

GRADUATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter for our postgraduate research student community

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NEWS



TDE CONFERENCE 2015

Success for **School of Architecture** student

May this year saw the third annual Faculty-wide Postgraduate Research Conference for the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment. There was a fantastic turn-out with a wide range of presentations and performances scheduled throughout the day, and an excellent poster display where PhD students were given the opportunity to vote for their favourite.

Salem Al Quadwa, a PhD student from the School of Architecture, was judged by his fellow students to have the most informative and graphically appealing poster of the day. Salem, who described the day as 'wonderful' and 'a good chance to see how each research student had managed to build up his/her own experience and cultural background towards a unique piece of research', said it was exciting to see his fellow students putting their stars against his submission.

Salem's entry to the conference was not a poster submission in the traditional sense. He backed up his 2D poster with a large 3D model that displayed numerous visuals and snapshots of information around his research project, making it a truly interactive and engaging entry.

Salem's research examines the *Architecture of the Everyday as a Responsive Possibility for the Gaza Strip, Palestine*. It was incredibly important to Salem to receive as much feedback as he could about the development of his project so far.

EMPLOYABILITY beyond the PhD

Research students from every department in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences came together in April for the annual HSS Research Student Conference, supported by the Graduate College. Feedback from last year's inaugural conference suggested employability beyond the PhD would be a popular topic – and so it proved; there was even a waiting list!

Chaired by Dr Tom Crook of the Department of History, Philosophy and Religion, the conference opened with a talk from PhD alumna Dr Philippa Joseph, Reviews Editor of the popular magazine *History Today*, followed by a session from Dr Chris Humphrey, founder of *jobsontoast.com*, who talked at length about the skills needed in order to promote oneself in a diverse and competitive jobs market.

After lunch, Headteacher of Abingdon Preparatory School and current Brookes' PhD student, Crispin Hyde-Dunn, spoke on 'Careers in teaching: how can a PhD help?'

The final session of the day was led by Dr Jo Moyle, a Careers Consultant within Oxford Brookes Careers, who spoke of her own experiences of gaining a PhD and beyond.

The conference was a huge success, with one attendee summing up their experience as 'Interesting talks, great comments and advice – a really fun and productive conference!'

Commendation for SCHOOL OF ARTS student

Fine Art PhD student Aya Kasai received a commendation in the Postgraduate Category of the Oxford Brookes Business Plan Competition 2015 held earlier this year.

Now in its fifth year, the University's Business Plan Competition is open to all Brookes' undergraduates, postgraduates and recent alumni, with the opportunity of winning a number of cash prizes.

The award was presented by Professor Julie McLeod, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience, in a prize ceremony held on 4 March.

The focus of Aya's business plan is CARU; the Contemporary Arts re:Search Unit. CARU is an interdisciplinary research platform and a social enterprise based in Oxford. It was created to assist artists and researchers in bringing their creative and/or academic work out of their offices and studios, to share and exchange ideas with the public to develop practical techniques in working, not only 'within' the community but more importantly 'with' the community.

Next year's competition will open for entries from Monday 30 November 2015.



Sonia Morano-Foadi, Anneliese Dodds and Alfred Fullah

Labour MEP for South East England visits School of Law

Anneliese Dodds, Labour MEP for South East England, visited Brookes' School of Law in June to give a talk on 'The European Parliament as legislator: formal powers and informal pressure'.

The visit was jointly organised by Dr Sonia Morano-Foadi, Reader in Law, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and second year PhD student Alfred Fullah. Alfred and Anneliese had stood together as Labour candidates in last year's May European and District Council elections, where the idea for Anneliese's visit was first conceived.

Her talk, which covered topics such as the 'power of initiation' that the Members of the European Parliament have, the inter-relationship between the European Parliament and the Council and the setting up of inquiry and special committees, provoked a number of interesting questions from the floor. Anneliese was asked to talk more around her range of expertise that had enabled her to succeed as an MEP; the notion of 'fairness' in the context of the Union where legislation operates both vertically and horizontally; and her book entitled Comparative Public Policy published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2012.

The visit was such a success that there is now a popular request for Anneliese to return in the upcoming academic year.

Brookes Union TEACHING AWARDS 2015

Three of the current Research Degree Supervisors were amongst the winners of the third annual Brookes Union Teaching Awards held in Headington Hill Hall earlier this year.

Professor Anna Barnett, from the Department of Psychology, Social Work and Public Health, received the award for 'Best Academic Advisor'; Dr Faye Mitchell, from the Department of Computing and Communication Technologies, accepted one of two awards presented for 'Best Taught Module'; and Dr James Balkwill, from the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, became the proud recipient of 'Most Inspirational Lecturer'.

The student led awards were established by Brookes Union to celebrate the fantastic work that both academic and support staff do at Brookes. Over 200 members of staff were nominated by students for their outstanding commitment to enhancing the student experience. Nominations praised staff for their caring natures and for consistently going above and beyond the call of duty.



Julie McLeod and Aya Kasai

RESEARCH STUDENT PROFILES



TURK SHOAB

Department of Real Estate and Construction

My PhD is focused on the *Globalization and Urban Development in Saudi Arabia: Place Branding in Economic Cities*.

I have a background in architecture and a postgraduate degree in Business and Marketing from the United States. This led to a professional career in Real Estate Development in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, specifically where it relates to marketing, place branding and image.

Globalization is spatially expressed through a global network of cities. In order to be competitive, cities must have the ability to attract investment, business and residents. A city can gain competitive advantage when its Government is able to define the different elements of a city and its public image. Currently, existing city marketing frameworks are geared towards promotional strategies for existing places, they do not take into account the development of identity and image for planned cities

that are without an existing urban fabric or population. Therefore place branding frameworks for new cities constitute a gap in the existing literature.

My research aims to identify critical elements of place branding for new cities competing for investment and residents while promoting a more open socio-cultural environment. The research will be grounded in two different areas of knowledge. The first is Globalization and how it relates to cities, competition and the economic and socio-cultural environment in the Middle East. The second is Place Branding, which will be studied to understand the theories involved in developing identity and image, along with the existing frameworks that identify, develop and measure the value of a place brand in existing cities. Additionally the research will explore theories of image representation and analysis of promotional elements through ideology and discourse analysis. More specifically, my research seeks to understand how different representations and perceptions of place in new economic cities in Saudi Arabia are developed and perceived across different target groups with the ultimate goal of making these cities more attractive to investors and future residents. As each geographic, political, socio-cultural situation is different, the focus of the study will be on a specific region, the Middle East, with a focus on a single country, Saudi Arabia.



HUSEIN PEREZ

Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mathematical

The title of my PhD is *Discrete Mathematical Models for Electrical Impedance Tomography*.

Prior to joining Brookes as a research student in 2011, I worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 7 years as an IT Specialist. It was my passion for science and research however that motivated me to pursue a PhD in the area of breast cancer detection.

Electrical Impedance Tomography (EIT) is a non-invasive, portable, low-cost technology developed to image the distribution of electrical properties, conductivity and/or permittivity, within an object from measurements of electric currents and voltages on its surface. Since different materials display different electrical properties. EIT has important applications in medicine, geophysics and industry.

Researchers at Brookes in collaboration with the EIT group at the University of Mainz have been working on the development of an alternative technique for breast cancer detection based on electrical impedance imaging. Breast cancer is routinely detected by palpation, X-ray mammography and ultrasound imaging with sensitivity rates of up to 90%. The diagnosis however, yields rather unspecific results, with only one in five biopsies of suspicious lesions leading to a malignant histological diagnosis. Since in vivo studies have discovered a difference of three times or more in the specific electrical conductivity between healthy and cancerous tissue, EIT can be used as an aid to improve the specificity of the diagnosis in detecting breast cancer in its earliest stages of development. Research is therefore aimed at developing alternative techniques in the field of breast imaging.

To achieve clinical acceptance, theoretical developments of reconstruction methods should be closely connected to laboratory experiments and studies on real data. My research addresses this need by contributing to the design of a new sensing head for the mammographic sensor with higher spatial resolution, as well as developing an efficient 3D reconstruction algorithm that will enable detection of smaller and deeper tumours and consequently improve the specificity of the results.

ONE STUDENT'S STORY



ELAINE ULETT
School of Education

I am a Training and Development Specialist within Oxford Brookes Information Solutions (OBIS) and am currently completing a Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) within Brookes' Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. My doctorate enables me to explore personal research interests in the context of my own professional role as well as promote critical self-reflection through a sequence of structured learning experiences.

Thanks to the financial backing of the Santander Research Scholarship scheme, as well as the support from Bill Sturman, Chief Information Officer of OBIS, who allowed me to have the time away from work as part of my training and development, I was able to join Dr Jane Spiro, Reader in Education, earlier this year on a research trip to Hawaii. During our trip to Hawaii, Dr Spiro and I sought to enable students in the UK and Hawaii to create an educational programme that would facilitate EdD students to work collaboratively. This collaboration between the University of Hawaii (UH) in Manoa, Hawaii and Oxford Brookes University will allow Brookes to positively work towards 'enabling a student experience of the highest standard possible'. It will offer the opportunity to students from the two universities to transfer knowledge both nationally and internationally, while also helping 'prepare the universities' graduates to become engaged global citizens'.

Our time in Manoa began with an introduction to the latest cohort of the University of Hawaii's EdD programme and a welcome reception for me and Dr Spiro. The reception was organised by Dr Jeff Moniz, Associate Professor and Director of the EdD programme at the College of Education, UH. There were 23 people in attendance, which included the Dean of the College, lecturers and members of the new EdD cohort, as well as three students from the previous cohort who attended the School of

Education Colloquium at Harcourt Hill in June 2014. There were a number of other gatherings throughout our stay. Dr Spiro conducted a session on peer reviewing, which explained the benefits of using the process. The peer review method is a process not currently used at UH so would be carried out collaboratively between the two universities. This introduction was welcomed by both the students and staff at UH as a mechanism for improving academic writing, which is one of the fundamental learning issues experienced by students in higher education institutions. There was also a discussion on coordinating a collaborative EdD Colloquium where students would be invited to present papers. Working Groups have been established to design, develop and organise these collaborative processes at UH and Brookes. Fundamentally, the Hawaiian and British cohorts will provide an environment where students are proactively engaged in shaping their experience and learning.

The latter part of my visit granted me the opportunity to meet two prominent women from the University of Hawaii. Sarita Rai, the Director of the Study Abroad Centre, and Mary Hattori, Coordinator of the Centre for Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Technology. Both Sarita and Mary work within areas of the university that are of interest to me and that I felt could lead to possible research opportunities. The Santander Research Scholarship Scheme has aided me in my personal development as a doctoral student, as well as giving me the opportunity to further my international perspective as a Training and Development Specialist. I am thankful to both Santander and Bill Sturman for all their support.

COMING UP

ALUMNI REMINISCENCE BALL

The Vice-Chancellor is delighted to invite you to the Oxford Brookes Alumni Reminiscence Ball. This special event will be celebrating Brookes' 150th anniversary year and the contributions of our alumni.

Saturday 26 September 2015 - 6pm to 11pm

THE TERRACE, JOHN HENRY BROOKES BUILDING, HEADINGTON CAMPUS, OXFORD OX3 0BP

Tickets are priced at £65 per person and will include:

- **Prosecco Reception**
- **3 course dinner, with wine, soft drinks and tea & coffee**
- **Live Entertainment**

Tables for 10 can be purchased for £600.

Should you wish to attend the Alumni Reminiscence Ball or for further information please visit:

www.brookesalumni.co.uk/events

If you would like to discuss your booking or access needs then contact the Alumni Office at

alumni@brookes.ac.uk or +44 (0) 1865 484863



ANTARCTICA: FRAGILE WILDERNESS

Monday 3 August – Friday 4 September 2015

THE GLASS TANK, ABERCROMBIE ATRIUM,
HEADINGTON CAMPUS, OXFORD, OX3 0BP

The Antarctic is the planet's last wilderness and parts of it are melting at an alarming rate. This exhibition employs moving and static images, sound and text to present a multi layered reflection of the artists' journey to Antarctica, informed by subjective, scientific and historic observations.

For more information and how to book please contact:

joannawalker@brookes.ac.uk

THE OXFORD BROOKES INTERNATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION 2015

The Oxford Brookes Poetry Centre is launching a new International Poetry Competition with two top prizes of **£1000** on offer!

Poems are welcomed in the following two categories from poets over 18 years of age:

- **ESL category**
- **Open Category**

The competition is open from 1 May until 31 August 2015. It costs £5 to submit a poem or £4 per poem for more than three entries. You may enter a maximum of ten poems, providing they are unpublished.

To find out more please visit:

www.brookes.ac.uk/poetry-centre

We are always looking for contributions for future editions of the newsletter and they are welcome from all sections of the University. If you would like to get involved please email:

asa-gcnewsletter@brookes.ac.uk