



Buckingham Business School Newsletter

June 2011 Edition

Message from the Dean

Across the higher education sector generally there is a huge amount of uncertainty, with for example the trebling of tuition fees (in state universities) for 2012, and with the coalition government wanting to see more private higher education in Britain. In many ways Buckingham is very much swimming with the political tide, and provides an example to the world in the provision of non-profit-making university education.

The University and the Business School are flourishing. The Business School came 15th out of 116 in the Guardian University Guide 2012 and the University has re-entered The Times league table this year and been placed at Number 21 out of 116, and this is because of stellar performance in student satisfaction, staff/student ratio and graduate prospects.

Its independent status means that Buckingham is excluded from the Research Assessment Exercise but The Times Good University Guide 2012 says that "it would almost certainly have finished in the top 20, rather than just outside it, if its research could be assessed".

We firmly believe the University and the Business School are finally receiving the recognition they deserve. We have always placed high value on small group teaching and we will continue to work hard to ensure our students are both very satisfied and very employable.

This message is getting through to students - this year, across the University, applications are up 100 per cent, a testament to our growing reputation. The Business School has increased its student numbers from 146 in 2007 to 254 in 2011 and we expect a high intake of students in both September 2011 and January 2012.

It is a very exciting (and busy) time for us all. We are continuing to review and update our programmes and will shortly be introducing our new-look MBA, and a new Masters in Finance and Investment. We are also delighted to be accrediting a range of programmes with our new partners in Singapore, the Marketing Institute of Singapore Training Centre (MISTC), and to starting a joint venture with one of our Visiting Professors, Rakesh Sondhi and BMC Global Services to accredit our MSc in Leadership, in Denmark.

Finally, we are now turning our attention more seriously to fund-raising to enable a major step-change in our growth. Currently we are growing organically, but to build a truly successful, independent, niche Business School we are seeking an injection of capital to fund developments and build on our core strengths. This will enable us to make a significant improvement to our competitive position and to transform our physical facilities. We will be raising funds for a range of key initiatives, which include:

- Enhancing our teaching and learning space - by developing new teaching rooms, state-of-the-art but practical in terms of technology, as students of the "digital" age might expect.

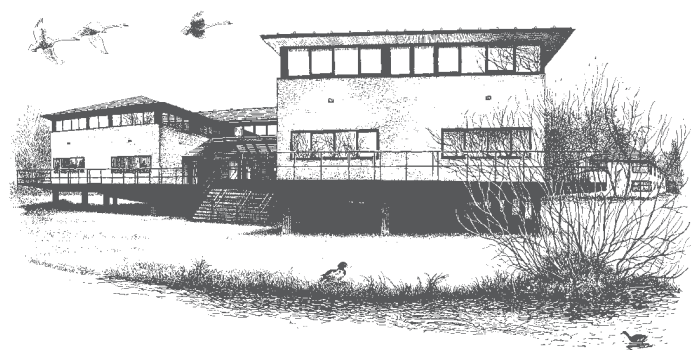
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- Creating a social learning space in the foyer of the Business School, turning it into a - welcoming, fit-for-purpose hub of student activity, providing access to both the essential digital technology for learning (wireless access to key databases, reports etc) as well as a more traditional "reading room" and space for books and journals.
- Establishing a trading room – creating a fully-automated financial trading room with real-time access.
- Developing our research capabilities - funding for Chairs / Professorships in areas of key strength (Enterprise, Finance and Investment) and funding DPhil scholarships to expand our research community and enhance our capability.

The Business School Newsletter has been fantastic in re-establishing links with our alumni and we thought it might be fun and interesting to include "Alumni Profiles" in future editions. So please email us and let us know what you are doing, or even better drop in and re-connect with Buckingham. We would love to catch up with you.

Dr Jane Tapsell, Dean of the Business School



Leadership for Leaders



Masters students from the Business School Learn to Lead at BMC Global Services

The University of Buckingham has approved a new Masters programme, the MSc in Leadership. This is a part-time, 24 month course with a practical element aimed at individuals who currently lead, or wish to lead in the future, providing the requisite skills and knowledge to improve the performance of their teams or organisations, and successfully lead them through periods of transformation.

The launch this autumn sees the MSc in Leadership (part-time) for Danish students being delivered at selected partner colleges in Denmark. The course was designed, in association with BMC Global Services, an organisation specialising in Leadership Development and Training, by Rakesh Sondhi, a Visiting Professor at the University of Buckingham.

The MSc takes students on a leadership journey from the strategic organisational aspect (the current state and need for leadership), through to leadership conceptualisation and leadership skills, and finally the application of new leadership to the self, teams and the organisation. The programme is designed to develop the leadership skills and behaviour of the delegates, in addition to creating a better understanding of the academic concepts of leadership. A distinctive feature of this programme is that it is designed for behavioural change in the delegates.

The programme is aimed at leaders operating in the business, sport, political and spiritual environments. "We felt there was a lot to learn from these different environments so why not design the programme to assist leaders from these environments, as well"

said Professor Sondhi.

The majority of course workshops take place in Denmark. However, students will also have the opportunity to visit the UK and the University of Buckingham and BMC's Leadership Academy in Nottingham to expand the learning experience.

The course is directed by Professor Rakesh Sondhi and will be run with a specialist faculty consisting of academics, business leaders, and leadership champions from a broad selection of areas such as sport and military.

Experiential learning methods are a key part of the MSc in both the transfer of learning and the application of those acquired skills. These methods form numerous module assessments including team film-making assignment, practical exercises, 360 degree assessments, storytelling and sport. The MSc is designed to maximise the latest technology and thinking in learning methods.

The programme will be offered on a full time and part basis in the near future with modules on Holistic Leading and Thinking, Leading Strategy, Leading Change and Organisational Renewal, Leadership Development, Inspirational Leaders, Spiritual and Cultural Diversity in Leadership, Managing Relationships, Leadership Expression, Leading and Building Winning Teams. A key part of the assessment is a dissertation based on the specific needs and focus of each student.

Supply Chain Management Students Visit DHL in Bicester



On Wednesday 4th May a group of Supply Chain Management students made a visit to the DHL logistics operations facility in Bicester.

Working on behalf of Kraft Foods in the UK, DHL manages the stock warehousing and distribution of all of the Kraft Foods ranges for the UK market. With the recent merger of Kraft with Cadbury, this has added further products and volume to the business. The warehouse area was certainly impressive, holding up to £36 million worth of stock (brands such as Kenco coffees, Toblerone and Green & Blacks). Undoubtedly with this amount of stock most of which has limited shelf-life there is strict batch control to support customer requirements for fresh products. The 42,000 location automated warehouse and the systems control ensure this dependability for Kraft's customers.

A presentation by Andy Railton, Site Manager at Bicester set the scene before students made the plant tour guided by himself and Brian Bergmann. For the students this was an opportunity to see a real "logistics operation" in practice. During the visit we were shown how the organisation works, and shown both the goods receipting and storage processes, and the despatching and forward logistics to the retailers; in addition, and a growing part of the operations at Bicester, the 'co-packing' operation - preparing products for display in retail store promotions.

Students' comments following the visit included - *"good to see it 'for real' rather than on paper", "really interesting", "helps us make sense of business"*.

DHL have 4 key areas of business including its famous Express packages and mail services. DHL Bicester is just one of its facilities within the Supply Chain group.

Collaboration with MISTC in Singapore

A ground-breaking partnership has been started between The Business School and Marketing Institute of Singapore Training Centre (MISTC) based in Singapore. MISTC will launch two new programmes – a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Business and Management and a Master of Business Administration – in September 2011.

MISTC will follow the Buckingham programme and course content; the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Business and Management is designed to develop skills in solving business problems that are transferable organisationally and internationally across business environments.

The Master of Business Administration curriculum is designed to prepare managers for senior managerial positions, helping to ensure success and marketability in an ever-evolving job market. MBA students will study the theory and application of business and management principles, equipping students with knowledge that can be applied to a variety of real world business situations or in further research. "The University of Buckingham welcomes the collaboration with the MISTC; with its impressive track record of delivering high quality courses in the thriving business environment of Singapore. As they have a shared interest in providing personalised educational provision to high standards our two institutions are ideal partners" said Dr Frances Robinson, Director of Collaborations at the University of Buckingham.



Mr Jeffrey Gomez, Executive Director of the Marketing Institute of Singapore Training Centre supported this, stating - "With the high ranking it enjoys among universities internationally and its pristine reputation in student satisfaction, the University of Buckingham is a choice partner for the Marketing Institute of Singapore Training Centre. Combined with the excellent and proven quality of our administration as well as student services, MISTC is confident of ensuring that both the programmes will be offered to the highest standards with a balance of academic theory and real world experience."

Business Enterprise - Visiting Entrepreneurs

During the Winter Term a variety of entrepreneurs were invited to make presentations on their businesses (successes and failures) to BSc Business Enterprise students, other students and local business people. These sessions are held in the Winter and Summer Terms, so also see the notice-board for next term. Here is a selection of the talks by the entrepreneurs.



Barbara Stopher

Barbara Stopher worked in the corporate world for 18 years before starting her own business. Barbara had a vision of her own from the age of sixteen - she wanted to be a successful marketer in the branded goods area. She

structured her career to meet her aims and objectives, initially in the corporate world.

Barbara's focus in choosing a company to work with was to select those that gave her opportunities not to just continuously improve her CV, but to also give her the aspiration to go further. Not only did she learn about "marketing" but also about business structures and the need for policies and procedures to manage a business and manage people.

In 1996 Barbara left corporate life for good and started her own marketing consultancy business. Over the years, the consultancy's business grew and services expanded, particularly into Public Relations (PR). In 2008 she decided to sell the successful business, and was pleased to accept an offer from the UK's longest established PR agency, Richmond Towers Communications.

Andrew Bernard

Andrew Bernard (Bernie), a renowned speaker and founder of the company Innovative Enterprise, gave an engaging lecture at the 'Innovation & Entrepreneurship – Business Success Stories' workshop. The theme of the seminar was bringing the future to life. If there was ever an evening full of life this was it – it was fun, inspiring and full of life.

The workshop started with an interactive session where individuals, grouped in fours and fives, were

tasked with identifying the business prospects hidden in the mystery objects given to each group.

This exercise encouraged teamwork and deep thinking. Bernie concluded the workshop with words encouraging individuals to follow their hearts and start their business ideas even in the face of imperfections. In his own words:

"CREATIVITY – Try it out, Don't wait for Perfection!"



Robert Anstee

Rob Anstee started his career working as an apprentice electrician in the family business, but after a number of years he decided to make more progress by studying for a degree in engineering at the University of Bath. Following

his graduation he was employed by the record company EMI, working as an engineer with The Beatles and other bands, developing their recording techniques. It was during this time that he and his colleagues started to experiment with capturing images underwater, using sound waves.

Subsequently Rob started two businesses, Requirements Engineering Limited and Quality Systems and Software Limited. He did this, not only for the money, but also so he could become his own boss. Through his existing contacts Rob was able to assemble a highly motivated team. He also used an innovative way of recruiting other members of staff – by asking them to voluntarily double work. He could then easily assess whether or not they were truly interested in the job.

He finished his session with "Rob's Top Tips on starting a business":

- Don't do it! But if you do, then be totally committed
- Business is 10% inspiration and 110% perspiration
- Networking is key to success
- your business is not the 'widget' - its people, sales, marketing and finance.

Reports from 2011 Business Enterprise Students

Financial Management students visit to the *London Metal Exchange*

On Monday 9th May, the Financial Management class made a trip to the London Metal Exchange (LME). The LME is the world's premier market for non-ferrous metals, it offers trading of futures and options contracts for a variety of metals such as aluminium, copper, tin, nickel, zinc, steel and many more.

Obviously, we weren't allowed to be on the actual trading floor, but from the viewing gallery we had the opportunity to observe the frenetic activity of the traders. Trading takes place across three trading platforms: through an open-outcry trading in the 'ring' (Trading Times: 11:45 – 17:00, London Time) the part we watched, through an inter-office telephone market and through LMEselect, the Exchange's electronic trading platform.

As you would imagine, the floor was quite busy and loud and difficult to see what was really

happening. However, as we followed our eyes and discussed with classmates, we were starting to get an idea of how things were working. The teams (traders) were working very hard to close the deals as they only had 5 minutes to do so, and the types of metals kept changing after each deal. It was definitely interesting to see how they used 'hand-signal' codes to communicate messages to their colleagues. The whole idea was to make future deals with suppliers at an agreed price, which is rather competitive. Following our studies on the subject of Derivatives over 2 weeks, the LME visit gave us the practical knowledge we needed to understand the concept and what is being traded at LME more fully. Overall, it was a fun trip and I would definitely recommend it to future Financial Management students.

Report by: Sepand Fardghassemi

Alumni visitor gives insight into the world of chocolate

Bill Keeling, a Buckingham alumni, and former investment banker gave a fascinating insight into how he and his brother had reinvigorated the Prestat chocolate brand. Nick, with his brother, purchased Prestat in 1999. Prestat at this stage comprised a retail outlet in London and, the brand name itself. Importantly the brand came with a Royal Warrant. Prestat was also the favourite chocolate brand of various mid-twentieth century celebrities, notably Roald Dahl (author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*). Despite a long history, the brand is over a hundred years old, Prestat had become antiquated and out of fashion. The challenge facing Nick and his brother was how to re-establish and grow the brand whilst respecting its heritage and tradition.

The brothers made the decision to retain the shop in Piccadilly, London, in the belief that the brand needed to be supported by a physical presence. Over time



Prestat has expanded its distribution; its chocolates can be purchased in most up-market retailers, and now available online. It has invested in product development, the banoffee chocolates are particularly recommended!

Bill also stressed the importance of packaging to generate brand values. Prestat's packaging is designed to celebrate the sexiness of chocolate. Finally Prestat purchased a manufacturing company. In essence the development of the brand has been built on these five distinct pillars: history and tradition, a physical presence, product development, product packaging and manufacturing. And by the way, the chocolate really is great!

Developing Professional Capability in the Automotive Industry

To many students one of the most uncomfortable parts of any programme is 'making a class presentation' or 'making a big presentation to the examiners'. The twenty-two members of the JCT600 Group's two programmes which should lead to the Professional Management Certificate – Automotive – have gone one step further.

Yorkshire based JCT600 Group is one of the largest car dealership groups in the United Kingdom and over the last fifteen months two groups of senior managers have been subjected to the 'six modules' of the Buckingham CAM programme.

So what was special for these groups when it comes to making presentations? Simple – for the last round of presentations spread over two days, there were three members of the board listening – and asking questions - throughout. Members chose the topics of their presentations from issues they had examined on the way through the programme. The challenge of presenting, uninterrupted, for 15-20 minutes to among others the group managing director or the finance director – can be quite daunting.

The projects the programme members discussed all offered potential profit opportunities or greater competitiveness for the business – hence the intense questioning! The verdict at the end of the programme? HR Director Graham Clark commented 'we do a lot of training but this is something different. The members have really appreciated it. Members tell me they have been putting to use the ideas and new found knowledge almost from day one'

And how many will be graduating? He asked.

'That' say Professor Peter Cooke the programme director, 'is in the hands of the examiners!'



“Research in Brief”

A number of the Business School faculty have attended, and presented papers at conferences and workshops in recent months. A quick rundown of some of the major activities include:

Nigel Adams presented a paper entitled: Developing and running an innovative BSc Business Enterprise honours degree programme, at the 2011 EFMD Entrepreneurship Conference in Tallinn, Estonia (21-22 February 2011). The conference focussed on Entrepreneurship Education and Practice.

Nigel Adams chaired the Enterprise Educators Best Practice Workshop at the University of Buckingham on 23 February 2011. The event focussed on Entrepreneurship Education and Practice, and was attended by academics from Liverpool, Sheffield and London. In addition to chairing the event Nigel lead on of the sessions entitled: A Review and Discussion about the BSc Business Enterprise Programme at Buckingham

Nigel Adams also attended the CICFT (Creativity, Imagination, Creativity, and Flexible Thinking: The challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurial teaching and learning). The conference held at the University of Westminster, in London in February where delegates focussed their thinking and discussions on Entrepreneurship Education and Practice, and had a strong emphasis on creativity.

In June, Anne Hampton and James Rowell presented their paper: Cross-border Business Relationships: Balancing attitudes and behaviour for long-term partnerships at the eleventh International Conference on Knowledge, Culture and Change in Organisations (2011) held at Universidad San Pablo in Madrid. Their presentation explored a working

paper to share a newly developed framework for further research in the area of understanding and developing international business relationships.

Having also presented their research findings in May, at the Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce Economic Quarterly Review, they are now poised to broaden their research net, to further develop understanding international business relationships managed with SME organisations.

Thomai Filippeli attended the conference “The Future of the European Union: Democracy, Stability and Enlargement” held at the Facultad de Economía y Empresa, Universidad da Coruna, in Spain. She presented her paper “Lessons from the Greek Debt Crisis” based on her research on the debt crisis in European Monetary Union with an emphasis in Greece. She presented the reasons that led Greece to the current situation, potential solutions to the problem and the possible outcomes for each solution, not only for Greece but for the euro area as a whole.

Andreas Schroeder was one of the facilitators at the UK Association of Information Systems Conference held 11th - 13th April in Oxford. This is the annual meeting of the UK Association of Information Systems. It is the UK wide gathering of IS scholars to present academic papers in the IS discipline, and drive developments in the UK. Andreas was a facilitator of the PhD consortium, where PhD students from UK and wider Europe present their work in small group seminars and receive feedback from the academic facilitators and their PhD peers. For Andreas the process has been very interesting to learn from other facilitators on how to judge and support a PHD student in the most constructive way.

Wondimu Mekonnen organised a CIMA Event held at the University of Buckingham on 4th May 2011. The event was chaired by Ms Joanne Wood from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). CIMA prepares people for a career in business. Whilst our undergraduate Business programmes are accredited by CIMA, with exemptions from six papers, and MBA graduates can gain advanced entry to CIMA by examination, the session provided an insight into careers possibilities in private practice, working on external audit and tax issues amongst others.

Industry Forums – An Innovative Agenda

Professor Peter Cooke has been running The Centre for Automotive Management forums. Following recent changes to personnel in the sponsoring companies Prof. Cooke is pleased to announce that DHL in Milton Keynes has decided to back the forums to encourage information exchange amongst the diversity of interests in the automotive industry.

The next one of these well-attended forums will hold event on November 9th.

For further details contact kim.pittwood@buckingham.ac.uk

Introducing...



Joanna Leach BSc (Cambridge) Management and French

Joanna Leach ('Jo' to her friends) joined Buckingham Business School in September 2010 as Study Skills tutor, having taught English foundation at the University since 2008. In January this

year, Joanna also became Programme Director of the International Foundation Programme, and alongside her roles within the university she works as an examiner for Cambridge University exams, as well as studying for a master's degree in adult language and literacy at London's Institute of Education.

Previously, Joanna has worked in a number of further education colleges around London, and has also worked for the British Council in Spain, living in the country for three years. Speaking of Buckingham Business School, Joanna says she likes its 'bustling feel', and has welcomed the opportunity to apply her love for teaching in working with Buckingham's diverse student population.

In her spare time, Joanna likes attending music festivals (her favourite artists include David Gray and Van Morrison), and she also loves to travel. Her sixteen year old son is currently taking his GCSE exams, which even for a lecturer, is proving to be a stressful time! Jo hopes her love for travel will one day see her return to live in Spain, and she would also love to visit India and Mauritius at some point in the future.

Thomai Filippeli BSc Economics (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), MA Economics (University of Macedonia, Greece)

Thomai joined Buckingham Business School in February 2011, so is the newest member of the Business School. She is a Lecturer in Economics, and is studying for her PhD which she is looking forward to 'defending' at her viva this summer.

Her PhD subject is focussed on the macroeconomics of EU integration, with a particular emphasis on European Monetary Union; when successful she will be awarded her doctorate by the University of



Macedonia, in northern Greece, her home country. Since joining the university she has been meeting both undergrad and post grad students in the Business School, and teaching economics and some QM subjects.

When asked, Thomai has been pleased with her move to Buckingham, referring to the landscape, staff and students. Whilst missing the Greek sun, she feels she has been made to feel most welcome here at the university. She likes good food, theatre and opera; and whilst this is not 'everyday' in Buckingham itself, she has marked out the Red Chilli restaurant in the High St. as a good place to eat.



Dr Gurcharan Singh BSc (Malaya), MSc (Putra Malaysia), PhD (Malaya), ACCA

Dr Gurcharan Singh joined the University of Buckingham in January 2011 having taught as a senior lecturer for five years at the University of Malaya. Dr

Singh's first degree was in sports management, which he studied alongside his ACCA qualification. He then went on to study for an MSc in Financial Economics, before working for a pharmaceutical company and then working as a group financial controller. Whilst studying for his PhD, Dr Singh lectured at the University of Malaya, progressing to a senior lecturer role after completing his doctorate.

Now Director for the MSc Accounting and Finance and MSc Finance and Investment courses at Buckingham, Dr Singh also teaches finance to other postgraduate students. He is an assistant editor of the Journal of Accounting and Finance, and continues to supervise PhD students in Malaya.

Dr Singh came to the University of Buckingham for a complete change in work environment. He embraces the flexibility that Buckingham as a small institution offers, in terms of the level of input he has in planning and designing the programmes under his directorship. In his spare time, Dr Singh is a fan of many sports including badminton and hockey, so much so that he was a national umpire for the latter! In the future, Dr Singh hopes to see his MSc programmes grow and develop, and wants to continue building his reputation as a researcher in the area of finance.