March/April 2005 Issue 41

upfront
magazine

• CETLs SUCCESS
£18m boost for teaching

• MASTER AT WORK
Leading artist & first-class mentor

• FACULTY FOCUS
Health & Social Work

• SPORTS STARS
Supporting student champs

NEWS FEATURES REGULAR COLUMNS & MORE
Welcome to the March/April edition of UPfront

If you have any feedback or ideas for future editions, please contact Paola Simoneschi, Public Relations Manager, on ext 3986 or email paola.simoneschi@plymouth.ac.uk

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Front cover:
‘New Blood’ Lecturer Guillaume Massé (left) and Arctic explorer Pen Hadow at the official opening of the university’s new £2-million ‘polar’ laboratories for chemical, biological and environmental sciences.

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If you require any part of this magazine in larger print, please contact: Disability ASSIST Services on ext 2289 email: das@plymouth.ac.uk

The University is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. Our policies are available on the website: www.plymouth.ac.uk/equalopportunities

Film: My Big Fat Greek Wedding – our family is exactly like that!

Song: Bohemian Rhapsody – a classic.

Read: Nigella Lawson’s How to Eat. I love her writing and recipes.

Food: Moussaka, of course!

Destination: Northern Italy – Venice, Padua, Ferrara, etc.

Person: My maternal grandmother – she always had time for people even though she was a very busy person.

Memory: When I gave birth to my babies and held them for the first time.

Crush: My husband, Costa.

Whinge: Punctuality - I hate people being late, myself included!

Tip: Dare to be yourself.
CETLs success

The university is celebrating the news that it has beaten stiff competition to secure an extra £18 million in government funding – recognition of the excellent standard of its teaching.

The money – which comes from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and will be allocated over five years – has been awarded for four University of Plymouth Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETLs). The university is a partner in a fifth CETL, led by Liverpool Hope University College. This achievement was matched only by the Open University, despite very tough competition from other UK universities.

The CETLs initiative has two main aims: to reward excellent teaching practice, and to further invest in that practice so that the funding delivers substantial benefits to students, teachers and institutions.

Each CETL will have a distinctive focus reflecting its track record of successful student learning. The university’s four CETLs are:

• Placement Learning in Health and Social Care
• Experiential Learning in the Environmental and Natural Sciences
• Higher Education Learning Partnerships, and
• Education for Sustainable Development.

The CETL in partnership with Liverpool Hope University College is called LearnHigher.

Predominantly, the funding will be used to further develop high quality academic staff, to attract new staff and to enhance buildings and upgrade laboratories and training facilities, including the planetarium, which will be transformed into a cutting-edge ‘virtual fieldwork’ centre. The partner colleges that form the University of Plymouth Colleges (UPC) will also benefit significantly from the funding.

“Plymouth has long had an excellent reputation for the quality of its teaching and we are delighted that this strength has been recognised at the highest level,” said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky.

“Together with our National Teaching Fellowships*, the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are acknowledgement of our status as one of the best universities in the UK for teaching and learning.”

The university was congratulated on its success by Dr Kim Howells, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, who said: “It will further advance the teaching and learning opportunities for students in Plymouth and the South West. Amongst many other things the university is tackling the very difficult problem of providing higher education to relatively small communities scattered across a wide and largely rural geography.”

Steve Ricketts, Plymouth Site President of the Students’ Union, said: “Students at Plymouth benefit from a very high standard of teaching and are well supported throughout their courses. It’s fantastic to have this recognition and it will really help to put Plymouth on the map.”

For more information about the CETLs, visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/cetl

*The university holds seven prestigious National Teaching Fellowships, including one with the Peninsula Medical School.
‘Sports star’ students who compete at national and international level were awarded scholarships and bursaries from the university at a special presentation.

Among the students receiving this year’s awards – which ranged from £300 to £1,500 per student – were those representing sports such as sailing, ladies’ football, equestrian sports and rugby.

“The money I receive from the sports scholarship is a great help financially. As a student, I don’t have much money to spend on boots and sports equipment, but this award means that I can buy everything necessary to help me,” said Martin Olima, a student who currently plays for Launceston Rugby Football Club.

“We are very proud of our students’ achievements,” said Lesley Coulton, Head of Sport & Recreation.

“The scholarships and bursaries provide students with the opportunity to continue performing at a high level in their chosen sport whilst studying.”

The university’s £7-million library extension – which is open to the public and provides 24/7 computer access for students – had its official opening recently, performed by Linda Gilroy, MP for Plymouth Sutton.

As well as a new café and a round-the-clock open-access computing and media area, the extended library provides improved study facilities and re-arranged stock to cater for the students on courses moving to Plymouth from other campuses.

The new ‘self-issue’ and ‘self-return’ machines enabling full borrowing facilities throughout opening hours have proved so popular that an additional one has since been installed.

The area outside the library has been re-paved in the same style as the Portland Square development and is designed to improve disabled access. The library foyer also contains a lift enabling wheelchair users access between the two levels.

“The extension marks an important milestone and enhancement for the university and the city, and will provide a valuable learning resource for students and the local community,” said Linda Gilroy MP. “I welcome the opportunity of giving my support to this project and to the university team, who are doing such a fantastic job in promoting the university and the vision of Plymouth as a modern and forward-looking city.”
Have your say...

If you haven’t already seen the plans for the university’s new arts building, now’s your chance. The model, architects’ drawings and planning application for the exciting Rowe Street development, which were recently on show in Portland Square, have moved to the Plymouth Arts Centre in Looe Street, where they will be on display until 29 March.

The state-of-the-art building will be the first of a vibrant new ‘cultural quarter’ planned by the university, Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Arts Centre. It will house the Faculty of Arts and extensive teaching facilities as well as providing the new base for Plymouth Arts Centre (which will become the Centre for Visual Arts (CVA) upon relocation). The building’s prominent location at the heart of the city centre provides an ideal platform for a building, which will operate as a focal point for both the university and the city.

People attending the exhibition are being encouraged to provide feedback using the comment forms provided. All comments received by 29 March will be forwarded to the council to assist in determining the planning application.

“The vision for the new building is to establish a centre for arts and culture which will fuse both the university campus and the city by creating a hub for activity and learning,” said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky. “It will provide a showcase for the university campus, working in tandem with the Plymouth Arts Centre, and will ‘open up’ to its surrounding environment, drawing in and linking to the City Museum and Art Gallery, Central Public Library and Plymouth College of Art & Design.”

Leading the way

At the end of January, senior academics and managers joined governors and some of the university’s recently appointed ‘rising stars’ for a two-day conference on leadership.

Conference organiser, Jo Kan, had worked with Professor Roland Levinsky, Vice-Chancellor, to put together a challenging, stimulating and thought-provoking programme, with a keynote address by arctic explorer, Pen Hadow, and a question-time session.

Professor Levinsky opened the conference with a review of how the university is progressing against its mission and plan. Progress made since 2001 includes:

- setting up the Graduate School
- establishing University of Plymouth Colleges as a faculty
- creating a new faculty structure
- completing several new buildings – including a new HQ for the Faculty of Health & Social Work and Peninsula Medical School at Tamar Science Park – to be called the John Bull building
- extending the library and refurbishing the Students’ Union
- providing new squash courts, gym and watersports facilities, and
- appointing 12 ‘new blood’ lecturers and five Research Council Fellowships.

For Question Time, the VC took on the role of Jeremy Paxman, with panel contributions from:

- Brian Milstead, Chief Executive of the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust
- Brian Pearse, Chair of Governors
- Nick Cutts, a governor and Chief Executive of Barton International Ltd, and
- Commodore Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Officer for Wales and Western England.

The panel debated issues such as ‘does management end and leadership begin?’, ‘is leadership innate or can it be taught?’ and how an organisation protects itself from developing a leader like Ghengis Khan.

Pen Hadow gave an insight into the leadership required of him to train people for polar expeditions, as well as an account of his unsupported solo trek to the North Pole. He recognised that one man’s focus is another man’s obsession, and reminded his audience that ‘you haven’t failed until you give up’.

Day two was led by the two academic Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Professors Mike Beveridge and Mark Cleary, and was all about how to do more within the university to foster and support academic leadership at all levels. Discussions in small groups were fed back to a plenary session, and it was clear that common themes had emerged: whether the university structure and culture really empowers people to take on leadership roles; how we develop and reward staff; how we identify the qualities and skills involved in leadership.

“These two days have been a useful start,” said Dr Dave Stephenson, Director of Undergraduate Programmes. “But we need to push on and make sure that everyone realises leadership isn’t something done by ‘them up there’ but involves us all, and that we need to develop everyone’s ability to lead.”
Starfish study

Pioneering research being carried out by the university’s School of Biological Sciences is investigating the link between the health of marine life such as starfish to the amount of pollution in our oceans.

The research has been made possible thanks to a Natural Environment Research Council Industrial CASE studentship, in collaboration with AstraZeneca’s Brixham Environmental Laboratory (BEL) in Devon. The three-year studentship is one of just 20 awarded in the country and involves PhD student Martin Canty, who has been taken on full time to carry out the research, supported by a supervisory team of Dr Awadhesh Jha, Principal Lecturer in Genotoxicology, and Professor Mal Jones, Head of Biological Sciences, and Senior Ecotoxicologist Becky Brown, who is based at BEL.

Starfish form part of the echinoderm phylum of invertebrates and, as well as being a symbol of marine life are, in evolutionary terms, relatively close to humans.

“Because starfish exchange so much of their bodily fluids with the sea, they are extremely sensitive to marine pollution and therefore provide us with valuable information about the environment in which they live,” said Dr Jha. “This research aims to develop some ‘health markers’ without causing any distress to the organisms and can be carried out in the laboratories as well as in their own environment.”

“Just as a doctor would take your temperature and blood pressure to find out what was wrong with you, we are applying similar tests to establish the health of the starfish and other common species of echinoderms,” said Professor Jones. “This research will have significant implications for the protection of our marine environment.”

Master at work

This month, Professor of Fine Art John Virtue became the first-ever living artist to have exhibitions running simultaneously at the National Gallery and the Courthauld Institute of Art. He has been appointed as the sixth Artist in Residence at the National Gallery, and fans of his work include Simon Schama and Lord Rothschild.

“John is an incredible inspiration for our fine art students, a truly motivational figure to illustrate that ‘you can do it’, and provide not only real tips on how to make the breakthrough to becoming a well-known artist, but also a share of the intense passion with which he approaches his work,” said Professor Steven Parissien, Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

In fact it was at the National Gallery back in 1964 that John himself stood before works by Constable and Turner, and realised at the age of 16 his ambition to paint landscape.

In the same way that during the Renaissance all painters trained as apprentices under a ‘master’ artist – Da Vinci under the sculptor and painter Verrocchio, Botticelli under Fra Filippo Lippi – John is bringing a role model and a real-life famous master to the university’s courses.

The past two years have seen John preparing for the current exhibitions, out on the roof of Somerset House or the National Gallery, filling his sketchbooks with drawings of the capital regardless of the weather.

“John is a true role model and a marvellous resource for our students,” said Professor Parissien. “His achievements illustrate that a non-London based artist can reach the highest level.”

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“John is a true role model and a marvellous resource for our students,” said Professor Parissien. “His achievements illustrate that a non-London based artist can reach the highest level.”
The research team, led by Reader in Sociology Malcolm Williams and including Dr Joan Chandler, Dean of Social Science & Business, and Moira Maconachie and Tracey Collett from the School of Sociology, Politics & Law, has recently completed a project that explored these questions.

The study, which was funded by the Economic & Social Research Council, used data to track individuals in the UK between 1971 and 1991. It found that there was an increasing trend of living alone among all groups of people, but there were important differences in the patterns of men and women.

In their late teens and early twenties either sex is just as likely to live solo before setting up home as part of a couple, but if a man’s relationship breaks down he is more likely to change to a lone existence. Women, on the other hand, tend to live as one-parent households. For them, the transition to living alone comes mostly in their forties and fifties as their children leave home or their relationships with partners dissolve.

Interestingly, the research showed that once someone had spent time living solo, they were more likely to live alone in the future.

“While the Census data we used can’t tell us anything about people’s reasons for living on their own, this finding raises the intriguing possibility that more people prefer to live alone once they’ve tried it,” said Malcolm Williams.

“If the trend towards solo living continues, it has enormous implications for the kind of housing required and care arrangements for those who fall ill. However, on the positive side, living alone earlier in adult life may well be a benefit to those who choose or are constrained to live alone when they are elderly.”

To find out more about the report, contact Malcolm at malcolm.williams@plymouth.ac.uk

Research led by the university has shown that more of us are living alone than ever before – but who lives on their own and for how long?

Students from the university’s Yacht Club have been training hard throughout the winter for the BUSA (British University Sailing Association) National Championships to be held this month.

The boat the students are using for race training is a Sigma 38, El Greco, that has been chartered by the university. The participation of three teams from Plymouth in the BUSA event is supported with funds provided by UPSU, Unite (the student accommodation company) and other sponsors.

“This is just one of a range of initiatives contributing to a significant advance in the watersports facilities available at the university,” said Dr Andrew Eccleston of the School of Earth, Ocean & Environmental Sciences. “It provides support for our degree programmes, which include the recently announced BSc (Hons) Marine Studies (Ocean Yachting), as well as open access for young people who might otherwise regard this kind of activity as beyond their reach.”

Home alone
The faculty is recognised nationally for excellence and innovation in the delivery of health and social care programmes. Building on this, the CETL will focus on students who carry professional responsibility as part of their placement.

Partnerships between the university and agencies such as hospitals and social service departments ensures consistently high standards of preparation, teaching and assessment of students, and good practice will be shared with all programmes that include work-based learning, benefiting students across the country.

Advantages for students include a range of support networks and techniques developed to help them integrate theory with practice. The inter-professional learning they undertake – regarded as the future of health and social care – prepares them for the workplace. Social workers, nurses and midwives train alongside student physiotherapists, podiatrists and speech therapists and provide a much more person-centred approach to services.

“I welcome the faculty’s success in its CETL bid associated with placement learning and want to acknowledge Dr Susan Lea’s leadership in its preparation,” said Professor Mary Watkins, Dean of the faculty. “She is an international expert in the application of social psychology to education and will oversee the development of the new centre.”

A glowing example of what can be achieved through placement learning is the Students and Refugees Together (START) project, which involves social work students, together with those from other disciplines such as publishing and accountancy, working in partnership with refugees and asylum seekers in Plymouth to help them access the services they need.

“As groups, both students and refugees are sometimes viewed as a burden on society, but they are both potentially high contributors,” said Avril Butler, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, who leads the project. “START aims to work with their strengths and the success of the project is testament to what can be achieved.

“We are able to provide students with high quality placement learning and they are aware that they are providing a very necessary service – they are the lifeblood of the project.”

Prize-winning research

Researcher Dr Elizabeth Stenhouse has been awarded the David Kennedy Memorial Prize for Research into Obesity.

Elizabeth entered her thesis to the competition, held by The Obesity Awareness & Solutions Group (TOAST). The results of the thesis, Effect of Maternal Glycaemia in Pregnancy on Birth Weight, Infant and Childhood Growth, found that by the age of two children in Plymouth are up to 500g heavier than national reference population growth charts published ten years previously.

Elizabeth won a visit to the House of Lords as a guest of Lord Clement-Jones, CBE, where she was addressed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Health, Melanie Johnson MP.
Last year, the faculty was privileged to welcome Mary Gilhooly to its staff as Professor of Gerontology and Health Studies and Head of the School of Social Work & Primary Care.

Having studied psychology, Professor Gilhooly, who was born in Washington and grew up in Oregon, has spent the past 30 years in psychology and health research, focussing on gerontology (the study of ageing). Before coming to Plymouth, she was at the University of Paisley, where she helped build the research profile of health and established the Centre of Gerontology & Health Studies. For four years until September last year, Professor Gilhooly held the prestigious role of President of the British Society of Gerontology and she will be active in the new role of Past President until 2006. As well as recognising that Plymouth has a ‘strong core of good researchers’, she was drawn here ‘because it was time to progress’ and because heading a new school that provides education and training for the ‘real world’ of social work and primary care was very attractive, with gerontology a theme central to both.

“I see my role here as a wonderful challenge,” said Professor Gilhooly. “Traditionally, social work in the UK has focussed on children. However, there will be a growing emphasis on the elderly, as there is in the USA, in the future.”

Applications to programmes in the faculty are booming – almost 70 per cent up on last year – with the new degree course in child health attracting a great deal of interest.

Preview days are underway, running throughout March and early April. These introduce prospective students to the faculty, plus student support, accommodation and finance.
Engineering the future

Engineering students from Plymouth have spent time on the other side of the Atlantic with the business students at Auburn University, Alabama, who are partnering them to design and market two solar-powered boats.

Although they've communicated through teleconferencing and email, the students hadn't met face to face until the recent trip. "This adds flesh and bones to the project," said Paul Swamidass, Director of the Business-Engineering Technology programme at Auburn.

Though the students share a common language, the cultural differences between them have been the driving forces in the project. While the Auburn students have had trouble picturing a large domestic market for solar-powered boats, their British counterparts see profitable opportunity in alternative energy sources.

The communication gap between the technically-minded Plymouth students and their business-oriented Auburn colleagues has at times forced the engineers to abandon language altogether. During one teleconference, marine engineering student Nick Leach communicated a concept simply by drawing a picture – which is just the kind of improvisational communication their tutors are hoping they will develop.

Looking to the future

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) South West Forum hosted by the university recently attracted practitioners from across the country.

At the event, which was organised by staff in Educational Development & Learning Technologies, Phil Price, Senior Advisor at the HEA, led a lively discussion about the future of the Academy and there were a range of workshops about current issues in teaching and learning in higher education, including debates on problem-based learning, inter-cultural learning and inclusive methods of assessment, to name but three.

Feedback from delegates was extremely positive, with comments including "I'm beginning to feel a real sense of shared professional identity" and "I can relate to and develop my own practice from the workshops I attended".

Help at hand

Ricky Lowes, Programme Manager for In-Sessional English Support at the university, has co-authored a book that aims to help international students succeed at university by sharing the experiences of many students.

The International Student’s Guide, Studying English at University, published by SAGE Publications, recognises that each student is unique, with different abilities and needs. With this in mind, it offers practical information and help on a range of aspects of study.

To find out more, visit www.sagepub.co.uk
OUT NOW

The 2006 undergraduate prospectus is now available.

As well as course information, this edition has new photography, more information about arts on campus and details of how students will benefit from over £100 million of investment in facilities.

To obtain a copy, contact Course Enquiries on 01752 232232 or email prospectus@plymouth.ac.uk

PRESS OFFICE NEEDS YOU!

As reported in the previous edition of UPfront, the university’s Press Office team is working with a PR agency, Grayling, on a national media campaign. Recently, the team’s work with the agency has resulted in several university stories hitting the headlines (click on ‘university news’ on the intranet for details) and the team is continuing to gather ideas for both feature ideas and news pieces.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Just contact one of the Press Office team (details inside front cover) with any stories you think are likely to be of interest to people across the UK – research outcomes, for example, or the achievements of staff and students. With the introduction of top-up fees not far off, now is the time to put Plymouth well and truly on the map.

Faculty liaison

Three senior managers from the Marketing & Communications Department are each working in liaison with two faculties with the aim of increasing and improving communication about marketing at senior level.

Tracy Wilson, Head of Marketing (Commercial) is working with the faculties of Science and Technology; Peter Ingram, Head of Marketing (Postgraduate & International), with Arts and Social Science & Business, and John Griffiths, Director of Marketing & Communications, with Education and Health & Social Work (while Fay Steer, Head of Marketing (Undergraduate) is on maternity leave).

“The objective is to better align faculty and central marketing communications planning at a senior level,” said John Griffiths.

“The team has been welcomed into a range of faculty executive and senior management meetings and there is clearly much that can be achieved through tackling a common agenda. Top of that agenda are the development of the extranet, an improved course portfolio and more extensive media coverage.”
Helping Bocastle

Students from Duchy College have been working in partnership with mental health charity Pentreath Ltd to carry out two pieces of repair work at Boscastle following the disastrous floods last year.

The first was the rebuilding of a weir for which the owners were extremely grateful and delighted with the standard of work. The second was the rebuilding of an oak fence bounding the river for The National Trust, which was also completed to a very high standard. Pentreath Ltd specialises in providing support, training and self-development opportunities for people who have had, or are suffering from, mental ill health. The charity works in partnership with Duchy College to provide courses such as landbased operations.

Skills Challenge

Three printing students from Plymouth College of Art & Design have scooped first prize in the print journalism category of the 2005 Skills Challenge.

Derek Anderson, Tim Farmer and Matthew Jones (below) attended the ceremony in Manchester with print lecturer Matt Taylor, who said, “This is an excellent achievement, reflecting the hard work and enthusiasm they put into their project. We are all very proud of them and their success.”

PCAD students Matthew Dore and Christopher Smith won the bronze award in the same category.

Students were challenged with producing a centre spread for a teenage lifestyle magazine and judging was based on design and layout, copy and the photographic images used.

Kris Talikowski, Finance & Communications Officer, reports on the latest happenings in the Students’ Union.

Sport support

Plymouth campus President, Steve Ricketts, and Sports & Activities Officer, Ben Wiggins joined the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky, for a visit to Westminster to meet Minister for Sport & Tourism Richard Caborn recently.

The visit was a golden opportunity for Steve and Ben to ‘up the pace’ for improving sports facilities for students in Plymouth, a campaign that now has support from the university, the city council and Richard Caborn. It is hoped that the redevelopment of Central Park will provide for both indoor and outdoor sports events, giving students access to train and play fixtures.

“UPSU being listened to by the right people is a great step forward,” said Steve. “It’s crucial that we have their support.”
Vision for Plymouth
Steve Ricketts was also at Westminster to see international architect David Mackay present his ‘Vision for Plymouth’ alongside Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, MP for Plymouth Sutton, Linda Gilroy, and Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council.

“We have a marvellously diverse student community so it’s not a single voice but a chorus, and working closely with the Students’ Union officers is an enormous help in understanding the full range of students’ needs.

The SU has exciting proposals for an updated student representation system to include a ‘student senate’ – this will add a further valuable route for interacting directly with student representatives, especially on those issues that are outside the programme committees’ remit.

The student portal is another potentially powerful tool for communication and participation, and developments such as web-polling, e-democracy, and course rep areas are in the pipeline.

Improving social and recreation facilities are priorities for both the university and the SU. The first phase of the extension to the Plymouth SU building will provide space for more diverse activities - for example, those associated with student societies, including those linked with academic disciplines. Extra-curricular activity is part of the total package that is the student experience and a stimulating environment full of opportunities encourages students to participate and achieve their potential.

If we get it right, every student gains from a first-class education in the widest sense, and the university gains through excellent student performance – academic and non-academic – and student retention, all of which enhance our reputation.

Recent restructuring has created the Office of the Dean of Students, which encompasses a range of student support including medical services, counselling, student funding, chaplaincy, international advisory service, Disability ASSIST, learning development and the Careers Service. Access to high quality support will continue to be important to students, and it will be a challenge to meet their increasing expectations.

On the Plymouth campus the lack of an obvious central point for accessing information will be overcome by the Information Gateway, which will be part of the exciting Rowe Street development.

In the meantime the reception area of Hepworth House is being redesigned to provide a student information point, with many of the administrative services for students on hand nearby.

Above all, that the fact that the university has a Dean of Students gives a clear message that we are focused on supporting student success.

Anita can be contacted at deanofstudents@plymouth.ac.uk
Clear future

Earlier this month, Chair of the School of Architecture & Design Professor Michael Wigginton joined other leading architects to speak at a conference celebrating ‘Transparency’.

At the event, organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and sponsored by the Architectural Review, Professor Wigginton and his fellow speakers explained how they perceive transparency and its amazing potential for the buildings of the future.

Professor Wigginton is world-renowned for his work in the field of glass and architecture and his book, Glass in Architecture, is regarded as the standard international reference work on the subject.

Equality News

• **An essential part of the university’s CETL bids** (see page 3) was to state measures put in place to show our commitment to equality and diversity. We could boast our four equality policies and implementation strategies; full compliance with the legislation; equality targets and the support of the dedicated Equal Opportunities Development (EOD) Unit and Disability ASSIST Services (DAS). EOD Manager Mel Landells signed the bids in this regard, which played a significant part in the university winning all four.

• **The Disability Discrimination Bill**, has been updated with some extended provisions that will have implications for universities. The definition of disability will include people with HIV, certain types of cancer (yet to be confirmed) and multiple sclerosis – from the point of diagnosis. Also, the current requirement that mental illness must be ‘clinically well recognised’ in order to be deemed a disability will be dispensed of. The Bill will be implemented from December 2005 and EOD is working with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) in preparation for our ‘positive duty’ to promote disability equality.

• **Did you know that age discrimination in the workplace** is estimated at costing the economy £31 billion per year, mostly in lost GDP but also because of reduced taxes and increased welfare payments (National Audit Office, 2004)? Also, by 2010 almost 40% of the workforce will be over 45 while only 17% will be 18-24 year olds.

The briefing paper about the 2006 legislation on age discrimination will soon be on the EOD web community. The new laws will have a major impact on recruitment and selection, training, promotion, retirement and redundancy practices.

In the News

A round-up of where the university has appeared prominently in recent weeks...

• **Psychologist Dr Paul Kenyon** was featured in a Glasgow Herald article about the physiology of greed. Dr Kenyon, from the School of Psychology, explained that the simplest evolutionary explanation tells us ‘greed’ is a basic reflex to improve our chances of survival. During our evolutionary history, food may have been difficult to obtain and therefore, when it was available, it would make sense to consume as much as possible. “This is the type of behaviour we would label as greed or gluttony,” said Dr Kenyon.

• **An innovative piece of artwork** by Mike Phillips of i-DAT (in the School of Computing, Communications & Electronics) was shown on the BBC culture show Constellation Columbia in a feature on 'Space Art.' The work was inspired by the writings of JG Ballard and incorporated simple audio recording and transmission, gyroscopes, gravity switches and light sequencers. It is now being developed for inclusion in future zero-gravity flights with the aspiration for a full-scale release from the International Space Station.

• **The university’s unique ‘yachting’ degree** has been featured in both the Western Morning News and Evening Herald. Currently recruiting for this September, BSc (Hons) Marine Studies (Ocean Yachting) will equip students with a broad knowledge of all elements of the yacht and super-yacht industry and help boost the South West’s lucrative marine trade.

• **Pioneering ‘texting’ research** carried out by Dr Fraser Reid, Director of Taught Programmes in the School of Psychology, and Donna Reid at the Centre for Language & Thinking attracted nationwide media interest. The two were interviewed on GMTV, and the Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Daily Express and The Sun ran articles. The study – which was the first of its kind in the UK – showed over half of mobile phone users (using a sample of 1,000 people) would rather send a text message than talk when using their phone. It also illustrated that texting can help people who are ‘socially anxious’ to express themselves.
Late last year the university created a Research & Innovation team, led by Dr John Chudley. It is responsible for providing support to academic staff in identifying and securing research funding, protecting and exploiting intellectual property, and maximising our collaboration with industry, business, public sector, research and community-based partners regionally, nationally and internationally.

Bringing together University of Plymouth Enterprise and the Research Support & Development Office (RSDO) to create Research & Innovation provides a valuable support function that can work seamlessly across the research continuum, from applied research and consultancy through to blue sky research.

In supporting innovation through partnership, Research & Innovation provides access to:
- opportunities for staff to work in a variety of ways with a range of clients
- intellectual property management, including support for university spin-out companies
- entrepreneurship support to help staff and students turn new ideas into business opportunities
- consultancy and project management expertise
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
- in-depth research support and development for staff and students
- opportunities for exciting new research projects and technologies
- Centres of Expertise that align university research strengths and corporate plan objectives with regional priorities, and
- a project finance team responsible for financial accounting of all externally funded projects.

Complementing these more established services is the new Regional Projects team, providing support to academics, Centres of Expertise and faculties in relation to government and European Structural Funded regional projects, free of charge, through the HEIF2 Knowledge Transfer Project. Their support begins at the application stage, continues with project management guidance, claims processing and audit requirements through to project closure and archiving, and includes a review of new project applications, training and liaison with funding bodies.

The team has supported the Business School with an application to the Government Office South West for an ESF Objective 2 project, and according to Lecturer Smita Trepathi, “The support we received from the team at each stage was simply superb – they were happy to take time out for all our queries.”

The Regional Projects team is developing a practical guide to managing externally funded projects, utilising one of the university’s Enterprise Fellowship Awards, which will be available from April. For more information, contact Claire Cridford on x3562 or email claire.cridford@plymouth.ac.uk

Discover the 18th century

On Tuesday evenings until the end of May, you can gain a fascinating insight into the 18th century, thanks to a series of lectures organised by the Faculty of Arts.

Upcoming lectures include those on The Society of Gentlemen, a literary society in Exeter, and Status and Splendour, focussing on textiles and dress, to name just two.

All lectures take place at the Exeter campus. To find out more about these and events on other campuses, visit the news and events section of the website at www.plymouth.ac.uk. To add your event to the calendar, contact Alice Li on ext 3988/email: alice.li@plymouth.ac.uk at least one week before the date of the event.
Conrad returns!

Having covered 26,000 miles with no outside assistance, leading British yachtsman and Plymouth graduate Conrad Humphreys crossed the finishing line of the Vendée Globe race in the early hours of 20 February.

Thirty-two-year-old Conrad spent 103 days alone at sea in HelloMoto, overcoming some harsh weather conditions and equipment problems, to finish the race in a very respectable seventh place. "To finish the Vendée Globe is the big challenge - this ranks as the greatest thing I've ever done," he said.

The university is working in partnership with Conrad and the Motorola Ocean Yachting Team – look out for more news in future UPfronts.