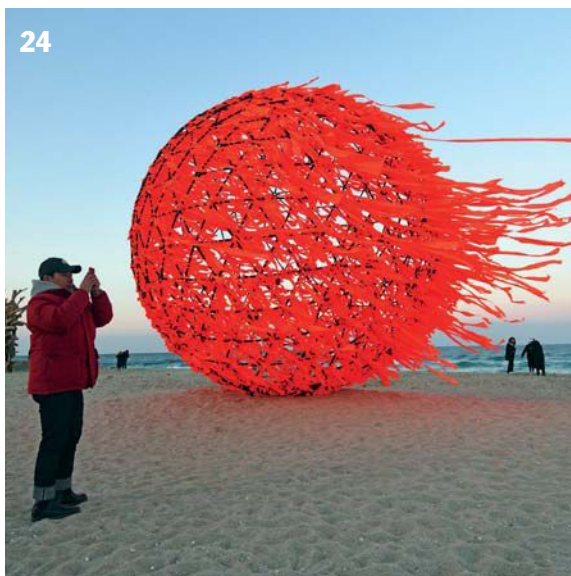
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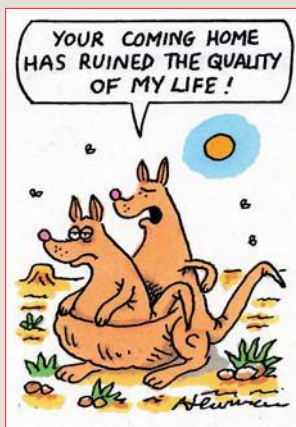
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THE WEEK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

●●● We thought that we’d all learned a lesson from the case of University of Oxford law graduate Faiz Siddiqui, who tried unsuccessfully to sue the institution for £1 million for “poor teaching” and a subsequent failed career. But one former Anglia Ruskin University student appears to have taken inspiration from his cause, *The Sunday Telegraph* reported on 11 March. Despite graduating from her international business strategy course with a first in 2013, Pok Wong claims that she has little to show for a “Mickey Mouse degree”. Boasts in Anglia Ruskin’s prospectus about career prospects were misleading, she argued, and she is seeking damages – to the sum of £60,000 – to cover tuition fees and living costs. Anglia Ruskin’s lawyers suggested that the prospectus did not form a “real” contract regarding career opportunities. If she had spent more “time and energy” on job-seeking and less on her campaign against Anglia Ruskin, she may have had greater success in finding an attractive job, they added.

●●● While we’re on the topic, graduates who fail to find a well-paid job should beware: grown-up children who move back home worsen their parents’ quality of life. A study by the London School of Economics suggests that parent couples – you know, the generation who paid no tuition fees and enjoyed low mortgages – experience a new lease of life once their children fly the nest, with improved marital relationships and time for new hobbies. The return of their “boomerang generation” offspring may therefore be regarded as a “violation” of what is meant to be an excit-



ing stage. Data show about one-quarter of young adults in the UK still live with their parents. “Everything in my psyche says [that] this young woman should be living independently,” one mother told *The Guardian* regarding the return of her 23-year-old daughter. We suspect that the feeling is mutual.


●●● Universities have been threatened with another 14 days of strike action during the exam period if the dispute over changes to UK higher education’s biggest pension scheme is not resolved. As *Times Higher Education* went to press, a week-long walkout was continuing at 65 institutions over changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme, while talks between Universities UK and the University and College Union continued. The UCU said on 8 March that its higher education committee had sanctioned the strike dates between April and June. Last week, vice-chancellors joined picket lines at the universities of Glasgow, Sheffield and Loughborough, while Oxford and Cambridge

joined those stating that they would be prepared to accept additional risk in order to protect members’ pensions.

Letters, page 33

●●● The University of Oxford has apologised after a female cleaner was photographed scrubbing a chalked “Happy International Women’s Day” slogan from the Clarendon Building, while male security guards watched. The image was posted on Twitter by Sophie Smith, associate professor of political theory at University College, Oxford, who added: “What an image for #IWD.” The university replied to the tweet saying that it was “deeply sorry for this and for offence caused”. Professor Smith said that she appreciated the apology, but that the priority should be fair working conditions for all staff. “Can you please make sure that the woman asked to remove the message receives a heartfelt apology, a warm cup of tea, the rest of the day off and, along with all our precarious staff, good enough pay to live in this city,” she replied.

●●● “Torture the data, and it will confess to anything.” So said Ronald Coase, the Nobel prizewinning economist; and it’s a saying that might well be applied to the debate about executive pay, in the wake of a story in *The Guardian* on 12 March that proclaimed: “Revealed: how vice-chancellor pay eclipses the public sector”. The story, which focused on how university leaders were typically paid significantly more than the heads of their local authorities and NHS trusts, came just weeks after analysis by economist Michael Nisbet, reported in *Times Higher Education*, suggested that vice-chancellors were not, in fact, overpaid. Mr Nisbet’s study compared vice-chancellors with the leaders of major public agencies, based on the number of staff that they employed. Questions have to be asked about whether vice-chancellors’ pay is justified, but it’s a sad day if the UK’s ambition for the University of Cambridge is for it to have a status akin to Cambridgeshire County Council.

The background of the entire page is an underwater photograph showing a large school of fish swimming in clear blue water. Sunlight filters down from the surface, creating a bright, shimmering effect in the center of the image.

LEADING THE WAY IN MARINE RESEARCH

CLIMATE CHANGE • CONSERVATION • MICROPLASTICS
MARINE MAMMAL SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR • MAN-MADE NOISE

The story of our time?

In view of the recent revelations of abuse in several industries, networks such as an academic sisterhood could offer vital support and solidarity



Certain news events leave an indelible imprint in one's mind.

Some of these will be universal, others particular to the individual. For me, one such story was the Waco siege in 1993. Not that it had any direct significance for a 13-year-old in Cambridge, England, when the Texan headquarters of a religious sect went up in flames. But something about the dramatic news footage, an early interest in journalism, perhaps, and the idea of a religious cult led by a would-be messiah made a big impression.

I was mulling this over last week as I drove from Austin to Waco on a trip to a Baptist university – one of several Texan university visits while in the US for a conference.

It is a drive that confirms one's preconceptions about the lone star state. Giant billboards at the side of the road advertise gun shows and God; fast food and private education.

One, styled like a no-smoking sign, had a picture of apes evolving into man crossed out inside a red circle, with a telephone number along the lines of 376-886-TRUTH (this is not the actual number, so don't bother calling).

Passing billboard after billboard, it struck me how much of society – even one that considers itself defined by the sanctity of individual freedom – is organised around institutions. The church, the National Rifle Association, the religious cult, the university (I make no connection).

Another institution that Texas has in multitudes is prisons. Huntsville, the state penitentiary, has the most active execution chamber in the country, while the US has the highest rate of imprisonment in the world. A higher proportion of state budgets is now spent on prisons than on higher education.

This is some statistic, but it wasn't always so – 30 years ago prisons accounted for 3 per cent of state budgets and colleges about 15 per cent.

One way to reverse this trend, a waste of life as well as money, would be to focus more attention on education as a route to rehabilitation, and there are examples of outreach programmes that are successful in helping prisoners to turn their lives around.

That is as true in the UK as the US, and in our features pages this week we explore one

such project, and its impact not only on inmates, but – in this instance – on undergraduate students, who have the opportunity to learn alongside them.

In our cover story, meanwhile, we consider another type of institution that some believe exists on campus – a membership organisation of sorts that segregates along gender lines.

While the old boys' network has long been discussed, and arguably continues to persist in the shadowy realm of unconscious bias, our feature considers whether there is such a thing as an academic "sisterhood". If there is, what form does it take, and does it help to address inequality in academia? And if no such institution exists, should it?

The sexual harassment (and worse) that has been exposed in several industries over the past six months has dominated headlines and demanded a reappraisal of how enlightened our times really are. Will future generations look back on the Harvey Weinstein scandal as one that is burned into their consciousness? And if so, will it change anything?

Perhaps. What's clear is that institutions, from the church to the NRA to Hollywood studios, are all under pressure for reasons that, in one form or another, relate to harm and abuse.

Universities do not fall into this category, but their copybook is hardly spotless when it comes to gender equality, and in recent months we have reported on issues of abuse of power in academia that also feed into what is undoubtedly the story of our time.

If, in this context, women in academia are taking measures to help each other out – sisters doing it for themselves in the face of institutionalised bias – it's easy to understand why.

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“Will future generations look back on the Harvey Weinstein scandal as one that is burned into their consciousness? And if so, will it change anything?”





GETTY

Soaring demand imperils England's uncapped system

Demographic bulge and rising participation drive growth, says Hefi report. Simon Baker writes

The UK's government faces trying to find funding for 300,000 extra undergraduate places in England by 2030 if it is to meet likely future demand for higher education, a new report warns.

A demographic bulge in the 18-year-old population in the 2020s and further increases in the proportion of young people going to university will drive the upturn, according to a detailed study from

the Higher Education Policy Institute.

The report warns that the figures are likely to provide a huge funding headache for the government – which is already reviewing the current system of fees and loans – and could force it to reintroduce the cap on undergraduate numbers that was lifted in 2015.

Hefi's study says that the current demographic decline in England's youth population will soon tail off

before numbers climb sharply, the result of the baby boom in the 2000s that is currently putting a squeeze on school places.

This on its own would mean that 50,000 more university places would be needed by 2030, but an additional driver will be a continuation of the trend seen in the past 15 years for wider participation.

"If participation were to increase at the average rate of the previous 15 years, then there would be demand for nearly 350,000 additional places by 2030," the report says, adding that this scenario was

"quite plausible" given that England was still behind some advanced nations on participation.

The only significant countervailing factor, the report adds, could be Brexit, which, by stemming demand from the European Union, may reduce the extra places needed by about 50,000 to 60,000.

It says that the resulting 300,000 figure for extra demand was "perhaps the most likely outcome" but the study warns that it could be even higher if the relatively low rate of participation by boys picks up or access for disadvantaged students

Plans to link staff seniority to teaching quality in

Proposals to rate the quality of UK university courses according to the seniority of lecturers have been branded "absurd" and "unfair to early career scholars".

As part of a consultation on the planned subject-level version of the teaching excellence framework, the Department for Education has outlined six options for a new "teaching intensity" metric that could influence whether a degree is given a gold, silver or bronze award.

One of the options is to use gross teaching quotient, which measures students' contact hours, weighted by class size – thereby rewarding small-group teaching – as outlined in a specification issued last year.

However, the consultation document also details five other options for measuring teaching intensity, including the creation of a GTQ metric that "would also weight contact time by qualification/seniority of the teacher".

"The qualification and seniority of the teacher could be seen as proxies for the quality of the teaching," says the consultation, although it acknowledges that there is "no consensus on what [measures] would be a good proxy for 'good teacher'", such as whether they have a PhD or a teaching qualification, or how many years of industry experience they have.

Cathy Shrank, professor of Tudor and Renaissance literature at

the University of Sheffield, said that the proposed metric was "clearly ridiculous", adding that "the idea that seniority of staff can be equated with teaching quality is also so unfair to early career scholars, including PhD students, who put so much into their teaching".

Other options for measuring teaching intensity include surveying students about their "perception" of how many contact hours they received, or about how much independent study they undertook. Another idea is to measure "engagement with teaching resources" which would draw on data including "use of libraries and digital resources, completion of assignments and other

matters", although the consultation admits that collecting these data might be "very intrusive".

Michael Merrifield, professor of astronomy at the University of Nottingham, said that the idea of "GTQ as formulated [would create] an absurd measure", with the staff-to-student ratio rating system containing "cliff edges which would mean that very similar programmes will get arbitrarily different levels of recognition".

"It also fails to recognise many of the aspects of teaching that are most important to students, such as high-quality assessment, feedback and open-door access to lecturers," adding that "creating a system that

improves. In this case, the number of extra places needed could top half a million.

Bahram Bekhradnia, Hefi president and co-author of the report, said that the report “complicates things” for the government’s review of post-18 education, launched by prime minister Theresa May last month.

Mr Bekhradnia said that a major driver of the review was easing the fee loan burden on students, something that would likely cost the Treasury more. “On top of that will come this huge increase in the demand for the number of loans,” Mr Bekhradnia said, adding that it created a “circle that won’t be squared” for public funding. Australia had faced similar dilemmas after lifting student number controls, he added, forcing it to backtrack.

“The trouble is these reviews are launched by governments hoping to find a magic bullet and there is no magic bullet here except either additional government expenditure or a limit on the number of places they are willing to fund,” he said.

If there were a restriction on places, it could lead to universities raising the bar in terms of grades needed, something that could harm access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Mr Bekhradnia added.

Diana Beech (pictured below), Hefi’s director of policy and advocacy, and the report’s other co-author, said that the predicted surge in demand was also significant for Labour, given that it wanted to axe tuition fees.

But she hoped that a return to a



numbers cap by any government would be the “very worst-case scenario” and that ministers would realise that increased participation helped the government through the creation of more higher-earning graduates, who then paid more in tax, and were less likely to claim benefits.

Dr Beech said that there would be “some tightening of the system” but demand could be addressed through creating additional routes into higher education, including more higher-level technical courses, new providers and different models of learning.

However, one consequence might be that fewer students went away from home to study, she added, warning that there was a risk that this model could become the preserve of better-off students.

“I think the going-away-from-home model might be where we see the difference in the sector. That might be reserved for the more advantaged families, which puts the onus on universities to make sure there is equal experience for those that live on campus and those that stay at home,” she said.

Dr Beech added that universities also needed to start planning now for the extra demand, including thinking about the future academic workforce by giving today’s early career academics more security.

“Universities should be looking more to the long term and seeing if they can provide contracts more on a five-year basis. You need to make that pool [of academics] bigger in the middle to ensure you’re going to have the senior lecturers of tomorrow for this 2030 cohort,” she said.

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Opinion, page 30

King’s lessons in campus harmony

Scholar to explore how civil rights leader’s ideas could inform HR policy in UK. Jack Grove writes

The words of Martin Luther King continue to inspire millions across the world almost 50 years after his death – with activists from the #TakeAKnee, #MeToo and gun control movements seeking to follow his example of non-violent protest.

The legacy of the US civil rights leader is now informing a more unlikely cause in the UK: concern over the growing managerialism of university human resources departments.

Thanks to a research fellowship from a local charitable trust, a Newcastle University scholar is to explore how Dr King’s teachings could shed light on the rift between university administrators and academics caused by the introduction of performance targets.

Nick Megoran, reader in political geography at Newcastle, began to look at the issue after campaigning against the introduction of the proposed “Raising the Bar” initiative at Newcastle in 2015. The policy was widely criticised as imposing “draconian” targets for grant funding on staff, although this was denied by the university, which withdrew the policy after consultation.

Dr Megoran, who has been awarded a grant by the William Leech Trust for his research, believes that Dr King’s “theological critique of institutional power honed within African American theologies of liberation” could help managers to create more sympathetic HR policies in which “staff can feel valued and work meaningfully in an organisation”.

Dr King’s belief that all people are created “*imago Dei*” or “in the image of God” and must therefore be treated respectfully was often missing from universities’ workforce strategies, said Dr Megoran, an honorary chaplain at Newcastle.

“Dr King’s warning that if we ‘thingify’ people then we risk mistreating them remains highly apposite for universities at a time when academics are formally described as ‘resources’ in an institution’s inventory,” said Dr Megoran.

His project, titled “‘Image of God’ or ‘human resource’?”, will also draw upon the speech given by Dr

King at Newcastle University in April 1967, on his last international visit before his assassination a year later.

That visit is important to understanding the politics of Dr King, whose outspoken political views extended beyond civil rights in the US, said Dr Megoran.

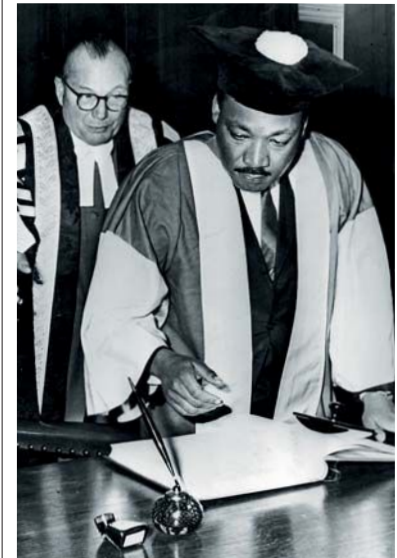
“There is a danger that Martin Luther King becomes a cardboard cut-out of a civil rights leader frozen in time in Washington 1963 during his ‘I have a dream’ speech,” he explained.

Dr Megoran insisted that he was “not trying to draw an equivalence” between the 1960s civil rights movement and alleged mistreatment of staff within UK universities.

However, the preacher would have recognised how university staff often felt “mistreated, bullied and reduced to outputs...[because of a] reduction in their humanity”, he said.

Dr King’s work could “problematised” current thinking about unhelpful HR practices and language that had been ingrained within institutions. “It is only since the 1980s that the language of ‘human resources’ has arisen, but we have now grown used to it, as well as the way staff are sometimes crassly treated,” Dr Megoran said.

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Legacy Newcastle awarded Martin Luther King an honorary degree

TEF ‘absurd’ and ‘unfair’

incentivises universities to cut corners on all these more personalised aspects of education is perverse in the extreme”.

Paul Ashwin, professor of higher education at Lancaster University, said that all the new options outlined in the consultation would be “very strange ways to measure teaching quality”.

“Option one for the GTQ [as described last year] looks a bit odd, but the others are so strangely presented that they start to make it look quite good,” he said.

Professor Ashwin added that plans to measure teaching intensity “start from the idea that more is better, rather than understanding

that high-quality courses need to be well-designed to balance many different things”.

However, the “strangest thing” about these plans was that they were announced midway through the year-long pilot exercise for the subject-level TEF, which will conclude in summer 2018, said Professor Ashwin.

“While it lays out lots of options, the whole tone of the consultation is ‘we don’t know what we should do’ when they could have just waited six months for the results of the pilot,” he said, adding that if the consultation’s unusual ideas “were not so worrying, they would be quite amusing”.

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News, page 8

'New elite' emerges as new UK ranking combines TEF and REF

A new league table that attempts to combine the results of the teaching and research excellence frameworks demonstrates that a "new elite" of universities is emerging in UK higher education.

That is the claim of two senior university leaders who created the ranking by putting together grade point averages from the 2014 REF, weighted for the number of staff submitted, and the average score across the six metrics underpinning the 2017 TEF.

The table – which for final scores gives equal weighting to both exercises – is still headed by the three UK research universities that tend to rank highest in international league tables (the universities of Cambridge and Oxford and Imperial College London).

However, several smaller research-led institutions and some modern universities achieve relatively high placings in the list thanks to strong TEF scores. They include Loughborough University (5th), the universities of Surrey and Bath (6th and 7th respectively), Coventry University (18th) and Liverpool Hope University (37th).

Writing online for *Times Higher Education*, Mark Smith, vice-chancellor of Lancaster University, and Nicola Owen, the institution's chief administrative officer, who worked on the ranking with the institution's data analytics unit, say that combining TEF and REF metrics was worthwhile "despite well-known concerns about the robustness of TEF data".



TEF/REF ranking top 20

Institution	TEF rank	REF rank	Overall Rank
University of Cambridge	13	1	1
University of Oxford	10	3	2
Imperial College London	28	2	3
University of St Andrews	8	6	4
Loughborough University	6	9	5
University of Surrey	2	29	6
University of Bath	5	24	7
Lancaster University	22	8	8
University of Birmingham	16	13	9
Keele University	3	37	10
University of Dundee	4	32	11
University of Exeter	16	21	12
University of Leeds	14	26	13
Newcastle University	32	10	14
Durham University	33	11	15
Royal Holloway, University of London	31	14	16
University of Bristol	54	4	17
Coventry University	1	95	18
University of York	30	23	19
University of East Anglia	9	39	20

Source: Lancaster University.

This was because "the data underlying REF and TEF are arguably much more robust than using brand references or historical reputations which are often used as sloppy shorthand for high quality".

The pair add that the list produces "an interesting cadre of universities in the top 20" that are "medium-sized, campus-based, genuinely research-intensive universities" that in their opinion "are now clearly a key component of the emerging new elite".

Addressing the "obvious suspicion" that they constructed the table to favour Lancaster – which is 8th – they point out that the insti-

tution "has little to gain, as we perform well in all three conventional UK league tables, being currently inside the top 10 of all of them".

However, they accept that "some recognised world-class institutions have depressed positions because of well-rehearsed reasons around weaker TEF performance than the average", highlighting the London School of Economics' placing (64th).

This is likely to be one of the criticisms of combining the exercises as, apart from Imperial, London universities – which by and large performed badly in the TEF – all appear relatively low in the list.

The table is also still dominated by pre-92 universities. This could arguably be because of the method used to weight REF scores, which reflect the percentage of all academics – including teaching-only staff – submitted to the exercise. Such an approach could have amplified REF scores for research-intensives and depressed them for institutions with more of a teaching focus.

Professor Smith told *Times Higher Education* that combining the data did inevitably "lend bias" towards universities "whose missions are both teaching and research-focused".

"We are transparent about this and it comes from our belief that having excellence in both research and teaching is an important factor in defining leading universities internationally," he added.

Alan Palmer, head of policy and research at MillionPlus, which represents a group of post-92 universities, warned that rather than alter existing hierarchies, "blunt combinations" of the REF and TEF risked reinforcing them.

"The intent behind the TEF was to identify and recognise excellence in teaching and so raise its status. Dovetailing TEF results to REF league tables does little to achieve this and will do nothing to help students make informed decisions about the courses that are right for them," he said.

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Academic citizenship

Pro-bono work by UK university staff 'worth £3.2 billion a year'

Millions of hours of unpaid extra-curricular work undertaken by university staff is going "under the radar", according to a new report that highlights the hidden multi-billion-pound value of public engagement and knowledge exchange in UK institutions.

In a series of online surveys, a sample of 1,093 university staff from three different universities were asked to estimate the average amount of time, if any, that they spent in a typical year on a range of voluntary, unpaid activities relating to their job.

Taken across the whole higher education staff population, pro-bono work to an estimated value of £3.2 billion took place in the year 2015-16 alone, according to a resulting paper, *An Elephant in the Room*, published by Viewforth Consulting.

This equates to 40 million hours spent on activities including public presentations, participation in science events, charity and social enterprise work – or 24,493 full-time jobs, researchers concluded.

The figures come at a time when university staff are reported to be facing an uphill struggle to achieve a good work-life balance, with increasing workloads not matching up to salary expectations.



Hidden figures the equivalent of 24,493 full-time jobs are done by university staff in unpaid activities relating to their jobs

A major global survey of university staff undertaken by *Times Higher Education* between October and November last year reveals that about two-fifths of all university staff believe that their working hours have increased in the past three years, with many having considered leaving the higher education sector as a result.

Speaking to *THE* about the new report, Viewforth director Ursula Kelly said that the findings were not a reflection on staff terms and conditions, however, and rather should be seen as a celebration of the goodwill seen in university staff across the country.

“People are not being compelled to do these activities,” she said. “A lot of universities themselves say this is part of their mission, that this is about the public good.”

Nonetheless, without staff members’ willingness to volunteer after hours, universities would not be able to function in the same way, she acknowledged.

“There are [also] so many things that staff do on a voluntary basis for the government, for instance acting as advisers on consultation panels. They don’t get paid for any of this by the government either, but it is relied upon.”

Part of the issue, Ms Kelly said, was that “people seem to have a wish to use their expertise for the public good”. “It shouldn’t actually be about ‘how can we pay people for all of this’ because people are doing this due to their own feeling.”

The research comes after Jo Johnson, the former universities minister, told universities that they “must do more” to engage with industry, drive up productivity and ultimately generate income for the UK.

With plans for a knowledge exchange framework to measure institutions’ activity in this area, Viewforth says that “full cognisance” must be given to the pre-existing contribution from universities and their staff, “albeit under-recognised and hitherto unquantified”.

Any evaluation framework that rewards “only a visible subset of... activities” – for instance, by measuring patents and licences acquired – runs the risk that “staff will simply abandon their voluntary work to concentrate on ‘recognised activities’”, the report says.

“To sustain this volume of knowledge exchange activity on a non-voluntary basis, someone is going to have to find an additional £3.2 billion to pay for it,” the report’s authors say.

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Governance

Nationalistic fraternity members join Austrian university boards

Austrian universities have raised concerns that some board members appointed by the country’s new conservative and far-right coalition are under-qualified for the role or members of shadowy nationalistic student fraternities.

Academics fear that the new appointees at institutions including the universities of Vienna and Graz could use their power to block the re-election of rectors, and send a signal that Austrian higher

education is provincial and inward looking.

Oliver Vitouch, vice-president of Universities Austria, said that “the appointment of the trustees by the federal government is not as bad as feared but still bad enough”.

To the relief of universities, there are no figures who have made openly racist comments in the past. However, nine have been identified as members of nationalistic student fraternities by the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, which documents historical Nazi persecution and tracks modern-day extremism.

The influence of these fraternities, which members can remain in for life, has been debated in Austria since the far-right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) entered government last December. A sizeable minority of its MPs are reported to be active members, including the leader, Heinz-Christian Strache.

In February, Austria’s former social democrat chancellor, Christian Kern, warned that fraternities were “infiltrating” the Austrian state, including universities.

Professor Vitouch’s other concern is about the suitability of the new board members. He said that on average, they were “the weakest and most provincial ones we’ve ever had”.

“Being a general practitioner, or a village pharmacist, alone” does not qualify a board member to contribute to a university’s mission, he said. “It’s just the wrong signal: a signal of provincialism and political connections.”

There are 142 new board members, of whom half are nominees by the ruling parties, and half are chosen by university senates. Previous Austrian governments have also appointed their political allies to boards in the past, Professor Vitouch acknowledged, and he said it was “not unusual” in other countries that people with “political proximity” sit on university boards – for example, US governors often sit on the boards of state universities.

But the problem this time around is that because the FPÖ had such a “narrow reservoir” of supporters, its chosen candidates had been particularly weak, he argued.

Professor Vitouch was also particularly critical of the appointment of tabloid editor Eva Dichand – herself not connected to fraternities – to the board of the Medical University of Vienna. It was “as if Rupert Murdoch was to be appointed into the board of the University of Melbourne”, he said.

The new political appointees, who will be in position for five years, “don’t have a majority if every [other] member of the board is present”, he said.

But a two-thirds majority is required to re-elect rectors, and board members have considerable power to bog university business down with requests for information if they choose. “It’s a dangerous game,” Professor Vitouch said.

A spokeswoman for the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research said that board members by law had to possess “aptitude, integrity, unencumberedness, availability, diversity, qualification, [and] professional suitability”.

A spokesman for the University of Graz said that “all the boards have always collaborated constructively. We are going to continue this way with the newly elected university council.” A spokesman for the Medical University of Vienna said its new board members were “renowned personalities” and that it looked forward to “fruitful collaboration” with them.

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Mental health

Labelling universities ‘toxic’ for mental health ‘is harmful’

Labelling universities as “uniquely toxic environments” could do more harm than good to student mental health, a leading psychiatrist has warned.

There is growing concern about the prevalence of mental health conditions among students, but Sir Simon Wessely, Regius professor of psychiatry at King’s College London, questioned the value of campaigns that aimed to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with higher education.

University life was a time of “tremendous changes” that encompass both good and bad experiences, and labelling universities as “toxic” for mental health could encourage students to adopt a more negative outlook, Sir Simon, a former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, told a conference.

“We need to ensure that people have a proper understanding of both [the good and bad experiences] and not take either a mindlessly optimistic view or a negative pes-

simistic one,” he told *Times Higher Education* afterwards. “Neither is neutral – both can create distress and disorder.”

Speaking at a Universities UK conference on student mental health, Sir Simon questioned whether awareness-raising campaigns would help to tackle the issue.

“Most people who have a mental health disorder [such as] depression or anxiety know they do,” he said. “And therefore that’s not the reason why they aren’t presenting for help.”

Failure to seek help is more likely because of issues such as stigma or the opinion that mental health services are inadequate, he told the conference.

Moreover, Sir Simon added, by focusing on raising awareness, there were dangers of “adding to the over-professionalisation and over-medicalisation of normal emotions”.

This could, in turn, lead to more pressure on an already overburdened NHS.

“Increasing expectation without resource can endanger us all. We will then end up with even more frustrated and demoralised patients, and even more demoralised and frustrated professionals,” Sir Simon said.

Sir Simon added that, instead of being urged to seek professional or medical attention immediately, students should instead be encouraged to seek help from friends, families and university staff, welcoming initiatives such as Heads Together and Mental Health First Aid that supported people to take on this sort of role. “People like me need to stay in the background until we are needed,” Sir Simon said.

Other speakers at the conference included Steve West, vice-chancellor of the University of the West of England and chair of UUK’s mental well-being in higher education working group, who spoke about the StepChange Framework, which encourages universities to adopt mental health and well-being as strategic priorities.

The framework – currently being piloted at three UK universities –



recommends that institutions should work closely with the NHS to consider how mental health services should be delivered to student populations. It also advocates working in close partnership with parents, schools and colleges, as well as with employers and businesses.

However, Professor West added that it was important not to create an environment that “over-medicalises our universities”.

“We need to ensure that we create an environment in which we are open, honest and having conversations,” he said. “That’s not about medicalising, that is about socialising and making sure that people are looking out for each other.”

Professor West added: “Throwing loads of money at it and going for more counsellors will not solve the problems. We have to be more creative.”

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Internationalisation

Australian universities fear decline in Chinese enrolments

Stiff competition from the northern hemisphere, rather than frosty relations between China and Australia, could have dampened Chinese student flows into Australian universities – and if that is the case, vice-chancellors could be in for more bad news when diplomatic tensions begin to bite.

The number of Chinese people approved to study at Australian higher education institutions increased by 4.2 per cent in the second half of last year, compared with the equivalent period in 2016, according to the Department of Home Affairs.

However, the growth was exclusively among applicants who were already in Australia. The number of Chinese who successfully applied from overseas was unchanged, suggesting that Australia is now recycling its most lucrative students.

The figures signal an end to half a decade of strong growth. Higher education visa awards to people applying inside China had increased by between 15 per cent and 30 per cent a year over the five previous financial years.

Australian education providers have been bracing for a downturn following recent criticism of the



Waning interest Australian education providers have been bracing for a downturn following recent criticism of the country’s universities by Chinese authorities and media

country’s universities by Chinese authorities and media. China’s Ministry of Education and its embassy in Canberra have warned students about safety in Australia, while its newspapers have carried stories about expensive Australian degrees that do not lead to jobs.

China watchers interpret these moves as retaliation over Australia’s proposed foreign interference laws and its consideration of freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea, among other matters.

However, the chief executive of the International Education Association of Australia said it was unlikely that the recent adverse commentary about Australia had triggered the stalled growth in visa applications from China.

Phil Honeywood said that students who had received visas late last year would have chosen their destinations months beforehand, and there would be a “lag time” before tensions between China and Australia impacted on visas.

Other factors may have triggered the stalled growth. Statistics from Australia’s biggest international education competitors, the UK and the US, suggest that the prestige of their institutions may be luring Chinese enrolments away from down under.

In the UK, higher education enrolments from China rose by 4.2 per cent to about 95,000, defying a 1 per cent decline in enrolments from non-European Union countries.

In the US, the number of Chinese higher education students edged

past 350,000 after increasing by 6.8 per cent – double the overall international student growth rate of 3.4 per cent.

Elevated competition for Chinese students, on top of an anticipated hit on enrolments because of the diplomatic tensions, could prove a nightmare scenario for Australia’s top-tier universities.

While Chinese students make up close to 40 per cent of foreign enrolments at Australian universities, they comprise up to two-thirds of international students at the research-intensive Group of Eight institutions, where up to one-sixth or more of revenue comes from Chinese students’ fees.

The flatlining of offshore visa grants has been masked by a sharp increase in the number of Chinese higher education students applying from within Australia.

Mr Honeywood said the growth in onshore visa applications reflected a “try before you buy” trend among Chinese students, combined with new rules that made it easier for them to obtain fresh visas after they had arrived in Australia. “They’ve come with a view to do an initial course and discovered that they can stay on.”

He said that Chinese students were also being targeted by colleges whose business model relied on poaching students from other Australian providers, rather than recruiting from offshore. “It’s a much bigger issue than people realise,” he said.

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European politics

Italian party's loss 'shows limits of science advocacy politics'

It was billed as a clash over the future of public trust in science: Italy's recent election pitted rational, evidence-driven moderates against rabid anti-vaxxer populists who wanted to halt inoculation programmes.

The incumbent health minister, Beatrice Lorenzin, who had increased the number of mandatory jabs, even formed her own pro-science party, and called on researchers "who want to represent the scientific truth in parliament" to back her.

But when voters went to the polls on 4 March, Ms Lorenzin's *Civica Popolare* party won just 0.5 per cent of the vote.

Italian academics who followed the election see the debacle as a warning over the limits of mobilising science in the service of politics, and paint a more complex picture of "populist" attitudes to science than Ms Lorenzin.

"I don't believe she got 0.5 per cent because Italians don't believe in science," said Guido Silvestri, professor of pathology and immunology at Emory University. Most Italians are supportive of scientists,

but do not vote on the basis of science policy, he added.

Researchers "don't want to be associated with one party", said Antonio Guarino, a professor of economics at UCL. "I want to have an impact," he said, but "it would be very bad if the position of science was associated with a particular political party", reducing scientists to just another interest group.

"Anti-science was one of the critical points of the election campaign, much followed by newspapers [but] of little interest to voters," said Alberto Baccini, a professor of economics at the University of Siena, and a member of *Return on Academic Research*, a forum for discussing higher education policy. The vaccine issue was played up to thwart the "predictable" success of new "populist" parties, he said.

One such party is the *Five Star Movement*, which came out on top with 32 per cent of the vote. Drawing on young voters, it is a hard-to-define grouping that primarily defines itself as anti-establishment.

There is a strain of thought in the movement that believes "we don't need any competence to do anything" and "my opinion is as worthwhile as yours" said Professor Guarino. Some opposition to the euro has fed off an attitude that "we don't need economists", he added.

But as it neared the election, *Five Star* brought in outside expertise to help with policy, he explained, as did another of the "populist" parties, the *League*, known for its anti-immigrant tone, which came in third place with about 18 per cent of the vote.

A year ago, Professor Silvestri was asked by *Five Star* to design its policy on vaccinations, which it adopted "without changing a comma", he said, aside from some sloppy simplification when it was translated into the party's election manifesto.

"A lot of people thanked me, but a lot of people accused me of collusion," Professor Silvestri said. "If you want to advance science, you've got to do it in a non-partisan way."

Five Star, as well as the *League*, wants to repeal a 2017 law that made childhood vaccination against 12 diseases compulsory; previously, only four vaccines were mandatory. However, *Five Star* and the *League* insist they are not anti-vaccination, just against obliging parents to inoculate.

The problem is not anti-science sentiment, said Professor Baccini, but the failure of politicians to be open with the data on which they base their decisions. Rather than do

this, they enlist "scientist-heroes" who can provide "certain and irrefutable solutions" and "miraculous" cures, he said, which leads to public scepticism.

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Vice-chancellors' benefits

Vice-chancellors 'must come clean' over grace-and-favour homes

UK universities have been urged to reveal the true value of vice-chancellors' housing perks after it emerged that one institution head received rent-free accommodation worth £60,000 a year.

Documents passed to *Times Higher Education* show that Michael Arthur, president and provost of UCL, was provided with "rent-free accommodation" with an "estimated rental value of £60K per annum" on top of his £366,204 salary and benefits package in 2016-17.

The £60,000 figure was not reported in UCL's latest financial statements. Under guidance published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England,



universities must state the "estimated money value of any other taxable benefits received by the head of institution, other than in cash...in particular...subsidised accommodation".

However, many universities do not report the value of university-owned housing provided to their vice-chancellor because they regard the accommodation as cost-neutral and having "nil taxable value".

In a statement, UCL said that the "accommodation provided for the provost is rent-free as UCL owns the property" and that Professor Arthur (pictured above) is "required to occupy the flat as part of [his] contract of employment so that [he]

can be available close to campus. It is therefore not a 'perk'."

The university had been "asked to put a value on it, which is £60,000 but, as this is only an estimate and rent is not charged, there is no requirement for UCL to include this figure in either its tax submissions or its financial statements", the statement added.

The disclosure, which was obtained via a Freedom of Information Act request, comes amid demands for greater transparency over non-cash benefits enjoyed by vice-chancellors, which were highlighted by Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme last month.

This year's *Times Higher Education* survey revealed that vice-chancellors were paid an average of £268,103 in salary, bonuses and benefits in 2016-17, which was £10,180 more than in 2015-16, and amounted to a rise of 3.9 per cent.

Figures obtained by the University and College Union in April 2017 showed that 24 universities provided their leaders with grace-and-favour homes worth at least £28 million – £1.2 million a property.

However, many universities choose not to disclose details of these properties in their financial statements, often citing the "nil taxable value" exemption. In its accounts for 2014-15, the London School of Economics said that the estimated market rent of its director's housing was £133,000 a year, but it did not make a similar disclosure for 2016-17.

However, the University of Nottingham disclosed that the "accommodation allowance" for its vice-chancellor in 2016-17 was £42,000, which counted towards former vice-chancellor Sir David Greenaway's overall remuneration of £381,000.

Calling for England's new higher education regulator to close the "nil taxable value" loophole, Sally Hunt, UCU general secretary, said that the "current set-up is clearly not fit for purpose and the onus is on the Office for Students to actually deliver on proper regulation".

"Whether it is grace-and-favour homes, a £2 biscuit expense claim, sitting on the committee setting their pay or arranging a bespoke pension deal, vice-chancellors' pay and perks scandals have been an embarrassment for too long," said Ms Hunt. "The time has come for proper transparency over the spending of senior staff in our universities."

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European politics

German coalition to boost university funds, with strings attached

After months of unprecedented wrangling, German politicians have finally agreed a new government that promises universities welcome funding stability and inflation-busting increases in research budgets for years to come.

But university leaders expect this largesse to come with strings attached, potentially ushering in much greater scrutiny of graduate outcomes and even “peer review” of teaching.

The coalition agreement between Angela Merkel’s conservatives and the Social Democratic Party commits to protecting the so-called Higher Education Pact – more than €20 billion (£17.8 billion) of federal funding that started in 2007 and was set to run out in 2023 – that has enabled a dramatic expansion in German student numbers.

Yet quantitative and qualitative measures will be used to judge eligibility for federal funds, according to the coalition agreement, with student employability a key measure.

German universities last year lobbied heavily against a proposal that could have seen them compete for funds on the basis of their teaching, arguing that teaching quality was hard to compare.

Wolfgang Herrmann, president of the Technical University of Munich, told *Times Higher Education* that teaching was harder to measure than research “because a convincing personality may overrule

a medium-quality lecture”.

But he said: “I think one has to approach the peer review model in teaching as well, to be frank.”

“How this can be managed with 177 study courses at this university, I don’t know yet,” Professor Herrmann cautioned, but added that a pilot programme “will be necessary to find out the appropriate way”.

Addressing teaching quality was essential because it had long been “underestimated” in German universities, he added.

Bernd Huber, president of LMU Munich, said that “the government will demand from universities some key indicators are improved over time”, such as employability or the retention rate of students.

Universities will therefore have to “adapt our programmes” to “make sure we meet these targets”, he added.

Meanwhile, in research, the coalition will continue with annual budget increases of “at least” 3 per cent for the German Research Foundation, which in 2016 distributed more than €1 billion in competitive individual grants, and for networks of non-university research institutes, such as the Max Planck Society.

Martin Stratmann, the society’s president, welcomed the commitment. “We all would like to have more but, for us, stability is at least as important as absolute growth in numbers,” he said.

“It’s a general goal of German politicians to invest in science and education...I do not see major differences” between parties, he added.

Institutions will also be set “binding targets” for gender representation, according to the coalition agreement, while the Excellence Initiative, designed to build up world-leading peaks of top research, will be continued.

But the new coalition has thrown

up one surprise – Anja Karliczek, an all-but-unknown new science minister from Ms Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union. Unlike her predecessor Johanna Wanka, a former professor of engineering mathematics, Ms Karliczek’s educational background is far more vocational – she trained as a bank teller and in hotel management before completing a distance degree in business administration later in her career. david.matthews@timeshighereducation.com

Admissions

Course cuts may be taste of things to come for Australian sector

Course cuts at an Australian university in the wake of a freeze on teaching funding have proved more disruptive than previously realised, in a preview of what may await other institutions in the country.

Last month it emerged that the Australian Catholic University had cancelled admissions to at least 30 courses in the days before Christmas, after the government’s announcement that it would freeze university teaching funds at last year’s levels – in effect suspending the demand-driven system that had operated since 2012.

Times Higher Education can now reveal that the impact of the cuts at the multi-campus institution is not limited to new admissions, with some continuing students being affected too.

THE understands that second- and third-year undergraduates have been asked to consider switching degrees, with science students urged to transfer into biomedical science, nutritional science, exercise and sports science and even arts.

Students who want to stick with



their original course choices may be obliged to take units at other institutions to complete their degrees, if they can find suitable subjects with vacancies.

The course closures are also likely to result in job cuts as programmes are “taught out” over the next three years.

ACU appears to be the only Australian university to have reacted to the funding freeze with such speed. Many intend to wait until the middle of this year or early next year before making any changes to their admission plans, even if it means accepting unsubsidised students.

The freeze emerged well after enrolments for this year had started, forcing ACU to renege on places it had offered in mainly science and health-related courses. They included a combined nursing and counselling course that had never previously been conducted, developed just months earlier to meet industry demand.

ACU chief operating officer Stephen Weller told *The Australian* last month that the university had been “actively considering these measures” ahead of the funding freeze, given that the government had flagged possible funding cuts.

He said that courses had been withdrawn “in disciplines and locations where enrolments have been low for some years”.

An ACU spokeswoman told *THE* that course coordinators were meeting affected students “to discuss options available to continue their studies, some of which include consideration of course transfers”. “Every student who has started will finish their degree and graduate,” said the spokeswoman, who added that no students had been required to enrol in alternative institutions for this semester.

“The university will continue to assess the workforce requirements to teach out the programmes,” the spokeswoman added. “There will be some reduction in jobs as the teaching-out period progresses to a planned timeline over the next three years.”

It is not clear whether last year’s cut will force other universities to resort to similar measures. ACU has been one of Australia’s fastest-growing universities since the former Labor government revealed plans to uncapped enrolments in 2009.

Analysts say its rapid growth has left it with so many continuing students that it has little capacity to absorb revenue losses from taking on unsubsidised students.

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Brexit

UK cannot be net beneficiary from research post-Brexit, say MEPs

The European Parliament has insisted that the UK should not be a net beneficiary from a post-Brexit research partnership with the European Union, and should be stripped of any “decision-making role” in future framework programmes.

But it has not explicitly tied freedom of movement – a red line for the UK government – to participation in the successor to the Horizon 2020 research programme, raising hopes of a deal.

Thomas Jørgensen, senior policy coordinator at the European University Association, said that the guidance was not “catastrophic” but “could be better”.

Prepared by the parliament’s Brexit steering committee and released on 7 March, it says that any future relationship could include “UK participation, as a third country, in the EU research and innovation framework pro-

gramme and in the EU space programmes”.

But it adds the caveat that this must be “without permitting net transfer from the EU budget to the UK, nor any decision-making role for the UK”.

“That is fairly disappointing,” said Dr Jørgensen, and added that it showed a “Scrooge attitude” from the European parliament.

Currently, associate members of Horizon 2020, such as Israel and Norway – who are outside the EU but can fully participate in the programme – pay in an amount pegged to their gross domestic product. How much they get back depends on how well their researchers do in the programme’s competitive funding calls – meaning that, financially, some win and some lose.

If the UK were blocked from winning more money than it paid in – which as an EU member it currently does – this would fly in the face of the present, competitive system, Dr Jørgensen argued. “How can you do that in an excellence-based programme?” he asked.

Jan Palmowski, secretary general to the Guild of European Research

Intensive Universities, agreed that the guidelines appeared to show the parliament wanted special, cost-neutral rules if the UK wanted to join future framework programmes. “It’s hard to argue there should be a special case” for the UK that did not apply to associate countries such as Israel, he said.

A Royal Society analysis conducted in 2015 found that the UK received €8.8 billion (£7.8 billion) of EU funding for research between 2007 and 2013, in return for an estimated contribution of €5.4 billion.

In the UK, MPs have also raised concerns that Sam Gyimah, the universities and science minister, is lukewarm over future associate membership.

However, the European Parliament’s proposals do not explicitly link associated membership of future research programmes with freedom of movement as feared, something that Dr Jørgensen said was a “good thing.”

Instead, the parliament suggests that the ease of immigration between the UK and EU “should be at least commensurate to the degree of cooperation” between the two.

There have been fears that the

EU would make continued freedom of movement a precondition for associate membership of research programmes. There are no clear rules on this – only conflicting precedents. Israel is an associate member, but does not accept freedom of movement. However, when Switzerland attempted to restrict immigration in 2014, it was partially suspended from the programme.

Although the parliament is not formally involved in talks with the UK, it will have to agree to any withdrawal and future association agreement.

Appearing before the Commons Science and Technology Committee on 6 March, Mr Gyimah said that UK ministers were “not turning our backs” on European research, but he declined to commit to associate membership.

Draft guidelines from the European Council, which represents member state governments and gives EU Brexit negotiators their instructions, were also leaked on 7 March.

However, they were less revealing than the parliamentary guidelines, simply saying that any future UK participation in research programmes should be “subject to the relevant conditions for the participation of third countries”.

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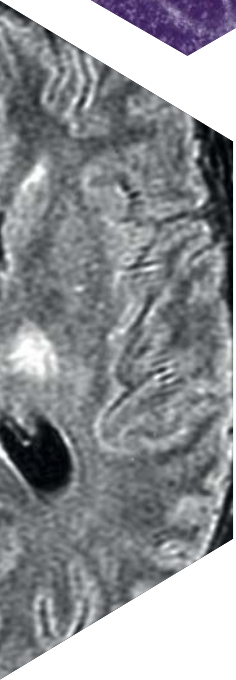
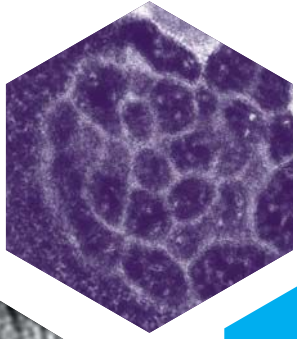
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Bearded ladies: facing inequality

Moustaches at work lead to scholarship scheme to assist women in research. Rachael Pells writes

It is a tired trope that women working in research must learn to blend into a predominantly male environment in order to get the job done without any hassle.

But a group of US palaeontologists took this approach to the extreme when they made the decision to wear human-hair beards and moustaches in the field.

Initially a joke between friends, the Bearded Lady Project began life as a photographic documentary project featuring women working in palaeontology, all posing in their normal, working environment with individually designed facial hair.

The campaign, which sets out to highlight sector-wide inequality and the challenges faced by female and ethnic minority scientists, is now set to culminate in a feature film – due to be released this summer – that will fund a scholarship scheme for budding female scientists.

Speaking to *Times Higher Education*, project co-founders Ellen Cur-

rano (pictured), a palaeontologist at the University of Wyoming, and Lexi Jamieson Marsh, a film-maker and director, said that the ability to “pay forward” the publicity received through the campaign by turning it into a support programme for young scholars was what made the experiment a success.

As one of few women working in her field, Dr Currano said that she felt “pulled in two different directions”. “On the one hand, I’m held up as an example to all researchers and all women...simultaneously, at faculty meetings and conferences I’m ignored and spoken over, not taken seriously, thought of as weak, young and incapable,” she said. “There are days when I wish that I could just slap a beard on my face and go and do my job.”

The pair decided to use this metaphor to highlight a history of gender imbalance.

“The history of palaeontology is that it’s very colonial,” said



KELSEY VANCE

Ms Marsh. “You have a lot of fantastic black and white portraits of pioneering men next to their discoveries, but we realised that women don’t have this legacy.

“Looking at [our own] portraits with the women in their gear and beards, at first one assumes that it’s a man...and what does that say about your belief about what this person can accomplish?”

Through the project, the team heard stories from women who felt that they had not been treated fairly in their working environment, including one who had worked in the Australian outback in the 1970s

and had worn a beard as a disguise.

“She said [that she] was constantly being interrupted by men who would stop and ask if her car [had] broke down or if she had enough water – because clearly a woman alone in this situation must need help,” said Ms Marsh. “So she put on this big, bushy moustache and her field hat and then nobody disturbed her.”

More than 100 women have since taken part in the project, which was expanded from a photography exhibition to a documentary – screened at LA Femme International Film Festival 2017 – and to the feature film that is currently in its final stages of production.

Dr Currano said that it had been “really powerful” to see participants “finally getting recognised for their achievements” through the project, but acknowledged that there was “still a long way to go” towards getting women’s place in research fully recognised.

The Bearded Lady Project’s first two scholarships are released this summer, with two planned for 2019. rachael.pells@timeshighereducation.com

When
great minds
collaborate...

the big
questions
get answered



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Date: Tuesday 27 – Wednesday 28 March

Location: Whitehall, London

www.lfhe.ac.uk/powerbrokers

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This retreat is designed for governors and senior executive leaders to explore strategies and tools necessary to produce changes in culture and processes to advance the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda with measurable results. This 24 hour residential Retreat will begin on Monday 23 April at 12pm and end on Tuesday 24 April at 1pm, taking place in Greater London.

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Date: Thursday 26 April

Location: London

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BME Leadership in Higher Education Summit

This BME Leadership Summit aims to empower agents of change and key decision makers in higher education to take action within their institution and advance the race equality agenda. Speakers include Nicola Dandridge CBE, Office for Students and Shakira Martin, National Union of Students.

Date: Wednesday 16 May

Location: Central London

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Date: Tuesday 5 June

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Application deadline: Friday 8 June

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Ideal for those new to the role or aspiring to become a head of department, this short but intensive programme gives participants the survival skills to hit the ground running in the first few months in post.

Date: Wednesday 25 April

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This year's summit will explore how higher education is changing and what it means to be a leader now, and behavioural and cultural change. Hear from experts speakers, discuss and be challenged on topical issues and develop new insights.

Date: Friday 29 June

Location: Central London

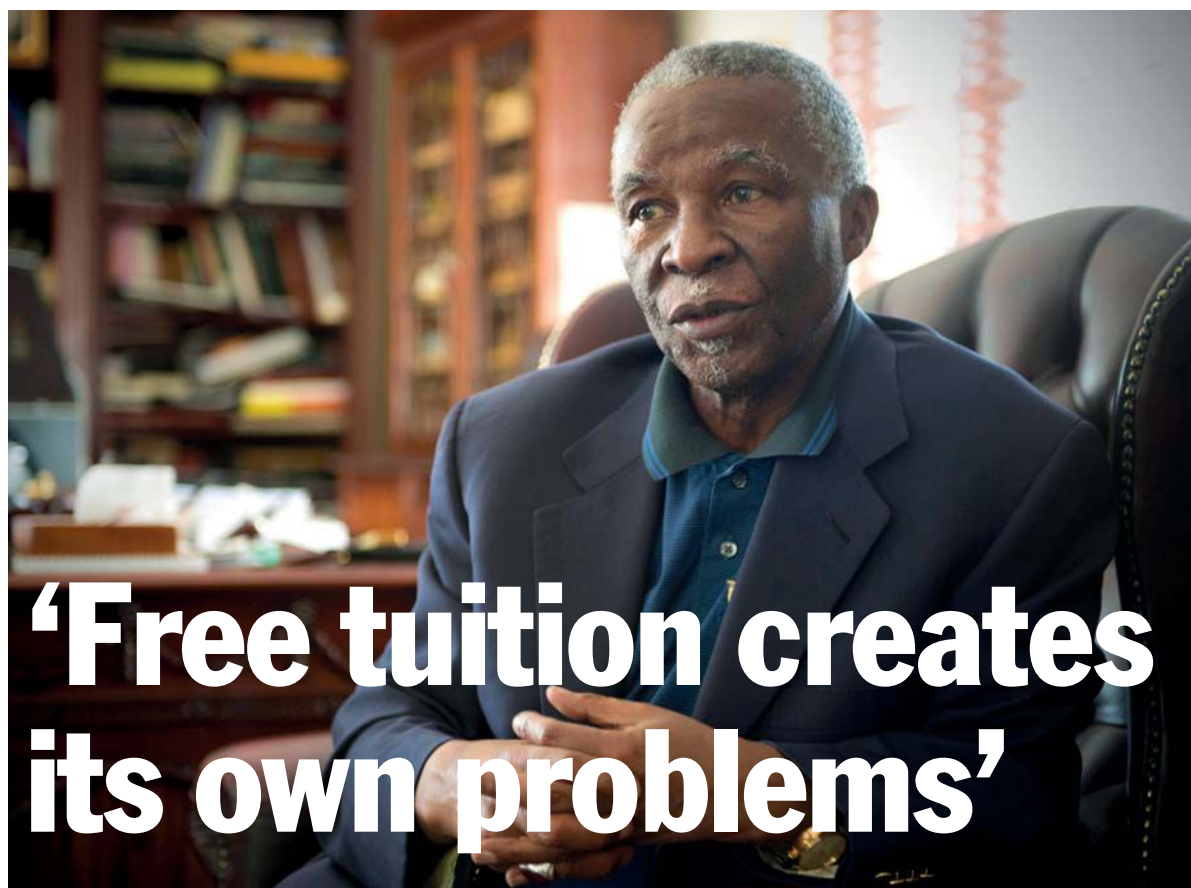
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'Free tuition creates its own problems'

Thabo Mbeki warns scrapping fees will lead to high dropout rates in South Africa. Ellie Bothwell writes

South Africa's move to make higher education free for most students will lead to high dropout rates and create problems of capacity in the university sector, Thabo Mbeki, the country's former president, has warned.

Mr Mbeki, who led the country from 1999 to 2008 and is now chancellor of the University of South Africa, said that the nation still has to "deal more comprehensively with the issue of funding of education".

Last month, South Africa introduced free tuition and maintenance support for students from households

with a combined annual income of less than R350,000 (£20,563), in a move that outgoing president Jacob Zuma said would cover more than 90 per cent of families.

But, in an interview with *Times Higher Education*, Mr Mbeki said that university funding cannot be dealt with "in a piecemeal fashion" and that the free higher education model "creates its own problems".

"The problem inevitably is that there will be high dropout rates," he said. "Many students cannot go beyond the first year [of university] because the grounding [in education] is not there."

The government must ask what it can do to better prepare students so that they do not drop out, Mr Mbeki added.

A "country like South Africa" must also ask "what kind of intake of students we can afford", he continued.

"If you say higher education will be fee-free, everyone will flood in and you haven't dealt with capacity," Mr Mbeki said, suggesting that a student number cap could deal with this issue.

"South Africa still hasn't done a comprehensive review [of higher education funding], which it needs to do. Fee-free education is important but insufficient – it creates its own problems," he said.

Mr Mbeki was speaking at

IE University in Madrid, after taking part in the institution's Reinventing Higher Education conference.

In conversation with Santiago Iniguez, IE's president, Mr Mbeki suggested that Africa could become the new bastion of globalisation – and internationalisation of higher education – in response to the rise of insular populism in Europe and the US.

The title of the event was "Higher education in times of anti-globalisation", but Mr Mbeki said that the "sentiment" in Africa is "quite the opposite".

"The sentiment on the continent [of Africa] is pro-globalisation," he said, adding that African universities "want better cooperation with universities globally, on an equal basis".

Mr Mbeki also spoke about collaboration in the African continent, highlighting a "pan-African university" initiative that was established under his presidency, aimed at widening access to higher education.

The scheme has resulted in individual universities across the continent becoming "centres of excellence" in different subject areas on the condition that they provide access to all African students that are interested in their specialism.

"We don't have the resources to build the higher education institutions in the numbers that are required in each country, but since we are all Africans together...why don't we cooperate to address this need to develop this intelligence using the resources that we have?" he said.

"It is a very important initiative because then you don't have to get out of the continent to get the highest level of access to knowledge and training."

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UNIVERSITY LECTURING: 'SAGE ON THE STAGE' ERA 'IS OVER'

The era of the university lecturer as the "sage on the stage" who imparts wisdom to students is over, according to a business education expert who argued that the duty of teaching staff is now to "facilitate a learning environment".

Robert Reid, senior executive adviser at the Florida-based Association

to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, said that while the pace of change in higher education is "often glacial", increasing numbers of academics are now "unbelievably engaged with students, and have used technology such as the flipped classroom model to create an effective learning environment".

Speaking at IE University's Reinventing

Higher Education conference in Madrid, Mr Reid said that such lecturers "drag their colleagues along because their colleagues realise that the 'sage on the stage' is gone and today the faculty member is really a facilitator of a learning environment".

"They are not the source of information – the information is out there. Their job is to help

students assimilate and figure out what does it mean [and] how do we use it," he added.

During a panel discussion on the future of work and how universities can develop talent for today's world, Mr Reid said that while there are "still some sages on the stage", he was "pretty optimistic" about the quality of lecturers at universities.

"There are a lot of

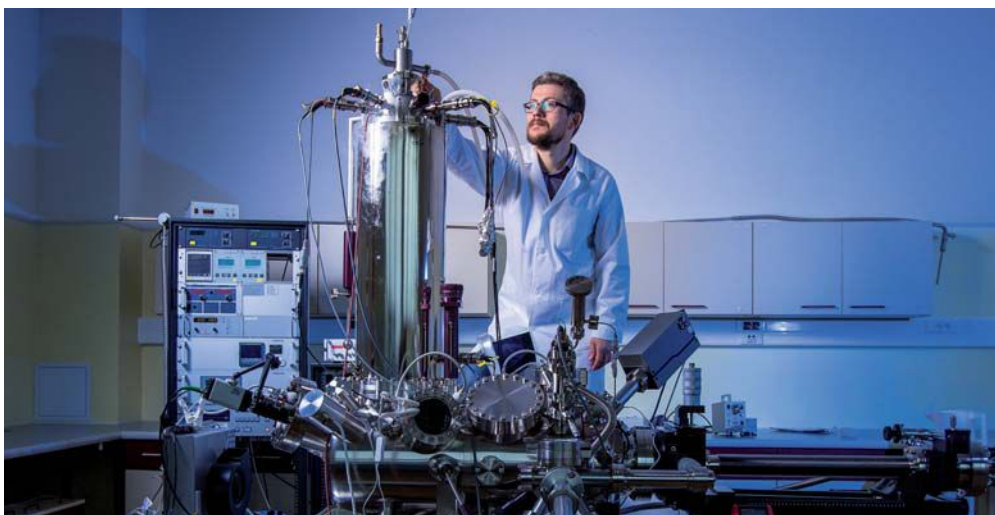
people in a lot of places who have learned how to teach in a very different way and in a very effective way. But it's certainly not 100 per cent," he said.

Martyn Davies, managing director of emerging markets and Africa at Deloitte, who also spoke on the panel, highlighted the importance of universities' creating graduates with strong communication and people skills

and downplayed the threat of artificial intelligence for jobs.

"I even accuse many of my staff of being robots because they don't think enough. Do I want robots to replace them? That's the last thing I want. I want people, I want human beings who can connect and communicate, who come up with ideas," he said.

Ellie Bothwell



Palacký University
Olomouc

Searching for another Czech Nobel prize laureate

Aleš Vlk, Tertiary Education and Research Institute, Prague

Is it utopia? It seems that the search for another Nobel prize laureate might not be hopeless for Czechs. History offers inspiring examples

Around 40 people gathered in a cosy restaurant one Thursday morning in late February in the very heart of Prague, in the vicinity of the Charles Bridge. Charles IV, king of Bohemia and later also Holy Roman Emperor, not only built the bridge bearing his name but also laid a framework of continental law and, by founding the oldest higher education institution in Central Europe, he significantly contributed to developing the educational culture in the region. Charles University and Palacký University, established in the 14th and 16th centuries are the oldest universities in the Czech Republic.

Those gathered for a Thursday breakfast included scientists, research managers, rectors and others connected with science policy in the Czech Republic. In the informal setting, they discussed whether one of the next Nobel prize laureates in science would come from the Czech Republic. This ambition is, in fact, not a fantasy. For those who do not know the list of all Nobel prizewinners by heart: a Czech, Jaroslav Heyrovský, received the Nobel prize in Chemistry in 1959 for his discovery and development of polarographic methods of analysis. A second Nobel prize was awarded to Jaroslav Seifert in 1984 for literature.

The breakfast participants, typical for almost any discussion about contemporary public issues in the Czech Republic, stressed a couple of reasons why it is almost impossible for Czech science to aspire to another Nobel prize, the bureaucracy connected with research projects being the most repeated issue. However, there are several facts revealing that the overall position of Czech science is not bad at all.

Research centres welcome international researchers

Thanks to rather massive investments from the European Regional and Development Fund, mainly during the period 2007-2013, the Czech research infrastructure has changed significantly. As a result, we can see the map of the Czech Republic with eight "European Centres of Excellence" focused mainly on basic research and 40 Regional R&D centres aimed at applied research. Prague, where historically most research was carried out, has now been complemented by cities such as Brno, Olomouc, Pilsen, Ostrava, Zlín and others.

The Czech Republic already possesses impressive new or reconstructed buildings with modern laboratories. As a next step, the country should go for highly motivated researchers. Czechia, having around 10 million people and facing an ageing population, and the smallest age cohort entering higher education during recent years, should take great care in developing human resources. Having enough top sciences for academic institutions as well as R&D specialists for Czech industry is yet another challenge. Czech researchers support the view that Czechs should cultivate their domestic talent and try to find another Heyrovský among themselves. However, this means freeing them from the burden of timesheets, administrative reports and countless pages of proposals, and allowing them to focus on research. After all, they have been trained in their scientific disciplines, not administrative procedures.

At the same, Czech institutions must also attract top researchers from abroad. Without internationalisation, Czech science is not going to make it to the top. The rather high level of inbreeding and limited mobility must be challenged. By now, there are already a few research centres where foreigners hold positions of research group leaders. Jaroslav Koča, from the Central European Institute of Technology in Brno,

says that money is important to retain foreign researchers, yet Czech institutions should be concerned about other things as well. Meetings should be held in English and internal documents should also be translated. Furthermore, a high quality grant office should take away most of the administrative burden that in many cases resembles absurdities of Kafkaesque proportions.

Czech researchers among the world's top scientists

Despite their traditional criticism, Czechs should be optimistic. A comparatively small nation has produced many stars, for example in sports and music. Underlying factors of success are similar across those fields – identification of top talents, motivation and systematic hard work. Czech science also has champions who have been successful from an international perspective. For example, Pavel Hobza, one of the most cited contemporary Czech scientists, works at the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague and also at Palacký University in Olomouc. He was awarded a Schrödinger medal by the World Association of Theoretical and Computational Chemists in 2017. Petr Pyšek, from the Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences, was listed together with Pavel Hobza among 3,000 top scientists in 2014. Jaroslav Doležel, from the Institute of Experimental Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Palacký University, is yet another top scientist. The author of more than 200 articles coordinates research in the International Genome Sequencing Consortium with 2,100 members in 64 countries. It seems that the search for another Nobel prize laureate might not be hopeless for Czechs.



Resistance is futile developing skills for an increasingly digital world is key to 'future-proofing' students

NUS to programme students for success

President tells Rachael Pells why computational thinking is compulsory at Asia's top university

To many, the idea of pushing through significant changes at Asia's most highly ranked university would be nothing short of madness. But, even though the National University of Singapore has topped *Times Higher Education's* Asia University Rankings for three years on the trot, the new leader of the city state's flagship institution could not be calmer about rocking the boat.

Tan Eng Chye (pictured inset), who became NUS' president in January after more than a decade as provost, the institution's number two position, said that he was not afraid to rethink the university's entire approach to teaching in order to "future-proof" his 28,000 students for a world increasingly shaped by digital technology and automation.

"Things are moving very fast in the external environment and we cannot afford to keep still," said Professor Tan. "The fourth indus-

trial revolution is crucial. My colleagues know this and they understand that we must change with the times because of it."

Professor Tan, who completed his undergraduate degree at NUS and has been on the faculty since 1985, said that his predecessor, Tan Chorh Chuan, had "set very strong foundations for the university", pushing it up to 22nd in the *THE* World University Rankings, up 18 places in just five years. But Professor Tan said that he "will have to take it much higher", acknowledging that "certainly, there's pressure on me to continue to do better".

His first priority, he told *THE*, will be to introduce "set skills" across the entire university curriculum.

"Much to the angst of some students, I have made statistics as well as computational thinking or programming compulsory for everyone, regardless of what course they do," Professor Tan said.

In accordance with Singapore's goal of creating a sustainable knowledge economy, Professor Tan's new mandatory requirement means that even art and music students will be required to cover some level of computational thinking – for instance, understanding algorithms in everyday life.

"Some students don't react well, but it's good for them to be sensitised," he said. "They may not have to do programming [when they graduate] but I think in this new world where technology is really disrupting our everyday life it is good for a university student to have some understanding."

Moving away from the reading and regurgitation approach to learning traditionally loved within Asian education systems, Professor Tan also wants to put more focus on "experiential training".

As provost, last year he helped to introduce a "co-op programme" for students on data science, busi-

ness and information security courses, requiring them to spend as long as 18 months of their four-year degree on part-time internships within industry.

Professor Tan intends to roll this out across all disciplines, with the hope that undergraduates will learn how to deal with "real-life problems" and bring those industry problems back to the university to solve.

In his last two years as provost, Professor Tan also introduced what he called a "roots and wings" approach to teaching, which requires every subject to consider how it can develop students' personal skills, such as concentration, perseverance and how to engage with others.

It is these soft skills that will ensure Singapore does not fall behind its Asian competitors in the future employment landscape. "No question, China will be changing very quickly, and if we want to stay ahead we need to move just as quickly, if not faster," Professor Tan explained.

While a strong international outlook has kept NUS at the top of its game for many years, the university has been the subject of criticism by Singaporeans who claim that the nation's top learning institutions have neglected their local role.

Whether or not this was once the case, Professor Tan denied that there was any problem with local engagement in recent times.

"To us, that Singapore identity is very critical," he said. "Just to give one example, in the past four years the faculty of arts and social sciences alone offered 125 modules on Singapore studies."

Researchers also have financial incentives to relate their work to issues beneficial to the local community, he noted. "In the past two years, arts and social sciences alone published 200 papers on Singapore-related subjects."

Above all, preparations made for future graduate skills will benefit all Singaporeans in terms of the economy, Professor Tan said. "Students today will graduate at 22 and most likely work until they are 70," he said. "We cannot train them up in just one trade any more."

"My key challenge is how do I prepare my students to be adaptable? How do I train them to have a strong sense of perseverance? With soft skills."

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Careers intelligence

Share tips

Sophie Inge speaks to two sets of job-sharers about the pros and cons of this form of flexible working



Last month, the University of Reading announced that Parveen Yaqoob and Dominik Zaum would join its executive, job-sharing as the new pro vice-chancellors for research and innovation.

While job-share arrangements are not uncommon in higher education, this is thought to be the first such top-level appointment in a UK university. So, can such arrangements work in academia?

Both of the Reading professors, who start their new role on 1 August, are convinced that they can. Crucially, the pair said, it will allow them the flexibility to pursue their own research interests.

“The reason we applied for a job-share was so that we could spend 60 per cent of our time in that role and then the other 40 per cent of our time keeping our own personal research going,” Professor Yaqoob told *Times Higher Education*.

As she and Professor Zaum both have young children, the arrangement will also ensure a healthy work-life balance, she added.

And another bonus, she feels, is that they belong to different faculties – she heads the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy, while Professor Zaum is professor of governance, conflict and security, as well as research dean for

prosperity and resilience.

“There’s no point having a job-share involving two people who are very similar. I think that it’s fantastic to have two people with such different areas of expertise, experience and outlook because it gives a broader view of the research that the university is meant to be representing,” Professor Yaqoob said.

Neither professor, however, will restrict themselves to the areas with which they are most familiar.

“We are making an explicit attempt to enable multidisciplinary working so that we can develop a good understanding of what happens on each side,” Professor Zaum said.

While they are enthusiastic about the undertaking, Professor Yaqoob admitted that she initially had doubts.

“I was worried at first that people would see this as saying: ‘She didn’t feel that she could do it herself because she’s female.’ But people seem so positive about it that no one seems to be implying that,” she said.

Together, the professors hope to send an important message to the rest of the higher education sector, in terms of promoting not just flexible working but also gender equality.

“There’s a big responsibility for Dominik and myself to make it

work, because it could lead the way for other board-level positions to be offered as a job-share,” Professor Yaqoob said.

Other academics who have job-shared extol the benefits of the arrangement. Biologists Mary Allen and her husband Mark Kuhlmann split a professorship of biology at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York for 17 years, with each performing three-quarters of a full-time role.

Just the two of us

“For us, there were two main benefits,” Professor Allen, who now works full-time at the institution, told *THE*. “One was that it allowed us to be able to work in the same geographical area. It also had the added benefit of allowing us to do more of our own home care for our kids, and to balance that with our work.”

Because they were both in the same department, scheduling classes around their family commitments was relatively easy.

“Our teaching load was low enough to be able to arrange [it so] that neither one of us was expected to be in the classroom at the same time,” said Professor Kuhlmann, who still maintains three-quarters of a full-time role.

“So, for one particular semester, I might have morning classes on

Monday, Wednesday and Friday – while Mary would have afternoon classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And if we had labs, we would make sure they couldn’t conflict.”

When the college initially approached the couple about sharing a job, Professor Allen was adamant that they should be evaluated separately.

“For personal reasons, we didn’t want that added stress [of joint evaluation] on our relationship,” she said. “If the evaluation was poor, was it your fault or their fault? I didn’t want to have to think about whether he was doing his job [well] or not.”

Although the couple’s job-sharing experience was positive overall, Professor Allen admitted that they each ended up doing more than three-quarters of a full-time role because of their research responsibilities and time spent on committees and other duties.

However, she added: “It did give us the ability to say no if we felt [the percentage] was tipping over.”

And there’s another downside, according to her husband. “The sacrifice is that we didn’t get paid as much,” Professor Kuhlmann said. “But we’re very grateful, and if we could go back, we would do it again and make the same choices.” sophie.inge@timeshighereducation.com



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United States



No echo chambers

Duke University has announced that it will bar freshers from selecting room-mates. Starting this autumn, the room-mate selection process will be entirely governed by the North Carolina institution, with assignments largely made at random. Officials said that the shift would stem from the recent movement of students self-selecting peers with similar perspectives and backgrounds to their own, fuelled by social media connections made before arriving on campus. While many students and higher education professionals applauded the Duke decision, others fear that forcing two people of particularly dissonant backgrounds – a gay student or an ethnic minority student paired with one who holds bigoted views, for instance – could lead to fear, but not much meaningful interaction.

Republic of Ireland



Nailing their colours to the mast

University College Cork has become the first university in the Republic of Ireland to fly the Transgender Pride flag. As part of the university's Equality Week, which ran from 5 to 9 March, the blue, pink and white flag to denote commitment to trans and non-binary staff and students was raised in UCC's quad. "Flying the Transgender Pride flag indicates UCC's growing appreciation and understanding of trans and gender non-binary issues in Ireland and internationally," explained Karl Kitching, director of equality, diversity and inclusion at the university. He added that the institution is in the process of finalising its policy on gender identity and expression policy, which "seeks to support trans and non-binary staff and students in a variety of ways".

Romania



On the straight and narrow

Romania's national students' union says that it has successfully lobbied for the introduction of mandatory academic ethics courses for master's and doctoral students. It has warned that plagiarism is on the rise in the Romanian education system, and there have been a string of scandals where politicians have been accused of having plagiarised PhDs. In 2016, the National Alliance of Student Organisations in Romania drew attention to academic fraud in the country with a report that warned that the country's academic image was being severely damaged. At the end of January, the Romanian Ministry of National Education ordered universities to introduce compulsory academic ethics and integrity courses for the next academic year – although they will remain optional for undergraduates.

Mexico



High-rise hopes fall flat

Plans to build more than 600 apartment blocks on the site of Mexico's largest university have been suspended, after a judge declared the construction a violation of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation world heritage site regulations. The National Autonomous University of Mexico occupies its own "University City" state in Mexico City and was declared a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2007. Permission was reportedly granted for the construction of three new tower blocks to begin in University City from January. However, on 2 March, district judge Juan Carlos Guzman Rosas said that UNAM had an "international obligation" to protect the site and ordered the building of two apartment blocks to be suspended with immediate effect.

France

Terre verte

The French government has launched four new programmes aimed at attracting international students and academics that are keen to study and research earth sciences, climate change, sustainability and the transition to renewable energy. The schemes build on the interest of the country's Make Our Planet Great Again initiative, which was launched by President Emmanuel Macron last year in response to US president Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement. The new programmes, which have been launched in collaboration with Campus France, will provide €50,000 (£44,800) for about 20 doctoral students to study for three years from 2018, as well as additional funding for postdoctoral researchers and master's students.



Africa

Short-term focus, long-term loss

Science policies in African countries must include a greater emphasis on technology development and innovation rather than focusing only on funding scientific research in order to spur long-term economic growth across the continent, a recent report has claimed. A study from the African Academy of Sciences says that in 2016 less than half of African countries had adopted science, technology and innovation policies and among those that had, most of the policies did "not consider sustainable development imperatives holistically". "Instead, they tend to focus on funding scientific research with less emphasis on technology development, procurement and innovation. This may stimulate the production of knowledge for short-term economic growth, but fails to spur social inclusion and environmental sustainability that are necessary to long-term sustainable development," according to the report.

Hong Kong

Up where they belong

A leading university in Hong Kong has reached gender parity at one of its most senior levels of staff, but other institutions in the territory continue to lag behind. Two of the four vice-presidents at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology – which is ranked joint fifth in *Times Higher Education's* 2018 Asia University Rankings – are now female, a higher share than any other publicly funded university in the city. The milestone comes after the institution appointed Dr Sabrina Lin Man-yee (pictured) as vice-president for institutional advancement. She joins Professor Nancy Ip Yuk-yu, an expert on neurodegenerative diseases and the university's vice-president for research and graduate studies.



Australia

Majority of ECRs are women

Women now outnumber men among early career researchers in Australian universities, according to figures. Statistics from the League of Scholars, a data analytics firm that focuses on research talent, show that 53 per cent of researchers who are less than 10 years into their career are female, *The Australian* reported. In comparison, 43 per cent of all Australian university researchers are women, according to the figures, which are based on an analysis of publications in research journals. The League of Scholars added that 23 Australian universities have more

female researchers than male, but that women are still in a minority overall owing to a bias towards male researchers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, which dominate research-intensive universities.



World policy

Making rhetoric reality

Last month, UK prime minister Theresa May announced a major review of the UK tertiary education system, with a focus on driving up access, quality, choice and value for money. The Irish experience is worth looking at in terms of how it is bringing about such change.

Since the publication of its *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* in 2011, the Republic of Ireland has taken actions to move towards a coherent system of higher education. Policies have promoted collaboration between universities and institutes of technology – which are similar to what the UK used to call polytechnics – in order to deliver the complementary yet differentiated range of institutions and academic programmes needed by individuals, society and the labour market.

The strategy, however, required a radical new way of thinking. Emphasis was placed on the system as a whole: an especially bold move at a time when global rankings have focused undue attention on the performance of individual institutions. In truth, the move owed much to timing: when it was launched, Ireland was in the grip of an economic recession sparked by the global financial crisis of 2008, so any proposal to reward winners would have certainly bankrupted others.

Phase one commenced in 2012 with publication of the *Higher Education Systems Performance Framework 2014-2016*. This set out the national priorities and objectives, which included meeting human capital and skills needs, promoting access and opportunity for the disadvantaged, promoting excellence in teaching and learning, maintaining an open and excellent public research system and increasing accountability. These goals set the framework for the subsequent three rounds of “strategic dialogue” between institutions and regulator the Higher Education Authority, aimed at aligning institutional goals with the national objectives while respecting autonomy.

Then, the HEA published status reports on the performance of the system. Some noteworthy successes of the first phase included implementation of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, a National Employer Survey and a National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Phase two kicked off in January. The *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020* sets out six high-level objectives (compared with

seven previously), including a smorgasbord of indicators from which “mandatory metrics will be agreed”. The main difference from phase one is the weight given to improving institutional “governance, leadership and operational excellence”. This arises in the wake of political controversy regarding the mishandling of budgetary and human resources matters by certain universities, and failure to deal with the issues transparently before the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. The government had proposed granting additional inspection powers to the HEA, but ultimately took this route instead.

Last year also saw the publication of a new resource allocation model based on the recommendations of an independent expert group and a national consultation. This makes some important statements regarding allocation for skills development, lifelong learning, widening access and research innovation and impact. In addition, it suggests new metrics for monitoring university governance performance and, significantly, gender equality. The main research funding agencies have already announced that they will require grant applicants’ institutions to have attained the Athena SWAN award by 2019.

Funding levels were covered by the *Investing in National Ambition* report in 2016, but the absence of political agreement means that none of its recommendations for additional funding have yet been implemented. With student numbers having risen by 30 per cent since 2010 and funding decreased by almost as much, the debate over higher fees remains very much alive.

With the exception of funding, the new measures have been introduced without major controversy. Yes, there has been some grandstanding, but nothing major. This may be due to Ireland’s small size: most of the key players can all fit into one room. In addition, the economic collapse has perhaps instilled a sense of realism and collective endeavour.

Either way, Ireland offers a good example of how the social contract between higher education and society has been reframed for the 21st century.

Ellen Hazelkorn is founding partner of BH Associates education consultants, joint editor of *Policy Reviews in Higher Education* and an international co-investigator at the Centre for Global Higher Education, based at the UCL Institute of Education.



Most international universities how outlook can vary by sub

Analysis of rankings data shows how nations differ on most open disciplines. Simon Baker reports

This year's *Times Higher Education* ranking of the world's most international universities is again dominated by countries that, through geography, government policies or culture, are open to the movement of students, staff and ideas.

From Switzerland and the UK in the West to Singapore and Hong Kong in the East, these nations owe much of their success in higher education to being hubs of internationalisation (although in the UK's case it is now clearly a factor under threat because of Brexit).

As a result, despite some ebb and flow in the order among the top 10 – École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne takes the top spot, swapping places with its Swiss counterpart ETH Zurich – many of the institutions in the ranking are familiar.

However, a new analysis by *THE* of the data underlying the list – which mainly consist of scores from the “international outlook” pillar of the main World University Rank-

ings, reflecting universities' share of overseas staff, students and cross-border research – shows that countries' ability to be open to the rest of the world does not necessarily always cut across every subject.

While the most international universities in nations such as Switzerland are as globalised in the arts, humanities and social sciences as they are in pure science, the same is not true everywhere.

For instance, the UK's most international universities appear to be most globalised in engineering, business and management and computer science, but much less so in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Institutions from the Netherlands, meanwhile, are strongly global in engineering, but less so in other subjects. Particularly in clinical and health subjects, they are less international than other European universities.

Most interestingly, according to the data, which are drawn from the international pillar scores in each of

THE's subject rankings, universities in Asian countries that score poorly overall for internationalisation, such as China, South Korea and Japan, seem to be more global in the arts, humanities and social sciences than in pure science – the opposite of their Western counterparts.

While a major caveat here is that the data cover only a small number of the most international universities in each country, this finding is also backed up by an analysis of wider statistics on research collaboration. According to data extracted from Elsevier's SciVal analysis tool, almost 38 per cent of Chinese arts and humanities research indexed in its Scopus database in 2017 had an international co-author. For engineering, this figure was 20 per cent, and in physics and astronomy, it was 23 per cent.

This could be because of the types of research, journals and languages covered by bibliometric databases. But it could also be a result of other factors, such as the need for Western academics studying China to work with researchers in the country.

“With the rapid development of

China, an increasing number of Western scholars are interested in Chinese society, culture and tradition,” said Lili Yang, a PhD researcher working on a project at UCL's Centre for Global Higher Education comparing higher education systems.

“Further investigation into Chinese studies requires close collaboration with Chinese universities. And I personally know many examples [where] Western scholars initiated research projects to collaborate with Chinese scholars,” she added.

In terms of international students studying in China, Ms Yang pointed to elite universities encouraging more mobility into the country through schemes such as Tsinghua University's Schwarzman Scholars, a humanities and social science programme that claims to be the “most significant of its kind” since the Rhodes Trust was set up by the University of Oxford to fund scholarships for international students.

There was a particular push to encourage more cross-border student movement as part of the Chinese government's “Belt and Road” infrastructure project connecting the

ies: ject

look at cultural and linguistic issues that apply only locally.

But this does not explain why elite universities in some countries excel in openness in certain science subjects: the Netherlands in engineering, Sweden and Denmark in life sciences, France in physics and computer science, for example. And in health research there is great variation between European nations too.

Distinct national health systems may explain this last point, with research needing to be applicable to that country. And Bart Pierik, public affairs adviser for the Association of Universities in the Netherlands, also points to labour market factors as another possible explanation. “People who work in finance or technology would be more likely to be employed by a multinational company, or at least work on issues or markets that transcend the scale of countries,” he said. “This plays less of a role for literature teachers and doctors.”

In North America, there seems to be a clearer lead for subjects such as engineering, physical sciences and computer science having a global outlook.

But it is notable that this difference is much more marked in the US than in Canada, where there are relatively strong scores across the board.

One particularly eye-catching performer is the University of Alberta, which, despite being more geographically isolated than other Canadian institutions such as the universities of Montreal or Toronto, comes higher in the most international pillar scores are noticeably very high in subject areas such as the physical sciences and computer science.

Jonathan Schaeffer, Alberta’s dean of science, said that the university’s strong global reputation in subjects such as palaeontology and computer gaming, the institution

MOST INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES: TOP 20

Rank	Institution	Country	Score
1	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne	Switzerland	97.7
2	ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich	Switzerland	97.5
3	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	96.7
4	National University of Singapore	Singapore	95.9
5	Imperial College London	UK	95.5
=6	Nanyang Technological University	Singapore	95.3
=6	University of Geneva	Switzerland	95.3
8	University of Oxford	UK	94.8
9	University of Cambridge	UK	93.3
10	Australian National University	Australia	92.9
11	London School of Economics and Political Science	UK	92.6
12	University College London	UK	92.5
13	Technical University of Denmark	Denmark	92.4
14	King’s College London	UK	92.3
15	University of Vienna	Austria	91.8
16	University of Melbourne	Australia	91.7
17	Copenhagen Business School	Denmark	91.6
18	Delft University of Technology	Netherlands	90.5
19	University of Warwick	UK	90.3
20	University of Edinburgh	UK	90.2

Source: THE DataPoints

being at the forefront of the massive open online course boom, and particular characteristics of its offer to students – such as fieldwork opportunities harder to come by elsewhere – were all possible explanations.

However, he added that the general open climate in Canada at the moment was also very important and he had no qualms about Alberta taking advantage of the fallout for higher education in other countries from events such as the election of Donald Trump and Brexit.

“I would like to thank President Trump for his unique policies

because they are allowing us to attract outstanding American and [other] international graduate students, undergraduates...and faculty members,” he said.

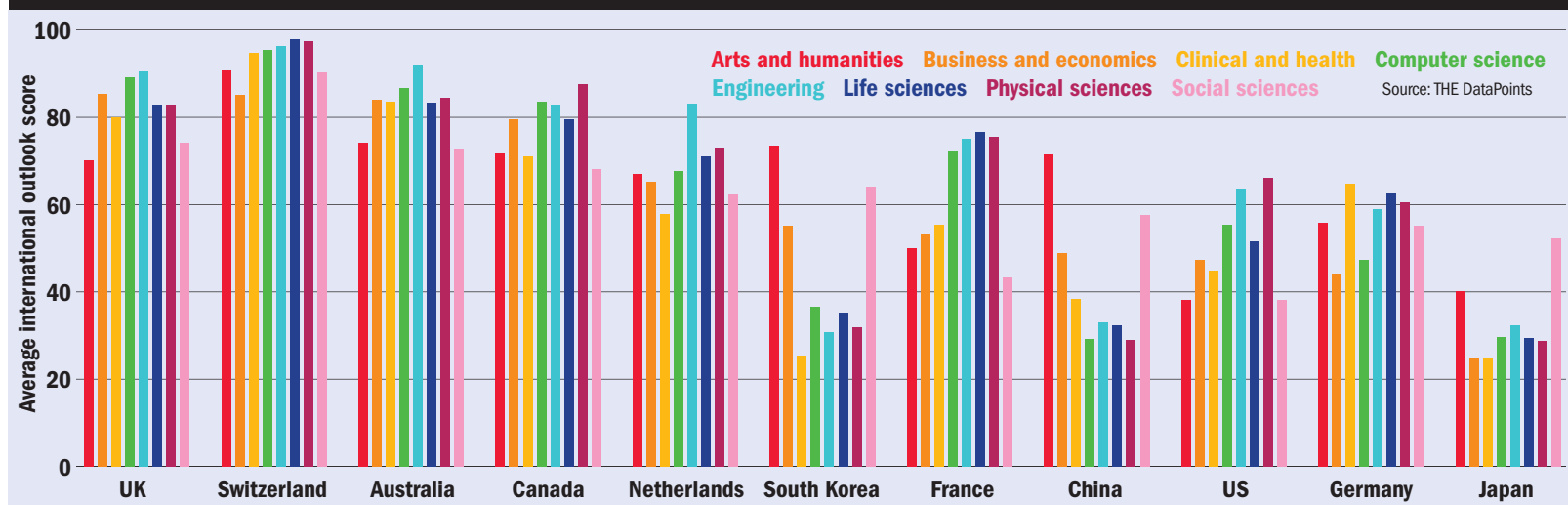
“In both the US and Britain, politics are creating an environment which will lead to a drain of outstanding people...and I would be crazy not to try and take advantage of it. Another few years down the road...[and] the politics in Canada could become unstable and you can be sure every other country is going to try and steal people from us.”
simon.baker@timeshighereducation.com

nations of Eurasia, Ms Yang said.

But what of other countries in which the most international universities seem to be more open in some subject areas than others?

In Europe, where apart from Switzerland there seems to be a fair degree of variation among subject areas in terms of global outlook, arts, humanities and social science subjects are much more likely to

OPEN DISCIPLINES: INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK SCORES BY COUNTRY AND SUBJECT FOR MOST INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES



Obituary

Nicholas Phillipson, 1937-2018

One of the leading authorities on the Scottish Enlightenment has died.

Nicholas Phillipson was born in August 1937 and studied at Aberdeen Grammar School, the University of Aberdeen (1958) and then, after completing his national service in the Royal Air Force, the University of Cambridge (1962). At Cambridge, he went on to complete a PhD on “The Scottish Whigs and the reform of the Court of Session, 1785-1830” (1967), and also chose to take Duncan Forbes’ celebrated special subject on the Scottish Enlightenment, a field that he very much went on to make his own.

In 1965, even before completing his doctorate, Dr Phillipson took up a post as lecturer in history at the University of Edinburgh. He was to remain there until he retired in 2004, as emeritus reader in history, although he actively continued his research and writing. He also held a number of visiting positions at Princeton University, Yale University, the Folger Institute in Washington DC, and LMU Munich.

Throughout his career, Dr Phillipson devoted most of his research to the Scottish Enlightenment and its wider European context. Along with a number of highly influential chapters in books, he produced full-length studies of *Hume: The Philosopher as Historian* (1989, reissued in 2011) and *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life* (2010), although his broader overview of the whole Scottish Enlightenment was never completed. He was also a founding editor of the journal *Modern Intellectual History*.

It was in the pages of that journal that Colin Kidd, professor of history at the University of St Andrews, offered a striking 2014 tribute to what he called “The Phillipsonian Enlightenment”. Not long ago, he argued, Scottish intellectual history had been “a desert of comparative academic neglect”. Dr Phillipson had played a crucial role in establishing it on firm foundations, making him “the historian of Scotland best known in the wider world”. Furthermore, “in the graceful elegance of his prose, his cosmopolitan sophistication, the unrelenting drive of his arguments, his demanding search for compelling answers simultaneously synoptic and multi-stranded, and his cheerful scepticism”, he could be seen as “a striking modern embodiment of the era he loves”.

Thomas Ahnert, head of history at Edinburgh, recalled Professor Phillipson as “an accomplished oboist”, “a generous patron of the arts” and “a brilliant host”, as well as an inspiring teacher who “once said that he thought of teaching as something analogous to a musical performance”.

Professor Phillipson died of cancer on 24 January.
matthew.reisz@timeshighereducation.com



HE & me

Bertha Ochieng was appointed De Montfort University's first professor of integrated health and social care in November 2017. A former children's nurse and a Mary Seacole leadership awardee, Professor Ochieng's research focuses on the health of socially disadvantaged communities and how income, education, ethnicity and housing affect health and life chances

● Where were you born?

In the coastal city of Mombasa, Kenya, but my family origin is from the port city of Kisumu, near Lake Victoria.

● How has this shaped you?

Mombasa is a very beautiful place with an amazing shoreline. It is also a very cosmopolitan city, so I grew up in a very multilingual environment with different ethnic communities living side by side. There was a real sense of vibrancy in Mombasa and it taught me about the importance of tolerance and understanding different communities, and my academic research has always had a strong multicultural element to it.

● How did you come to study in Leeds?

My husband had a scholarship to study in the UK, so I came with him when I was in my twenties and joined Leeds Metropolitan University [now Leeds Beckett University] to do a bachelor of science degree in nursing. I was the only African student in my class and being referred to by the colour of my skin was quite a shock.

● What kind of undergraduate were you?

My parents did not have a degree, so going to university was a big deal for me. I was very focused as an undergraduate, but my master's in development studies at the University of Leeds was also very memorable. The debates that we had about the politics of poverty, particularly with international students, were really important to my academic development.

● How did you move from nursing into academia?

I was working in a children's intensive care unit but my hospital introduced a rota where I had to

do night duties every three to four weeks and I couldn't do that because I had a young daughter. I'd done my master's degrees by then and I stopped working to take a postgraduate certificate in education to become a lecturer. I was attracted by the idea of a nine-to-five academic job that meant I could pick up my children from school; it didn't, however, always work out that way.

● Why should Joe Bloggs care about your work?

I'm very focused on finding practical ways to help children, young people, migrants and working-class families, particularly by empowering parents to improve their families' nutrition. Parents are aware of what they should give their children, but we need to understand the daily challenges that are stopping this from happening.

● What's the best thing about your job?

Supervising students but also having a practical impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities. I think that I'm fortunate to be based at a university that has championed so many community impact projects through its Square Mile programme – its ambition on this front is very different to any institution that I've been at before.

● Tell us about someone you've always admired.

My own parents were an extraordinarily positive influence on my life. I am the middle child of nine and we always had extended family living with us, so I marvelled at how they did it. They always found time to talk to us about politics, education, social justice and football, and they were ambitious for all of us.

● As recently as 2015, a Runnymede Trust report stated that there were only 17 black female professors in the UK. What can academia do to help black women reach more senior positions?

We need to understand more about the different entry points into academia for women of African descent and what type of specific disadvantage they face. There must be a conscious effort



JASON SENIOR/FREDPIX

to make change as the sector loses out if it doesn't have this diversity.

● **What keeps you awake?**

I don't necessarily lose sleep but a number of things play on my mind: the effect of social inequality and justice on people's lives, threats to people's ability to access higher education, and uncertainty about Brexit.

● **If you were universities minister for a day, what would you do?**

I would convene a thinktank involving academics, students and business leaders and instruct them to review tuition fees to ensure that they do not disadvantage students. I would also look at how you might rank institutions based on how their research transforms the lives of socially and economically disadvantaged students.

“If I were minister for universities, I would look at how you might rank institutions based on how their research transforms lives”

● **As a former nurse, what do you think about the BBC drama 'Call the Midwife'?**

I've never watched it. Perhaps I'm worried that it might convey some of the misconceptions about nursing. People often imagine that nurses work only in hospitals or that they perform a very narrow range of tasks, but there are hundreds of thousands of nurses with degrees – some of whom are now in very senior positions, including in the fields of research and politics. We now have consultant nurses.

● **How would you like to be remembered?**

I have three daughters, so I'd like them to remember me as an awesome mama.

Jack Grove

Appointments



Ian Walmsley has been appointed the next provost of Imperial College London. Professor Walmsley is currently pro vice-chancellor (research and innovation) and Hooke professor of experimental physics at the University of Oxford. He will take up his role in September. Alice Gast, Imperial's president, described Professor Walmsley – an expert in ultrafast and quantum optics – as an “exceptional academic leader and an eminent scholar”. “His strong support for collaboration across disciplines, sectors and between nations will make him an outstanding champion for the college and our community,” she said.



Lucy Meredith has joined the Royal Agricultural University as deputy vice-chancellor. She was previously dean of computer engineering and science at the University of South Wales. Dr Meredith is an expert in environmental health with interests in environmental microbiology, food safety and public health engineering. Dr Meredith said that she was “passionate about working with staff and students to co-create an excellent working and learning environment at the RAU”. The RAU has also appointed **Julie Walkling** as director of operations.

Elena Rodriguez-Falcon has been named provost and chief academic officer at the New Model in Technology and Engineering, the new engineering university in Hereford. Professor Rodriguez-Falcon was previously professor of enterprise and engineering education at the University of Sheffield.

Edward Harcourt has been appointed director of research, strategy and innovation for the Arts and Humanities Research Council, on secondment from his current position as chair of the philosophy faculty at the University of Oxford.

Simon Skene has been appointed professor of medical statistics and director of the Surrey Clinical Trials Unit at the University of Surrey. Professor Skene joins Surrey from UCL, where he was head of statistics in the Comprehensive Clinical Trials Unit.

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Ready to take on the world

Universities must become more accessible and engaged if they are to thrive in the future, says Feridun Hamdullahpur

New ideas and technologies are disrupting the way the world as we know it operates.

Technological innovations that power strides in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and autonomous vehicles are affecting the economies, lifestyles and demographics of the future. If we are to meet the challenges and opportunities these technologies present, we're going to have to change with them.

Key to making this transition will be the world's 22,000 universities, which are charged with exploring knowledge and with preparing the millions of students who study at their campuses for the road that lies ahead.

To meet these emerging challenges, the role of the university and how it operates will need to necessarily evolve. In addition to breaking down traditional silos within institutions themselves, universities will have to break down the barriers that exist between them and the world outside their campuses.

We'll need to encourage the various

We must adopt ideas that have allowed academia to build a bridge between the practices of the past and the necessities of the future

disciplines to work together and ensure that groundbreaking discoveries make their way beyond the lab and the academic journal.

Our students will need to be more than just book-smart. They'll need to be world-smart, and intimately familiar with the needs and challenges of the workplaces they hope to create or join.

This does not mean abandoning the traditions, fundamental values and principles that have made universities great: it just means growing them and making them more accessible. It means ensuring that we are adopting and expanding on ideas that have allowed academia to build a bridge between the practices of the past and the necessities of the future.

In the context of my own university, the University of Waterloo has had many opportunities to learn what works and what doesn't when it comes to preparing our students for the next stages of their lives and ensuring that the contributions of our researchers are felt well beyond our campus. Ensuring that our students are exposed to the opportunities and challenges of the workplace was a

founding principle of our institution and is embodied in what has become the largest cooperative education programme in the world. It's a programme that sees our students work directly with industry during "work terms".

We have also found that supporting and encouraging research at its most fundamental level and, at the same time, connecting it with a real-world application has been fundamental in building research relationships with companies across the world. These relationships, combined with a policy that allows researchers and students to keep the intellectual property they develop on our campus, have made partnerships with Waterloo increasingly sought after by new and established companies alike.

I believe it is this interface between the private and public sectors and academia that will need to be a major focus of all universities' efforts if they are to contribute to the future in a way the world needs them to.

As the talent and research imperatives continue to grow, universities and the extensive abilities they house are going to have to become easier to navigate: less bureaucratic and providing a clear path of entry for external partners. Because change has become so rapid, industry will need to have the confidence that it can tap into that talent, solve its research problems and commercialise the findings at a speed its reality dictates, and with the integrity that only universities can offer.

For many institutions, this will require a type of relationship they may not be used to, and one that may at first be uncomfortable. The challenge of moving into this space will not be one of ability but one of culture. Meeting the needs of a changing world will require a greater understanding of emerging problems beyond academia and a vision that expands well past the boundaries of campus.

The reality is that change for universities has been coming for decades. The only question is how ready we are to adapt to it.

Feridun Hamdullahpur is president and vice-chancellor of the University of Waterloo, Canada.



The indisputable success of UK universities over recent decades has been built on four bulwarks: steady growth in student demand, relatively generous funding arrangements, protective and supportive regulation and sustained public and political goodwill. But all of those bulwarks are being seriously eroded by political and market currents.

Since 2006, total UK university revenues increased from £21 billion to more than £34 billion, on the back of 30 per cent growth in full-time home students and more than 40 per cent growth in international recruitment. But the latest data show that enrolments in 60 per cent of UK universities have fallen in recent years, with more than 30 mostly teaching-led institutions seeing reductions of more than 10 per cent. And the predictions are that almost all segments of student recruitment will continue to flatline at best.

The financial impacts of this have been exacerbated by the falling real-terms value of capped tuition fees, with ominous indications of actual cuts in prospect after the recently announced funding review. The benevolent English regulatory regime overseen by the Higher Education Funding Council for England is being replaced by the adversarial tone of the new Office for Students. No established providers have yet "exited the market", but the OfS is under no obligation to prevent that from happening in the future. And the public and political narrative around



LAM ANSLOW

Campuses must morph into the Googles and Amazons of public life

To survive, UK universities must think beyond educational products and their own narrow institutional interests, warns Mike Boxall

universities has swung from celebrations of excellence to litanies of criticisms.

PA's latest sector survey of heads of higher education institutions, published earlier this year, suggests that university leaders recognise this new, harsher reality. Unsurprisingly, almost all vice-chancellors cited securing their institution's financial viability and resilience as their top strategic priority for coming years.

Approaches being pursued include modernising internal operations; enhancing and extending e-learning services; consolidating provision around dependable core revenue sources; seeking greater shares of current markets through enhanced student experiences, financial inducements and more flexible

entry requirements; diversifying into transnational ventures, work-based learning or employer services (including apprenticeships); and sharing costs and risks with academic and commercial partners, through a range of joint ventures and outsourced operations.

But while these are all sensible responses, they may not be enough to ensure a stable long-term balance between provision and demand for institution-centred higher education.

In other sectors, such defensive measures would be accompanied by a wave of provider rationalisation through closures, mergers and takeovers. This has been widely predicted but not yet seen in higher education. Instead, we are witnessing a quiet "shrink to fit" across

almost every institution, characterised by staffing cuts and course and campus closures.

At the end of this hunkering down, most vice-chancellors expect their own institutions to emerge largely unchanged – although many are much less optimistic about the outlook for their peers. But this optimism may simply be a symptom of universities' notorious insularity. Sector leaders would do well to consider the experiences of print media, high street shops, airlines and financial services, which have all seen demand for the core service continue to grow, but shift from established providers towards new entrants with alternative, often technologically enabled business models.

While the historic growth in traditional patterns of "going to uni" may have topped out, there will probably always be niche demand for the extended boarding-school model of higher education provision. But the real growth, and the opportunities for a rejuvenated system, will lie elsewhere and

There will always be niche demand for the extended boarding-school model of higher education provision. But the real growth will lie elsewhere

university leaders must develop imaginative visions in light of this new reality.

They must think beyond educational "products" and address how to ensure continued institutional involvement with the applications of knowledge and learning in the lives and work of individuals, organisations and communities. They must stop fixating on securing deficit funding to cover the costs of teaching and research and work out how to share in the far greater returns created from the outputs of those activities in business, public services and daily lives. And they must rise above the interests of their own stand-alone institutions to grow the roles of universities within interdependent systems of learning providers, businesses, public agencies and communities, working together to resolve shared needs and problems.

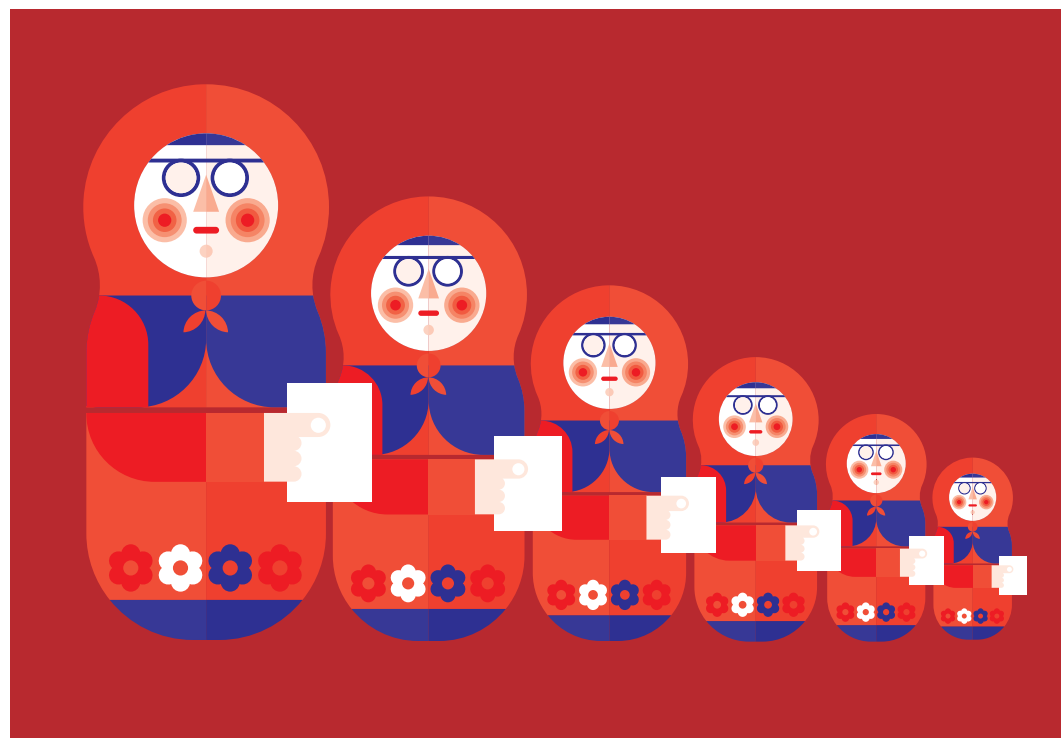
The implications of re-imagining higher education and universities in these ways are profound and difficult, but far from outlandish. They offer a vision for tomorrow's universities as leaders and orchestrators in a variety of multi-partner "learning ecosystems" – ranging from local community development programmes to national growth strategies to global programmes to address "grand challenges", such as climate change or food security.

Many examples of this kind of engagement can be seen around the world, but they are mostly on the fringes. This must change. The future health of the mainstream higher education system may depend on universities becoming as ubiquitous to 21st-century public life as Google, Amazon and Apple have become in our private lives.

Mike Boxall is a higher education expert at PA Consulting Group.

Paper weight

For Russian scholars, ethics committees are just another form of stultifying bureaucracy, writes Katarzyna Kaczmarek



The best interview is an unethical one.” This was not an opinion that I expected to hear from a panel discussing the ethics of interview-based research in sociology. The panel was organised as part of a recent conference held in St Petersburg, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the St Petersburg Association of Sociologists. There was, of course, no unanimity behind this view, but the all-Russian panellists largely endorsed the view that ethics committees obstruct rather than assist in the research process.

Such an attitude is particularly puzzling because – as the panellists admitted – no ethics committee has been created in Russian social sciences so far. It is not that Russian scholars are oblivious to the numerous ethical challenges associated with fieldwork. It is rather that the idea of a committee is immediately read as an attempt at an unnecessary bureaucratisation of ethical decisions that are best left to the discretion of an individual researcher.

The discussion made two things clear. One is that Russian sociologists’ distaste for ethics committees is linked to the socio-political context of Russian academia, where scholars’ negative experience of bureaucracy breeds protest against any form of institutionalisation and regulation. The other is that this scepticism is strongly reinforced by the English-language literature on ethics committees.

We might well ask why the latter is so negative. The answer is that, whether we acknowledge it or not, a good academic article is, as a rule, deemed to be a critical one. We tend to withhold from discussing processes or institutions that work well. This is understandable,

for progress is largely based on the improvement of past practices. As a result, what *does not work* receives special attention. The drawback is that readers may not derive a full, accurate picture of the state of current practice.

As for over-bureaucratisation, this is currently the main worry of Russia-based scholars. It manifests itself in a number of ways and affects both individual scholars and institutions. One of the more recent victims was the conference’s host, the European University at St Petersburg. This is an internationally renowned research and teaching institution but it nonetheless lost its licence to conduct educational activities in 2016 because it failed to meet some bizarre bureaucratic requirements, such as failing to display anti-alcohol messages.

The university’s rector speaks of a “monstrous bureaucratisation”, whereby the controlling bodies display more interest in ill-advised procedures than in the actual quality of academic research and teaching. As one of the university’s professors, Ivan Kurilla, puts it: “the logic of bureaucratisation is linked to the Ministry of Education’s...total distrust of professors and students”. What has become increasingly obvious is that the distrust is mutual. Researchers fear any form of institutionalisation because they have experienced what it may mutate into.

I acknowledge the conference audience’s scepticism about ethics committees. I am also sure that my personal experience of research into knowledge production in Russia does not qualify me to make generalisations. However,

as an early career scholar, I have definitely benefited from a formal and structured reflection on the ethics of my interview-based research. With the help of a list of questions, I was able to think through potential dangers to research participants as well as to myself. And while there may be some artificiality to the process of coming up with ways to mitigate potential dangers – as the reality of the situation in the field is never exactly the same as the one that a researcher envisages beforehand – the formalisation of ethical assessment provided me with food for thought and, trivial as it may seem, made me allocate time for reflection on ethics.

Criticism of research ethics committees in English-language journals ranges from softer concerns about their lack of necessary expertise to warnings about their infringement of academic freedom. In Russia, where scholars are struggling not just with increasing bureaucracy but also, more recently, with political control, these clearly are worries that should not be dismissed. In addition, Russian scholars face a shortage of research funds and declining academic standards – exacerbated by the fraudulent awarding of academic titles, unfair practices in conducting and publishing research and a proliferation of low-quality journals.

Moreover, there are several instances where scholars’ own initiative and joint action has worked far better than the mechanisms of control designed by bureaucrats. For instance, in 2013, a group of researchers and journalists established Dissnet, a now widely known and respected community network aimed at raising awareness of and exposing fraud in the awarding of academic titles. Professional groups such as historians’ Free Historical Society and open access publishing outlets such as Troitskii Variant are another illustration of how scholars can organise to expose and resist unnecessary bureaucratic pressures. The former protests against many aspects of state interference in academia, such as the removal of the European University’s teaching licence and the criminal case against an academic researching Russia’s political system. The latter sees its mission as preventing the degradation of academic standards; contributors regularly comment on the government’s plans for academic reform, such as a presidential decree demanding a greater number of Russian-authored publications in the Web of Science.

Such sceptical attitudes towards the regulation of research mean that adopting models from elsewhere may not be the optimal solution in Russia. Scholars will need to think creatively about frameworks and principles that both experienced and early career researchers can draw on to help them with ethical challenges encountered in the field. A balanced analysis of both the positive and negative aspects of the mission and actual workings of research ethics committees would be a good starting point.

Katarzyna Kaczmarek is a Marie Curie research fellow in international politics at Aberystwyth University.

The educators strike back: walkout is right

I was dismayed to read John Marenbon's article, "USS strike: academics are wrong to walk out" (Opinion, 2 March, www.timeshighereducation.com).

When you take away the hysteria ("trade union militancy"), the ad hominem slurs ("armchair socialism") and the rather egregious errors of fact (the claim that the Universities Superannuation Scheme is in debt), the article boils down to three points: the strike makes those who are not striking uncomfortable; it is unfair to students; the consequences of a University and College Union victory would be catastrophic.

With regard to the first point, the worst that I have heard is



“Greed” would not be a term naturally used to describe people protesting that their compensation is being cut

“Please don't cross the picket line.” If that makes non-striking colleagues uncomfortable, it should. Those who are on strike are forgoing half a month's wages (and, in universities that are exacting further penalties, sometimes more) in service of a cause that, if successful, will also benefit those who are crossing the picket lines but who continue to draw their full salaries.

The claim that students are being “used as pawns” is absurd. No one likes to strike. In addition to the financial disincentive, academics are in this business because we love teaching. The union has made strong efforts to explain the situation to students. Students are, of course, free to decide whom to hold responsible

for the current situation: their lecturers (whose dedication to their profession would, one would hope, have long been evident to them from classroom interaction), or the administrators at Universities UK and the USS (who refused to sit down to Acas-mediated negotiations until pressured to do so by the strike).

I won't say much about the third point because Marenbon doesn't either: he simply asserts rather than attempting to make an argument. I do, however, want to speak to his claim that the strike is motivated by “self-interest and greed”. That lecturers are striking from self-interest is true enough. On the other hand, to say that striking lecturers are motivated by greed is slanderous and beneath contempt. “Greed” would not, to my mind, be a term naturally used to describe people – many of whom could earn far more in the private sector and all of whom have seen the real value of their salaries fall by nearly 15 per cent in the past decade – protesting that their compensation is being cut, and drastically (the proposals would mean a 10 to 20 per cent cut in the value of pensions, translating to a net loss of something in the order of £10,000 per year for the average retiree).

The financial status of the USS is something that is open to discussion and increased contributions may well be necessary in order to keep the system working as a defined benefit scheme. These are all matters that the UCU has made clear it is willing to discuss. It is a pity that Marenbon isn't.

Ian A. McFarland
Regius professor of divinity
University of Cambridge

John Marenbon: you don't get it. This strike is not about a few militants but about thousands of academics, admin staff and students who are worried about the future. We have reached a watershed moment with regard to pay and conditions, but also in terms of the relentless marketisation of the sector. Perhaps the author has been insulated against the worst of that at the University of Cambridge, but others are not so lucky.

mhpervic
Via timeshighereducation.com

The idea that strikers are deliberately manipulating and injuring their students is insulting, as well as dismissive of the time and effort that they put into teaching.

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Students are neither gullible nor manipulable: they are adults who can think for themselves and some have come to the same conclusion as their lecturers. If anyone is uncomfortable with the picket line, so be it: it is OK to be put out of your comfort zone from time to time or to deviate from the lesson plan so that you can reflect on, voice and defend your opinion.

Marenbon is shaming academics for pointing out that they have livelihoods to protect – families to feed, old age to insure and lives to be lived in reasonable comfort.

Astrid Van den Bossche
Via timeshighereducation.com

Industrial action is now in its fourth week. By picketing and taking a significant financial loss of up to half a month's pay, union members have exposed miscalculations and shambolic behaviour on the part of UUK.

It is now clear that the projected deficit in the pension fund is a result of employers making reduced contributions, some years ago, taking advantage of its then-healthy state, and worst-case analyses being carried out at the present time imagining that all universities might go bankrupt simultaneously. The process by which UUK has brought such a state on us includes an amateurish interpretation of its survey among participating institutions about the levels of risk acceptable to them. Further, a tweet being the trigger to agree a meeting with union negotiators does not inspire much confidence that this organisation intends to treat staff with any seriousness or respect.

With knowledge of the above, several vice-chancellors have acted sensibly in either clarifying their institutional positions in a more considered manner or by reversing previously held views. Others have called for more detailed analyses to be carried out by experts, even noticing that such experts are employed in the institutions that they lead.

None of this would have been possible without industrial action.

Hence, it is the behaviour of senior university leaders that should be blamed for the damage being done to student education.

It is urgent that the issue is resolved quickly so that staff can be confident that the pensions promised to them in return for the relatively lower pay is secure, and so that they can return to work.

Mahesan Nirranjan
Department of electronics and computer science
University of Southampton

Men on board

Elizabeth Chell reports (“Male mastheads”, Letters, 8 March) that 100 per cent of the editors of 23 journals in management and entrepreneurship are male. Not all social science disciplines are the same. In the 11 journals published by the British Psychological Society, the male-to-female ratio for the editors is approximately 50:50. However, it is a different matter for editorial boards. There is a greater proportion of men on the editorial board of the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* and men exceed women as consulting/advisory editors on the advisory panels of six BPS journals that have them.

James Hartley
Emeritus professor
Keele University

True mettle

Elizabeth Kiss assures us that, compared with welding, philosophy “cultivates habits of reflection and self-examination” (HE&me, News, 8 March). A philosopher who would have had an interest in this assertion was Rush Rhees (1905-1989), a pupil of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In 1940, Rhees worked in a factory as a welder, but what we also need for a test of the assertion are examples of philosophers who become competent and professional welders.

R. E. Rawles
Honorary research fellow in psychology
UCL





Anti-Brexit historians must dare to be political

Tanja Buelmann, professor of history at Northumbria University



As a child of 1980s West Germany, my prevailing personal memories of growing up are of positive change: the rejection of fascism and the advancement of democracy and equality.

Yet I see today that those advances are nowhere near as deeply rooted in Western societies as I had come to assume.

From Brexit to Trump to current developments in Poland, hard-won progress is being undone at an alarming speed. Historians have an important role to play in challenging that.

My academic upbringing was at the University of Bielefeld. Established in the late 1960s as a reform university, it was founded on the principles of progressive learning and interdisciplinarity – the latter to the point that the university’s building itself was designed to facilitate it, a central hall physically connecting all faculties.

Leading scholars from Bielefeld in the late 1980s showed how historians can engage in, and lead, debates about critical political and social questions of the time – in this case, the question of how Germany can interpret and ought to deal with its Nazi past.

This was a question that entered wider public discourse in 1986 with the publication of Ernst Nolte’s feuilleton *Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will* (“The past that will not go away”) in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Nolte wanted to draw a line under Germany’s past, criticising what he considered excessive interest in the history of the Nazi regime. He argued that most Nazi crimes, such as deportations, had been seen elsewhere before, for instance during the Russian Revolution, and that, therefore, the Nazi regime ought to be viewed in that context rather than as unique.

His piece drew widespread criticism nationally and internationally. In Germany, it triggered the so-called *Historikerstreit* (historians’ argument), with prominent Bielefeld historians taking a strong position against Nolte.

This debate was much more than an argument between historians. It also brought to the fore how Germany confronts its past, something the UK has not done in the same way, as well as two much more fundamental questions that we often discussed when I was a student. First, what can – what should – historians do when they see a defining political/social moment in the present where their intervention might make a difference? And second, what can – what should – they do, when that intervention might blur the lines between their knowledge and their view might make them political?

After the EU referendum, there can be no doubt – whatever one’s position on Brexit itself – that the UK is at a defining moment: a point at which it needs to define not only what the common interest is, but its very future.

Currently, both are being defined primarily by a comparatively small group of politicians and commentators, who are, demonstrably, driven less by safeguarding the best future for the country than by ideology or their own interests.

Many of them frequently employ history for their ends to establish a particular narrative, be it by using anti-German tropes referencing the Second World War to facilitate an anti-EU argument, or by invoking nostalgia for a glorious imperial past that never existed.

Yet while history is frequently used, historians themselves – academics and experts more broadly – are derided and dismissed. This is a climate in which historians can provide much-needed context and interpretation. They can challenge myths and short-term thinking. They can help make sense of the present.

Expressing knowledge as well as a view, especially when that view is political, can come at a price. I know that from my own experience of abuse.

However, historians must now not only take a step forward but also take a stand. There is a time for all of us historians to dare and it is now.

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“Thank goodness for the 62 out of 132 UK universities that are the real drivers of social mobility in the country today”

USS strike: we need

Jan Machielsen, lecturer in early modern



“There can be no debate with someone who denies the principles.”

My colleagues in philosophy will be better placed to discuss the origins of this age-old maxim – known in Latin as “*Contra principia negantem non est disputandum*” – but the basic idea is clear enough: one cannot have a discussion without a shared premise. There is no disputing the facts.

The maxim has come to mind with ever-increasing regularity – and clarity – from the moment news of the mooted university pension reforms broke, like the nightmare or vision at the beginning of a horror film, whose truth is gradually revealed.

Facts are, we are told, facts. In an all-staff email in January, our

Elitism is alive and well in most UK universities

John Raftery, vice-chancellor of London Metropolitan University



Recent Ucas statistics revealed that the country's class system is still hard at work and as active as ever in more than half of our universities.

Figures analysed by *Times*

Higher Education ("Most privileged outnumber least advantaged 2:1 at most UK HEIs", 25 January) showed that, at 70 universities, students from the most advantaged areas were still twice as likely to gain a place as peers who lived in disadvantaged areas. At 10 universities, the ratio was higher than 9:1.

Despite many years of widening participation efforts by higher education colleagues, it appears that where you live and where your family comes from still determine your access to a university education.

To me, these figures demonstrate an elitism that continues to run through higher education in the UK.

Young people who live in low participation areas seem to be responding obediently to implicit signals that university, and the social mobility that comes with a degree, is simply not

for them. They are to "know their place". They are not encouraged to have dreams and ambitions. And those signals are coming loud and clear from the very universities that are simply not doing enough to promote social mobility.

What lies beneath these Ucas figures is yet another reminder of the vital role that post-92 institutions, such as the one for which I am privileged to be the vice-chancellor, are playing in the UK higher education sector.

Let's remind ourselves that it is 62 universities, less than half of our sector, that have what I would describe as a fitting number of students from low participation districts enrolled.

It is through their widening participation efforts that thousands of young people have been given the opportunity of a university education.

It's an opportunity that, very often, was never considered by themselves or their parents or their teachers throughout their childhoods.

This experience is in direct contrast to the "other" young people, those who come from

high participation districts where their parents and other family members have studied at higher level and gained degrees and therefore enjoyed a range of careers available only to university graduates.

Those "other" young people have been brought up with the expectation of higher study; they see it as their right.

So thank goodness for the 62 out of 132 UK universities, mine included, that are, I believe, the real drivers of social mobility in the country today. It is to us that young people from low participation areas come when they want to transform their lives and the lives of their children, when they recognise that they are not prepared to "settle" for the life and life chances set out to them from birth or from when they or their parents arrived in this country.

London Met is proud to be among the universities that actively transform the lives of their students. We believe that students from low participation areas deserve that opportunity.

It is therefore disappointing that more than half of our universities have stalled in their efforts to encourage applications from those for whom higher education is a passport to social mobility and, indeed, a transformed life.



an honest debate about pension 'facts'

John Raftery, vice-chancellor of London Metropolitan University

vice-chancellor reported that the pension scheme was in deficit by about £7 billion, and employer contributions would have to rise by an unaffordable 4 per cent, costing Cardiff more than £10 million annually, to fund current pension arrangements.

These facts are, of course, regrettable, but who can disagree with them? Do they not represent a fait accompli?

This has been the position of almost all vice-chancellors: combining facts with profound expressions of regret. They were wellsprings of understanding and compassion. We really wish it wasn't so, but the facts leave us no choice.

The origins of this strategy can be debated. Certainly, it was successful for a time. Not only did it foreclose the possibility of debate

– facts are facts – it made any response seem overtly emotional, an unwillingness to see reason.

Yet, facts are never just facts, and numbers even less so. Facts, we teach first-year history undergraduates, are made. Facts are nothing without interpretation. It is historians that identify turning points, they are not there waiting to be found.

In this pension dispute, staff were presented with the polished end product of a protracted process of interpretation and – dare I say it – manipulation, intended to occlude the possibility of debate.

This process intended to hide from view legitimate areas of discussion. Forecasts based on assumptions (some of them highly dubious, which involved the bankruptcy of the higher education sector) were transformed into

cold, hard facts, whose veracity only the most hot-blooded would refuse to accept.

This gambit which once looked so successful has run into trouble. Even if employers still prevail (and I hope not), their leaders are weakened. Their strategy has been exposed and can never again be resurrected. Their facts have become factoids. You are in trouble when your pension calculations are challenged by the *Financial Times*.

The desperation with which vice-chancellors have clung to their reasonableness has also become apparent. Oxford's vice-chancellor expressed her understanding for "the depth of feeling on [the pension] issue but I have to say that I have been disheartened these past few days by the tenor of some of

the debate", but then endorsed a strategy that frustrated debate in the university's main decision-making body. She, too, has now changed course.

Reasonableness such as this is the embodiment of passive-aggressive behaviour. It can be diagnosed and pointed out, but those who engage in it are impossible to dislodge from their stance.

Yet at least passive-aggressive behaviour is almost necessarily time-limited.

Vice-chancellors are finding that, stripped of their facts, the mask of "I-am-sorry-you-feel-so-strongly" can hold only for so long.

Let's hope that they will soon abandon this posture altogether. Employees have been waiting for an honest debate for far too long already.





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Are sisters doing it for themselves?

Does academic sisterhood exist only in the (male) mind? Are women really supportive of one another? And if so, how far does it go to redressing male advantage? **Holly Else** considers queen bees and female networks





We all sat around talking about men who were sexually harassing and, by chance, the vast majority in the room all named a man who was a terrible predator – he had a bed in his office.”

The occasion, according to Miriam David, a professor at the UCL Institute of Education, was a mid-1970s meeting of female academics from universities across the south west of England, who were discussing forming a women’s network under the auspices of the British Sociology Association. Fearing that the authorities would not believe them, the group decided to warn fellow staff and students about the man by posting a notice in the ladies’ lavatories at the University of Bristol, where both he and David were employed at the time. They reasoned that putting it there was the only solution “because that was a place that men wouldn’t see it”, David recalls.

Meanwhile, in the early 1980s, a group of women on the west coast of the US turned up to a research centre at Stanford University to mourn the death of a colleague. Shelly Rosaldo, an associate professor of anthropology at the institution, had fallen off a cliff and died on a field trip in the Philippines. The

impromptu vigil started almost immediately after the news of Rosaldo’s death broke. Myra Strober, who is now emeritus professor at Stanford’s School of Education and was one of the mourners, says that the women knew instinctively where they should meet.

“The entire academic sisterhood came together at the Centre for Research on Women without anybody sending a single message,” she says, adding that she still remembers to this day the feeling of support that she drew from the gathering.

These stories from several decades ago paint a picture of solidarity among female academics, of women looking out for each other in the face of male domination of universities. But what about the modern era? Does anything resembling an academic sisterhood still exist? And should it?

Although discrimination may in many ways be less overt and less conscious, the infamous “leaky pipeline” of female academics suggests that women still run up against both conscious and unconscious barriers to their progression. According to the most recent publicly available figures, for 2014-15, 40 per cent of all academic staff in UK universities are women,

but only 23 per cent of professors are female. And of the 136 current UK university leaders listed on Universities UK’s website, only 37 are women. It is a similar story elsewhere in the world. In Australia, for instance, 12 out of 39 university leaders are female, according to the Universities Australia website.

And sexual harassment apparently remains a problem, too. In the wake of the recent revelations about the abuse of women in Hollywood and Westminster (in an echo of David’s story it emerged that a secret WhatsApp group warned female staff in Parliament about male MPs with a history of harassing behaviour), *Times Higher Education* ran a feature highlighting numerous recent examples of harassment in the academy (“Cultures of denial”, Features, 16 November 2017).

The second wave of feminism, also known as the women’s liberation movement, was in full swing at the time of the discussions about the now-deceased Bristol professor, who had visited David at home shortly after she arrived in the city and chased her through various rooms. David had moved from London, where she had been part of a consciousness-raising group in the late 1960s. “A lot of what we



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“**[The sisterhood] is no more than personal supportiveness and solidarity among women who know what it is like to be shat on by men**”

were doing was creating feminist knowledge to use it [for] political, personal and academic change. So it was extremely powerful: we felt very excited by these ideas,” she explains. “We used the concept of sisterhood – [although] whether or not sisters are that supportive of each other is a more contentious question.”

Academics are divided on the question of whether a 21st-century sisterhood exists. An online straw poll of more than 400 academics, conducted in preparation for this article, reveals that 44 per cent of the self-selecting respondents (44 per cent of whom describe themselves as early career academics) believe in the existence of an academic sisterhood, defined as a network whereby female scholars offer each other certain kinds of help and support that they would not offer to men. This compares with 30 per cent who do not believe that a sisterhood exists. Interestingly, women, who make up 86 per cent of survey respondents, are significantly less likely than men to believe that a sisterhood exists: 42 per cent of women have such a belief, compared with 55 per cent of men – although the number of male respondents to the survey is relatively small, so the figures should be treated with caution.



More than half of female respondents (51 per cent) claim to have personally benefited from the help of their academic sisters. Among them, the most common type of benefit is career mentoring and guidance, followed by confidence boosts, support through a difficult situation, and access to networks or influential people in their field. But female solidarity led to tangible career benefits such as promotion or getting a paper published for only a very small number of respondents (just 3 and 1 per cent, respectively, of those who felt that they had benefited from the sisterhood cited such results).

According to a UK-based early career academic in the arts and humanities, in her experience the sisterhood “is no more than personal supportiveness and solidarity among women who know what it is like to be shat on by men. It certainly isn’t some kind of exclusive cabal that is keeping men out of opportunities.”

When asked whether there exist gender-specific networks that benefit men, 69 per cent of all respondents agree, rising to 75 per cent among women (and falling to just 35 per cent among men). For related reasons, 78 per cent of female respondents (and just 37 per cent of male ones) believe that it would not be unfair to men if an academic sisterhood did indeed exist.

“Women are structurally disadvantaged in every aspect of society; why should they not support each other and fight this via a ‘sisterhood?’” asks a female UK early career scholar in the social sciences (social scientists account for 28 per cent of respondents, compared with 42 per cent from the humanities, 16 per cent from medicine and the life sciences and 14 per cent from the physical sciences, engineering and mathematics). “Men’s power has been solidified over centuries in a way that is inherently unfair for women...Men are still free to support each other in whatever way they feel is necessary,

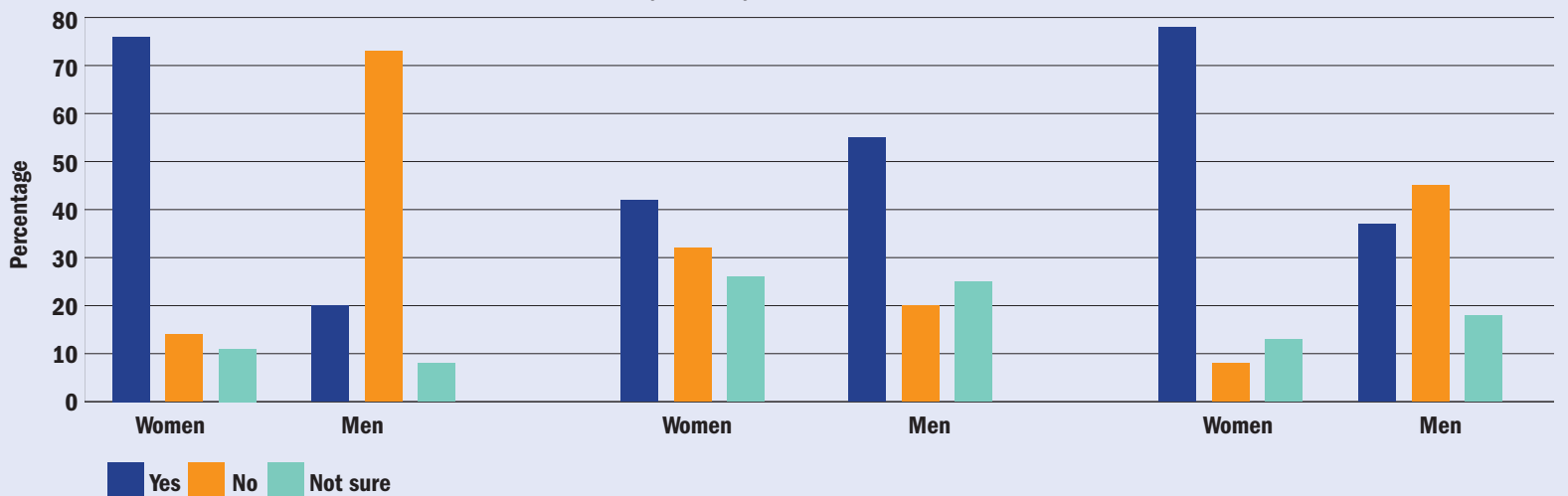


SISTER ACT: WHAT SURVEY RESPONDENTS THINK ABOUT THE 'ACADEMIC SISTERHOOD'

Do you think women have an obligation to help and support other women in academia?

Do you think an "academic sisterhood" exists, whereby women help and support each other in a way that they do not for men?

Do you think it is fair on men that an academic sisterhood may exist?



but they don't need to as much."

Meanwhile, a female academic in the physical sciences, engineering and mathematics believes that "men already benefit from the academic network, which is dominated by men and supports men more than it supports women. We need an academic sisterhood to balance up support – and then we can just have a supportive academic environment for all when we have equal gender representation."

And while a junior social scientist in Canada is "sceptical" that a sisterhood exists, it "certainly couldn't outpace the benefits male networks ensure" if it did.

But alongside the supportive tales, those asked about the academic sisterhood also cite stories of female-to-female hostility, bullying and even ideas theft. Of course, these behaviour patterns are also far from unknown among male academics, but there are those who believe that there is something especially reprehensible about a lack of female solidarity. That view was famously articulated by Madeleine Albright, the US' first female secretary of state and a former Georgetown University academic: first at a 2004 discussion at her alma mater, Wellesley College, and several times subsequently, including during the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, another graduate of the women's liberal arts college in Massachusetts. There is, she believes, "a special place in hell for women who don't help other women".

The idea that some powerful women in male-dominated fields treat those below them more critically when they are female is nothing new. The phenomenon, known as queen bee syndrome, was coined in the early 1970s by psychologists at the University of Michigan. Popular theories of what motivates such behaviour include the fact that such women have struggled to the top without help and consequently feel that the onus is on others to do the same, almost as a rite of passage. Queen bees might even actively work to keep other women away from the top table, psychologists suggest.

An early career humanities scholar working at a large post-92 institution in the UK, who prefers not to be named, knows only too well how it feels to be the victim of such behaviour. She was left feeling humiliated by the "vitriol" spouted about her by some senior women in her department.

"Online, there's a fan community, supportive and loving, with a strong sisterly feel. In my institution, however, I have faced some of the most horrendous attacks from older female academics," she says.

Last year, for instance, she returned to work after a hysterectomy and experienced a backlash from female colleagues, who felt that she was causing them more work and that she was a "whiner". "One [female] colleague also suggested I was faking the whole thing because I couldn't hack 'playing with the big boys'," she adds, describing the comment as a "punch in the gut: it felt humiliating, as if everything that I'd done in my work with this person was of absolutely no consequence. It was definitely not a sisterly atmosphere."

A PhD student, who also prefers her



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“Online, there’s a fan community with a strong sisterly feel. In my institution, however, I have faced some horrendous attacks from older female academics”



identity not to be disclosed, felt betrayed by her female supervisor, who would not fulfil a prior promise to support her application for an extension of her thesis submission deadline after returning from maternity leave. "She dropped me like a hot potato," says the student, who later found out that the supervisor has been actively working behind the scenes to prevent the university from granting her the extension. Although she has "no idea" of her supervisor's motive, the doctoral student wonders whether the need for women to "cover their backs all the time" can lead to a "habit of working behind closed doors instead of being transparent".

Whatever the reason, her experience "made me feel really irrelevant and a failure, and I wanted to give up...I thought that she must be doing this because I am not a worthy scholar." The incident has also made her more cautious about trusting other academics of either gender: "It is a scar that I will bear for ever," she says.

Naomi Ellemers, a social psychologist and a distinguished university professor at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, has spent the past 20 years studying the queen bee phenomenon in workplaces, including academia. The mentality, she says, is a consequence of gender inequality, rather than a cause of it: "It is very clearly connected to personal career experiences of individual women."

Women who have been victims of sexist treatment in academia can react by emphasising how different they are from a stereotypical woman, Ellemers explains. In doing so, they take on traits stereotypically found in men, such as overt ambition, competitiveness and other individualistic tendencies that they feel are highly valued institutionally. But Ellemers is "slowly becoming disaffected" by the term "queen bee" because it implies that there is something inherent to women in the workplace that entails an unwillingness to help each other, or even to tolerate each other's presence. She prefers the behaviour to be labelled a "self-distancing response".

"It not something that is dormant in all

women,” she adds: it also happens to men from minority groups when they are confronted with stereotypical expectations at work.

It seems that even those involved in the original sisterhood movement are not immune from queen bee behaviour. UCL’s David says that some women in her emergent feminist network, who went on to become vice-chancellors and other senior figures in UK universities, became unsympathetic to other women.

“I have never asked them but they may have felt that it was very dangerous to become more supportive of women academics than male academics because it would have been seen as special pleading,” she says.

Susan Bassnett, who became the first female professor in humanities at the University of Warwick in the early 1990s, is “100 per cent opposed” to the queen bee mentality, but knows it exists – in both genders. She was left stunned by the behaviour of two colleagues at one of the women’s lunches that she organised after gaining her professorship. These events brought together a small group of female professors, readers and senior administrators from across the university to discuss their experiences: “All the women who came along thought it was great just to be able to sit and have Chatham House rules and seriously talk” about issues such as pay disparities, promotions and mentoring. But in one session, two “distinguished senior women well known as feminist scholars” flatly refused to do any mentoring. Their motivation, Bassnett recalls, was “more or less that they had better things to do”.

She thinks that such a stance is indefensible. “I think that it is the duty, not just the responsibility, of one generation to help the next. You help them in any way that you can by reading their work if they ask, and helping them to publish,” she says.

Meanwhile, a female professor in the sciences at a research-intensive university in the UK, who asked not to be named, says that in her experience men can be just as bad, if not worse, to each other as women can – but this is much less remarked on: “There is often talk of women in science being bitches to each other, but I have not come across similar talk about men being nasty to other men,” she says.

In *THE*’s survey, 80 per cent of female respondents report having been treated less favourably because of their gender at some point during their academic careers, but only 22 per cent say that this came at the hands of another woman (57 per cent of men report a similar experience; of those, 65 per cent say that it was perpetrated by a woman). In fact, research suggests that men engage just as often or even more often in the kind of behaviour that typifies a queen bee – such as using malicious humour, excluding people and making them feel inferior.

Although the science professor counts herself as “much nicer” than any of her male bosses, by virtue of being more considerate, offering praise and constructive criticism, and sending Christmas cards to underlings,



I think it is the duty of one generation to help the next. You help them in any way that you can by reading their work if they ask, and helping them to publish



she has still found herself with a “tough reputation”. She adds that she is often expected to do more nurturing of young talent than her male peers, and that women can be penalised for neglecting these duties in a way that men are not.

“This ‘niceness’ expectation might affect women’s progression to top-level jobs – less time for things that matter for one’s own career,” she says, adding that she feels, from her experience, that “niceness” and leadership may not mix well.

When asked whether women have an obligation to help and support other women in academia, 76 per cent of female respondents (but only 20 per cent of male respondents) agree. In a follow-up question, we asked whether women have a greater obligation to support other women than they do to support men. Although only 45 women responded, the response is interesting: 56 per cent agree that they do, against 29 per cent who disagree.

Countless women’s networks have sprouted up at universities around the world, putting just such an onus on women to support other women. The Women’s Classical Committee UK is one example. Established in 2015, it organises a regular feminism and Classics conference, offers financial support for the costs of travel and childcare for scholarly activities and runs a mentoring scheme for PhD students and early career researchers. One of its co-founders is Victoria Leonard, a research associate at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London. Until she started a family, Leonard says that she had not noticed the lack of female role models around her because “the issue of gender didn’t always come up. My PhD supervisors were men, my external examiner was a man and my internal examiner was a man. Men have been influential on me.”

Leonard says that older female classicists who she spoke with while founding the



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committee told her that these networks have always existed informally. “But they are certainly not very visible and they are not easy to join if you don’t know which women are good at giving advice and who could be an informal mentor,” she says. “You can’t always expect solidarity from someone just because they are female – in the same way that you shouldn’t always expect men to be misogynistic and anti-feminist.”

The committee is predominantly for women but it is not gender-exclusive. This is because the goals of diversity and inclusivity are “not necessarily gender-specific and they help and harm people equally”, Leonard explains. Indeed, some academics remain wary of networks that work to further the cause of women exclusively. Dame Athene Donald, master of Churchill College, Cambridge and the University of Cambridge’s former gender equality champion, is one sceptic. She says that while it is tempting for women to want to share experiences with other women, she is “nervous about groupings that explicitly exclude men because women take exception to this in reverse. Social meetings are one thing, but formal structures that are gender-exclusive are another.”

Her point is that genuine progress towards equality relies on both genders working together: “Just because we know the so-called old boys’ network may traditionally have supported men only, that is not a reason to perpetuate a new girls’ network per se... We should shy away from anything that appears to pit half the population against the other half. There may be issues – such as how did you cope with pregnancy – that you really need to discuss with a woman, but general career advice can be offered by anyone with whom you have a good interaction,” Donald says.

Martha Nussbaum, professor of law and ethics at the University of Chicago, finds that she enjoys “an easy rapport with the female faculty that permits me to do things like going to the movies with them, or shopping, that would not be possible for a senior male to do”. But she agrees that “of course everyone ought to mentor untenured faculty”. And when it comes to hiring decisions, the whole department has a responsibility to search for and support female candidates (although not necessarily hiring them if the bar of quality is not passed). “An individual woman should not carry a lone secret crusade

but should make her views known and persuade the group,” Nussbaum says.

Indeed, it seems that the hierarchy at Chicago is already persuaded: the institution makes available extra funds for departments that find an outstanding female candidate, according to Nussbaum. Such a thing was unheard of in the early days of Strober’s career at Stanford in the early 1970s – during which, as she vividly portrays in a recently published memoir, she became a feminist after being denied a tenure-track position by her faculty chairman for spurious reasons (“Work in progress”, *Features*, 9 June 2016). Reflecting on her experience of the sisterhood, Strober says that it has been “utterly sustaining. If you read the literature, men have been helping each other out forever.”

Since she earned her PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1969, she says, discrimination against women has become more subtle – which, in some ways, makes it more difficult to deal with.

“Back then, men would say things that they wouldn’t dare to say now,” she says. “But that doesn’t mean that they are not still thinking and acting on such things.” All the more reason, she adds, to have a sister on your side. ●



Inside, life-changing lessons

Offering university-level courses to prisoners is relatively new, as is inviting undergraduates to learn alongside them. But the experience can have profound effects that transform learners' views of themselves and others. **Helen Lock** reports



The canteen at HMP Isis is no genteel tearoom, but today it could be mistaken for one. Staff and family members of inmates at the young offenders' institution mingle among tables covered in white cloths, helping themselves to items from the buffet prepared by prisoners on the institution's catering course. Emily Thomas, the prison governor, recommends the jam-and-cream mini-scones.

Meanwhile, all the chairs have been turned to face the front of the room, in readiness for the eight philosophy presentations to be given by young offenders. The assessment of these, by academics from Goldsmiths, University of London, will count towards their final Extended Project Qualification, equivalent to half an A level. The academics' responses, at the end of each presentation, will help the students to clarify their essay questions; 5,000 words must be submitted to complete the EPQ that some of the prisoners hope will

bolster a future university application.

HMP Isis is located in south-east London, not far from Goldsmiths. Although the university has plenty of experience teaching former inmates through its well-established Open Book programme, it started teaching inside prisons only last year, beginning with a successful 10-week pilot programme covering social sciences. The male inmates are all between 18 and 30, so they fall into the typical age range for students. However, they have a variety of prior education levels, to which the courses must be able to adapt. Learning alongside the prisoners are current students from Goldsmiths, taking extra credits or on access courses.

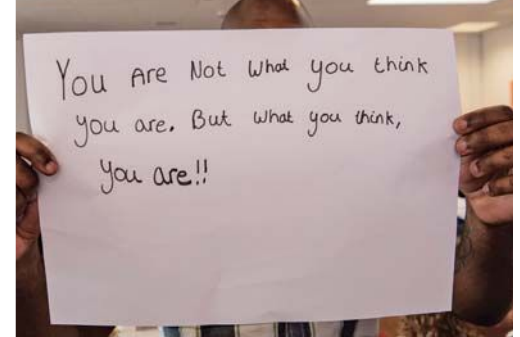
Thomas is very impressed by the response to the programme from her inmates. "They are avid learners, which has been very exciting to see," she says. "I wanted to get something like this to happen because it's aspirational – there tends to be a focus on vocational

training in prisons, which is important, but this is something different."

Nervous anticipation builds in the room as the start time for the presentations approaches. Each one is the culmination of 10 weeks of hard work, at the beginning of which many of the prisoners admitted to having known nothing about philosophy. The learning curve has been steep. But after the first few presentations are delivered with confidence, everyone starts to relax a little and starts scribbling down notes and thinking of potential questions.

Ursula Blythe, the tutor who led the course, is a philosophy master's student at UCL and is herself someone who came to higher education later in life. She completed an access course and then a BA at Goldsmiths, where she first became involved with Open Book.

She chose, in the course, to look at the representation of race, religion, gender,



sexuality and disability in society, as a starting point for asking philosophical questions. Accordingly, many of the presentations explore religion, morality and life after death. One queries why people believe in God and examines the “first cause”, or “cosmological”, argument for God’s existence (the need for a supreme being to cause the universe to exist). In considering Descartes’ theory of dualism (the separation of mind and body), another encourages the audience to identify whether they are dualists or physicalists by a show of hands.

“The learners are mainly black and ethnic minority young men, so I thought it would be worth reflecting on identity within UK society,” Blythe explains. “Raising awareness of themes such as disability and sexuality helped to fuel debate and engender a sense of empathy. I wanted to motivate the learners to see themselves as active thinkers and budding philosophers, which seemed to work really well.”

One prisoner-turned-philosopher, Mo, poses the question: “Does capitalism provide a basis for morality and social security?”

“I’ve really changed my thinking on it,” he tells *Times Higher Education*. “I started out just thinking that capitalism was what we’ve got, and that it is the best system, but now I’m not so sure. I haven’t decided yet what the answer to my question is, but the process has made me realise that everything can be questioned: you have to go into philosophy with an open mind.”

Mo’s favourite philosopher is Immanuel Kant, and he insists that what he has read during the course will be useful in his everyday life, both now and when he is released. “It’s definitely given me a different perspective. I used to think money was the only thing that mattered; it didn’t matter how I got it. Now I feel like other things are important.”

It is hard to overstate the genuinely transformative impact that the course seems to have had on the group. One of the speakers says that by taking part in the course he realised that everything could be questioned and that his opinion was important. Another found that, as a gay man, he identified with the writings of Michel Foucault, and observed that a discussion on the topic of sexuality had led to a shift in the wider group’s attitudes.

“It’s definitely given me a different perspective. I used to think money was the only thing that mattered; it didn’t matter how I got it. Now I feel like other things are important”

All this will be music to the ears of those who went to a great deal of trouble to set up the course. One of those is Jo Sharpe, a prison officer at Isis. Every week, she says, she faced a battle to find the resources and space needed. This is despite the fact that there was only capacity for 12 inmates, out of a prison population of 630; the selection was made by interview, and the 30 unsuccessful candidates had to make do with a place on the waiting list.

The appetite for higher-level non-vocational learning is evidently keen among offenders. However, amid cuts to prison budgets and reductions in staff numbers, it would be easy to assume that the provision of such learning would not top many institutions’ list of priorities.

According to Rod Clark, chief executive of the Prisoners’ Education Trust (PET), the budget for education in prisons has been saved from cuts, but institutions are often too short-staffed to facilitate lessons. “This means that prisoners have been locked in their cells much more than they should – sometimes for 23 hours a day,” he says. “Therefore, even if teaching could happen, the prisoners are not being [released from their cells] to get there.”

Despite such challenges, he says, there are currently about 120 university-prison partnerships, many of which were established in the past two years. According to the charity’s database, 23 of these were launched in 2017, involving a variety of institutions, from small, new universities to large research-intensives – and, of course, the Open University.

It is nothing new to find teachers and academics working inside prisons; various types of ad hoc education have been on offer to prisoners for years. But formal, university-led lessons such as the programme at Isis have developed only relatively recently in the UK, Clark says. The model that Goldsmiths is using – of undergraduate students learning alongside prisoners – was pioneered in 2014 by Durham University with its Inside/Out criminology module. The following year, the University of Cambridge launched a similar programme, called Learning Together.

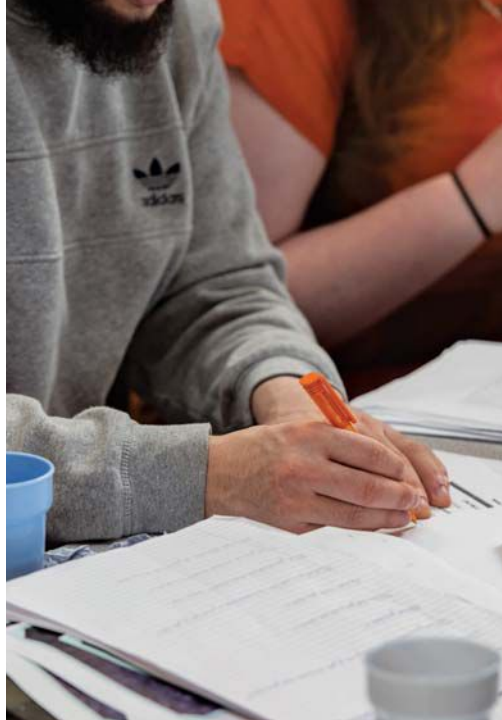
Indeed, initiatives by criminology and law departments lie at the root of many university-prison partnerships, as there is an obvious benefit for mainstream undergraduates in the opportunity to experience prisons and to learn from prisoners.

Hannah Thompson, a third-year criminology student at the University of Manchester, says that her department’s partnership with HMP Risley in Cheshire, which started last September, has been very useful.

“For me, criminology is more than a degree. I want to become a researcher myself, and I feel it’s not enough to just go to lectures and seminars to become a criminologist: you have to go out and work with the groups of people you come across in your readings,” she says.

She has been struck by how much she has in common with the inmate-students she has worked alongside. “A lot of the guys are a similar age to me, and we agree on many things, particularly stuff relating to how bad the prison system is – it’s amazing to have what you have read confirmed by them.”

Shadd Maruna, a professor of criminology at Manchester, suggests that learning inside a prison motivates undergraduates such as Thompson to go the extra mile in their studies. But perhaps more importantly, he feels that it



“It’s easy to underestimate just how important it is to get a different perspective from learners experiencing a completely different institution from your own university”

helps them to “put a face to a name”, to personalise the effects of the criminal justice policies that they explore in books and seminars. He believes that students on other courses that grapple with social problems could also benefit from being taught in prison because offenders are likely to be at the sharp end of many of the issues that they cover.

This feeling is echoed by Morwenna Benniallick, a research officer with the PET and a PhD student researching prison education culture at Royal Holloway, University of London. Having led a course inside HMP Feltham, another young offenders institution in London, she is adamant that there are educational and research benefits for universities across a variety of disciplines.

“What we are seeing more this year is a greater range of subjects being taught – creative writing, drama, psychology, social research and so on,” she says. “In those cases, the benefit [to mainstream students] is less clear at first, but it’s easy to underestimate just how important it is to get a different perspective from learners experiencing a completely different institution from your own university – especially if you are studying a creative or social sciences-based subject.”

She reports that doctoral students from other departments were also keen to teach alongside her at Feltham. “They wanted to learn how to explain quite complex philosophical ideas to people with different perspectives. That in turn helped them to clarify their arguments: the benefit goes both ways.”

According to Benniallick, there is a strong commitment to such programmes at senior levels across the sector. “There are a number

of different movements in the sector that this work speaks to, such as widening participation. We’ve seen more universities talk about developing Level 3 access courses, too; so there is a chance for offenders to continue education once they leave prison, and perhaps apply to university.”

But both Benniallick and Maruna acknowledge the challenges from the academic side of establishing partnerships. “It takes a very progressive and willing prison to sign up,” Maruna says. “You are essentially dealing with two large bureaucracies, and the staff at the prison need to be open to the idea – and not short-staffed, or angry at being short-staffed, preferably.”

Money is also an issue, he adds: universities typically do not have the extra funding to buy out the time of the academics involved in such programmes. “At Manchester, we were able to apply for funds from the Centre for Higher Education Research, Innovation and Learning (CHERIL). But other academics have said that they are doing the work in addition to their regular workloads,” he says.

Still, there is no end in sight to the expansion of university-prison partnerships. And if the experience of the Isis inmates is anything to go by, the benefits seem likely to far outweigh the practical difficulties involved. Before the afternoon is over, Blythe, the course leader, is applauded by her students for her efforts. Many declare that her lessons will stay with them for life.

“Skills such as critical thinking are so crucial,” Blythe says afterwards. “I sometimes feel like higher education – and then philosophy – saved my life, and I hope it’s the same for them, too.” ●

LOCKED-IN LEARNING: IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, PRISONERS AND UNDERGRADUATES ALL PULL TOGETHER

The experience of delivering higher education in a high-security prison is both very challenging and extremely rewarding.

The challenge lies not so much in overcoming the intimidation that you might expect to encounter from prisoners. In our experience of teaching a third-year criminology module at HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire last year, all the concerns around safety and security that we discussed at length during planning proved to be merely theoretical. Prisoners are no more confrontational in class than the standard Leeds-based undergraduates who take the module on penology alongside them.

Although the campus-based students entering the prison were understandably nervous about

coming into a penal institution, that was outweighed by their excitement about the prospect of having their preconceptions challenged in a way that they had never experienced before. The concerns for the prison-based students should not be underestimated either; they too were apprehensive about how they might be perceived by “outsiders” entering the prison. For us, creating this opportunity was about replicating the university experience in an environment that enables the two groups of students to come together and break down social barriers in the process.

The challenge is primarily pedagogical. When lecturing, we tend to stick to what we know, making liberal use of projectors, online learning technolo-

gies and esoteric jargon, encouraging students to independently explore the material available and draw their own conclusions. But prisoners cannot do this because they lack the unrestricted access to online learning resources.

But necessity is the mother of invention, and this narrowing of options creates a space for innovative thinking about pedagogy. You have to strip learning back to its core elements: engaging thoroughly with academic literature and creating opportunities for insightful discussion and debate. You need to provide all the base knowledge that you want explored and use small-group teaching to help the students understand how to process the literature into their own knowledge

through critical thinking and discussion. This creates powerful learning experiences.

Another concern that we had before the course began related to the wide disparities between the students’ educational levels. Nevertheless, we wanted everyone to have the same learning experience as far as possible. So we provided each student with a module handbook to guide their study, and gave them a reading pack with all material that they were required to read in advance of the taught sessions. All the students completed the work required, and this had unexpected benefits for the university-based undergraduates. In the absence of the online learning and resources they are used to, they immersed themselves in

their hard-copy materials, developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of research, theory and key concepts through engaging with the primary research.

The prison-based students were just as engaged – if not more so. In some cases, they were slightly less able to express their thoughts academically – but reading the literature enabled them to overcome that, too. In the event, all students attained at least an upper second-class grade in the module, with four of the prison-based students attaining a first-class grade.

Many of the students in the collective cohort described their experience of the course as life-changing, particularly in relation to their conceptions of self and others.

All the students had a profound impact on each other, willingly helping their peers to find their own voices, gain confidence and realise that they all had something to offer others: whether academic knowledge and understanding, or support more generally.

The provision of further Leeds Beckett courses at Full Sutton is currently being piloted, with a view to providing more of them within the next three years, across a number of subject areas. This will be to the benefit of both students on campus and those in hard-to-reach places in our community.

Helen Nichols and Bill Davies are senior lecturers in criminology and co-lead the Prison Research Network (PRISON) at Leeds Beckett University.

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Not a reflective surface in sight

Anti-populists need to look in the mirror instead of fixating on political rivals, says Matthew Goodwin

**Counter-Revolution:
Liberal Europe in Retreat**
By Jan Zielonka
Oxford University Press
176pp, £14.99
ISBN 9780198806561
Published 8 February 2018

In February 2018, Europeans celebrated the fact that the Berlin Wall has been down longer than it was up. Yet for a continent that is grappling with new divides, this watershed moment was bittersweet. While old walls have come down, new walls have gone up. The financial and refugee crises exposed a Europe that remains deeply divided – between winners and losers, East and West, creditors and debtors, liberals and nationalists.

Germany is officially unified but at elections last year the country's divides were laid bare for all to see. Social democrats slumped to their worst result since the 1930s, while the national populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) captured their first (94) seats in the Bundestag, demolishing the claim that populism simply cannot thrive in the nation that gave the world National Socialism.

Since then, things have got even worse for liberals. The German Social Democrats have fallen further, to just 15 per cent in the opinion polls, behind even the AfD. Nor is this an exceptional case. In Austria, France and the

Netherlands centre-left progressives have fallen to some of their lowest levels of support on record, while national populists have mounted a major electoral assault. Marine Le Pen lost the presidency but walked away with support from one in three French voters. Ukip has collapsed but with Brexit it achieved all that it ever wanted. National populists are only just being kept from power, yet from Theresa May in the UK to Sebastian Kurz in Austria, their centre-right cousins increasingly sound and look like them. Make no mistake: the liberal mainstream is losing.

How can we explain these historic events? One answer is to examine the populists themselves, to interrogate not only their ideology but their leaders, electorates and funding. Since Trump and Brexit, we have seen an explosion of scholarly interest in such topics. This adds to a much broader literature on the national populists in Europe, who since the 1990s have easily become the most studied “party family” in political science. Populism is not only going mainstream in the real world but in social science it is becoming an industry in its own right.

Yet liberals, argues Jan Zielonka in his new and timely book, should point the finger not at populists but at themselves. By “liberals”, he is referring mainly to liberal elites and the neoliberals who hijacked



The rise of populism Alexander Gauland of the AfD is caricatured in the 2018 Rose

the liberal project (“Liberalism is not defending minorities against majorities; it is minorities – professional politicians, journalists, bankers and jet-set experts – telling majorities what is best for them”). From one revolt against their values to the next, he claims that such liberals have consistently failed to reflect on where they have gone wrong. Instead of trying to explain the rise of populism they should start reflecting on the demise of liberalism.

Zielonka, a self-described “lifelong liberal” who grew up in communist Poland, is more than willing to take them on this journey. His highly accessible and engaging book is written in the form of a letter to his late mentor, Ralf Dahrendorf, who wrote a similar letter to reflect on the turbulence that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall nearly 30 years ago. But whereas that earlier letter focused on how a revolt among the masses was opening borders and extending liberalism into eastern Europe, Zielonka’s reply is about why borders are closing and the liberal project is in retreat. Optimism has been replaced by pessimism.

This book, put simply, should be compulsory reading for liberals. It pulls no punches while setting out what feels like an infinite list of their mistakes and failures. Their willingness to send more and more powers up to non-majoritarian, distant and unelected institutions. Their own dalliance with post-truth, whether



THE AUTHOR



Jan Zielonka, professor of European politics at the University of Oxford, was “born at the peak of the Stalinist reign in a small village in western Poland and went to school just outside Opole, a small town in Silesia. As a boy, I dreamed about a Europe without walls and oppressive governments. The first book I read in English was *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.”

Zielonka studied law in Wrocław and then politics in Warsaw at a time when he felt “the scent of freedom spreading in the air as early spring. In 1980-81, Poland was trying to create spaces of freedom and justice in an oppressive system and I was part of this experiment, writing essays and making public speeches. My PhD thesis was about the British Labour Party and its efforts to combine freedom with social justice. The spring eventually arrived in Warsaw only in 1989. The Berlin Wall was dismantled and Poland joined the ‘free world’, I hoped for good.”

After a series of roles at the University of Warsaw (1978-82), Zielonka worked at the universities of Groningen (1982-83) and Leiden (1984-96) and the European University Institute in Florence (1996-2003). Yet, over the years, he believes that “liberal ideals have been compromised or betrayed by the post-1989 generation of politicians and intellectuals. Illiberal measures are gaining ever more support. Illiberal politicians triumph at the ballot box. They will not just stop at correcting liberals’ mistakes; they will go further by destroying many institutions without which democracy cannot function and capitalism becomes predatory... It did not have to be this way.”

In this dispiriting context, Zielonka sees his “job as an intellectual...[is] to tell these uncomfortable truths to my fellow liberals. We share a lot of responsibility for the current predicament. [*Counter-Revolution*] is a self-critical book by a lifelong liberal born on the other side of the Iron Curtain.”

Matthew Reisz



Monday parade in Düsseldorf; below right, Syrian Kurds flee Islamic State

in the form of lies about foreign wars or exaggerated economic forecasts of doom ahead of the Brexit referendum. Their continued willingness to dismiss and ridicule populist visions while setting out no convincing or appealing vision of what a global liberal society actually looks like. Their excessive focus on atomistic individuals at the expense of taking seriously people’s intense concerns about community, belonging and tradition. Their tendency to reduce political debates to dry, technocratic and transactional point-scoring at the expense of emotion, passion and pride. Their failure to embrace the e-democracy and internet mobilisation that were central to the rise of populism, whether Podemos in Spain or Five Star in Italy. Their failure to regulate capitalism and curb rampant inequalities that only sharpened under liberal rule. Their failure to forge common security and defence policy amid a new era of terrorism. The willingness of liberal elites

to indulge in foreign military interventions that not only killed millions but planted the seeds for the current migration crisis. And the undeliverable promises made by liberal conservatives such as David Cameron to curtail immigration while simultaneously promoting a neoliberal economic model that by its very nature depends on continuous inflows of cheap migrant labour.

If liberals are looking for easy reading, then look away. If, alternatively, they are ready for some serious self-reflection, then read this book. Not everybody will be convinced, but this is without doubt a conversation that liberals need to have.

Where the book falls short, as is often the case, is when the focus shifts from diagnosis to prognosis. Not everybody will buy the prescription, which at times feels naive. Liberals should continue on their quest for an open society through “reasoning, bargaining and deliberation”, yet some might question whether they are

genuinely up to the task, as we are discovering amid Britain’s Brexit debate in which many liberal Remainers seem more focused on reversing the outcome than meeting Leavers halfway. The marketplace of ideas exists only in so far as it puts liberals in charge of all the stalls.

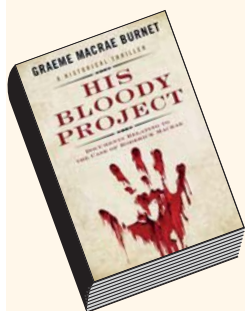
Other proposals will also invite scepticism. More power should be delegated to cities and regions, but what of examples such as Switzerland, where democracy is local and direct yet still national populists are highly successful? And what if democratic deliberations merely exacerbate rather than heal value divides? Others will argue that on some of the key issues, such as foreign wars or neoliberal inequality, rank-and-file liberals have been at the heart of opposition movements.

Liberals are also told urgently to find ways of revitalising the fading magnetism of their ideology, yet is the proposed “festival of ideas across Europe” either practical or realistic? Is this not what elections are for? Companies should put workers on boards to help push back the excesses of neoliberalism, yet is this not precisely what Prime Minister Theresa May (criticised elsewhere) has proposed? Parliaments should be made more representative of society, but will ever more affluent and out-of-touch political elites really open the gates to reformers? And while many would support the call for liberals to offer “new visions” of democracy and capitalism, translating these vague demands into practical action is the elephant in the room.

Yet do not mistake these questions for criticism. Indeed, I suspect that Zielonka would welcome them as part of a broader debate that he looks set to trigger. The future is contested and it is one where the continued dominance or even survival of liberalism is not guaranteed. Liberals got carried away with talk of the end of history. They have started the new century on the back foot. Now, they need to look at themselves as much as their rivals. And that should start with this book.

Matthew Goodwin is professor of political science, University of Kent, senior visiting fellow at Chatham House and co-author of *Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union* (2016).

A weekly look over the shoulders of our scholar-reviewers



Sir David Bell, vice-chancellor, University of Reading, is reading Graeme Macrae Burnet's **His Bloody Project: Documents relating to the case of Roderick Macrae** (Contraband, 2015). "Shortlisted for the Man Booker prize in 2016, *His Bloody Project* is an extraordinary and unsettling book. In the literary equivalent of removing the fourth wall, the author suggests a familial link with Roddy Macrae, the story's main protagonist. Roddy, a disturbed 17-year-old living in the Highlands of Scotland in the 1860s, endures a life of grinding poverty and is fuelled by resentment and lust. Since the novel contains a first-hand witness statement, a psychological profile, medical reports and a contemporary journalistic account, the reader might be forgiven for thinking that this is a true story. Without giving too much away, I can say that the book tackles fundamental issues in criminology and leaves us pondering the age-old question of nature versus nurture."



Maria Delgado, professor and director of research at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, is reading Fernando Aramburu's **Patria** (Tusquets, 2016). "*Patria*, a literary sensation in Spain, is now in its 22nd edition with almost 3.5 million copies sold, a planned English translation due in 2019 and an HBO Spain series in development. The novel concerns two neighbouring families in a small Basque town. When the father of one, Txato, is pressured for protection money and then killed by ETA, his widow Bittori moves away, returning to a frosty reception when ETA declare a permanent ceasefire in 2011. The fractured friendship between her and her childhood friend Miren is used to explore the broader legacy of the Basque conflict. Aramburu explores the multilayered complexities of civil strife and reconciliation through a tale that considers what it means for the victims and perpetrators of violence to come to terms with their past. *Patria* is quite simply one of the most resonant political novels of the 21st century."



Rachel Roberts, lecturer in secondary English education, University of Reading, is reading **The Science of Expertise: Behavioral, Neural, and Genetic Approaches to Complex Skill** (edited by David Z. Hambrick, Guillermo Campitelli, Brooke N. Macnamara, Routledge, 2017). "At 470 pages, this is a weighty tome, and rightly so: it presents both a history of expertise study and current research. Its central thesis is that the swing between expertise-as-nurture and expertise-as-nature is now outmoded and that 'multi-factorial models that take into account all relevant factors' are needed. Divided into five parts, expertise is examined via behavioural, neural and genetic approaches, as well as through integrated models of development. Deliberate practice and working memory are covered comprehensively, with chapters drawing on research into chess and music (favoured domains of researchers in this area) as well as the visual arts and Rubik's-cube solving. While not a 'pop' science publication, the book is certainly accessible to non-specialists and would be of interest across disciplines."

War stories worth hearing

More heroic hidden figures are saluted in a timely study reflecting on equality today, says June Purvis

A Lab of One's Own: Science and Suffrage in the First World War
By Patricia Fara
Oxford University Press, 352p, £18.99
ISBN 9780198794981
Published 11 January 2018

As we commemorate the end of the First World War in 1918, it is poignant to reflect on how women helped to bring this about. While much has been written about the contribution of female munition workers to the war effort, the part played by trained female scientists and doctors has been largely ignored. This group of women is the focus of Patricia Fara's fascinating book. Carefully researched and absorbing, it tells a story that has been hidden from history.

Caroline Haslett was one of many young women who fought for women's suffrage and women's advancement in science. Regarded as a lost cause by her Sussex village teachers because she could never sew a buttonhole, she joined the law-breaking suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union, led by Emmeline Pankhurst. When the WSPU ceased militant action on the outbreak of war, Haslett's life was transformed. She was repeatedly promoted in the boiler factory where she worked to replace men who went off to fight. By 1918, her customers included the War Office. She eventually became an international consultant on the domestic use of electricity – dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, washing machines – and used her influence to encourage girls into scientific careers.

Most scientific women, however, conscious of their marginal status, appear not to have joined a suffrage group or, if they did, opted to become members of the law-abiding National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. As men left for the war front, trained female scientists took over their positions in boys' schools, museums and government

departments. Others abandoned their research projects and worked in areas essential for the war effort – aircraft design, drugs, acetone and insecticides. Some women became lecturers while a few doctors defied the government and served overseas in exceptionally demanding places such as Serbia.

Fara rescues from obscurity the names of a large number of these women, many of whom have left few footprints in the archives. Maria Gordon, the first woman in Britain to gain a doctorate in science, dedicated herself to war work and, as president of the National Council of Women, campaigned for women's rights. Dorothea Hoffert, who had studied chemistry at Girton College, Cambridge and then taught at a girls' school, was requisitioned for research in varnish and food. May Leslie, a coalminer's daughter who graduated from the University of Leeds, was hired for secret wartime research into explosives.

After the war, as unemployment rose, priority was given to finding work for men, while these pioneering women – paid substantially less than their male counterparts – were pushed back into domesticity. Despite their contribution towards winning the parliamentary vote in 1918 for some women over 30, their fight for equality had not ended.

And that fight continues today, as Fara observes in a reflective conclusion. Most speakers at science conferences are men, while presenters of television science programmes are mainly distinguished older men – unless they happen to be glamorous young women. Informative and moving, *A Lab of One's Own* is a timely reminder in helping us eliminate the inequalities that professional women still face today.

June Purvis is emeritus professor of women's and gender history, University of Portsmouth. Her latest book is *Christabel Pankhurst: A Biography* (2018).



Body politic a rally in Washington DC in response to the suicide of transgender teenager Leelah Alcorn

Transgender Children and Young People: Born In Your Own Body

Edited by Heather Brunskell-Evans and Michele Moore
 Cambridge Scholars, 244pp, £61.99
 ISBN 9781527503984
 Published 1 January 2018

The recent storm of media attention surrounding transgender youth may reflect much broader cultural anxieties. Certainly, it is a furore over a tiny population – of more than 13 million under-18s in the UK, 2,016 were referred to the NHS Gender Identity Development Service in 2016-17. This edited collection is positioned by its authors as heretical and marginalised, but reflects concerns voiced regularly in recent times. They identify as “gender critical feminists” (rather than “trans-exclusionary radical feminists”) but inhabit the same small but acrimonious position in a feminist movement that is otherwise predominantly inclusive of trans people.

The messages of the book are bold. The first is that “transgender children do not exist”. As an academic contribution to the debate, the promise is in its theoretical framework. Having dismissed the perspectives of youth, parents, charities, medicine, social policy and the law as “unproven” and “intellectually incoherent”, it suggests that trans youth are a discursive invention. “Transgenderism”, it contends, reinforces traditional gender

binaries, propping up the patriarchy. This framework remains undeveloped and the chapters are inconsistent, offering a hotchpotch of pet clichés that sidestep the evidence-base. Trans youth are variously explained by tribal belonging; restrictive femininity; the distressing human condition; childhood trauma; male transvestites’ sexual desires; and really being gay.

Perhaps hopes were pinned on the highest-profile contributor, whose activism is currently aimed at blocking schools from accepting that children may be transgender. But of 57 sources cited in Stephanie Davies-Arai’s chapter, only seven are peer-reviewed research and these are cherry-picked and distort the wider medical and sociological evidence. Meanwhile, editor Michele Moore’s account of transgender theory leans on dated and inaccurate stereotypes of trans identities that make tiresome reappearances throughout. Nowhere is it acknowledged that many trans people experience binary gender norms as tyrannical, or that many (if not all) trans identities actively queer these binaries.

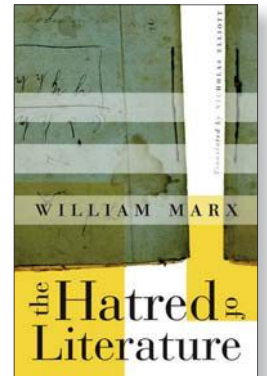
The second message is that children are “transgendered” by adults and that this is “abusive”. The book constructs an artifice of a society teeming with over-eager parents, whereas research consistently shows that trans youth are often rejected by their families and peers. While claiming that they are motivated by children’s well-being, the authors frequently misuse or ignore recent

international studies that unequivocally show both high rates of depression, self-harm and suicide among trans adolescents and the safeguarding effects of gender-affirming support. Indefensibly, the book is almost silent on widely substantiated hate crime against trans youth. The authors’ account of secret meetings to plan the book – “each afraid of very real consequences for our families and livelihoods” – is the single point of resonance with the challenges faced by their subjects.

Gender critical feminists are often accused of recycling second-wave feminism’s failure to address differences between groups of women, but as “radical feminism” most of the arguments here are barely recognisable. Some fundamental principles are missing: powerful people shouldn’t dictate others’ identities, for example. More specifically, Brunskell-Evans and Moore reflect a white middle-class feminism untouched by subaltern or queer perspectives. Masquerading as scholarly text, this is epistemological chicanery, with the contributors adopting an already vocal repositioning as the silenced minority. In labelling “transgenderism” abusive, they don’t listen to the supposedly abused; in claiming to challenge “the seemingly unstoppable celebration of transgender ideology”, they present arguments neatly aligned with much recent media coverage. The irony is complete, the consequences no less serious.

Rachel Pain is professor of human geography at Newcastle University.

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Shoulders back, neck aligned

People link upright bearing with positive traits and slouch with sloth – and worse, Louisa Yates finds

Stand Up Straight!: A History of Posture
By Sander L. Gilman
Reaktion Books, 424pp, £25.00
ISBN 9781780239248
Published 7 March 2018

In the preface to *Stand Up Straight!*, the author half-apologises for the “anecdotal rather than exhaustive” nature of his 10 chapters. Far from a problem, however, this anecdotal approach is inseparable from Sander Gilman’s ambitious aim: proving the significance of posture in Western history. As he suggests, the human ability to *stand* results from “sets of muscles and ligaments and bodily systems” – but our determination to stand *up straight* reveals much about “what we believe and what the implications of such beliefs are”. Gilman skilfully traces our understanding of posture from the earliest *Homo* through classical civilisation and on to post-war art movements and contemporary working practices.

Driving the chapters forward, however, is not chronology but rather the multiple discourses ensuring that the body politic stand upright. Gilman’s multidisciplinary approach draws on theology, philosophy, the military, medicine and art. Greek philosophers debate the precise location of humanity within physiognomy (for Aristotle, bipedalism; Anaxagoras favours hands) but agree that “being erect moves man towards the gods”. Gilman’s reading of Immanuel Kant suggests an origin for the enduring link between stance and morality. For Kant, humanity’s stunted, crooked, twisted form must strive towards physical, social and moral “uprightness”: achieve moral soundness and one’s body will follow.

Gilman deftly threads the striking image of the plumb line throughout, using this trope to turn anecdote into data. While Kant pondered moral straightness,



These books were made for walking people “were shaped by social institutions: education and citizenship, respectively”

“posture books” offered practical military advice. *Stand Up Straight!*’s illustrations are wonderful, particularly those depicting balletic pike-men emulating their weapon’s long lines, a forerunner of parade-ground rigidity. Nineteenth-century discourses on social citizenship adapted the plumb line, as in the case of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s ladies-in-waiting, trained by “body culturist” Bess M. Mensendieck (I stood in Mensendieck’s required position for three minutes: ouch!). Plumb-line ideals stiffened the moral body, informing the use of women’s corsets, invalids’ back braces and even rigid swaddling for babies. Children and adults were shaped by social institutions: education and citizenship, respectively. Sigmund Freud’s work on neurosis drew on “uprightness”,

while no less an authority than Charles Darwin believed that only bipedal man – using his free hands – could express anger. Gilman’s authoritative voice marshals a crowd of examples into a cogent, illuminating analysis.

Cleverly, each chapter amplifies what comes before, until socio-moral “soundness” and physical verticality are linked beyond question. Only then do the final three chapters make distressingly clear what such links mean for non-normative bodies. Again and again, a nation’s symbolic “straightness” is maintained through dehumanising the “crooked”: Native American children forced into corrective shoes; Blood and Soil in Nazi Germany; persecution of disabled bodies; antisemitic feeling legitimised through categories of straight/slouched, patriotic/traitor, useful/parasite; these same

categories justifying slavery. As Gilman sharply observes, persecutors (race scientists in his example) love “such seemingly objective classification”. His final section, demonstrating posture’s central significance to disability studies, stands out as particularly significant.

What Gilman demonstrates so successfully is that any history of posture is always a history of perception. The title’s bold imperative is a command barked at those whose posture supposedly imperils the nation, causes moral degeneration or decreases productivity. He has produced a valuable book.

Louisa Yates is director of collections and research at Gladstone’s Library, and a visiting lecturer in English at the University of Chester.

Readers' Liberation: The Literary Agenda

By Jonathan Rose
Oxford University Press, 240pp, £14.99
ISBN 9780198723554
Published 11 January 2018

The study of reading, or rather readers, has always been a bit of a Gordian knot. Who reads, what they read and what they *should* read are questions that have been regularly reframed throughout the history of critical thought. Reader-response theory, reception theory, audience studies and the history of the book are just some of the schools of criticism that focus on the role of the reader in the construction of the literary text. But what all these theoretical standpoints seem to share is an anxiety about the relationship between reading and personal agency. What is the value of reading? And who, if anyone, should decide what we read? Jonathan Rose's *Readers' Liberation*, the latest in the Literary Agenda series from Oxford University Press, seeks to answer these questions.

In a political climate where a new review of English post-18 education is set to suggest that humanities degrees are worth less than those in subjects such as science and maths, an added urgency might be attached to series editor Philip Davis' calls for "polemical monographs" that make the case for "the importance of literature and of reading". *Readers' Liberation* certainly fits the brief of offering polemical arguments – "Feminists really should be more generous in acknowledging the debt they owe to Hugh Hefner" – but as a tonic (if Rose was hoping to invigorate or strengthen our resolve as champions of reading), the book offers fairly mild medicine.



Some of the arguments here are familiar, perhaps even old hat, to those who have spent their lives defending the value of reading. The well-known "reading slows and often even arrests reoffending rates among prisoners" argument is rehearsed, as is the mountain of evidence for reading-as-therapy. It is difficult to imagine that the readership of *Readers' Liberation* will include anyone other than those already sympathetic to its cause. Particularly for those who work in higher education, literature is an acknowledged force for good, thus Rose is preaching to a very weary choir when he tells us that "reading literary fiction enhances empathy", or that there are deep gendered imbalances (more women read fiction and study literature, but syllabuses and "Great Books" lists disproportionately favour male authors). The people who need to read this book, for whom it *should* be on a prescribed reading list, are those who have the power to make decisions about access to reading in schools, in prisons and in other places where vulnerable people require support – educative or otherwise.

In the latter half of the book, Rose makes the convincing case that fake news, PR spin and access journalism are phenomena that date back hundreds of years and across continents. He notes the early sceptical readers of the first English newspapers, the *Corante* (1621) and the *Weekly News* (1622), before exploring the rise of investigative journalism and its various success stories such as the Watergate scandal. These moments serve to punctuate the history of our suspicion of newspapers with the occasional spike of fleeting confidence. For the present, we're given statistics such as "among millennials...just 11 percent trust the media", but the internet sits somewhat awkwardly in this account as an amorphous space of "scurrilous... but often highly enlightening... reading". Rose's rather eristic final thought is that "liberated readers" exist, if they exist at all, outside academia in reading groups, while the university has become a place where students "don't want intellectual freedom" and readerly "dissent" is a thing of the past.

Helena Goodwyn is lecturer in Victorian studies at the University of St Andrews. She is working on a book titled *The Americanization of W. T. Stead*.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Writers and Their Mothers

Edited by Dale Salwak
Palgrave Macmillan

Georges Simenon claimed that novelists are united in hatred of their mothers. But the truth is inevitably a bit more varied. For his new anthology, Dale Salwak – professor of English literature at Citrus College in southern California – assembled 22 prominent novelists, poets and critics to explore their own and other writers' relationships with their mothers. Margaret Drabble reflects on Samuel Beckett and Jeffrey Myers on Robert Lowell, while John Updike's son David recalls his father's mother, Ian McEwan explains how his writing was shaped by his mother's "particular, timorous relationship with language" and Martin Amis pays tribute to his "wicked stepmother", novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard.

Also Human: The Inner Lives of Doctors

Caroline Elton
William Heinemann

The dean of an American university recently described "a national epidemic of burnout, depression and suicide among medical students". Yet far too often, argues Caroline Elton – a psychologist who has worked with trainee doctors right across London, "medical training...fails to acknowledge that doctors are people too, with their own thoughts, feelings, fantasies and desires", and that the toll on their mental health soon affects patient safety. Her book describes, for example, an obstetrician whose own fertility treatment failed and an oncologist trying to treat the disease that killed her father. It is only by acknowledging doctors' "inner lives" that we can hope to address the crisis in the profession.

Hitler and Film: The Führer's Hidden Passion

Bill Niven
Yale University Press

There have been many studies of the books Hitler read, his passions for art, architecture and Wagnerian opera. What has received far less attention is his avid consumption of many different types of film. Here Bill Niven considers how the Führer carefully monitored every newsreel before it went out, decided to ban certain films, often invited actors and particularly actresses to his private soirées and stage-managed his own cinema outings to promote his political priorities. Even public support for the Nazis' most vicious programmes of sterilisation and genocide was partly orchestrated through film.

Diary of a Bipolar Explorer

Lucy Newlyn
Signal Books

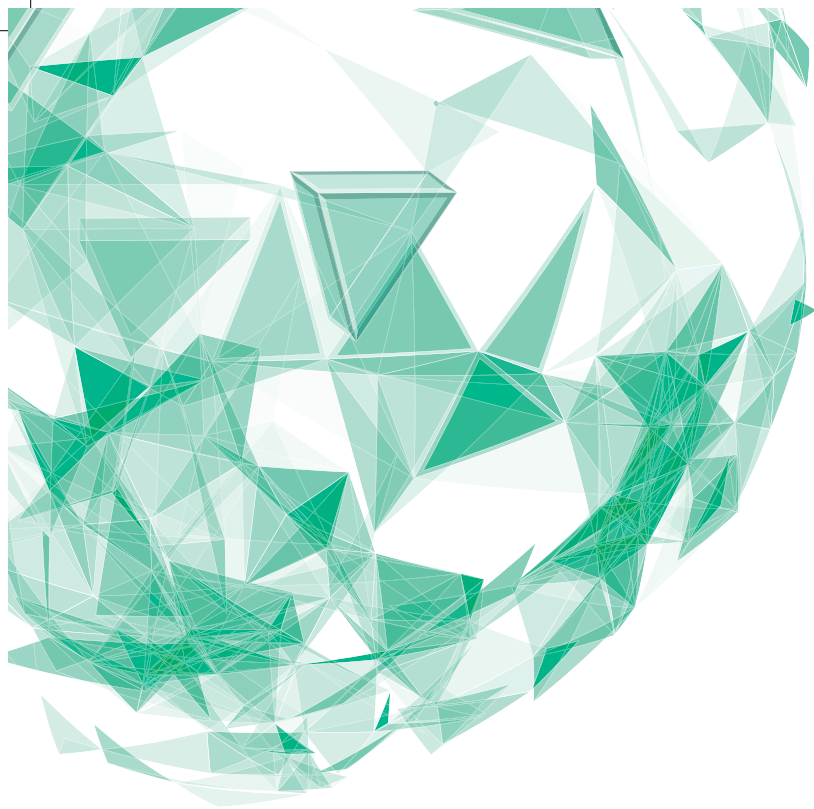
"Professors are meant to be eccentric," writes Lucy Newlyn, "but not mentally ill." So it was only in retirement, after 35 years at the University of Oxford, that she felt able to publish this diary of her last 15 years. It opens with a harrowing account of being "sectioned", following a prolonged period of grieving for a sister and then a vigil at her father's deathbed. Further crises arose out of a dispute with her college and then the transition to retirement. Yet Newlyn also conveys the many varied shades of mental illness, and how walking, diary writing and particularly the intense effort of composing poetry often proved therapeutic.

The Birth of the RAF, 1918

Richard Overy
Allen Lane

The Royal Air Force – the world's first independent air force – came into existence on April Fool's Day 1918 (and both the Army and the Navy hoped it would prove a short-lived joke). It was actively promoted by politicians such as Churchill, as leading historian Richard Overy shows, to "defend the home front against the novel menace of bombing", although even before the end of 1918 it was also involved in supporting Allied armies and bombing German industrial towns. This centenary account offers a vivid narrative of the challenges of "founding a new service in the midst of a bitterly contested conflict".

Matthew Reisz



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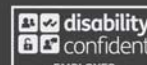
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Say hey, say ho



Might our own vice-chancellor have followed the example set by such university heads as Glasgow principal Sir Anton Muscatelli, Sheffield vice-chancellor Sir Keith Burnett and Loughborough vice-chancellor Robert Allison, and joined staff and students on the picket line?

According to an eyewitness, at about 3.30 yesterday afternoon,

our vice-chancellor was seen stumbling towards the picket line outside the Administrative Block after returning from a lengthy lunch with the Poppleton branch of the Grand Order of Buffaloes.

This witness reported that the vice-chancellor "initially appeared surprised" to see people standing around the brazier that had been erected outside the Admin Block. However, he seemed to adapt to the situation by readily accepting a grilled cheese toastie from one of the



strikers and even appeared to nod along to the collective chant of "Say hey, say ho – UUK has got to go".

However, the idea that this behaviour indicated a change to our vice-chancellor's traditionally wholehearted support for UUK was subsequently tempered by a statement from his office in which he made no reference to strikes or picket lines, but merely described the availability of "such excellent cheese toasties" as a "significant contribution to the university's catering outlets".

Solidarity forever

In this regular column, Mr Ted Odgers of the Department of Media and Cultural Studies answers your emailed questions on the University and College Union strike. This one comes from "Puzzled" of Jo Johnson College.

Dear Mr Odgers

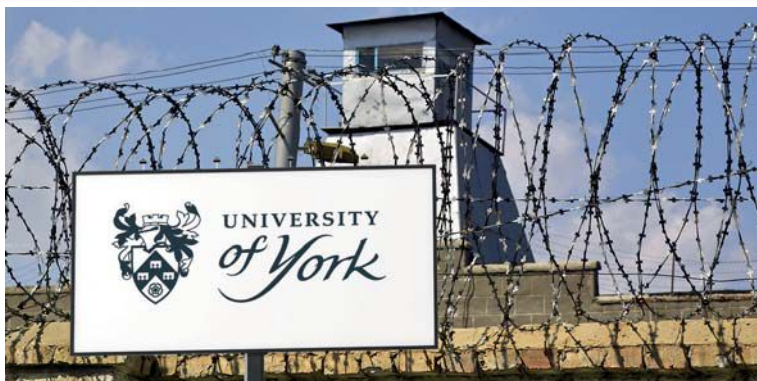
Although I am by nature a somewhat reserved member of the academic staff, I have so much enjoyed the chanting and camaraderie and sense of solidarity on the Poppleton picket line that I have begun to wonder whether, once we've secured better pension entitlement, we might all go on to overthrow the capitalist state. What do you think?

Mr Odgers replies: I'm afraid that I'm unable to respond to your enquiry as I'm currently on strike and therefore not answering emails. I hope this helps.

Securing our borders

Our Head of Campus Security, Brigadier T. W. Trouncing, has praised the University of York's "human resources compliance team" for its insistence on academic staff thoroughly vetting any foreigners who might choose to visit the campus.

Trouncing described York's vetting scheme as far from onerous. Academics were merely asked to record who their visitors were, where they came from, and whether they were giving lectures, conducting research or attending meetings. In addition, York dons were asked to record whether their visitors were in possession of a valid visa, the length of time their visitor might be staying, and whether or not any payment was made to them. As a final modest task they were required to produce an account of how many



'Liberalisation of procedures': are you compliant?

such foreign visitors of different types – students, researchers, or invited speakers – they received during each calendar year.

But did Trouncing have any sympathy at all with the York academic who had anonymously expressed discomfiture at the new restrictions and suggested that the university's readiness to implement such a gross level of surveillance constituted

"a slippery slope"?

"What such critics fail to recognise", said Trouncing, "is that these rules already represent a liberalisation of procedures. Until recently any Johnny foreigners turning up at York were only allowed to remain on campus after their capacity for sinking or floating had been thoroughly tested in the university's much-vaunted artificial lake."



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