

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council – March 2005

As usual in my reports to Council I highlight some of the matters which are of particular importance at present. The report is rather long, but this reflects the range of current issues. In the meeting itself I propose to concentrate on some of these, but I shall of course be happy to respond to questions and comments on any of them.

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Pro Vice-Chancellor

At its last meeting Council agreed to the proposal to appoint a third Pro Vice-Chancellor, and Senate recommends to Council that Professor Aled Jones be appointed. This will give us greater resilience and enable us to work on the wide range of initiatives which are important to us. The distribution of duties has now been finalised, and the arrangements are summarised in the minutes of Senate.

Research

The research monitoring meetings with departments took place in January. In them we emphasised the need to formulate departmental research strategies, which are consistent, of course, with the university's overall strategy, and which address issues such as the research environment within the department, the coherence of research planning and the relationship with overall research objectives in the discipline. Emphasis was placed on the approach to RAE 2008, external research income and collaborative links. It was agreed that an external opinion would be sought in the case of most departments.

We now have some information about the way in which RAE 2008 will operate, but much remains to be decided. The details are included in the report of PARC to Council. In summary, each submission will be assessed in relation to the quality of cited outputs, the research environment and indicators of esteem. The assessment will be on a scale of 0–4 *, a quality of a 2* output corresponding to 'international recognition', 3* to 'international excellence' and 4* to the very best work in the subject. A single profile will be compiled in which the quality of research output will have a weighting of between 50% and 90%, the detail to be determined by the individual panel. The sub-panels have already started to meet to formulate their assessment criteria and working methods, and we expect a consultation exercise on them during the summer. When the guidance from panels and sub-panels has been finalised it will be necessary to work towards deciding on whom to submit to the RAE – and indeed which individual outputs to submit. The changes that have been introduced mean that it is especially difficult to assess the likely financial outcome.

I am concerned about the level of external research income. There has been a significant decline over the last few years, though there are signs of some improvement over the last few months. The competition for funding is becoming increasingly fierce, but we must make an effort to increase the number and range of applications. Professor Pykett (as the PVC with responsibility for research) and I had a very useful meeting with the Faculty Promoters of Research a few weeks ago, and we shall work together to stimulate and support activity. The meeting highlighted, inter alia, the importance of research leadership within departments.

An important element of the research environment or 'culture' is the training of research students. We have resolved to establish a Research Degrees Board, which will oversee all aspects of the recruitment, supervision and assessment of research students. I have asked Professor Pykett to convene a working party to investigate ways in which we can increase the number of research students and give greater prominence to this aspect of our activity. In this context I am very pleased to report on a recent visit of a panel from the ESRC Postgraduate Training Board. We expect their formal response in a few weeks time, but the informal feedback at the end of the visit was very positive, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the preparations for the visit.

Collaboration

I am pleased to say that our discussions with the University of Wales Bangor have led to the submission to HEFCW of a bid under the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund to establish a Research Partnership. We are now waiting for the Funding Council to arrange to meet us to discuss the proposal further.

The proposal is to establish a strategic and sustainable research partnership which will raise the universities' international profile and enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly selective environment. The partnership is designed to extend the range of available expertise and increase 'effective mass'. One of the objectives is to strengthen the quality of research output. Another is to create a structural framework which will facilitate collaborative research and joint grant proposals, so that we can compete more effectively for external research funding from the Research Councils and other funders.

The partnership with Bangor is not to the exclusion of other links, and useful discussions are also taking place with a range of collaborators on a number of possibilities (and not only research).

Welsh-Medium provision

We have agreed with Bangor that we will prepare a submission to the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund in the area of Welsh medium provision also. This is currently in draft form, and I shall ask Professor Aled Jones to take this forward. There have been several other initiatives. The postgraduate scholarship scheme proposed by the Assembly Government has now been launched,

and we have submitted five applications (the maximum permitted number); we have invited expressions of interest from departments in the Fellowship scheme. Both will help address the need to ensure a supply of academics who can teach through the medium of Welsh, and will contribute to the requirement to develop appropriate Welsh medium material. They involve a commitment from the university in relation to long term sustainability.

The new Pro Vice-Chancellor will have explicit responsibility for Welsh-medium provision, and the appointment of a Director of Welsh Medium Provision is currently being made. The Director will have responsibility for advising departments, coordinating provision, leading its development and monitoring it. He/she will also have responsibility for managing on behalf of Planning Group the resources available from external sources (such as the Funding Council's development fund) and the university itself.

In developing our Welsh-medium provision we are mindful of the target set by the WAG that, in the sector as a whole, 7% of students follow some part of their courses through the medium of Welsh by 2010. Aberystwyth will play its part in helping the sector work towards this ambitious target, but it must be recognised that the student population is heavily weighted towards the South-East of Wales, where this little provision at present.

Planning Round

We expect to receive information about this year's recurrent grant from HEFCW a few days before Council meets. The increase in the grant to the sector as a whole is about 3.5%. However, U.W.A. was protected last year by the 'safety net' following the withdrawal of research funding from departments rated below 4 in the RAE. Using the true base line and taking into account some reduction in the minor volume measures for research funding, the expectation is that the grant to U.W.A. will increase by something of the order of 2% in cash terms. As members of Council know, our costs increase by around 4.5% per annum. Overall therefore we will have the very difficult task of ensuring that we achieve our financial targets.

The Planning Round will be especially difficult this year, not only for this reason, but also because yet again it will be necessary to move resources from departments in deficit to those in surplus. Some departments have a very large surplus in the Resource Allocation System and a few have large deficits. However, there is a larger number of less acute deficits which, nevertheless are significant when summed. At the same time we wish to provide as much support as possible to areas of research excellence and those demonstrating potential.

Future levels of funding

Universities in England will be charging variable fees in 2006, but this will not, of course, be the case in Wales. The commission, chaired by Teresa Rees, that was established by the WAG to provide advice on the fee regime and system of student support in Wales from 2007 has now submitted its interim report. It has not identified significant sources of income other than direct funding from

WAG and fees. It emphasises that the universities in Wales must be able to compete on approximately equal terms with their counterparts elsewhere in the UK.

The additional income from variable fees is significant – corresponding to up to a third of the resource available for teaching. If funding is insufficient, we shall not have the resources to make the necessary investment in maintaining and developing provision, and it will be difficult to recruit and retain staff of high quality neither would we be able to establish a bursary scheme. Our competitive position would suffer over quite a short timescale, and this would impact directly on the student experience and our research capacity.

The uncertainty in Wales is a matter of serious concern. This affects prospective students, since we are unable to give them the guidance which they seek. Moreover, in order to be able to plan ahead we need to know with some degree of certainty what the level of funding is likely to be; in particular we need this information in order to inform our investment decisions ahead of the RAE. For the immediate future, though we have been assured of supplementary funding for 2006/7, we have no information yet on the amount or the basis of distribution.

The Rees report proposes six possible models, corresponding to different combinations of fees and direct additional funding from the Assembly Government. It addresses the strengths and weaknesses of each, including the legal implications. The next stage is a thorough appraisal of these options. The commission is due to submit its final report towards the end of April, and a ministerial decision is expected in June. The model finally chosen should take into account, amongst other matters, the need for:

- sufficient funding to enable the sector in Wales to compete, and this funding to be sustainable,
- a clear and transparent system,
- a fair and equitable system of bursaries.

There is a danger that the system becomes so complicated for prospective students to understand that that itself becomes a barrier to widening participation. The positive aspect of the delay in Wales is that we can at least learn from the problems encountered in England, including the confusing scene for students, high administrative costs and the nugatory competition between institutions.

The third bullet point is important, and there appears to be a lack of understanding of how a system of fees and bursaries would operate. All the models abolish up-front fees : provision would be free at the point of use. Fee loans would be repaid on a graduated basis in accordance with the ability to pay. Of particular importance are the earnings threshold at which this becomes operative and the system of bursaries available to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The report mentions the possibility of National Bursaries, which could be supplemented by individual institutions.

Admissions and recruitment

Applications for undergraduate places are about 7.7% higher than at the equivalent time a year ago. This is in the context of an increase in Wales of about 11% and in the UK as a whole of about 9%. It is

gratifying that there have been significant increases in applications to Science departments. We are aware of the competitiveness of the environment in which we work, and it is clearly essential that we maintain the attractiveness of our provision. We are continually working on developing and 'refreshing' our portfolio of courses. It is essential to be innovative, and several new initiatives are being introduced within and between departments; for instance the establishment of Criminology. We must look beyond present structures, and as an example of testing new ideas I have established a group under the chairmanship of Dr John Harries to investigate our interface with the Health sector in general.

The number of overseas students has grown steadily over recent years. This is not only helpful financially, but it enriches diversity within the university and the town. Many institutions in the UK have suffered this year because of the difficulties encountered with visas. We have not been affected as to anything like the same extent, because, I believe, of the care with which we operate overseas. The strategy is to diversify the range of countries from which we recruit, and the range of subjects involved. It is essential that we provide good support to students during the application period and after they arrive in Aberystwyth. I have established a working party, chaired by Professor Gary Akehurst, to provide advice on future directions in relation to overseas students, taking all these points into account.

I am less sanguine about postgraduate recruitment, and, as I have noted above, there is a considerable amount of work to be done to improve recruitment.

The University of Wales

As members of Council know, the University of Wales established a working party under the chairmanship of Dafydd Wigley, the Pro-Chancellor, to consider the future role and structure of the federal university. It has been emphasised throughout that this should concentrate on the ways in which provision in member institutions can be strengthened. Following a constructive meeting between the working party and the Vice Chancellor's Board, proposals will be submitted to the University of Wales Council meeting on 18 March. Institutions will then be consulted, and I hope that further information will be available in time for the meeting of the U.W.A. Council on March 23.

The report of the Quality Assurance Agency on the Institutional Review of the University of Wales was published in January. This report had already led to the decision to devolve full responsibility for both quality and standards of awards to member institutions, and the consequent requirement for us to seek Degree Awarding Powers. The interim arrangements, to provide assurance until such time as those powers are obtained, are now in place. They involve external presence at key quality committees, in departmental reviews and in scheme validation events.

A great deal of work has been done to prepare our application for Degree Awarding Powers, and I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed to the process. A critical self-analysis will be submitted in April, and we expect an extended engagement with the QAA panel next academic year. The process is described in more detail in the report of PARC.

Other matters

I should like to note in this context the comments made in the Funding Council's response to our Strategic Plan in relation to the utilisation of space. Professor Barrett will have responsibility for these matters, which are particularly relevant now that the new building for the Department of International Politics is under construction. It will be important for us to rationalise our estate, not least to reduce the burden of long term maintenance. Space needs and availability in Old College and the Llanbadarn campus, as well as on Penglais are being reviewed.

Two other building projects are about to commence : the extension to the Department of Theatre Film and Television Studies (to house the Centre for Performance Research), and I am pleased to say that funding has now been confirmed for the Centre of Excellence for Visualisation. The latter is of particular importance to us in the context of third mission activity, and emphasises the important role of the university in the regional economy. Universities play an essential part in the cultural and economic life of their areas of influence, and this is especially true of Aberystwyth.

Finally I should like to mention two other reviews which are currently being undertaken, both under the guidance of the Registrar and Secretary. One is of Student Support Services generally. The other is of the university's communications strategy: communication is important in every large organisation, and requires careful planning.

I have on several occasions commented upon the rapidity of change which Higher Education is undergoing and on the opportunities and challenges that arise as a result. Since the last meeting of Council, a number of developments have occurred: in this report I shall provide updates on some issues and refer to several matters which are likely to be importance during the next months. There will be an opportunity to discuss these - and any other matters members wish to raise - in the meeting itself.

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Degree Awarding Powers

The Quality Assurance Agency has appointed a scrutiny team to consider our application for Research and Teaching Degree Awarding Powers, and this engagement has commenced. One member of the team will observe this meeting of Council, and an extensive programme of observations and meetings has been arranged over the next few months.

Longer term prospects

The current academic year is therefore likely to be a very difficult one financially. Shortfalls of this kind impact directly on our provision. In 2006/7 HE institutions in England will be empowered to charge deferred flexible fees. While this will not happen in Wales, the WAG has assured the sector that it will not be disadvantaged as a result. The budget presented in late September to the Welsh Assembly contained a sum of £30m over two financial years 2005/6 and 2006/7: the 'Supplementary Income Stream' (SIS). The budget has still not been approved, and we await detailed information on the additional income to U.W.A.

There are two other major financial considerations. One is the introduction of the Framework Agreement on the modernisation of pay structures. This involves Role Analysis and the establishment of a pay and grading structure based on a single 51 point scale. Such exercises can be costly unless carefully managed. The process will be a complex one; work has started, and intense activity is expected over the next months. It is a major project; it is led by Professor Lyn Pykett, and I am grateful to everyone who is involved.

The other major aspect is work on our estate. We are in the process of preparing a new Estates Strategy, which will be informed by the now-completed Condition Survey. Sustainability is a key requirement, and we have a policy of rationalising our estate in order to minimise long term maintenance pressure and concentrate activity in buildings which are fit for purpose.

Deferred flexible fees

I reported in July on the decisions reached by the Welsh Assembly on the introduction of deferred flexible fees in Wales. In summary, the fee in 2006/7 will be £1200 and that will be deferred: that is, it will be paid on an income contingent basis after graduation. From 2007/8, the fee in Wales will be the same as in England and will also be deferred. However, students from Wales studying in institutions in Wales will receive a fee remission grant of £1800 per annum; under European legislation this will also be available to students from Europe outside the UK. As in England there will be a means tested maintenance grant together with a range of bursaries. A National Bursary Scheme will be established, which will be available to all undergraduates. The details of the proposed scheme are still under discussion, but it is likely to consist of two parts: a core of means-tested bursaries, and subject-based bursaries which will be awarded by institutions in accordance with their own requirements and the strategic plans which they submit to the Funding Council.

In 2006/7, institutions in England will provide a range of measures to provide financial support to students. To maintain our competitiveness we are establishing a bursary scheme in Aberystwyth, using some of the income from the Supplementary Income Stream. Some of these will be means-tested, while others will be targeted at able students in particular subject areas and those who wish to study through the medium of Welsh.

Following the intense political debates during the summer, there was a commitment that HE institutions in Wales should not be funded less well than those in England. The WAG has asked the Funding Council to investigate whether there is a funding gap and to report on its extent. The results are awaited with interest! Separately a committee has been established to look into and advise on an appropriate package of fees and financial support for part-time students.

CUC Code of Practice

In July I referred to the voluntary Code of Practice for Governing Bodies which has been developed by the CUC (Committee of University Chairs). We shall refer to some of the issues elsewhere on the agenda; however I emphasise that the size of Council remains a live issue.

University of Wales

Our application for Degree Awarding Powers followed the decision of the University of Wales to devolve full responsibility for both the quality and standards of awards to individual institutions. The interim arrangements agreed with the QAA are in place and are functioning. The decisions of the University of Wales on its future role and structure were described in the July meeting of Council. A considerable amount of work is required on the detail of their implementation, and this is being taken forward. These proposed changes will require amendments to the U.W.A. Charter and Statutes. Our solicitors are working on these and will provide a full report to the next meeting of Charter Committee on 9 November.

Research

Preparations for the Research Assessment Exercise are continuing. Guidance on submissions was published during the summer, and consultation on the draft criteria and working methods of panels and sub-panels was held. Taken together, these provide further information on a number of aspects of RAE2008. Final decisions on the criteria and working methods are expected in January. The

assessment of each unit will encompass three elements - research output (mainly in the form of publications), research environment and indicators of esteem. The weightings given to the three elements vary slightly between panels, but a typical weighting is 75% research output, 15% research environment and 10% esteem. Institutions are required to adopt a Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities. This is included in the papers of PARC, and Council will be asked to approve it.

Our annual research monitoring exercise will take place in January, and in it we shall follow the likely requirements of the RAE itself as closely as possible.

External research income is important to us, not only as an indicator of success, but in order to deliver high quality research. There has been a decline in external research income over the last three years (for reasons which are well understood), and efforts are being made to reverse this trend. Submission of applications - and successes - is monitored on a monthly basis, by department and individual. I was encouraged by a good performance in August.

As part of the determination to ensure that universities operate on a sustainable basis, henceforth the Research Councils will fund research on the basis of Full Economic Cost. This will have far reaching repercussions. Most successful grants will attract greater funding, and despite the declared aim to maintain volume, it seems inevitable that the competition will become even more fierce. The Treasury, through the Funders' Forum, has introduced a system of monitoring institutional sustainability consisting of two elements, namely an institutional framework and a set of related 'trigger metrics'.

Collaboration

One of the most exciting recent developments - and potentially a very significant one for UWA - is the establishment of a Research and Enterprise Partnership with University of Wales Bangor. As I indicated in July, the purpose is to increase -effective research mass- in order to enhance our competitiveness and attract significantly higher external research income. The two institutions will formulate a strategy for collaborative research and establish a joint research support mechanism. Following the submission of a full business plan, the Funding Council, having first consulted the Research Councils and other assessors, has agreed to a very significant investment from the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF). The next stage is to submit a detailed schedule of deliverables and a full presentation of the case to the Welsh Assembly Government. I cannot predict the likely timescale of a response from the WAG, but we shall proceed as rapidly as possible, in particular in the appointment of a project Director.

The Research Partnership with Bangor is not to the exclusion of other collaborative activity, and we are engaged in other applications to the RCF, including one with University of Wales Lampeter in History and Welsh History.

Welsh medium provision

We are also engaged in collaborative activity in the area of Welsh medium provision and an application with Bangor is being prepared to the RCF. It is clear that we can do much more together than it is possible for us to accomplish separately. We are also involved in pan-Wales proposals, including an options appraisal for how best to deliver Welsh medium teaching in future. We have been awarded five of the ten postgraduate scholarships which have been made available across Wales. They are designed to develop academic expertise and require a commitment from us as to long term sustainability. The Director of Welsh Medium Provision has developed a matrix for the strategic integration of Welsh medium funding from a number of sources, including the Scholarships,

Fellowships, HEFCW funds and the internal U.W.A. It is our intention to appoint a Welsh-medium field-officer to a two-year post to market our Welsh-medium provision across Wales. This will include a longer-term business plan for our Welsh for Adults provision, and other Welsh-medium CPD initiatives. During this session, a new U.W.A. website and a marketing strategy for Welsh-medium provision will be developed and implemented.

Student Satisfaction

One of the features of Aberystwyth is the commitment of staff and students. We place great emphasis on preparing a supportive environment for all our students and ensuring that our courses are attractive and fit for purpose. This year saw the first National Student Survey. Students in nearly all HE institutions in the UK were surveyed by means of a structured questionnaire. Results were reported in relation to seven aspects of the student experience. I am very pleased to say that the response of Aberystwyth students was very good indeed, and we are very near the top of all the league tables that have been compiled.

Student Recruitment

We admitted about 2250 new Home/EU undergraduates this session, an increase of about 5% on last year. This is the largest number ever in Aberystwyth. It is gratifying that the increase in numbers is reasonably uniform across the university and that a number of subject areas which have had difficulty in recruitment in recent years have seen a significant increase. As at 21 October, the total number of Home/EU undergraduates (across all years) is 52 higher than a year ago.

However, the position is less positive in relation to postgraduate numbers and overseas students. On 21 October we had about 12% fewer Home/EU postgraduates than a year ago, about 12% fewer overseas undergraduates and about 22% fewer overseas postgraduates. There has been a sharp fall in overseas numbers across the sector, and it appears that we are in line with this reduction. We have increased numbers by about 15% per annum over recent years, and we sustained this increase in 2004/5, though many universities experienced a reduction. Applications this year were substantially higher than a year ago, and on that basis we established a target increase of 15% in volume. The reasons for the significant reduction in enrolments will be investigated carefully. It is likely to be a combination of factors, including the wider choice of HE course available in certain countries and the serious problems that have arisen with the granting of visas, a matter on which Vice-Chancellors have lobbied the Home Office very hard over the last six months. I have now received the report of the working party on overseas recruitment and will meet colleagues on 31 October to consider future developments.

The position in relation to postgraduates is of concern. We are dependent on a relatively small number of departments, and it is important for us to expand this base - and, crucially, ensure that our provision is more attractive. I am pleased to say that our proposed Law Professional Course has been validated by the Law Society, and this will provide continuity for students who take their first degree in Aberystwyth. I should also mention the review that is currently taking place into Initial Teacher Training - which in UWA is entirely postgraduate. As a result of the fact that over 70% of teachers trained in Wales for the primary sector do not find employment in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government decided to establish a review with the obvious objective of drastically reducing provision. The expectation is that the recommendations will be far-reaching.

Portfolio Development

Despite concerns about postgraduate recruitment, we need to keep in mind that the great preponderance of our funding comes from Home/EU undergraduates, and though we must address all these other issues we must not allow our attention to be diverted from this important facet. Hence portfolio development plays an important role

We have established a programme of continually refreshing our provision; for example, we are embarking on a degree scheme in Criminology within the Law Department. We are actively considering new possibilities, and specific recommendations will be made to the next meeting of Council. In addition to an enhanced range of provision, our marketing is of key importance, and we shall give active consideration to improving it further.

Further uncertainty is caused by the likely changes in the national procedures for admissions, including the possible introduction of Post Qualifications Admissions. For all these reasons it is essential that we ensure an attractive range of programmes and do everything we can to maintain - and if possible increase - our market share.

Financial Development

Our financial position over the last few years has been good; all indicators are sound. In 2004/5 we expect to report a surplus on the year' working of about 3.8% of turnover on the historic cost convention (or just under 1% on operating cost basis). The balance sheet is strong, and our liquidity very satisfactory.

At the risk of repeating myself, the last few years have seen increases in costs of about 5% per annum, while income from the Funding Council has been increasing at about 2% per annum. In such a context our financial performance has been very good. The pattern continues: the recurrent grant for 2005/6 was 2.35% higher than the previous year, and we again must expect an increase in costs of around 5%. The budget which was presented to Council in July forecast a surplus of about £2.9m (compared with an expected out-turn for 2004/5 of about £2.6m).

However, I have to report that because of the substantial under-recruitment of overseas students and postgraduates, we shall have to revise the expected out-turn. The shortfall in income could be in the region of £1.3m, so that without corrective action we would run an operating deficit. As a result I shall, with colleagues, go through the income and expenditure estimates line by line to protect our financial position.

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council – December 2005

My report to the November meeting of Council gave a detailed description of current issues : in this report my objective is to provide an update on developments since then. As ever, in the meeting I shall be happy to respond to discussion on these or any matters which members wish to raise.

Many of the issues are ongoing; for example, the work of the team scrutinising our application for Degree Awarding Powers continues, and preparations for the RAE are moving forward, with the Research Monitoring meetings with departments scheduled for January.

Collaboration

In relation to the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor we have now responded to the questions raised by the Funding Council, and the proposal is being considered by the Welsh Assembly Government. The WAG may come back to us - or, indeed, to the Funding Council - with questions, but I hope that the process can be completed within a reasonably short space of time. As I have said on previous occasions, this is an important development for us and an exciting initiative.

Planning of other collaborative activity continues. The full proposal for collaboration with Lampeter in History and Welsh History and been completed, and work is continuing on several other initiatives, including Welsh medium provision with Bangor, collaboration in the Social Sciences with Cardiff (in which the Department of International Politics and IGES are important participants), in Mathematical and Computational Sciences (led by Swansea), and in Archaeology (led by Lampeter).

Welsh-medium Provision

There have been several developments in terms of Welsh-medium provision. UWA is working in close cooperation with the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre and the Higher Education Academy to develop the skills of staff who teach through the medium of Welsh or who are likely to do so in future. Discussions continue with Bangor regarding the Funding Council's assessments of the structural options and the methods of funding Welsh-medium provision.

Steps have been taken to consider the possibility of introducing a module to develop Welsh-language skills, starting in the Faculty of Arts and then including the other faculties. We believe that these modules will be attractive to students and will increase their linguistic confidence, so that they will be keener to take advantage of the provision available through the medium of Welsh. The departments have now been invited to apply for the second round of postgraduate scholarships - members of the Council will remember that, last year, U.W.A. succeeded in gaining five of the ten scholarships available throughout Wales.

In January the university will submit an application to ELWa to be designated a Welsh for Adults regional centre. Discussions are also being held with Powys County Council to prepare lifelong learning courses and professional courses for the Council's employees.

Sector-wide financial matters

There is somewhat greater clarity now in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's budget for HE, and, following intense political discussion, the budget for 2006/7 has been agreed. There is confirmation that the Supplementary Income Stream will be a total of £33.5m for sector, though distribution to individual institutions has yet to be announced. It will be calculated according to a

formula corresponding to £1490 per fundable student. Thus Aberystwyth is likely to receive an income of approximately £3.4m from this source in 2006/7.

Progress has also been made on the 'funding gap'. The W.A.G. commissioned detailed work by the Funding Council and - as one might expect - the size of the funding gap between Wales and England depends on the way in which the calculation is done. It is now generally accepted that there is such a gap and there does seem to be a commitment to address it over a period of years. An additional £5m has been included in the budget for 2006/7, consisting of £3m capital and £2m recurrent expenditure, and further consideration will be given to the position for later years.

Discussions on the National Bursary Scheme are continuing. Although the proposals made by the sector appear to be broadly acceptable, detailed discussions continue. A U.W.A. bursary scheme for 2006/7 has already been announced. We shall need to give information about the bursaries available in Aberystwyth from 2007/8 in the prospectus which is being finalised in January; we are currently modelling a range of possibilities, but it is likely that something like 25% to 30% of additional income from fees will be directed towards bursary support for students.

The introduction of deferred flexible fees (in England in 2006/7 and in Wales a year later) is a reflection of the Government's acceptance of the chronic underfunding of the sector as a whole. Members of Council will be familiar with the fact that over recent years the costs in Aberystwyth have been increasing at about 5% per year whereas the recurrent grant has been increasing at about half that rate. This underlying trend is likely to continue, and will gradually erode the significant increase of income as a result of deferred flexible fees.

Financial prospects of U.W.A.

The financial demands on U.W.A. over the next few years include the following:

- i. the cost of implementing the Framework Agreement on modernising pay structures;
- ii. a large increase in the employer's contribution to the Aberystwyth's Pension Fund;
- iii. the necessity to invest in portfolio development in order to ensure that our provision continues to be attractive and fit for purpose;
- iv. the need to establish annual operating surpluses of around £2m a year;
- v. the costs of salary increases agreed nationally;
- vi. the large demands of long term maintenance of the estate.

I shall say more about some of these in the meeting of Council. Here I note that in relation to (vi) we have now received the condition survey on the whole of our estate, and in common with most other institutions we have a serious backlog maintenance problem. This is because over the years universities have invested in activity as opposed to the infrastructure - and have been funded in this way by the funding agencies. The sector is now beginning to realise that it must operate on a sustainable basis: this is demonstrated by the introduction of Full Economic Costing of Research Council grants and is something that must percolate throughout our activities.

In November, I mentioned the shortfall in overseas student recruitment and the need to make some reductions in expenditure as a result. I am pleased to be able to report that we have been able to respond to the requirement satisfactorily and in a fairly straightforward manner. The reasons for the sector-wide shortfall appear to be quite complex, and include the changing pattern of provision in countries such as China, and the undoubted effects (actual and on perception) of changes to the arrangements for securing a visa for entry to the UK. Our strategy continues to be diversification of both subject areas and the countries from which we recruit, and the provision of support for

students, both before coming to Aberystwyth and after arriving here. It is estimated that Higher Education brings in over £4b p.a. to the UK. To put this in context, the value of Education exports exceeds that of food and drink, insurance, and ships and aircraft. Despite the increase over recent years, it is still the case that the UK share of the international student market has fallen fastest amongst OECD countries.

I am also pleased to note that latest estimates indicate that we are unlikely to face claw-back of the recurrent grant for this year. However we are below our funded student numbers, and this is why it is essential that we invest in new initiatives and innovative provision.

The University of Wales

As members of Council know, far reaching changes in the role and structure of the University of Wales are taking place. Full responsibility has already been devolved for the standard and quality of awards: hence our application for Degree Awarding Powers. A range of other matters have also been devolved, and as a result we are developing appropriate regulations. One example is that Readerships and Chairs will now be Aberystwyth appointments rather than University of Wales positions. This will be a matter that will be mentioned in the report from Senate, and Council will be asked to give formal approval to the arrangements.

Attached to this report is a letter received from our solicitors in relation to the necessary revision to the Charter and Statutes. A number of changes are proposed:

- i. those deriving from our application for Degree Awarding Powers;
- ii. those following from the changes to the role and structure of the University of Wales -: broadly speaking it will no longer be a membership organisation, but rather one that provides services for the associated institutions;
- iii. the need to emphasise further that Council is the governing body of the institution, and the impact of this on Court;
- iv. modernisation and simplification of presentation, using generic terminology whenever possible;
- v. moving as many matters as possible out of the Charter and Statutes and into Ordinances.

I should emphasise that the advice of the DfES and Privy Council is to include in Charter and Statutes only 'high level' matters and to prepare Ordinances to cover detailed implementation.

The other issue is timing. The University of Wales will make its own submission to the Privy Council, probably for a Supplemental Charter, but that is a process that is likely to take some time. It seems reasonable for Aberystwyth to proceed with the changes that it wishes to make as soon as possible.

Council is invited to discuss these issues and comment upon the proposed approach to the revision of Charter and Statutes.

CUC Code of Practice

A number of aspects of the CUC Code of Practice for Governing Bodies have been discussed in previous meetings of Council. In addition to a Statement of Primary Responsibilities, we briefly discussed Key Performance Indicators in November. I have now received a number of comments on the draft tabled, and a revised version will be considered by PARC in the first instance. Sub-committees will be asked to take note of their terms of reference at the beginning of each Academic Year and the revision of the Charter and Statutes will take into account the delegation of powers to

sub-committees. The size of Council is a matter of some importance in the context of guidance in the Code of Practice which advises an upper bound of 25. Several models will be presented to Charter committee for consideration, and its recommendation will be presented to Council for decision at a later meeting.

Neol G Lloyd

December 2005

Report to Council: March 2006

New Initiatives and Collaboration

I am pleased to report that since the December meeting of Council, we have been notified of a successful outcome to several significant funding initiatives. First, the Welsh Assembly Government has now approved funding of almost £11 million for the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor. This is over a period of 5 years and is an exciting opportunity for the two universities. It will enable us to establish a higher profile in research, increase our competitiveness and enhance our impact on the economic and cultural development of Wales. It is important that research activity is outward looking and the partnership places considerable emphasis on the end-users of the research. As members of Council will recall, the partnership involves the establishment of a Research and Enterprise Support Unit together with four research centres: the Centre for Catchment and Coastal Research, the Centre for Integrated Rural Environment Research, the Centre for Advanced Functional Materials and Devices and the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

I am also pleased to announce that funding to establish the Centre for Excellence for Visualisation has now been approved by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). The overall value of this project is about £10.4 million, funded by the Welsh Assembly through WEFO, WDA, HEFCW (through the Science Research Infrastructure Fund), UWA and industrial partners Silicon Graphics Inc. and Sun Microsystems. This again is an exciting development, combining as it does Research and Development with a contribution to regional economic development

Separately, WEFO has given approval to the Welsh Institute for Sustainable Environments; this is a joint venture with Bangor and Swansea in relation to the commercialisation aspects of research on sustainable environments.

Other collaborative ventures are also in varying degrees of maturity. Following a positive response to the expressions of interest, detailed bids are now being submitted to the Funding Council in relation to the collaboration with Lampeter in History and Welsh History, and with Cardiff, Swansea and Bangor in Mathematical and Computational Science. Other initiatives are in the pipeline.

Discussions with Bangor on Collaboration in Welsh-medium provision have progressed well. However, the Funding Council has decided not to respond to our proposals until the consultations on the funding of Welsh-medium provision and on methods of delivery have been completed. We have been successful in being awarded three of the Welsh-medium postgraduate scholarships awarded this year (giving us a total of eight over two years) – in History, Geography and Mathematics.

In addition we have been notified by ELWa that we have been chosen as one of the six regional centres in Wales for the teaching Welsh for Adults: this is an important component of our outreach and our work in relation to Welsh medium provision.

Research

Preparations for RAE 2008 continue, and the latest rounds of Research Monitoring meetings have been completed. These concentrated on departmental research strategies, the research environment within departments and the cohesiveness of research activity. I have asked departments to prepare an initial draft of the narrative part of their RAE submission, in which the research environment is described and indicators of esteem noted, within the next few weeks. It is important to start detailed preparation as soon as possible. Also within the next few weeks we shall be advertising seven chairs or readerships as a strategic investment ahead of the RAE, using a combination of specific HEFCW funding and our own resources.

Applications for external research income are increasing, but much remains to be done. We have prepared guidelines on 'Research Foresight': it is essential that we recognise the priorities of funders, assess our capacity and proactively deploy our resources to address these priorities.

Admissions

It is disappointing that applications from Home/EU undergraduates are 10% fewer than at the corresponding stage a year ago. On the other hand, it is pleasing that applications from Wales have increased by 12%. Last year's intake was, of course, the largest ever, but in terms of applications we have returned to the level of 2003/4. There has been very considerable turbulence as a result of the introduction of deferred flexible fees in England, and this emphasises the uncertainties of the current situation and the highly competitive environment.

We are conducting an in-depth assessment of the factors affecting recruitment and we shall take such steps as are necessary to protect our position. It emphasises the need to continue the programme of portfolio development to ensure an attractive range of courses – hence the decision, for example, to introduce Psychology, in which the first appointment is imminent. We have recently appointed two new recruitment officers – one to work in the West Midlands and one to concentrate on Welsh medium provision.

It is also essential to ensure the best possible environment for students and we are therefore reviewing student support services. The purpose of the review is to strengthen and to make more cohesive the range of support services currently available to students. The review includes an examination of the roles performed by the Centre for Language and Learning, and all medical, counselling, accommodation, careers and financial support systems. It will pay particular attention to the relationship between Departmental systems (e.g. personal tutors, disability officers) and institution-wide provision, and will formally consult with the student body through the Guild of Students. It will consider the streamlining of the current range of provision into a ‘one shop stop’ for all students, supported by a reorganised management and reporting structure. An associated review of Year One induction is being conducted in parallel.

One of the most important elements will be our programme of bursaries – important for students and because it is essential for us to compete effectively with universities in England. In 2006/7 we shall enhance the range and value of Scholarships and merit awards, and introduce a range of means-tested and excellence bursaries. In subsequent years we shall develop the range of bursaries very substantially, with estimated expenditure in steady state of over £3m per year on means-tested bursaries, excellence bursaries in subjects of national importance including Welsh medium study, and residential bursaries.

Governance

In the light of far-reaching changes within the University of Wales, I have mentioned on previous occasions that significant amendments are required to UWA’s Charter and Statutes. This is a painstaking process, but we are making progress. The changes take a number of developments into account:

- (i) our application for Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs),
- (ii) likely application for University title if our application for DAPs is successful,
- (iii) the moving of a whole raft of matters of to the Ordinances (in line with advice received from DfES and WAG),
- (iv) modernisation of language and use of generic terminology,
- (v) full recognition of Council as the sole governing body.

Associated with the amendments are two issues which Council will be asked to discuss: the name of the institution following an application for university title, and the size of Council.

Finance

In my report in December I gave some details about the financial outlook for UWA over the next few years. I have reported in detail to Senate and to Finance and General Purposes Committee on the prospects for the immediate future and details are found in the minutes of F&GP in Council papers.

We have now received the recurrent grant letter, and our overall grant for 2006/7 is 2.05% higher in cash terms than this year. The average increase for institutions in Wales is much less than the corresponding figure in England and Scotland.

The significant change for 2006/7 will be the Supplementary Income Stream, a sum of just under £3.8m for UWA. The S.I.S. is designed to compensate Welsh institutions for the absence of deferred flexible fees in 2006/7. Institutions are required to account for expenditure of 15% of this funding in relation to the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government as described in 'Reaching Higher' – specifically in relation to widening access and a range of other priorities described as the 'promotion of Higher Education'. Details of the process are described in PARC papers. In subsequent years, deferred flexible fees will be introduced and Fee Plans are required to account for expenditure of 30% of the additional income; a draft version has already been submitted to HEFCW.

The significant additional financial requirements in 2006/7 include:

- * expenditure on bursaries (as explained above),
- * enhancement of provision for students and portfolio development.

- * an additional £620K employer's contribution to the UWA Pension and Assurance Scheme,
- * significant expenditure on addressing the condition survey of the Estates (F&GP has approved a proposal for £1m and sustainability in general),
- * the cost of the Framework Agreement on the modernisation of pay structures,
- * the cost of incremental progression,
- * the cost of the nationally negotiated salary increase.

The estimates which have been prepared are based on conservative assumptions about the cost of the Framework Agreement and uplift of salaries. These lead to an operating surplus of about £1m, which is less than our target; it will be difficult to achieve even that if salary increases are higher.

The introduction of the Full Economic Costing of Research Council grants demonstrates the greater awareness by funders of assessing the cost of activity on a sustainable basis. The large long-term maintenance requirement is a symptom of disregard of these principles in the past, by institutions and funders. In relation to the estate, our policy involves rationalisation of holdings, concentrating on buildings which are fit for purpose, and more efficient use of space. We have embarked on formulating a new estates strategy for the next 10-15 years, and initial discussions with the consultants doing the work are very interesting. This strategy must be submitted to HEFCW by the end of May, and Council will be asked to give F&GP authority to 'sign it off' on its behalf. Council is also asked to formally approve our policy on sustainability which has been submitted to HEFCW.

The current salary claim from the academic unions was originally based on an expectation that 1/3 of the additional funding from fees should be expended on improved pay and conditions for staff. Using the assumption outlined above, around 2/3 of the additional income in 2006/7 will be expended as increased employment costs of staff currently in post. Given all the financial pressures on the university, I am seriously concerned about the affordability of pay increases which are significantly higher than the rate of inflation. In the next three years, it is estimated that on the basis of pay increases of no more than about 3.5% per annum, about a half

of the additional funding from deferred flexible fees will be expended on increased employment costs.

I greatly regret the decision of academic unions to participate in industrial action. I shall explain the background in the meeting of Council and provide members with an update. The over-riding principles must be to do what is possible to protect the interests of students and at the same time to seek a fair and equitable outcome for all employees of the university – academic staff and support staff.

In summary, my report, as ever, describes a range of success and signals a number of challenges for the future.

NGL

REPORT TO COUNCIL, JULY 2006

In this report I shall concentrate on some of the main challenges – and opportunities – for UWA in the year ahead. I shall, of course, welcome discussion of these, and of other matters which members wish to raise, in the meeting of Council.

Charter and Statutes

Elsewhere on the agenda we shall consider the proposed changes to our Charter and Statutes. These reflect, to some extent, the changed context of HE in Wales. Following our application for Degree Awarding Powers, the engagement with the QAA scrutiny team is nearing its conclusion. At its meeting in March, Council agreed that we should seek University title as soon as possible following confirmation of Degree Awarding Powers under the name *Aberystwyth University*.

Separately, the University of Wales is applying to the Privy Council for radical changes in its Charter and Statutes; one requirement will be that those changes and the consequent amendments to the Charter and Statutes of associated institutions are coordinated.

Admissions and recruitment

The most significant challenge over the next year is in relation to student recruitment. Our recurrent grant from HEFCW is driven by the number of Home/EU students (the other major component being research funding on the basis of the RAE). This year saw the largest ever cohort of undergraduates admitted, but for a combination of reasons we are currently at risk of clawback in relation to the current year. One particular reason is a decline in the number of postgraduates, and another is a lower retention rate.

However, applications for 2006/7 show a significant overall reduction, despite a very welcome increase in applications from Wales. The reduced number of applications has led to a fall of over 10% in the number of students holding us as first choice. It is a year of considerable turbulence, of course, and though a single year does not constitute a trend, it is essential to respond proactively. We have done remarkably well in recruitment over the years, and the Admissions and Recruitment office, and those responsible for admissions within departments, have shown commitment and imagination. We have done particularly well in converting applications to admissions. There is intense competition and it is an area of activity where it is necessary to develop new ideas and initiatives continually. We are giving considerable thought to the matter.

As I have noted on previous occasions, we are responding in at least three ways, all of which will require some investment. First, we will continue our programme of portfolio development and enhancement; we are developing new subject areas (Criminology and Psychology are examples) and will now conduct a market assessment in preparation for the next development.

We are devoting time and effort to reviewing our marketing strategy. We will have in place a very competitive bursary scheme from next year onwards, and a range of other initiatives are being explored with departments. A number are already in place and we shall assess their effectiveness and combine them with new ideas and approaches. The third element is to ensure that our provision is attractive and to ensure that we provide an excellent experience for our students. To this end we have been reviewing Student Support, and I am due to receive the conclusions of the review in the near future.

While Home/EU undergraduates form the largest group, it is as important to put new developments in place in relation to postgraduate provision and overseas students. In the case of the latter we will concentrate on a number of specific areas and develop focused strategies for each – including the use of our network of alumni.

Research

The other challenge is in relation to research. Preparations for the RAE are proceeding, one element of which is the programme of senior appointments in which we are currently engaged. All departments have been asked for an initial draft of the relevant narrative part of their RAE submission. These will be the starting point of the consideration of a submission by a sub-panel and therefore has obvious importance. In it the department's research strategy is presented, its positioning within the discipline and contribution to it explained, and its trajectory mapped.

In the budget statement in March the Chancellor of the Exchequer made proposals about the future of the RAE – it is noteworthy that this emanated from the Treasury rather than DfES or the Funding Councils. A consultation on the future of the RAE is currently taking place, and we shall of course respond to that. It has now been confirmed that RAE 2008 will proceed as planned, but with a shadow exercise based on 'metrics' and an invitation to panels to consider whether greater use of metrics is appropriate and/or desirable. It is clear that the future shape of research funding is likely to be radically different. The basic proposal is that the Funding Council should distribute their contribution to research funding on the basis of certain performance indicators ('metrics') reflecting success in attracting research funding from the Research Councils, charities and industry. It is a complex issue, not least because the RAE currently serves the twin purposes of benchmarking quality and forming the basis for the distribution of funding.

Whatever its outcome, the debate highlights the importance of improving our performance in attracting external research income, particularly from the Research Councils. We have emphasised this strongly over the last year, and I am pleased to say that I feel that there is a clear improvement. That it is the expectation – part of the profile of an academic – to seek and obtain external funding is, I believe, being accepted. This is the thinking behind what we have called Research Foresight – in which we identify the priorities of funders and assess our ability to respond.

This is also part of the motivation for the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor. This is proceeding well, and I am pleased to say that the Director of the Partnership has been appointed and will start in post on 1 September.

Assembly Government issues

Collaboration continues to be a high priority for the Welsh Assembly Government. The emphasis on Widening Participation also remains. Progress by the sector towards the targets established in *Reaching Higher* is mixed, and details are contained in PARC papers. Of particular concern is the Welsh medium target, which is very ambitious for the sector generally. As far as we are concerned, our Welsh medium teaching strategy is developing well and is being mainstreamed into the planning process. We have again been successful in attracting Welsh medium fellowships and postgraduate scholarships, and I look forward to the development of the Language Centre for the teaching of Welsh for Adults.

Two other WAG initiatives should be mentioned. The first is that the review of part-time provision by the committee chaired by Heather Graham has now reported. The government's response will take a little while, and the financial implications have yet to be worked out. The issues include the appropriate fees for part-time students and the level of financial support for part-time students, including eligibility for grants.

The other matter is the review of Initial Teacher's Training (ITT). As I have explained on other occasions the government has decided to reduce the number of places for ITT very significantly – to halve the number of places for Primary ITT and to reduce the number of places for Secondary ITT by a quarter, this over a period of years. Much of the reduction will be in undergraduate provision, in which UWA is not involved. The Funding Council has been given the task of implementation, and I have had several discussions with HEFCW officers. We have made proposals to extend the range of our collaboration with Bangor to cover this area of activity, and have suggested a pro-rata reduction of PGCE numbers. A final decision is expected before the end of 2006.

Finance

Though our underlying financial position as seen in the Balance Sheet remains stable, the financial prospects in terms of Income and Expenditure for the next few years are not at all good and give rise to serious concern. This is despite the advent of deferred flexible fees (and the Supplementary Income Stream in 2006/7) and reflects the huge financial demands upon us. Details are given in Finance and General Purposes Committee papers and will be discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda. Briefly, we are facing a very considerable increase in the cost of pensions, the potentially significant cost of the implementation of the Framework Agreement on the modernisation of pay structures, a sharp increase in utilities costs and a requirement to address the very large backlog maintenance requirement on the university's estate. In addition, of course, there is the cost over the next three years of the salary settlement.

There is much greater awareness than there has been in the past on the part of government agencies of the importance of sustainability. For too long universities have invested in activity rather than infrastructure and have been encouraged to do so by the funding methodologies used by Funding Councils and Research Councils. It is in response that the SRIF (Science Research Infrastructure Fund) programme was established and Full Economic Costing of research grants introduced. Much remains to be done, especially in relation to the requirements of Learning and Teaching, and we must generate significant operating surpluses to enable to respond to this challenge. Our buildings must not only be properly maintained but also be fit for purpose and enhance our competitiveness as an institution. These requirements will be the basis of the development of the new ten year estates strategy which we are now considering.

The most acute immediate financial threat is a potential shortfall in student numbers, a matter which I have already discussed. We must ensure that we are competitive and that our provision is attractive to prospective students and employers. Consequently we have factored into the financial forecasts the requirement to invest in order to protect our future income.

NGL
July 2006

Report to Council, November 2006

A number of important developments have taken place over the last year. The engagement with the QAA scrutiny team following our application for Degree Awarding Powers was concluded, and we are now awaiting formal notification of the result. In parallel the proposed changes to the structure and role of the University of Wales (UoW) have been taken forward. The interim arrangements following the decision to devolve full responsibility for quality and standards to institutions (pending their obtaining Degree Awarding Powers) have worked well and to the full satisfaction of the QAA. The UoW is submitting an application to the Privy Council for radical changes to its Charter and Statutes to reflect the fact that it will no longer be a membership organisation but rather a HEI sitting alongside the others in Wales offering specific services on the basis of Service Level Agreements.

Aberystwyth in turn is submitting an application to the Privy Council for extensive amendments to its Charter and Statutes (details of which will be elsewhere on the agenda of Council). It will be necessary to ensure that these changes occur at the same time as those to the UoW. At its meeting in March Council decided that we should apply for University title as soon as we obtain Degree Awarding Powers under the title Aberystwyth University, and this will be incorporated in the revised Charter.

Looking back I should like to note the outstanding success of UWA in the National Student Survey. This is confirmation of the continuing quality of provision and the commitment of the university to the support of students, both academically and pastorally.

The other important development I wish to note is the establishment of the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor. This is an important element of our strategy going forward and provides a unique opportunity for us to enhance our competitiveness in research, a matter to which I shall return later.

Future Challenges

There is considerable turbulence at present as a result of the changes in the pattern of student finance - in relation to both fees and bursaries. A number of other factors are likely to have a significant effect in the future. I note (i) the changing expectations of students; (ii) increased international competitiveness, with European universities establishing English language courses and countries such as Australia being very active in the international market, for example; (iii) demographic changes in which there is a decline in the size of the 18 year old cohort; (iv) increasing stratification of the sector in the UK; (v) changes in funding; (vi) the forthcoming changes to the admissions process.

In Wales we are seriously concerned about the future funding of the sector. The 'funding gap' per student between Wales and England is widening; it is becoming of significant proportions, and will impact on the competitiveness of our provision. It will be

particularly difficult if, as seems quite likely, the cap on the level of fees will be raised or removed in England after 2009. There is considerable pressure for this to happen, though it is not a foregone conclusion.

I turn now to the more immediate issues facing us.

Admissions and Recruitment

I said in July that the most significant challenge facing us was in relation to student recruitment. That remains the case. Overall our admissions figures for Home/EU undergraduates are about 10% down on last year. Last year was, of course, the largest intake ever, but we are 5% down on the previous year. Within this headline figure there are some encouraging and welcome trends. Our intake of students domiciled in Wales increased by 16% (as opposed to a national figure of about 8%), and there was an increase of 20% in the number of Welsh speaking students. A number of subject areas which have in recent years experienced difficulties in recruitment show an encouraging upward trend – including most of the Sciences, European Languages and Welsh. The disappointing figure is the fall of 17% in English domiciled students; this compares with an overall figure of 12%, a figure which itself should give HEI in Wales - and the Welsh Assembly Government – serious cause for concern. The decrease has been especially marked in a few large departments, and their size leads to a significant impact on the overall position.

We have of course thought carefully about the reasons for this decline. Some are local to the departments concerned. In general though, there was very considerable uncertainty about the fee regime and student support in Wales at the critical time, and institutions in Wales were not in a position to put in place a bursary scheme as were our counterparts in England. We now have a competitive scheme in place.

Though one year does not of course constitute a trend, we must respond to this trend as a matter of urgency. We have always placed very considerable importance on admissions and recruitment and we have been remarkably successful over the years. But we must try to increase the number of applications and give the university a higher profile. A number of initiatives are being taken :

(i) We need to place greater emphasis on the marketing of the university as an institution; the changes I described earlier in relation to the University of Wales give us an excellent opportunity, and we are receiving professional advice on this.

(ii) We have put greater resources into marketing our provision : to provide market information and to assess future developments in these terms; to revitalise and maintain our web presence; to provide advice on bursary provision and fees. We need to assess the market in a way which takes into account its various segments.

(iii) As already noted we will have a competitive bursary scheme in place – the total package will be around £3m in steady state.

(iv) Portfolio development will continue. We will accelerate the introduction of Psychology and we already have a list of other developments to be investigated and assessed in relation to the market.

(v) Students from outside the UK. We are focusing on some specific areas, and we must ensure that our marketing is bespoke to those areas. We should take into account the countries from which large numbers of students come to the UK and in parallel establish some niche markets.

Research

RAE 2008 will now take place as planned, and our preparations for it are proceeding; we are about to embark on the 'dry-run'. It is important that we maximise our performance in this exercise, which will almost certainly be the last in anything like the present form. We have made a number of excellent new appointments recently as part of a special initiative to strengthen our research base.

I have already mentioned the Research and Enterprise partnership with Bangor. The Director, Dr Hugh Aldridge, started in post in September, and we are already seeing the development of some significant opportunities. The partnership has a number of strands : (i) the four subject-specific centres; (ii) the creation of a Research and Enterprise Support Unit; (iii) the alignment of the research strategies of the two institutions; (iv) rolling out formal collaboration beyond the four centres; (v) the identification and pursuance of new opportunities UK-wide and internationally. The whole activity will give us the opportunity to enhance our profile and become significant players in research.

The funding from HEFCW and WAG for the partnership is predicated on a sequence of deliverables. One of the most important is to increase income from external funders of research, in particular the Research Councils. As far as UWA is concerned there is good news about our successes in 2005/6: there was an increase of over 150% in the value of announcements of Research Council grants in comparison with the previous year. It was a low base, but despite the caveat that one year does not constitute a trend, I am pleased to be able to convey this encouraging news.

Other aspects of collaboration in research are in various stages of development. I am very pleased that the Welsh Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences has now been approved by the Welsh Assembly Government. This involves Cardiff, Swansea, Bangor and ourselves and will mean that we are able to further strengthen research in the Institute of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. The Welsh Institute of Social and Economic Research, involving Cardiff, Bangor, Glamorgan and ourselves is now moving forward; the business plan has been submitted to the Funding Council. Though it requires some further work, we look forward to a successful conclusion in due course. Others are at an earlier stage of development, including a large scale bid in relation to climate change (the Welsh Climate Change Alliance, involving Cardiff,

Swansea, Bangor and ourselves). There will be four nodes, and the Aberystwyth node will be in relation to polar research.

Welsh Medium Provision

Provision of courses through the medium of Welsh – and, indeed, the encouragement of research into the culture and language of Wales – are important elements of our mission. We have agreed with Bangor that Welsh medium provision should be another strand in our collaboration. Together, we approached the Funding Council some time ago but were asked to delay submission of an application to the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund until the two reports – that of Arad Consulting on future patterns of Welsh medium provision in Wales and that of London Economics on the cost of Welsh medium provision – have been received by the Funding Council. We have recently had very useful discussions with Bangor and have asked for discussions with the Funding Council as soon as possible. Given the expertise in the two institutions we wish to provide leadership to the sector as a whole and will welcome other HEIs to associate with the structure that will be developed. There are a number of aspects to the work we envisage – provision of courses, the preparation of materials, staff development and continuing professional development, marketing, the design of Welsh medium provision and the generation of increased interest in what is available.

The strategy for Welsh medium provision within Aberystwyth is developing well and I should like to thank the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aled Jones and the Director of Welsh medium provision, Professor Ioan Williams – and indeed many others – for their work in this regard. It was very encouraging at the beginning of term to see so many first-year students coming to the meeting in which departments were present to explain the Welsh medium provision available. It was by far the largest number that I have seen. In addition, we have over the last few of years been successful in the competition for Welsh medium teaching fellowships and postgraduate studentships; the task now is to mainstream these and place their future firmly within the normal planning cycle of the institution.

One development which might impact indirectly – and less favourably – on the overall volume of Welsh medium provision are the plans proposed by the Welsh Assembly Government on Initial Teacher Training. I reported in the July Council on the proposals to reduce the provision of places for ITT by half for the primary sector and by a quarter for the secondary sector. The present position is that the Funding Council has been asked to provide the Assembly with a plan by November. The proposal is that there should be three Schools of Education: one in the South East of Wales, one in the South West and one in Mid & North Wales. Bangor and ourselves wish to present this as a third strand of our collaboration. It is important to protect ITT in mid-Wales, both for the sake of appropriate geographic coverage and also in relation to the protection of Welsh medium training. Bangor and ourselves have extensive Welsh medium provision and we are currently in discussion with the Funding Council to seek to reach a reasonably satisfactory conclusion.

Finance

We now have a first version of the accounts for 2005/6. They show an operating surplus of about a £175k (corresponding to a historic cost surplus of about £2.4 million) and cash generated over the year of about £400K. This is a satisfactory result given the negative influences encountered during the year – the shortfall in overseas student numbers, the substantial increase in pension contributions and the effect of FRS 17 on the Income and Expenditure account. In addition we spent an additional £550k or thereabouts in year on maintenance of premises.

Looking forward to 2006/7 the budget presented to Council in July predicts an operating surplus of about £0.5m. However, the effect of the shortfall in student numbers is likely to lead to claw-back of recurrent grant of at least as much as this. In the budget we included provision for investment in new academic courses, student support and marketing. This is likely to be exceeded, since these initiatives, together with the scheduled investment ahead of the RAE, are so important for the future development of the institution. Moreover we shall be looking at other means of generating income in order to be able to protect our financial position.

In the budget we allocated £1 million additional expenditure on back-log maintenance of the estate. There is a growing awareness in the sector and amongst the funding bodies of the importance of investment in the infrastructure, and this is a welcome development. We are at present preparing a long term Estates Strategy. Some important issues must be considered, in relation to both the residential and non-residential estates.

I shall, of course, be happy to respond to discussion of these and other matters in the Council meeting.

NGL
October 2006

REPORT TO COUNCIL, DECEMBER 2006

This report is shorter than usual and provides an update on developments since the last meeting of Council in November.

Degree awarding Powers

The first thing to say is that we were notified by the Privy Council that the QAA had made a positive recommendation in relation to our application for Taught and Research Degree Awarding Powers. Later on the agenda the Council will consider the revised Charter and Statutes which incorporate this development. The award of Degree Awarding Powers will be confirmed when these are approved. The revised Charter and Statutes also include provision for the award of University title under the name Aberystwyth University. Part of the required process was to consult relevant bodies to ensure that the new name was or could not be confusing. That consultation has now been completed and all responses received have been favourable.

Funding

There has been continuing debate about the funding of Higher Education in Wales. The 'funding gap' between Wales and England remains a source of concern and appears to be widening. The sector's anxiety reflects the need to ensure that institutions in Wales are able to compete with their counterparts elsewhere in the UK in all aspects of their work, and particularly in terms of their provision for students.

Admissions and Recruitment

In November I shared with Council our concern that there had been a downturn in the number of registrations of students in relation to the previous year. I also gave details of the action that had been taken in relation to assessing the competitive pressures on us, identifying opportunities and marketing our provision effectively. Of particular importance is the bursary scheme which we will have in place for 2007/8, a scheme that enables us to compete with institutions outside Wales.

Research

- . Our preparations for the RAE 2008 are continuing. The next round of Research Monitoring meetings with departments will take place in January. It is important for the institution that we have all the details of our submissions ready in draft form at an early stage and we will be discussing with departments in the monitoring meetings the content of their submissions in relation to research environment and indicators of esteem. We now know more about the future of research funding following this RAE. It is clear that this will be last such exercise in its present form. It has been announced that the sector will work towards a system of assessment based on a broad basket of indicators, taking into account research income from sources other than the funding bodies, the research infrastructure with particular attention to the training of

postgraduate students and research quality. There will be a difference between the mechanisms used for SET subjects (Science, Engineering, Technology and Medicine) and all other subjects. For the former, appropriate indicators will be developed by September 2008 and will be tested against the results of the forthcoming RAE. These will influence the allocation of funding from the start of 2010/11 academic year. For all other subjects an early move towards metrics is not feasible and peer assessment in some form or another will remain a key component. It has been emphasised that the new approach will not be a simple perpetuation of the current system and that it has to be less onerous on institutions than the present arrangements. For non-SET subjects the results of RAE 2008 will determine funding allocations until 2014/15. It is accepted that there should be a single overarching system throughout the UK in terms of maintaining a UK-wide benchmark of research performance. The Funding Council in Wales, of course, can, and probably will, use a different funding model.

Collaboration

We continue the close collaboration with Bangor on the Research and Enterprise Partnership and in other areas of activity. I mentioned in November the changes taking place in Initial Teacher Training provision. Bangor and ourselves have submitted a proposal to the Funding Council to establish a joint School of Education covering Mid and North Wales. We now await the response of the Wales Assembly Government. We are also collaborating with Bangor on Welsh Medium provision and will together participate actively in the sector-led response to the established need to develop provision and to market it effectively, prepare materials and explain to students the value of pursuing some proportion of their course through the medium of Welsh. It should be noted that the Welsh Medium target established by the Assembly has been changed. It is now that 7% of Welsh domiciled students studying in Welsh Higher Education institutions should follow some part of their courses through the medium of Welsh. Previously there was no restriction on the domicile of the student population used.

IGER

- . I also mentioned in November that discussions were taking place involving Bangor, IGER and ourselves on establishing a consortium with the objective of establishing international expertise in sustainable land use. These discussions are continuing and are now quite intense; they involve both the BBSRC and the Welsh Assembly Government. It is likely that a decision will be taken by the BBSRC Council in its meeting in February.

Finance

- . The Funding Council visited Aberystwyth earlier in December and the Senior Management Team had a very useful and constructive meeting with the full Council. Following a presentation of the current position in Aberystwyth, valuable discussion took place on many aspects of our work. One particular matter to note is the importance attached to maintaining our sound financial

position. We explained that we were making a number of important investments for the future: investment ahead of the RAE; marketing our provision in the context of student recruitment; marketing the institution; enhancement of the student experience following the review of Student Support Services; and addressing the sustainability of the infrastructure in relation to both backlog maintenance of the estate and ensuring that our buildings are fit for purpose and competitive for the future. The Council emphasised the importance of maintaining a reasonable operating surplus on an annual basis.

This is a survey of developments since the last meeting of Council. It is stating the obvious to say that there are significant changes and challenges for UWA in the year ahead,

NGL
December 2006

REPORT TO COUNCIL, 28 March 2007

I am pleased to present my report to Council for its meeting in March. As ever, I should welcome discussion on the matters which are included in it and any others which members of Council may wish to raise.

Charter and Statutes

At their meetings in December, Council and Court approved the revised Charter and Statutes. These were then submitted to the Privy Council and we expect final approval shortly. In this meeting of Council we shall consider the draft new Ordinances, recalling that one of the aspects of the revision to the Charter and Statutes was to remove a number of matters to Ordinances, in line with national policy. We shall also need to discuss the mechanism for the transition from the arrangements relating to Council under the present Charter and Statutes to those contained in the revised versions – in particular the reduction in size.

Under the new Charter we shall be known as Aberystwyth University and arrangements are being made to ensure that the change of name takes place smoothly, and that we take advantage of the opportunity which this gives for improved marketing of the institution and its provision. Consultants have been appointed, following the appropriate tendering process, to advise us on this matter.

Research

In January we held the Annual Research Monitoring meetings with all departments. This formed a 'dry-run' for the forthcoming Research Assessment Exercise. We considered the selection of outputs at the level of individual researchers and paid particular attention to the presentation of the research environment in each unit of assessment and of indicators of esteem. It is this part of submissions (form RA5a) that will form the initial impression gained by the sub-panels of our submissions: consequently it is of considerable importance that the presentation is effective, that coherence is demonstrated, that all claims are fully based on evidence and the position of the department within the relevant discipline is made clear. In short, it is important to convey what contribution Aberystwyth makes to the discipline and what we are known for within it.

We are also conscious of the importance of increasing income from external funders of research, both the Research Councils and others. This year has been disappointing. The previous year, 2005/6 was a good year with a considerable improvement on the performance in previous years. So far this year, however, there has been a significant decrease, though it is the case that income of this kind is of its nature somewhat 'lumpy'. We have taken action to address this question partly by monthly monitoring of applications, but also by appointing a research management administrator who will have the task of bringing to the attention of individual researchers appropriate sources of external funding. It is also important to emphasise the value of European funding in this context and the significance of the new Framework Programme (Framework 7) and the advent of the European Research Council.

The required increase in external funding for research is one of the main drivers of the Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership. I am pleased to say that the Partnership is developing well. We have completed the first round of reviews and I was encouraged by the progress that has been made – and indeed by the enthusiasm for the initiative. We also arranged two events to launch the partnership, the one in the Senedd building in Cardiff and the other in Westminster. Both were very successful and brought us publicity of a very welcome kind.

IGER

I mentioned in December that discussions were now taking place with BBSRC in relation to IGER (the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research). These also involve Bangor and relate closely to the partnership. We made a presentation to the BBSRC Council in February and as a result of that meeting we were informed that the Council was 'minded' to give its approval to the proposal to merge IGER with the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and to do so as part of a wider linkage with the University of Wales, Bangor. A considerable amount of work has been done to take the matter forward and a meeting was held in Cardiff on 16th March between BBSRC, ourselves, representatives of IGER and Bangor together with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Funding Council. The meeting discussed the future governance and status of IGER as part of the university sector in Wales and agreement was reached on the steps that need now to be taken and on a broad time scale for completion. A draft 'Heads of Agreement' document had been prepared and was the subject of detailed discussion. Various elements will need to be ratified in due course by the relevant governing bodies; the first step is for the BBSRC Council to give its final approval in April.

All parties agreed on the exciting scientific opportunities offered by the initiative and look forward to creating an internationally competitive research entity. The range of scales and facilities available will lead to the opportunity to deliver excellence in research and innovation – pure research, and strategic research which will be of economic benefit across the land use sector and beyond.

The process has started very positively and all parties are keen to progress negotiations as rapidly as possible. However, the process will be complex and will take time to complete. I believe that this is a tremendous opportunity to create world class centre for research and innovation in the biological, environmental and land use sciences.

Admissions and Recruitment

I continue to be concerned about the level of our applications. We saw a decrease in the number of registrations for this academic year and as a result we expect claw-back of something in excess of £400K in our recurrent grant for the current year. The latest information about applications for undergraduate courses from the UK and the rest of EU show that applications to UWA were down 2.7% compared to the previous year. This is in a context of a UK-wide increase of 6.4%. Overall applications for institutions in Wales were generally similar to those in the previous year. The very welcome increase in applications from Welsh domiciled students has continued, but so has the decrease in applications from English domiciled students. Over the last two years there has been a 25% reduction in applications from England and a 20% increase in applications from Wales. This year applications from the European Union outside the UK have also increased significantly.

We have responded to these trends in a variety of ways and have put in place a number of initiatives to strengthen our recruitment staff, for example: to improve our web presence, to improve the gathering of market information so that we are able to understand trends at a more detailed level and to strengthen our marketing effort in schools and colleges. There is one piece of information that I am pleased to be able to give, and that is that, to date, the conversion rate this year is substantially better than it has been for many years past. Departments have made a huge effort in doing everything possible to optimise the conversion of applications to firm acceptances and there is clear evidence that that this is having a significant effect.

Welsh Medium Provision

A wide range of developments are taking place in the development of Welsh Language Provision. We have started the process of preparing the new Welsh Language Scheme, to be approved by Council in December, by establishing a working party to take the work forward. In addition, the monitoring report on the current scheme will be considered by Council. We have conveyed an expression of interest to the Centre for the Development of Welsh Medium Education in order to participate in the project of a staff development scheme for all HEIs in Wales. Our contribution is based on exploiting the particular expertise we have in e-learning in order to prepare on-line training, and to formalise the round-table format which we have developed for sharing best practice. We are hopeful that we shall be successful.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aled Jones, is a member of the sector group which has been established to plan the way forward for Welsh Medium provision across the sector in Wales and we continue to collaborate with the Centre in all its activities. We are appointing a development officer to prepare training for bilingual administrators and to formulate generic modules for students across all faculties. This is part of our efforts to encourage more students to take some part of their courses through the medium of Welsh. This requires support to enhance confidence in the use of Welsh for academic purposes. Discussions with Heads of Departments are continuing and I am grateful to everyone who has participated in the various initiatives that are being taken forward.

Finance

At the time of writing we have not received the details of the Recurrent Grant to UWA for 2007/8 but we do know the general decisions taken by the Funding Council in the context of the grant to the sector as a whole. The overall increase is likely to be around 2.7%, broadly in line with the GDP deflator. It is salutary to contrast this with an increase in England of around 4.9%, although part of that increase is related to increase in student funded numbers. Thus the concern about the 'funding gap' between Wales and England remains, with a likelihood (subject to detailed calculations being made in due course) that the gap is widening. An additional £6m for HE was agreed during the budget negotiations (about 1.5% of the total allocation). Of this £3m will be for research and will be distributed pro rata to income from UK charities; this will be of little benefit to UWA since it is mainly bio-medical subjects that are involved. The remaining £3 million has been incorporated into the base line for recurrent funding. We estimate that the overall increase for Aberystwyth will be between 2½% and 3%. This in the context of increasing costs of around twice that rate.

Finally, intensive work continues on the formulation of the Estates Strategy. A number of proposals are being investigated in detail, and a full report will be submitted to Council when these are completed.

NGL

March 2007

Report to Council – July 2007

In this report I give an overview of the university's work over the past year in the context of the Strategic Plan which was approved by Council and submitted to the Funding Council in July 2006. At the same time I shall highlight current issues and provide an overview of future developments.

Research

The university's overall research profile is an important part of its identity; it also contributes in an essential way both to Learning and Teaching and to Third Mission activities. The preparations for RAE 2008 are now nearing conclusion. We have monitored research carefully over the last few years and the Research Monitoring Group has met on a number of occasions with every department to discuss the preparation of RAE submissions. The Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Research (Professor Lyn Pykett) and Dr Gwion Evans from the Planning Department have engaged on a regular basis with departmental Research Directors and Heads of Department. We have established a target of the end of July for the preparation of submissions: after that we anticipate that only factual changes will be made to submissions. The Research Monitoring Group is scheduled to meet on the 7th August.

We are mindful of the need to support those areas of the university which perform strongly in terms of research and have the potential to become internationally competitive. The research foresight exercise is an important factor; in this we address the priorities of funders and match these to our skills and capacity. The research environment is becoming increasingly competitive: that is why the collaborative work on which we are engaged is important. The Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor is proceeding well and we are now starting to think about its continuation, its sustainability and its expansion. There are a number of other collaborative initiatives at various stages of development, for example the Welsh Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences.

The most exciting current development is the decision to merge IGER Wales into the university. I have kept Council fully informed of developments over the last year and I am delighted to report that we have now started the detailed work to accomplish the objective of integration by April 2008. The Programme Board, which has overall responsibility for the arrangements, meets for the first time on July 2nd; we have established a range of Policy Groups and 'Task and Finish' Groups to address particular issues. The BBSRC is involved in the Programme Board and in some of the other groups and there is in addition a 'local' committee, the Project Operational Group, involving IGER and ourselves. The proposal consists of two phases, though these are to be taken forward in parallel rather than in series. Phase 1 is the amalgamation of IGER Wales into the university at Aberystwyth to create a single entity encompassing the Institutes of Biological Science and Rural Science together with IGER - and so to form a large effective scientific grouping. The range of activity will encompass pure research, applied and strategic research, and innovation. Phase 2 of the proposal is to develop linkage with the University of Wales, Bangor, building on the Research and Enterprise Partnership. This will enable us to establish a scientific enterprise of a scale and capacity to be truly competitive at the highest international levels.

The other element of research activity and one which the partnerships I have described are designed to address is the required increase in the volume and value of external research funding. The year 2005/6 was a reasonably good year in

relation to grant capture. For a period this year seemed to be disappointing in comparison but I am pleased to say that there has been an improvement in recent weeks. The value of our successful applications is slightly down on a year ago but applications are significantly higher – something that reflects the greater importance that we have attached to external research funding and is also influenced, of course by Full Economic Costing of research grant proposals.

Learning and Teaching

One of the most important developments has been the successful completion of the application for Degree Awarding Powers and the report on the Institutional Review (IR) of UWA by the Quality Assurance Agency. Details of the report are provided in the minutes of Senate and Academic Affairs Committee. The report was a good one and commended several aspects of our work. It made some recommendations and we are engaged in reviewing our processes in response to them.

The good features highlighted by the report include the integration of financial and academic planning, the rigour of the programme approval and departmental review procedures, our support for distance learners and Welsh medium students, the work of the careers' office and the thoroughness of the institution's scrutiny of external examiners' reports and the clarity of its arrangements for responding to them.

There were two main recommendations. The first is to review our current management of the quality agenda to enable us to adopt a more proactive stance. We are currently discussing how this might be clarified through the identification of roles within a 'quality team' within the Academic Office working closely with the Deans. The second was to review the design of our degree schemes in such a way as to enable us to assure ourselves that students achieve all the planned learning outcomes associated with their awards. This issue had been addressed by the Academic Affairs Committee in the 2005-6 session, and changes had been made to our qualifying regulations which made UWA awards even more stringent than the University of Wales regulations. The Academic Affairs Committee continues to monitor UWA regulations and frameworks in the light of the IR recommendation. Attention is also being paid to the means by which good practice identified by the annual monitoring process is disseminated.

The development of new subject areas continues to be important to us. Some of these are cognate to current activities, while others break new ground; of particular significance is the development of Psychology, initially on a Joint Honours basis but in subsequent years this will develop into Single Honours provision.

We performed very well in the National Student Survey and we must continue to ensure that our provision is attractive and of high quality. We have embarked on a number of new initiatives in order to maintain the number of applications and I am pleased to report that the conversion rate (of applications to firm interest) has improved significantly this year. It is important to develop more refined market intelligence and to pursue opportunities energetically. We are in the process of establishing an international strategy to encompass not only international student recruitment but also other aspects of our relationship with institutions overseas. At the same time we will enhance our marketing and communication strategy; we are very much aware of the importance of effective communication, both external and internal.

Governance

The revision to our Charter and Statutes has been completed. We expect that the implementation date will be the 1st September 2007. At that time the University of

Wales will cease to be a membership organisation and we shall become Aberystwyth University. This provides a unique opportunity for effective publicity and we are working with professional consultants to exploit this in the most effective way possible.

Regional Contribution

Universities have an essential role to play in the economic, social and cultural development of their regions. In the case of Aberystwyth this is especially so. We are large employers in our own right, we contribute to the life of the region through the education and training of young people and we have a direct impact in terms of knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of some of our research. The university's Third Mission activities are managed by Commercialisation and Consultancy Services which now have an enhanced presence and are working effectively with a range of partners. Though the economic impact of universities is emphasised, as important are their cultural and social contributions. Our outreach work in general and, in particular, the work of the Arts Centre enhance our Third Mission activities considerably.

Our work in relation to Welsh medium education continues. This is a very important part of our mission and one to which we pay considerable attention. There have been significant changes over the last year, in particular with the establishment of the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre as a sector owned initiative involving all HE institutions in Wales at senior levels and committed to developing Welsh medium education on a wide front. One of its functions will be to extend provision within Higher Education but, as importantly, also to encourage younger age groups to continue a measure of their higher education through the medium of Welsh. I would like to pay tribute to the work of our own Centre for Welsh Language Services, whose work provides valuable support to academic departments and central service sections in their activities.

Finance

The underlying financial position of the university remains strong. The balance sheet is satisfactory and the cash position good. However, in the current financial year, excluding extraordinary items, we are likely to report an operating deficit. This is entirely as a result of the under-recruitment of undergraduate students, leading to anticipated claw-back of recurrent grant and suboptimal occupation of university residences. Under-recruitment is a matter upon which I have previously reported and to which we have responded energetically.

The Income and Expenditure account continues to give some concern over the next few years. The budget that we have presented for 2007/8 predicts a small operating deficit (though again an increase in cash). We have made provision for some new academic developments and enhanced student support; at the same time the current relatively smaller first year will remain in the system and though we expect the admissions figures to improve it is prudent to plan on some claw-back of recurrent funding. In 2008/9 we anticipate a small operating surplus, something of the order of £300k. For our turnover we should be anticipating surpluses of about £3m. However, we continue to commit to expenditure both on the maintenance of the Estate and, most importantly, on new academic developments and student support. Because of our good underlying financial position we are able to make these commitments ahead of time, and consequently the operating surpluses are less than they would otherwise be.

Comparing 2008/9 with 2005/6, expenditure is likely to increase by something of the order of £1.2m more than income. The increased income available as a result of

deferred flexible fees, net of bursaries, will be almost entirely expended on increased employment costs – including increased pension costs, increases in salary costs and the effects of the Framework Agreement and Pay Modernisation. Consequently, not only must expenditure be carefully controlled and existing income sources protected but new income streams must be explored. These encompass our international strategy, enhanced research grant capture and fund raising activities from alumni and other sources of sponsorship.

In summary, much is happening and a number of exciting new initiatives are coming to fruition. At the same time the university is facing significant financial challenges. Following the completion of the RAE submission, we will embark on a careful appraisal of future developments. It will be essential to respond to opportunities and we are determined to ensure the continuing success of the university.

NGL
July 2007

October 31, 2007

In my report I summarise recent developments and note some of the particular issues that the university will encounter over the next few months. I shall, of course, welcome discussion in Council over these - or any other - matters.

Following the approval by the Privy Council of the revised Charter and Statutes, we are known by our new name of *Aberystwyth University*. Together with the new logo, this gives us an opportunity to emphasise our ambition and our confidence in the university's future, and enables us to present ourselves afresh to potential students and to the outside world. This highlights the importance of marketing – both in relation to student recruitment and to the marketing of the corporate identity of the institution – and of effective communications, both externally and internally. We plan to strengthen this side of our activities considerably over the next few months.

The preparations for RAE 2008 are now more or less complete. I particularly want to thank those who have been involved in the preparation of the submissions. While I am confident that the quality of the submissions themselves and of the outputs is higher than in previous Research Assessment Exercises, the funding implications will not be known until after the results are published in December 2008. The Funding Council (HEFCW) is currently engaged in an assessment of its research strategy, and the funding model has yet to be determined. We know some of the broad parameters but it is impossible to estimate the likely impact on funding at this stage.

We are, of course, aware that this is the last RAE in the present form and that the intensity of peer review which is required at present will be replaced by greater use of metrics and bibliographical measures. We do, however, know that the results of the current RAE will inform funding allocations in subject areas other than the in Science Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEM subjects) for the period of about 6 years leading to the next RAE. In England the results will only fully determine funding for STEM subjects for 3 years, but it is far from certain that Wales will adopt the same pattern. Whatever the approach taken we do know that there will be greater emphasis henceforth on external research income – including research grant capture from Research Councils and contract research income – and on numbers of postgraduate research students. Hence the importance that we attach to improving our performance in relation to external research income. We are putting in place a range of measures to incentivise departments and to support the preparation and management of projects.

The importance of enhanced competitiveness in relation to external research funding is one of the drivers behind the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor. The four subject centres are moving forward well and we are currently starting to discuss with colleagues in Bangor how we can extend and develop the current partnership to establish a wider strategic alliance between the two institutions. This will include several aspects of our research work but will also include a number of other activities – examples are Welsh Medium Teaching and Initial Teacher Training. We hope also to work together in the formulation of bids for European structural funds through convergence funding.

The merger of IGER into the university is a major potential influence on our research profile. Council has been kept informed of discussions over the last year or so and

has fully supported the proposed new arrangement. I am pleased to say that work is progressing well. A very considerable amount of detailed work is being accomplished and we are, I believe, on schedule to achieve the target date for merger of 1st April 2008. This is an exciting opportunity to establish research capacity and activity of international competitiveness in Aberystwyth. In the Heads of Agreement that was signed some months ago, Phase One of the merger was the legal move of IGER (Wales) into Aberystwyth University. At the same time we agreed that we would take forward Phase Two, in which a linkage will be established between Aberystwyth and Bangor in this general area of activity. We are recommending to Council that the Institute of Biological Sciences, the Institute of Rural Sciences and IGER be merged into one department within the university and that it should be called the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Science (IBERS). We are currently discussing with colleagues in Bangor the nature of the linkage between IBERS - and related areas in Aberystwyth - with the College of Natural Sciences in Bangor.

Turning to Learning and Teaching matters it is very satisfying that Aberystwyth continues to do so well in all the surveys that are conducted on student satisfaction. We were again in the top ten in the National Student Survey; we have been nominated for the THES prize for the best student experience; in August we were awarded the highest score in the UK for student satisfaction in the Times Good University Guide; and in June 2007 a web-based survey of students named Aberystwyth as the UK's favourite university town. It is crucial for our future that we maintain this high reputation and that the quality of our provision is retained.

It is important that Aberystwyth takes a leading role within the sector in Wales on a range of issues. One of these is Welsh medium teaching. The Welsh Medium HE Sector Group has been established, in which and we play an important part in, for example, the marketing of Welsh Medium provision, collaborative provision and Staff Development. Internally departments are involved in strategic planning of provision under the chairmanship of Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Aled Jones.

By far the largest part of our recurrent funding is for teaching. There are significant concerns at present in relation to the recruitment and retention of students. Council will be aware that there was a shortfall in student recruitment for the academic year 2006/7, to a large extent reflecting a general reduction in applications from English domiciled students to HEI in Wales. On the other hand we are delighted that the number of applications from Welsh domiciled students is increasing - certainly a cause of satisfaction. The result of under-recruitment last year has led to a claw-back of recurrent grant during the current financial year of about £750K, obviously a significant loss of income. Applications for 2007/8 were marginally down on the previous year but during the year it appeared that conversion rates had improved. In the event however, admissions of home and EU undergraduates this year was very close to the number a year ago. The total number of home and EU undergraduates who are registered this year is about 20 fewer than last year. However, the number of postgraduate registrations is about 70 fewer than last year and the number of overseas students is about a 50 fewer than last year. Both these are significant reductions and in the case of overseas students it is especially disappointing.

We are expending considerable energy and making substantial investment in refining our approach to student recruitment, and I shall describe the range of measures in more detail in the meeting of Council. We had a valuable meeting of Heads of Department recently and are emphasising to all departments the critical importance of reversing the downward trend in all categories of student numbers. We are putting in place an international strategy, part of which is to focus attention on particular

areas of the world and more especially to establish links with institutions in other countries, links which encompass learning and teaching and research.

The financial impact of under-recruitment is significant. In general terms our financial position is very sound – indeed in relation to UK institutions as a whole we perform very well on most measures of economic stability. However, we anticipate claw-back in 2008/9 of about £800K and a loss of fee income of perhaps £700K. If we are unable to reverse the trend the shortfall will become even worse the following year. The graduating class for 2008 is relatively large, reflecting the size of the intake in 2005; if we continue at current levels of recruitment we may well face a loss of income of around £2.5m in 2008/9. The other aspect of student numbers is retention. It is important that our arrangements for supporting students, both pastorally and academically, are of the highest quality.

Finally, I refer to the university's role in economic, cultural and social development. The economic impact of universities is now recognised fully by governments in the UK and throughout the world – as indicated by, for example, the recent OECD report 'Education at a Glance'. Aberystwyth has, of course, a particular position in Wales and a responsibility to play significant role in the culture and language of Wales. It also makes an extremely important contribution to the local economy. The latest estimates are that the university as economic entity in its own right added a total of about £170 million to the Welsh economy in 2005/06 (for an investment by the Welsh Assembly Government of about £35m in 2005). In addition, the university contributes by Knowledge Transfer and to the training of the Welsh labour force. In this context the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Visualisation is notable. The building was opened a few weeks ago by the Deputy First Minister, Mr Ieuan Wyn Jones, and it was particularly auspicious occasion. This is a demonstration of the way in which the university contributes to research and development – taking sophisticated technology and making it available for businesses in Wales.

There are certainly challenges ahead, but it is a time of opportunity. The next few years will be a formative time in the development of Aberystwyth University, and it is now appropriate to assess afresh future directions of development and our 'positioning' within the sector.

NGL
October 2007

Report to Council, December 18, 2007

In this report, I summarise developments since the previous meeting of Council and note some issues that are likely to arise in the near future.

Research

Submissions to the RAE have now been completed; results will be announced in December 2008 and these will inform funding from 2009/10. In addition, consultation on the future mechanism for determining the quality of university research in the UK has commenced. In broad terms, the proposal is that for subjects within the general areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine, the assessment method should use a combination of bibliometric indices and information on external research income and research students. For other subjects it is proposed that a peer review system which is less burdensome than that currently used would be appropriate. However, it is apparent that the need for institutions to maintain and validate the necessary bibliographic information will itself require extensive new mechanisms to be put in place. One of the issues that HEFCW is consulting upon is when the new arrangements should inform funding; though the current RAE is a UK-wide system, Wales need not adopt the same system – and certainly not the same timescale for its introduction – as England.

We continue to emphasise the importance of increasing external research and contract income, and we are putting in place various measures to help achieve that policy objective. There is a growing awareness of the expectations, and an acceptance that overall it is an essential part of the profile of academic departments. The emphasis must be on the quality of research proposals submitted.

Welsh medium teaching

There are several developments to report. First, the Welsh Medium National Development Plan was formally launched in Cardiff on 27 November. Aberystwyth has played a leading role in its preparation, and is fully committed to its overall objectives. New initiatives will be discussed in academic departments so that maximum advantage may be derived from the teaching and marketing resources that are now becoming available.

The university is considering how it can become a 'lead institution' in the development of the national plan for collaborative Welsh medium teaching. We participate fully in the implementation of the development plan, and have academic representatives on seven of the subject network panels. £90k has been made available to promote developments in the three key areas of environment, media and law, for which AU will be in a strong position to bid.

HEFCW has now announced that the Welsh medium premium will become available where a 2 credit Welsh-medium threshold is reached in any module; this will be based on the proportion of Welsh-medium contact hours. All Departments have now identified these proportions in all modules, ensuring transparency. *Blackboard* is now available in Welsh, and this enhances the university's e-learning strategy further and increases the scope for teaching collaboration with other institutions in Wales. A survey by the Careers Service has indicated a strong link between undertaking modules through the medium of Welsh and the employability of graduates.

The university is currently revising its Welsh Language Scheme for presentation to Council in March 2008. We will mainstream the scholarships and fellowships which have been awarded into the overall planning process, and will seek ways of reducing the immediate financial impact on budget centres of mainstreaming such appointments.

Employer engagement

One of the current developments within the UK sector as a whole is the increasing emphasis on employer engagement, both in terms of involvement of employers in the design of curricula and in the provision of bespoke courses and Continuing Professional Development. These matters were highlighted in the Leitch review. The report of the Webb review of the mission and purpose of Further Education in Wales has just been published, and we are currently considering its implications for HE in general and AU in particular.

Student recruitment

By far the most significant challenge facing us is the downturn in student recruitment and the resulting impact on our financial position. This is a matter of serious concern and one which must be addressed in various ways.

In 2006/07 our recruitment of students (Home/EU undergraduates in particular) fell short of that required to maintain our funded numbers. As a result there was 'clawback' of recurrent grant for 2006/07 of about £750k. We saw a welcome increase in applications from Welsh domiciled students but a decrease in applications from English domiciled students.

This trend continued in 2007/08, and over the last two years we have seen a decline of over 20 % in applications from England – compared to an increase of 21% in applications from Wales. Our concern is that this may not be a transient phenomenon but an indicator of underlying structural change. It may be that the system in Wales seems more complicated and separate – sufficiently so at any rate to appear to form an additional hurdle. The Funding Council is itself commissioning some research on the reasons, and we are of course conducting our own.

Undergraduate applications for 2007/08 were slightly lower than in the previous year but during the year our conversion rate improved significantly, leading to a prediction for an intake of about 2100. However this did not happen, and UG intake this year was at about the same level as the previous year. Moreover, expectations in relation to both postgraduate and overseas recruitment also fell

short of predictions. In the former, it was as a result of a shortfall in two large departments, and came as a surprise in the light of the assessment of the position in June. The result of all this is that comparing 2007/08 with the previous year, we have about 20 fewer Home/EU undergraduates, about 80 fewer postgraduates and about 50 fewer overseas students. There is a reduction of 3% on total student numbers between 2006/07 and this year. The predicted clawback of recurrent grant for this year is about £1.1m.

In addition to loss of recurrent grant, there is also a very significant loss of fee income. Last year we were protected from the impact on fees from Home/EU undergraduates because of the mechanism of the SIS, which related to historic student numbers. This year, however, we anticipate a reduction of something like £2.1m in fees compared to the budget submitted to Council in July – relating to Home/EU undergraduates, postgraduates and overseas students taken together. It should be noted that this reduction in income coincides with a year in which costs in the sector generally are likely to rise sharply. The result is that the estimated out-turn for the current financial year is a large operating deficit and, at best, break even on a historic cost basis. It is obvious that this is a serious issue and that recruitment - and retention - is by far the most important challenge facing us.

In response to the recruitment difficulties which we have identified, we have put in place a wide range of initiatives both in relation to Home recruitment and overseas relationships. These take time to impact of course, but an indication of their range can be obtained from the attached paper.

To understand the background of the current level of funded student numbers, historically we have underperformed in research, both in QR (determined by performance in RAE) and external research income. This has led us to a higher level of student fte than would otherwise be needed. Coupled with the shift to Arts and Humanities because of the difficulty in recruitment in Science, we have probably a higher level of UG load than is our carrying capacity. It is interesting comparison that our undergraduate Home/EU funded number is currently 30% above that of Bangor.

Looking forward to 2008/09, applications currently being received indicate that recruitment will at best be no better than for this year. Moreover this year's graduating class is our largest ever. The likely effects therefore are a continuing decline in the number of Home/EU undergraduates. Predictions are for a further fall in Home/EU undergraduate numbers of almost 200, resulting in an overall shortfall of about 350 FTE, equating to about £2.5m in recurrent grant and fees.

In responding to this challenge we will need to commit to some investment. The underlying financial position is good, as measured by, for example, liquidity and net current assets. It shows how important it has been to establish that basis as a protection against the kind of sudden changes in the market that we have encountered. It was not sensible to cut expenditure last year in the immediate run up to the RAE, but we will now go through the budget line by line to reduce expenditure whenever possible, but also look at a range of possible new income streams. It is clear that we will need to consider very carefully the level of expenditure that we can sustain in 2008/09 and beyond.

As I reported to the previous meeting of Council, we continue to do very well indeed in all measures of student satisfaction. It is important that we do all in our power to ensure high quality provision and effective student support, both academic and pastoral. I am pleased to refer to excellent campaign launched by the Guild of Students : *I love Aber*.

Of high importance is the continuation of portfolio enhancement. We have decided to accelerate the introduction of Psychology as a Single Honours subject. International activity is important, and we will devote resource to appoint a Director of International Relationships, working closely with the Director of Recruitment and Admissions. Part of the approach will be to establish links with selected institutions (and in some cases regional governments) encompassing the whole range of our work. A clear focus to activity will be essential.

Our efforts in Marketing and Communications also need to be strengthened considerably, as does work with alumni and large scale fundraising. Policies are being introduced to strengthen all these aspects of our work.

The merger of IGER into the university

The arrangements in relation to the merger of IGER into the university are proceeding . The directorship of IBERS (the Institute of Biological, Environmental, and Rural Science) has been advertised and dates have been agreed with the recruitment consultants for the various stages of the appointment process. A great deal of detailed work is being done, and the minutes of the latest meetings of the Programme Board are attached to the minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The merger must be driven by the science, and it is essential that the science vision addresses the priorities of funders and the significant questions in the field. Innovation and quality will be paramount, across the range of activity - from pure science to strategic and applied research and innovation. IBERS will build upon current research and develop strengths to address current as well as new problems. Enclosed with this report is the draft science vision which is currently being refined.

The necessary due diligence is being performed and the first report on financial aspects is expected soon; a progress report will be made to Council. The legal aspects are being looked at very carefully by solicitors, and draft documentation for the legal transfer has been produced. Some serious issues remain to be resolved, not least in relation to the details of the financial agreement with BBSRC. Enclosed with this report also is table of critical dates.

In the meeting of Council the chairs of the various working groups will provide reports on the groups which they chair or of which they are members. Professor Pykett will report on the work of the Science and Economic Impact Group and the Science Strategy and Delivery Group; Dr John Harries on the Operational Group, including the Shared Services and Systems & Financial sub-groups), the Estates Group and the HR group; and the Director of Finance on the Governance and Funding group. A chart of the various groups is enclosed.

NGL

December 2007

Report to Council – March 2008

The two major issues to be considered in the March Meeting of Council are the merger of IGER into the University and the financial position. A note on the former is included separately in the papers for the meeting. In my report I will also give some contextual background.

Financial Position

As a result of under-recruitment in each of the categories of Home/EU undergraduates, postgraduates and overseas students, the university is facing a significant financial challenge. The out-turn in each of these three areas was less favourable than the best estimates available in 2007, and the under-recruitment coincides with a sharp increase in costs. For the current year, an operating deficit of around £2.5m was predicted, and for 2008/09 a deficit of around £3m.

It was therefore essential to embark on an exercise both to reduce expenditure and to increase income. As part of this, I have met individually with all heads of academic departments and service sections. The objective is to achieve at least a historic cost surplus in 2007/08 and an operational surplus in 2008/09. For the latter, a turn around of in the region of £3.5m will be required, and to attain this, I have emphasised the importance of both reducing expenditure and increasing income. At the same time, investment now in order to deliver future improvements in income must be protected. The original budget for 2008/09 contained a provision of £800k for investment in new opportunities.

As a result of these meetings I am reasonably confident of achieving a historic cost surplus this year. For 2008/09 we have identified a number of areas where expenditure can be reduced and to date about £1.5m of savings have been identified. I am now looking at the whole picture in detail.

Targets for additional income were also discussed with departmental heads, in four areas:

- (i) departmental targets for overseas students
- (ii) departmental targets for PG taught students
- (iii) departmental targets for Research Council grants
- (iv) departmental targets for other types of research grants.

These are designed to deliver additional income, both in 2008/09 and in the longer term.

Other income targets are being set : for fund raising and from property disposals. Some of the latter have been identified and will be realised in 2008/09; they are likely to be significant but the exact effect on the Income and Expenditure Account has still to be determined.

Essential investments include:

- portfolio development (e.g. the decision to accelerate the introduction of Single Honours Psychology)
- recruitment of home/EU students
- establishing an international strategy
- student support
- marketing the institution and fundraising

In addition to the savings which have been identified, it will be essential to explore the possibility of early retirements, and this is currently being costed. There is provision for restructuring in the budget.

Context

These important developments for Aberystwyth are taking place in the context of significant and far-reaching change, in Wales, in the UK and internationally.

Internationally the forces of globalisation and internationalisation are transforming the nature of HE around the world. About 2½ million students each year choose to study in institutions outside their own country and the provision of courses by institutions outside their own countries is growing rapidly. There is debate about the inclusion of HE in the GATS framework, a recognition that HE is now 'big business'. In the UK, international HE is estimated to contribute £4 billion a year to the economy, but there are significant pressures which are changing the balance of advantage. Markets are getting more crowded and competitive. A number of European countries have begun to offer courses through the medium of English and far more Universities around the world are internationalising their provisions in order to recruit international students. The balance of provision between public and private provision is also changing. Hence the importance to AU of establishing an International Strategy to encompass, not just international student recruitment, but to establish good relationships across the range of our work with specific and well-chosen institutions abroad.

There are major changes **within the UK**, including the recent announcement to establish twenty more university campuses and Higher Education centres in England. Considerable attention is being devoted to the relationship between HE and Further Education, in the involvement of employers directly in the funding of courses and in their design and in the relationship between HEI's and schools. Establishing this number of new Higher Education Centres illustrates the importance that is given to the value of Higher Education in economic terms both within a locality and more generally. In his speech announcing this development, John Denham said "I want to build on the successes of the last few years which have seen new centres of Higher Education transforming local economies and the lives of local people." Acknowledgement of the link between HE and economic competitiveness should stimulate us to think closely on how to mainstream enterprise and innovation into our academic work, both in research and in taught provision.

One of the significant challenges is demographic change. A significant reduction in full-time undergraduates is expected across the UK, with estimates of a reduction of about 8.5% in Wales between now and 2019. Uncertainty attaches of course to the scale of

inward migration. The sector as a whole, through UUK, is currently engaged in a study looking at the size and shape of the sector in future; a number of different scenarios are being considered to take into account demographic changes, the possible levels of economic growth, the greater involvement of employer based provision and a range of other factors.

In **Wales** a number of interesting challenges lie ahead. I mentioned the relationships being developed in England between universities and schools; there is a risk that Welsh HEI's will lose out by not having those relationships and we have to be very active in counteracting the potential effect. Issues relating to the 'funding gap' with England remain. Within the Welsh Assembly Government there is a more complex pattern, with Higher Education having links with both DCELLS (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills) and DE&T (Department of Economics and Transport); within DCELLS, HE has relationships with several directorates and divisions. The importance of Higher Education to economic development is a welcome trend and it will be essential for us to respond to these requirements. There will be emphasis not only on the relationship with economic development but also on the skills agenda and the relationship with Further Education.

Student Recruitment

Returning to the key issue of student recruitment, the current third year is the largest in the university's history. Unless the intake for 2008 is substantially in excess of 2,000 (the 2007 intake figure), these will be a reduction of up to 200 FTEs on overall student numbers.

UCAS has now released information for the whole of the UK for applications for 2008. This shows a substantial reduction in cross-border flow between England and Wales, with a 15% fall in English domiciled applications to Welsh HEIs. The position of individual Welsh HEIs is varied: Aberystwyth's applications overall were down 8.2% on the previous year, a markedly smaller reduction than our competitors in Wales. This reduction compares with a reduction of c.17% which could have been expected on the basis of the reduction in the number of choices available to applicants from 6 to 5.

The critical issue for the University's final performance in the 2008 admissions cycle (apart from what happens in 'clearing') is now the conversion rate. The early signs are promising, with CFs (Conditional Firm responses) up by about 55% and UFs (Unconditional Firm responses) up by about 20% compared with the same time a year ago. There remains particular concern over the impact of declining applications and intake on those departments which have a large cohort graduating in June 2008, or which currently have low numbers of student FTEs in Years 1 or 2. These issues will be raised with departments as part of this year's Planning Round.

Quite apart from funding issues, the effects of demographic changes, the reduction in cross-border flows and the trend of students to attend HEI nearer their homes are important issues for the future of the university, and a whole range of initiatives have already been put in place in response to the trends which we observe.

NGL

Report to Council, July 2008

Research and IBERS

It is evident that one of the most significant developments over the last three months has been the establishment of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS). It is of very considerable strategic importance and is timely, giving us the opportunity to establish activity of high international profile in a field of global significance. IBERS will be outward looking, and in addition to the emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach, will link pure research to applied research and innovation. The initiative has captured widespread support and we must take advantage of this opportunity to establish an internationally renowned centre for research, innovation and teaching in biology and the environment.

I have prepared a separate note for the Council on the latest developments.

The new Institute is by a long way our largest department, and that reinforces the need to think carefully about both our academic structure and the arrangement of central services. Moreover, we must be conscious of new opportunities which may be derived from the establishment of IBERS, as in other areas of activity.

IBERS will have a big impact on our research income and our dependence on Funding Council income will decrease as a result. It is essential to protect the programme grants from BBSRC in the medium term following the initial commitment, and more widely to enhance grant capture across the university from the entire range of funders : research councils, government departments, the EU and industry. We are currently looking very carefully at the arrangements for the support of research and the linkages we have with relevant funding agencies. I am pleased to report a significant increase in grant capture this year to date in comparison with the same period last year.

In the process leading to the establishment of IBERS, we have received strong support from several departments within the Assembly, and I am pleased to see the strengthening of interdepartmental connections, particularly between DE&T (the Department of Economy and Transport) and DCELLS (the Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills). This is important in order to optimise the contribution of universities to economic development and regeneration and to enhance our links with industry and commerce, from SMEs to international corporations.

Collaboration with Bangor University to form the Biosciences and Environment Alliance has been an important aspect of the approach to HEFCW and WAG, and provides considerable additional value. I am pleased to pay tribute to the excellent working relationship, particularly with the College of Natural Sciences, which has been evident in the preparation of these bids.

Collaboration in research continues to be important, and a number of significant applications to the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund are at differing stages of development : the Climate Change Consortium and the Welsh Research Centre for Crime, Community and Social Justice are two that Aberystwyth is leading, and we are involved in several others. We also hope to leverage EU convergence funding.

Finance and student recruitment

Without doubt one of the biggest challenges for us continues to be the recruitment of students (corresponding to an income stream of about £40m p.a.). As members of Council are aware, following the largest ever intake of Home/EU undergraduates in 2005, enrolments in 2006 and 2007 were both smaller than required. This led to significant clawback of recurrent grant this year (2007/08) and expected clawback next year (2008/09).

The overall financial position in Wales is that the 'funding gap' between Wales and England continues to widen. This is on the basis of a report produced by HEFCW, which presents a figure of around £60m by 2005/06 in a total budget of around £400m. The threat is that the quality of provision will eventually suffer if this is not corrected. The minister has established a task and finish group, chaired by Professor Merfyn Jones, to consider government policies for HE in Wales. The first stage will consider student finance arrangements while the second has a wide remit to review the role of HE in Wales, partly reflecting the DIUS review in England announced a few months ago by the Secretary of State, John Denham. The work of the review is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2009.

Recurrent grant for the sector in Wales is 2.47% higher for 2008/09 than for 2007/08. This is at a time when the sector's costs are increasing steeply. The salary increase in October (agreed as part of a three year pay settlement) is the higher of 2.5% or RPI, and this is likely to be around 4%; salaries have increased significantly since July 2007. Looking further forward, it is very likely that there will be a sharp increase in the employer's contribution rate to USS, and, in common with all defined benefit schemes, the Aberystwyth Superannuation Scheme is also under severe pressure (the triennial valuation is due on 31 July 2008).

As reported in the minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee, the current year is a difficult one financially, and we are anticipating an operational deficit. Current estimates are for a historic cost surplus of about £500k and an operational deficit of £1.6m. The underlying financial position of the university is sound, but it cannot sustain operational deficits for any length of time.

As a result of under-recruitment of Home/EU undergraduates, postgraduates and overseas students, early indications for 2008/09 were for an operating deficit of around £3m. We established a target for a 'turn around' of £3.5m, to be achieved by reductions in expenditure and – importantly – increased income. I am pleased to say that we are currently predicting a small operational surplus (of around £500k). However, this is only possible as a result of a number of 'one off' sales of property as part of our longer term estates strategy. Though encouraging as far as it goes, the surplus is considerably less than we should be producing in order to sustain our activities into the future. This is why diversification of income streams and effective working generally are both essential. Details can be found in Council papers and I shall discuss this in greater detail in the meeting itself.

In relation to undergraduate recruitment, the outlook has improved considerably. Our 'conversion rate' is now much better than the UCAS average, and the sum of Conditional and Unconditional

Firm Acceptances as at the end of June was 2221, compared with 1957 at the same time last year. The estimated intake is 2250-2300 (compared with 2000 this year and last). The improvement reflects a large number of individual initiatives (and additional investment), and efforts both in academic departments and centrally.

I am delighted with our continuing excellent performance in assessments of student satisfaction. This obviously aids our recruitment efforts, as does the fact that we are recognised as having one of the best provisions for bursaries in the UK.

Likewise there has been an improvement in our retention rate. Historically we have done well in this regard, and we continue to perform ahead of our benchmark. Nevertheless we wish to reduce withdrawals from the university further, and a ten point action plan for departments and faculties has been prepared.

We have prepared a budget on the basis of two scenarios : an intake of 2000 and of 2300. The former leads to an operational deficit of around £1.4m and the latter to an operational surplus of £500k. Further details are contained in F&GP papers.

Looking ahead

I have referred to the ministerial task and finish group and the way in which it reflects the wide-ranging DIUS review of HE in England. It is important that HE in Wales retains its connections with developments in England : there is no boundary – we are part of a UK wide sector and Aberystwyth, in particular, competes with institutions in England for students and for research funding.

At the same time we are very conscious of our responsibilities to Wales and to our immediate region. This relates to our contribution to economic, social and cultural development, and to our commitment to the Welsh language. There have been significant developments over the last year in Welsh medium teaching, and I attach a full report prepared by Dr Mari Elin Jones, Director of the Centre for Welsh Language Services.

Government (in England and in Wales) emphasise the key importance of HE to economic development and regeneration. Employer engagement is often mentioned, and we must respond to the developing 'skills agenda'. The response of WAG to the Leitch report on skills and the Webb report on Further Education will be published soon, and without doubt we will wish to engage actively with DCELLS on these issues. Employer engagement will be important, as will be success in increasing involvement with business.

Portfolio development will continue to be of critical importance; hence the acceleration of the development of Psychology, and the consideration of other developments such as Health and Exercise.

Looking forward we will receive the results of the RAE on 17 December. This will impact on the next Planning Round, and will probably lead to some significant rebalancing of the portfolio to reflect relative success in the RAE and the associated distribution of funding. It is impossible at this stage to

even attempt to predict the financial outcome of the RAE; currently we receive about £6m p.a. of funding as a result of the 2001 RAE.

Financial pressures are likely to increase over the next few years, and I have already mentioned such matters as the continuing pressure in relation to the remuneration package in general (salaries and pensions). Not only must expenditure be controlled, but new income streams sought. I have mentioned student recruitment and research funding. A linked issue is that of international recruitment, which has also been sluggish in recent years. The newly appointed Head of International Relations and Collaboration is now in post. We have established an approach which emphasises the formation of relationships with selected institutions (and, in some cases, regional governments) overseas, across the range of our activity. The new arrangements will lead to injection of energy and focus into this important area of activity.

We are also expanding significantly our efforts in relation to fundraising and alumni relations. We commissioned a consultancy report and will take forward its recommendations. It notes the commitment of alumni and the good base which we have; given other developments the time is opportune to take advantage of this strength.

The Estates Strategy is important for the future; I am conscious that Aberystwyth might look very different in ten years time, and we have some important decisions to take in the next few months. We await HEFCW's response to our Capital Investment Strategy.

There are continuing changes in relation to the University of Wales. We will need to consider the question of whether we should award Aberystwyth University degrees, and if so, when.

Despite the general sector-wide financial difficulties, investment in new developments will be protected. We have in the budget a sum of £800k for new developments and have earmarked several initiatives, including international activity, fundraising, new subject areas (including Psychology) and, of course, student recruitment. We are also looking at longer term planning in a number of departments, to protect current areas of strength and to boost performance in areas with potential for growth.

As members of Council see, it is a period of rapid change and I am aware of the intense demand placed on our management resources. It is formative time for Aberystwyth University – a time of opportunity as well as challenge.

NGL

July 2008

Report to Council, November 2008

1 Context

I am pleased to report on some very encouraging developments - particularly in relation to Student Recruitment and to Research, the latter partly, but not entirely, following the formation of IBERS.

The context in which we work remains highly competitive. It also remains the case that governments are increasingly involved in Higher Education, which they see as important drivers of economic, social and cultural change. The central importance of universities is repeatedly emphasised and this is reflected by reviews of HE in Scotland, England and Wales. In England work on the ten strands of the review established by the Secretary of State has been completed. Phase 1 of the review in Wales, on student financial support, has been completed, and the much wider Phase 2 is about to commence. Throughout these discussions, there is increased emphasis on skills, employer engagement, part-time students and innovative methods of delivery of provision. In Wales the emphasis on collaboration and widening participation continues.

UUK has identified six conditions to ensure the future effectiveness of the sector :

- (i) As engines of knowledge transfer, universities will provide key aspects of the response to the global challenges of, for example climate change, security and social cohesion; government must work with universities to exploit the potential to contribute to evidence-based public policy.
- (ii) Excellence in research.
- (iii) Quality and standards must be protected as the sector expands and the perception of high quality must be maintained.
- (iv) Greater employer engagement.
- (v) Sustainable, predictable funding.
- (vi) Autonomy : recent interesting research shows a strong correlation between autonomy of decision making and public investment in research with enhanced economic activity.

In this report, I refer particularly to four strategic issues which Council is invited to discuss. These are student recruitment, financial matters, research and the development of IBERS, and the award of Aberystwyth University degrees.

2 Student recruitment

See PARC Actum 4.11, the report prepared by Dr Hywel Davies and PARC Actum 4.2.

It is very gratifying to report notable success in all areas of student recruitment. Much thought has been devoted to this critical performance measure over the last two years, and appropriate investment made. This effort has borne fruit.

The statistics speak for themselves. Acceptances by Home/EU undergraduates on the eve of registration were up 18%; the increase was across the board, and sciences were up by over 20%. Acceptances of Home/EU postgraduate research students were up by 37% and of non-EU postgraduate research students by 20%. The graduating class was large, but the total effect is an increase in total full time student numbers of about 240 over 2007/8; overseas numbers are up 25% overall.

The increase in acceptances this year of around 18% compares with a UK wide figure of around 8% and a figure across HEI in Wales of about 4%. Aberystwyth had an increase of acceptances from English domiciled **students** of over 10%, against a small decline of 0.8% across Wales as a whole. There has been a significant relative increase in the percentage of students who are domiciled in Wales : 43% of this year's intake from the UK, compared with 39% the previous year.

The excellent outcome has enhanced morale and will have significant impact on the overall financial position. The task now is to sustain this performance. It remains important for us to try to increase the applications base. Our success this year has been generated by an outstanding conversion rate.

In the short term there will be further changes to the applications system, and next year will be the first in which the adjustment period will operate (this is a five day window following the release of A-level results in which applicants who have done better than their offer can make an additional application while retaining their original firm acceptance).

In the longer term there are demographic changes in which the 17 year old cohort in the population will decline; this will happen from 2010 and reach a minimum in around 2019. Other issues which may have an impact are possible changes to the student financial support system in Wales, and the removal or raising of the fee cap in England. I was struck by the statistic that in 2008 there were 47.5% of 17 year olds in England applied for entry to HEI, while only 41.7% did so in Wales; in 2007 the figures were 43.7% and 40.5 % respectively, so the gap is widening. This illustrates the importance of Widening Participation activity, and I am pleased to refer to the excellent work done by the Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion. The participation rate in the UK generally is increasing, but less rapidly than in several other OECD countries.

The reasons for the improvement in performance include

- the rebranding of the institution as Aberystwyth University;
- the emphasis placed on developing relationships with applicants and their schools and colleges, including the innovative use of electronic methods of communication;

- enhanced capacity in the central admissions office;
- the excellent bursary provision;
- the continuing programme of portfolio development;
- effective open days and the efforts put in by staff, in academic departments and centrally, on visiting days.

On the international scene, the International Recruitment and Collaboration office has recently been established and is already having a measurable effect. We aim to exploit opportunities with specific areas: India is one of these, with UK wide initiatives taking place. A massive increase in participation is planned, and there is a political agreement between the UK and India on the provision of support through mentoring partnerships with new institutions. Generally, international student fees form a larger income stream for many universities than research council grants; there are obvious dangers, and it is necessary to recognise the volatility of this income stream. Hence it is important to establish institutional relationships.

A further report on PG recruitment has been prepared by Dr Rhys Williams and was considered by Planning Group on 27 October. In response we have agreed to fund a range of additional postgraduate awards both for postgraduate taught and research students.

3 National Student Survey

See minutes of Academic Affairs Committee and attached paper

In addition, our performance in the National Student Survey is important to us. We have again obtained an overall satisfaction rate of over 90%. The median overall satisfaction rate in the UK is 82% and in Wales 83%. We are above the median score in both the UK and Wales in all 22 questions in the survey, and considerably above in several areas. All institutions are responding to the lessons of the NSS, and more universities are attaining a high level of performance (and there are several new entrants – a number of small specialist institutions, but also Oxford and Cambridge). It is essential that we take note of the comments made in the NSS and that all departments work to improve those areas where they did less well than they might. A detailed report has been prepared for Academic Affairs committee, and responses considered. This is reported in the minutes of Senate.

4 Research and the development of IBERS

See PARC Actum 4.10 and F&GP Actum 45

In terms of research performance across the board, we await the results of the RAE, and we will assess our position in that context when the time comes. The funding model is not known, and the financial implications of the results will take some time to resolve. Research grant capture has

recently been good, with a number of impressive successes across a range of departments. Research grant announcements in 2007/2008 remained at the reasonably satisfactory level of the previous year and applications increased significantly. The Research and Enterprise partnership with Bangor has had a positive effect; the partnership to date has won £10m in research grants, with the high success rate of 40%.

The newly formed Research Committee has met, and its first meeting a week or so ago covered a wide range of issues. Included was a valuable and detailed report on Research Grant capture over recent years, and this will be reported to the next meeting of PARC. Collaborative research activity remains important, and a number of projects supported by the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund are now active, and several others at various stages of the application process.

The university's research profile will, potentially, be transformed with the establishment of IBERS. It provides a unique opportunity to establish AU as an international centre of excellence, responding to important global challenges such as sustainable land use, renewable energy, climate change, and food and water security. The approach in IBERS is to link research, enterprise and teaching, with a recognition that high quality work is essential across the spectrum of pure research, applied and strategic research and innovation. It is essential to ensure that IBERS is attractive to funding agencies, students, staff and business.

Funding from WAG for the development of IBERS and the Alliance for the Biosciences and the Environment with Bangor University has been confirmed, amounting to £16.5m capital and £7m revenue funding over five years. Strategic outcomes, outputs and milestones have been agreed with HEFCW, and close monitoring of income and expenditure and capital spend will be essential. A management group to oversee use of the special funding provided by WAG, HEFCW and BBSRC has been established. External project managers for the capital spend are being appointed. Separately, the IBERS Development Group, with Council representation has been established, to provide a mechanism to review and support future developments.

The Director of IBERS, Professor Wayne Powell, started in post on 1 September. The management structure within IBERS has been established, and four research 'pillars' have been identified. Strategic and operational targets have been agreed, and a Science Advisory Board, with representation from WAG and BBSRC, is being assembled. Ways to maintain close contact with WAG and BBSRC have been put in place, and a mechanism developed for individuals to have responsibility for developing and maintaining connections with a range of other stakeholders and funding bodies.

Strategic and operational plans for IBERS are being finalised, and a business plan prepared. The indicative financial position is breakeven in 2008/2009. Key factors are increased grant capture from current sources (e.g. BBSRC and Defra) and the identification of new opportunities. Mechanisms are in place to optimise the number and – importantly – the quality of applications for research grants and contracts. An assessment of enterprise opportunities is planned.

It is a time of huge opportunity, and I am pleased to report on the substantial progress being made to ensure integration and effective working internally within IBERS, and to establish a wide range of external linkages, within the UK and internationally.

5 Financial position

See F&GP : Acta 43, 44

The format for the accounts for 2007/2008 will show significant changes, reflecting the introduction of a new SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice). They will also reflect the accounting treatment of the transfer of IGER assets to the university, namely that the benefit be written off during the year of acquisition. Stripping out the effect of FRS 17 as well, the Income and Expenditure account is likely to show an operating deficit of about £1m. This is entirely as a result of relative under-recruitment of students, leading to claw back of recurrent grant of about £0.75m and the attendant loss of fee income.

The success in student recruitment has transformed the expected out-turn for 2008/2009, and latest estimates indicate an operating surplus of around £800k. Though a significant improvement on previous expectations, it is still much smaller a surplus than is required for sustainability. With a turnover of in excess of £100m, we should aim for an operating surplus of about upwards of £3m at the very least. The future position reflects the large increase in salaries in the sector, and we also must face the possibility of large increase in pension costs in the near future. The indicative budget of the Welsh Assembly Government is an increase in cash terms for HEFCW of around 1.8% for Financial Year 2009/2010, a margin which is dramatically less than the likely increase in costs. Moreover, the funding gap relative to England continues and, indeed, is set to widen even further. The present review may help to address this question, but we must also recognise the potential effects on public spending and, possibly, on international student recruitment, of the bleak global financial prospects.

Thus we expect the 2009 planning round will be a difficult one. This further reinforced the importance of sustaining the improvement in student recruitment and enhancing research grant capture. The other imponderable at present is the consequences of the RAE, the results of which will be known in December. Though we do not know the funding model, some redistribution between subjects is almost inevitable.

Another important matter that Council will consider in December is the Estates Strategy. This has now been completed, and will be submitted to F&GP at its next meeting. There are some far-reaching issues, reflecting significant initiatives in relation to several aspects of the university's estate.

An update will be given in the meeting of Council on the position in relation to the university's cash investments in two subsidiaries of Icelandic banks. The university has a spread of investments, in line with the Treasury Management policy. The position is changing quite rapidly, and we are in touch with UUK and the Funding Council about the position.

6 Aberystwyth University Degrees

Separate agenda item : see PARC : Actum 4.14 and attached paper

It was reported to PARC that Planning Group had considered the issue of whether AU should progress to use the degree awarding powers that it now has. Following discussion, PARC resolved to recommend to Senate and Council that Aberystwyth should award its own degrees from the 2009/2010 intake onwards and to seek legal advice on the transitional arrangements. Working party would be established to oversee the details of the transition and to consider the practical implications of implementing the decision.

The background to PARCs decision is the fact that the University of Wales no longer plays any part whatsoever in the delivery of qualifications in Aberystwyth, and full responsibility for quality lies with AU. There are issues in relation to the locus of responsibility and concerns about the reputational risk associated with validation activity. The paper which has been circulated summarises the issues. The latest position at Bangor University and Swansea University will be explained.

NGL

29 October 2008

Report to Council – December 2008

1 The Strategic Planning process and the arrangements in relation to the award of Aberystwyth University degrees are covered elsewhere in the agenda.

2 Research

The results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) are expected on 17th December. The outcome could have a significant impact on the University's profile and indeed on the forthcoming planning round. It was decided some time ago that following the completion of this exercise, the RAE would be replaced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF). When originally announced this was designed to be a less onerous process and assessment of research quality would use a range of indicators including bibliographic information and success in attracting external research funding. In May of this year, following a consultation, some significant changes to the original proposals were announced. The Funding Councils are now committed to a single unified framework for assessing research across all disciplines, combining expert input and indicators as appropriate to each subject group. The funding bodies are in the process of developing detailed proposals for a more flexible framework which would provide a robust indication of research quality across all disciplines and a basis for the distribution of funding. The challenge will be to design a common family of indicators and review processes for the REF as a whole, which will have the confidence of users and which will be flexible enough to have different emphases in different subject areas. It remains the case that the timetable in England is for full implementation of the REF in 2013, to drive QR allocations from 2014. At present it is proposed to phase in the REF leading to full implementation. The Funding Council in Wales will make its own decision about the timing of implementation.

One of the strong messages from the Research Councils at present is the need in relation to research to demonstrate excellence with impact - that is, high quality research is not sufficient on its own but it is necessary to demonstrate its impact in, for example, delivering highly skilled people to the labour market, creating new businesses, improving the performance of existing businesses, attracting R&D investment, and improving public services and policy. The task will be to ensure that research delivers greater benefits to the UK economy as well as maintaining the UK's reputation for research excellence. Research Councils UK (RCUK) is emphasising the increasing need to demonstrate these benefits to stakeholders; HEI's must develop a culture that regards high quality research and economic impact as complementary - 'both ... and' rather than 'either ... or'. The economic impact of cutting edge research is seen as a significant contribution to the amelioration of the effects of the economic downturn.

3 Review of Higher Education

I have on previous occasions mentioned the various reviews of Higher Education in the countries of the UK. The Denham Review in England, with its 11 strands, has been completed and the reports are now available on the DIUS website. The Secretary of State is now consulting various 'end users' of Higher Education on the conclusions of the work streams.

In Wales, Phase 1 of the Review of Higher Education, under the chairmanship of Professor Merfyn Jones, has been completed. A report was submitted to the Minister and she has now broadly accepted its conclusions. Phase 1 was concerned with student financial support. The report concluded that the present system of fee remission grants for Welsh domiciled students studying in HEI in Wales was no longer the most effective option nor was it sustainable. It is therefore proposed that a significant proportion of the resources currently devoted to the tuition

fee grant should be redirected to enhanced provision of grants to students from lower income households.

The minister also states that she wishes to provide greater support for the HE Sector as a whole in response to the widening investment gap between Wales and England. She has stated that in targeting student support on a needs basis, the resources so released, estimated to be somewhat in excess of £30m per annum in the study state, will be provided for the sector on a “something for something” basis. It will be targeted on the priorities in line with the One Wales priorities. There is now a period of consultation on the proposals, and the Assembly will take a final decision early in 2009. The last analysis of the investment gap (using 2005/06 figures) was £60m.

There is a great deal of detail still to be worked out, both on the arrangements for student finance and certainly in relation to any additional funding that may accrue to the sector.

Phase 2 of the Review has now commenced and we have been invited to respond to the following specific questions:

1. What in your view are the strengths of HE in Wales?
2. What in your view are the shortcomings of HE in Wales?
3. What do you consider to be the most significant one or two issues that HE in Wales will face over the coming decade?
4. How might these issues be tackled by the WAG, The Welsh Higher Education Institutions and other stakeholders in Higher Education in Wales (giving due consideration to funding constraints)?

4 Financial position

I also wish to say something about the university's financial position. The original budget for 2008/09 predicted an operational surplus of around £750k. This is only about 0.75% of turnover and considerably below the kind of surplus that should be delivered on a year to year basis. However, in the light of the economic downturn the expected income has had to be revised downwards to reflect lower interest rates and, in particular, the fact that some planned disposals of assets will almost certainly not be possible within this period. As a result a deficit of round £750k is predicted, though this of course is on a “do nothing” basis. The underlying problem is that the Welsh Assembly Government's budget for Higher Education is set to increase by only 1.83% in cash terms for financial year 2009/10. This is at a time when our costs will increase very considerably in excess of that, reflecting salary increases already agreed (for example 5% in October 2008) and higher utility costs. Following the excellent performance in student recruitment there is, at least, likely to be little claw back of recurrent grant in 2008/09, though it is probable that there will be some.

Looking further forward, there are serious pressures on the finances of the Institution: one of these is pressure on increased employer contributions to pension schemes, in particular USS, and further increases in salaries. We should be delivering an annual surplus of around 4% of turnover; this is around £4m. A considerable amount of work has to be done to get anywhere near this figure and this will involve increased income streams as well as reductions in expenditure. In terms of student recruitment we must sustain the improvement of the intake in

2008 and improve markedly our recruitment of postgraduate and overseas students. Undergraduate Home/EU applications are monitored on a weekly basis and though numbers are small there is currently an increase of about 3% on this time last year - pretty much exactly in line with the increase across the sector as a whole.

Any increase of funded student numbers in Wales is highly unlikely in the short term. Increased research grant capture will also be critical and we are embarking on a new fundraising campaign. The key to the future will be that we must ensure that our activities are sustainable and our financial planning must be on a full economic cost basis.

Professor Noel Lloyd
Vice-Chancellor

Report to Council, March 2009

I shall separate my comments into three broad sections. In the first I describe some very positive developments; in the second I shall discuss financial matters in general and the challenges we face in particular; and finally I refer to a number of external matters. I shall reference PARC and F&GP minutes as appropriate:

1. Positive developments

1.1 The Research Assessment Exercise (PARC 16.9)

The outcome of the Research Assessment Exercise was very satisfactory. There were some outstanding performances and generally the profile was good. The external perception is of definite progress, and it is the best performance we have achieved in the RAE over the years. The results generally give a good foundation for future development. The task now will be to ensure that the high performing departments maintain and further enhance their position, and that other units of assessment make progress. There were some relative disappointments and attention will be given to see what can be done to recover the position in those cases.

As for the future, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) is very much 'under construction' and, though use will be made of metrics (bibliometric information, research grant capture and postgraduate research students) peer review will continue to play a part. It is likely that the approach will use a basket of indicators which will vary between subjects. Research grant capture and success in attracting research students are likely to be significant indicators. The quality of outputs will remain paramount, as will the research environment. In addition, the impact of research will be a significant part of the assessment.

1.2 Research Grant Capture

The latest information on Research Grant Capture is good. I reported to F&GP that the figures for the first six months of the Academic Year were excellent (see minute 19.2 iii of F&GP). The figures are that announcements for the first six months of the year are at £19.2m and applications at £26.6m. Clearly there is a significant effect of the formation of IBERS and the merger of IGER into the university, but I am pleased that there have been important successes across a whole range of departments. It is important to note that the Research Councils now place significant weight on the impact of research.

1.3 Student Recruitment (PARC 16.5, 22.5)

We continue to do well in student recruitment. Following the excellent performance leading to this year's intake of Home/EU undergraduates, which was the largest ever, the current position is that applications are up by over 13% on a year ago (the closing date for applications has now passed). Our current conversion rate is approximately the same as it was a year ago at this stage. Our success last year was based on effective conversion of applications into acceptances and we identified the need to increase the

applications base; to some extent that is happening. Within the increase above, applications from the EU outside the UK have approximately doubled to about 700.

Our consistently good performance in surveys of student satisfaction is obviously important to us in recruitment, with the National Student Survey (NSS) being a particularly important example. Academic Affairs Committee and the Deans are working with departments to respond to the detail of the NSS results and to improve upon some areas (Senate minutes, 35.1). It is also very clear that our policy of portfolio renewal has been successful and that the increase in applications has been largely due to the development of our subject areas such as Psychology, Criminology and Childhood Studies, though it is still very early days for the last of these.

2. Financial Matters

2.1 Recurrent Grant (PARC 18, F&GP 17.1)

We have now just received the recurrent grant letter for 2009/10. There is obvious change this year as a result of incorporating the results of the RAE. The overall increase in recurrent funding for the sector in Wales is 1.66% (as opposed to 4.3% in England for funding and research). The investment gap therefore would appear still to be widening. Reflecting the fact that we have done well both in the RAE and in terms of student recruitment, our recurrent grant has increased in cash terms by 4.74%. That our percentage increase is nearly three times the average is largely a consequence of our RAE performance, with our QR funding increasing by 20% compared to our previous recurrent research income.

This is obviously a good outcome. Nevertheless the financial prospects for 2009/10 are difficult. We cannot be shielded from the effects of the economic situation, and our success can only mitigate the effects to a degree. In particular, income from investments will fall significantly and it is now highly unlikely that we can make the asset sales that we had originally planned. Costs are increasing quite sharply, with the 5% increase in salaries in October, the increase in the cost of the employer contribution to USS (of 2 percentage points in 2009/10 and possibly more thereafter), and the cost of implementation of the Framework Agreement, which has now been signed.

2.2 Forward Planning

Given the position described in 2.1, and reflecting the fact that we cannot be isolated from external economic circumstances, I am looking for a significant turnaround - of around £2m - in the budget discussions I am currently having with heads of Academic Departments and Central Service Sections. This should be achieved by a combination of reduced expenditure and increased income - preferably, of course, the latter. Even if this is successful, it will deliver only a small operational surplus, and as I have repeatedly said, we should be working towards a surplus of something of the order of £4m per annum. Increased income will derive from maintenance of undergraduate numbers, of course, but there are other important areas: overseas student recruitment,

postgraduate recruitment and research grant capture. It is unlikely that the new fundraising initiative will impact significantly on 2009/10.

We established targets a year ago for all departments in the three areas noted and these have been updated in the current budget round. There is clear movement in research grant capture and there are developments also in international recruitment following the establishment of the International Recruitment and Collaboration Office. However, much remains to be done in terms of postgraduate students, both taught and research. This will be a significant element of the discussions with departments in the planning round in April. In particular, we need to develop a more attractive portfolio of postgraduate taught courses.

The overall message is that the planning round will be a difficult one with release of resources being highly selective.

2.3 The Academic Year 2010/2011

The most significant development in the period ahead will be position in relation to recurrent funding for 2010/11. It is clear that there will be a significant downturn in public spending as a result of the economic crisis, and the Finance Minister has already indicated publicly that a reduction in overall public spending in Wales of around £500m is likely. In 2010/11 we may well suffer a reduction in recurrent grant of perhaps between 5% and 10%; a 5% reduction equates to over £1.5m. We obviously need to plan for this and ensure that decisions we take for 2009/10 do not make it even harder for us to maintain our financial soundness in the medium term. The possibility is noted in the grant letter 2009/10 of an in-year adjustment during the Financial Year 2010/2011, and even in Financial Year 2009/2010.

2.4 Estates

The Council agreed to the Estates Strategy at its last meeting. There are several strands, all of them important, to be considered: IBERS, Student Residences, the Estates Planning on Penglais and Gogerddan, release of assets and the future of Old College. It is essential to take this forward as a managed and cohesive project. I have established a Project Board under my Chairmanship to oversee the process and there are five subgroups at present relating to the five themes mentioned.

3. External Matters

3.1 Review of HE in Wales (PARC 15.1, 22.4)

As members of Council know, a review of Higher Education in Wales is being undertaken. Phase 1 of the review recommended a reengineering of student finance – to give more targeted support to those in need and to go somewhat towards closing the investment gap with England. We have responded to the consultation; our response is in Agendum 15.1 of PARC minutes. A decision was announced by the Welsh Assembly Government in a ministerial statement on 18 March. Student

support will be targeted more closely to students in need and just over £30m per annum in the steady state will be used to help reduce the investment gap. However, the full effect of this will not be felt until 2015/2016, and it goes only some way towards addressing the investment gap, which may well be growing year by year.

Phase 2 of the review is much more wide ranging and is about the future of HE in Wales generally. Part of its function is to update the sector-wide targets established in Reaching Higher almost 10 years ago. Our response to this is seen in PARC papers (22.4).

3.2 Response to the Economic Crisis (PARC 19)

In response to the economic situation we have received a series of letters from the Chief Executive of the Funding Council; these are seen in PARC papers. In the first we were asked to bring forward capital projects and to ensure as rapid a response as possible to the payment of invoices. It also sought assurances that institutions were aware of the serious financial difficulties. Some advances on Capital Grants from HEFCW were also arranged. Our response was that we pay invoices on a weekly basis and would bring forward capital spending if possible, noting that procurement and tendering rules had to be satisfied.

The best way in which we can protect our region in the economic recession is to be successful in our core business of attracting students and increasing research funding, thereby maintaining employment levels, not only within the institution but in the neighbourhood generally.

In the second letter from the Funding Council we were asked to comment on the specific actions we are taking to assist the economy in times of extreme stress. I asked for a survey to be conducted with departments and I am pleased that all departments and sections responded within the requested twenty four hours. I have established a Task and Finish group, chaired by Dr John Harries, to take forward these proposals. We have recently received confirmation from the Funding Council of a small fund of £2m to stimulate activities of this kind.

3.3 Working with others (PARC 21)

Collaboration with other institutions is essential in order to be sustainably competitive. The Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor and the Biology and Environment Alliance are an important part of our strategy going forward and we are currently enhancing that relationship (see minutes of the Strategy Board in PARC papers). Partly following the RAE, and partly as a result of the strong messages from the Research Councils, it has become clear that institutions in Wales should work more closely together in research. We are now in a stronger position to play a part in such collaborations and I am pleased to say that we were involved in the launching of the St David's Day Declaration involving the Universities of Bangor, Cardiff, Glamorgan and Swansea together with ourselves. A copy of the declaration can be seen on the website. There are several other important collaborations at

various stages of development, including the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD), the Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS), and the Wales Institute of Visual Computing (VIEW), all of which are active, and applications have been submitted to the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund of HEFCW in a number of other important collaborations.

The overall message, therefore, is one of success across a wide range of activities, but of serious financial difficulties ahead. We shall have to make strong efforts to control expenditure and increase income from diverse sources.

Professor Noel Lloyd
Vice-Chancellor

The role of the Governing Body

Council approved a formal statement of its primary responsibilities in December 2005. This may need some amendment in the light of more recent developments.

The HE sector has a wide range of stakeholders: students, their parents, employers, staff of the institutions, learned societies, professional bodies, Research Councils, other funders of research, overseas Governments in some instances, companies with which we have research contracts and, most especially, the Funding Council and Government.

The role of the Governing Body is described briefly in the guide for members of HE Governing Bodies in the UK produced by the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC). There are two broad strands. The first is to oversee systems which establish and monitor control and accountability in relation to, for example, financial matters, Human Resources and a range of other legal requirements such as Health & Safety and diversity issues. The detailed work is discharged through its Committees, but the Council as a whole has a responsibility to assure itself that appropriate systems and controls are in place.

The other major component of the Council's responsibilities is in relation to Strategic Planning. It is envisaged that detailed strategic planning is the particular responsibility of PARC. The relationship with the Funding Council, in this connection is currently under discussion. A fairly fundamental review is likely, and a draft consultation document was considered at the Strategic Dialogue (including Vice-Chancellors, Chairs of Councils, and HEFCW) on 13 March 2009. The draft documentation contemplated a more meaningful engagement between institutions and HEFCW, including a greater dependence on institutions' internal procedures. The balance between autonomy and accountability is a delicate one. There are issues of principle and of procedure. A small working party is being convened involving HEW (Higher Education Wales), CHEW (Chairs of Higher Education Wales) and HEFCW, to consider the questions; the consultation will be delayed until the group completed its work. It is hoped that the revised procedure will be in place for the next preparation of the Strategic Plan in 2010.

REPORT TO COUNCIL, JULY 2009

Financial position

The HEFCW recurrent grant for Aberystwyth for 2009/2010 is 4.6% higher than the previous year. This compares with a sector increase in Wales of 1.6% ; it reflects the university's success in the RAE and buoyant student recruitment. Nevertheless planning is currently dominated by the current extraordinary financial circumstances and the inevitable reductions in public expenditure over the next few years. Following the UK budget the Funding Council in England has revisited the recurrent grant for 2009/2010 which had been announced, and it is known that there will be further cuts in grant in Academic Year 2010/2011. In Wales there will be reductions in the block grant to the Welsh Assembly Government, but so far it is not known how these reductions for Financial Year 2010/2011 will be distributed. The likelihood is that there will be three years of year on year reductions of the block grant, certainly in real terms, and quite probably in cash terms.

We have to plan accordingly, at the same time ensuring that the university remains competitive and has the capacity to grow in future. I have asked all departments to prepare contingency plans for reductions of between 5% and 10% over a period. There are several uncertainties : we do not know how the general reductions in public expenditure will be distributed, how the HEFCW grant in aid will fare and what approach HEFCW will take to the reductions that are required. Moreover, the timescale is unclear. This comes at a time of increasing costs, for example in relation to pension contributions.

Partly as a result of the financial crisis as it has affected interest rates and disposal of assets we shall report an operating deficit for 2008/2009. The budget which we are presenting to Council for 2009/2010 indicates a small surplus. We should aim to deliver a substantially larger surplus, and work is proceeding on that basis. This is necessary in order to be able to manage possible large cuts in the succeeding three years and to ensure that our surplus goes some way to achieving sustainability on a full economic costing basis. The reductions required are net - that is, a combination of reductions in expenditure and increase in income wherever that is feasible.

Recruitment

The recruitment of Home/EU undergraduates is a notable success story. Following our highest ever intake in 2008 - largely as a result of an increased conversion rate of applications into acceptances - applications were sharply up this year. We have maintained an excellent conversion rate, and acceptances are currently almost 15% higher than a year ago. We have revised our target upwards to 2500 new Home/EU undergraduates, and the task will be not to exceed this. In the context of a 9% increase in applications across the UK and a cap on additional student numbers in England, all the evidence suggests that the number of places available through clearing will be considerably reduced; consequently we expect a larger than normal number of Conditional Insurance acceptances. There are two limiting factors to expansion : the first is the available accommodation, and we are planning very carefully in this regard to ensure that the university and the town can absorb the pressure of increased numbers. The other is to protect the unit of resource and

consequently the student experience. We are likely to exceed our total funded student numbers; the preferred position is to do so by about 5%, so as to provide a cushion against an unexpected downturn in later years.

We still have a relatively small third year, and we are now putting plans in place for an intake of around 2400-2500 in 2010/2011.

There are a number of uncertainties – including the Adjustment Period which will occur for the first time this year. In the longer term, the impact of the changing fee regime in Wales is uncertain – on applications for Wales and from the EU outside the UK. Applications from English domiciled students to Aberystwyth fell significantly in each of the years 2006, 2007, 2008, before increasing by 6.1% this year, while applications from students domiciled in Wales have increased consistently over this period, and by 17.5% this year. Applications from the EU outside the UK have also increased and have doubled over the last two years. It is also gratifying that international recruitment has increased.

This success is testament to the effort that has been made centrally and in departments, and to the excellent market intelligence that the Admissions and Recruitment department is providing. In order to maintain our competitiveness it is important that we continue to perform well in such surveys as the National Student Survey and to maintain an attractive portfolio of courses. Portfolio development and enhancement has been an essential part of our success, with new subject areas (for example Sport and Exercise Science, Criminology, Psychology and Childhood Studies) doing particularly well. It is gratifying that Science subjects generally have performed well, and in several instances against national trends.

Effective student support is another key feature, and I am pleased that the new Student Welcome Centre has opened on campus. This enables a wide range of student services to be co-located, making it much simpler for current and prospective students to obtain the advice and information which they need. Its name is a strong indicator of the philosophy of a university which places high importance on the welcoming atmosphere for students; its location, at the heart of the campus, reinforces this; and the concept of a single point of contact is an indicator of institutional commitment.

Strategic Review of HE

Over the last year or so there have been strategic reviews of Higher Education in England, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland this has led to a 'compact' involving government, the sector and the funding Council. In England the publication of the outcome of the HE Framework has been delayed as a result of the reorganisation of departments: DIUS having been merged with BERR to form the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. It is stated by government that as a result universities are 'closer to the heart of government'.

The report of Phase 2 of the review in Wales will be published on 22 June, and the Minister will give her response on the following day. I shall provide Council with an initial response to the report and the minister's statement. The report of the Coleg Ffederal Planning Board will also be published on 22 June.

This year's remit letter from WAG to HEFCW was very detailed, and again emphasised the importance of widening participation and collaboration. Throughout the recent economic crisis the importance of HE in the recovery from recession and in ameliorating its effects has been emphasised. Aberystwyth has responded to this, and I am pleased that we have been able to demonstrate our contribution in this regard.

Research

Following a successful RAE we are already in the planning phase for the next assessment of research. This will be the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and originally was to be quite different in approach to previous assessment exercises. Following extensive consultation and a pilot exercise in a cross-section of institutions, the expected emphasis on bibliometric information seems set to be diluted. The best guess at present is that the next exercise will not be radically different from the previous RAE, with three elements being assessed. The greatest emphasis will continue to be on peer review of outputs, and subject panels will decide on what use is appropriate in the discipline of bibliometric information such as citation counts. The research environment will continue to be assessed, but the new element is likely to be an assessment of the impact of research. Work is continuing on the mechanism for assessing impact, but it is likely to be based on historic information.

The other important element of our success in research is our 'capture' of research grants and contracts. The position has improved over the last year, especially in some departments. However there is still some way to go. In this context the formation of IBERS has transformed the overall position.

In research terms it is essential that we have a high international profile, and that is one reason for our commitment to collaborative activities within Wales. I am pleased to report that IBERS is developing well. Its profile is high and it has received considerable support in WAG and BBSRC. Recent presentations to BBSRC, HEFCW and in Brussels proved successful, and I was greatly impressed with the first visit of the Science Advisory Board. Its estates strategy is driven by the requirements of the science and has now crystallised. The Centre for food, water and energy security is being planned, indication that IBERS will be able to address some of the major global challenges.

Learning and Teaching

Our competitiveness depends on ensuring the highest quality in everything that we do, and specifically in Learning and Teaching. We have to ensure that we satisfy the range of precepts established by the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency). Likewise the international competitiveness of UK Higher Education requires the system as a whole to be clearly perceived as providing education and training of the highest quality. Following some public concerns, aired in the press and in select committee hearings in Westminster, the QAA in England conducted a thematic review of five issues: contact hours, overseas recruitment, support for international students, the external examiner systems and assessment methods (including the degree classification system). The conclusion of the

report is that quality and standards are generally high, but it also presents some recommendations for consideration. Though technically it relates to institutions in England, its conclusions apply just as much in Wales. Reading the report I am satisfied that our processes and systems in Aberystwyth are entirely satisfactory, but nevertheless we shall take cognisance of its recommendations to further enhance and refine our approach to quality and standards.

Estates

The Student Welcome Centre to which I referred in the previous section is the latest addition to the university's real estate. This is a refurbishment which, in addition to providing a building which is fit for its purpose, enhances the environmental sustainability of our buildings. This emphasis on sustainability is common to all the planned new developments. Council is receiving a report on environmental issues and will see that considerable progress is being made. We will also play a full part in the work of the sector through the UUK Task Force on Sustainable Development.

The ten year Estates Strategy which Council has approved will have far-reaching consequences for the university and the town. I am chairing the Estates Strategy Board which has oversight of the various strands of activity and ensures that they are taken forward in an integrated manner. The whole exercise is being conducted in the context of, and in association with, the Aberystwyth Masterplan led by the Local Authority.

Pro Vice-Chancellors

The July meeting of Council will be Professor Lyn Pykett's last meeting of Council. She has been Pro Vice-Chancellor for seven years, having previously been Head of the Department of English (as it then was) and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. On behalf of the university I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation of her invaluable contribution over the years. I thank her most warmly.

At the same time, Professor Martin Jones commences his term of office as Pro Vice-Chancellor. I am certain that Council will wish him well in his new role.

NGL

21 June 2009

Report to Council, November 2009

Student Recruitment

1. I am pleased to report on an outstanding performance in student recruitment. The intake of Home/EU undergraduates in 2008 was the largest ever, but that has been comfortably exceeded this year. We withdrew from clearing on the first morning following the publication of A level results, and on the eve of registration the number of acceptances of Home/EU undergraduates was almost exactly 2700, as opposed to about 2400 last year and about 2000 the year before. It is noteworthy that our application base grew and that the conversion rate remained high. Particularly gratifying is that this good performance has taken place across the whole range of subject areas. The total number of full-time students is around 7570, approximately 600 higher than 2008/09, with an increase of about 15% in students from outside the EU.
2. We are comfortably above our funded student credits, which is exactly the position in which we wish to be. The limiting factor this year in relation to acceptances was accommodation. There are proposals to increase the stock of university residences, and proposals are described under a separate agenda item.
3. The attractiveness of our provision, as evidenced in the increase in applications, in part reflects the new subject areas which have been introduced in recent years, for example, Psychology, Criminology and Childhood Studies (within the School of Education and Lifelong Learning). The university's continuing good performance in surveys of student satisfaction is also important, and in this year's National Student Survey we maintained our high level of overall satisfaction (90%) while the national average figure fell slightly.
4. Increasing the number of postgraduate students, both taught and research remains a priority. The appointment of a Dean of Postgraduate Studies (Professor Colin McInnes) is designed to help address this issue.

Financial Position

5. The success in student recruitment will have a positive impact on the financial position for 2009/2010. The budget presented to Council in July indicated a small surplus. Taking recent developments into account, we should return a more healthy surplus (perhaps in excess of £1m). Though still considerably less than the target, it is an improvement. However, it will be some weeks before we have more precise information.
6. The draft WAG budget for Financial Year 2010/2011 has been published. The overall recurrent funding for HE, presented as a single line on this occasion, is 1.4% higher in cash terms than for 2009/2010. At the same time, the preamble mentions that this equates to an “efficiency gain” of 5%, taking into account the expected rate of increase of costs in the sector. It also includes a reduction of 2% in the teaching grant to enable HEFCW to ‘top slice’ the block grant for what they describe as strategic investments. The WAG budget will be confirmed in early December.
7. In the longer term it is essential that the university ensures that it is financially sustainable. In this context I am embarking on a Sustainability Improvement Programme and I shall be presenting a proposal to the next meeting of F&GP to obtain appropriate external advice in the context of Higher Education generally in the UK. It is estimated that the sector as a whole is operating at a significant deficit on a Full Economic Cost basis, particularly in Publicly Funded Research. In terms of sustainability, the threats to Learning and Teaching are seen to be contact with staff, infrastructure and student support.
8. The financial outlook for HE over the next four or five years is very uncertain. Following the Westminster general election it is likely that there will be serious reductions in public expenditure. Large figures are mentioned by some commentators, and part of the sustainability programme is to think about scenarios in which the core block grant could be reduced by up to perhaps 15% over the next four years or so. It will not be possible to cope with reductions at the top end of this range by incremental response, but it places a premium on both increasing income and working more efficiently. We may glean more information from the pre-budget statement in late November.

9. A number of factors can be identified in relation to financial risk. The withdrawal of the fee remission grant for students domiciled in Wales and the EU outside the UK – albeit with an enhanced availability of financial support for students on a needs basis – could impact on our undergraduate recruitment. Acceptances from Wales have increased steadily over the last few years (by 12.5% this year and by 75% since 2005), while acceptances of students from England, though they increased by 8% this year, have fallen by 12% since 2005. We are reviewing our bursary provision in this context: currently it is regarded as one of the best in the UK.

The review of student fees in England, should it lead to the abolition or significant raising of the present cap, would be a serious challenge to institutions in Wales. The HE Framework will be published by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in early November. Though directly a matter for England only, its conclusions could have a significant impact on Wales. Other risk factors include the potentially high cost of pension provision. There are national discussions currently in relation to USS in future. A further risk factor, perhaps in the slightly longer term, is the increasing activity of private providers.

10. The overwhelming risk is the tightening of public expenditure, leading to effective cuts in Funding Council block grant and reductions in Research Council budgets.
11. The implementation of the Estates Strategy is important for the future development of the University and its competitiveness. I attach a note describing the composition and terms of reference of the Estates Strategy Board, in which various strands are brought together in an integrated manner.

Research

12. Further consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) is currently taking place. Despite the original intention to use bibliometric information such as citation indices, it is now clear that they will be used only at the margins, and that the REF will not be dissimilar in concept to the RAE. The key change is the emphasis on Impact. The weightings suggested in the consultation are 60% for output, 25% for impact, and 15% environment; these may change, but probably only marginally. There remain questions about the definition of impact and its assessment. There are some other changes – substantial reorganisation of the sub-panel structure, for example, leading to a reduction of about 50% in the number of

units of assessment. We are consulting departments in order to prepare the AU response to the national consultation. We are also preparing the mechanism for monitoring research in preparation for REF. I enclose a useful summary of the consultation which has been prepared by the Funding Councils.

13. Separately from the REF, it is important to secure enhanced grant capture – from all sources. As a result of reduced public expenditure, a further tightening of research funding is possible, and it is important that Aberystwyth is able to improve its competitiveness further. Increased selectivity of funding is likely, and the paramount themes must be quality and focus. It is essential to identify areas of international competitiveness, and to concentrate support on them. An important element in our research profile is collaboration with other institutions, and we are embarking on a review of the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor University to assess the direction of its development.

Learning and Teaching

14. I wish to draw Council's attention to the work of the Academic Affairs Committee, which has oversight of all matters relating to the quality of academic provision. It reports to Senate, and, for example, does a large amount of detailed work on the validation and approval of schemes of study. In the October meeting of the Committee, a report was considered on the university's performance in the National Student Survey and actions for departments identified. There is a cycle of academic departmental reviews, and the Committee considers the reports in detail. The review panels are chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor, the other members being an external subject expert and two Deans.
15. As I mentioned in paragraph 3, the results of the National Student Survey were again very positive. The results at subject level are now available and have been analysed. All departments will consider the relevant information and, in discussions with the Deans and the Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Quality Assurance, will develop an action plan in response to the results and the comments made.
16. Quality issues have been given much attention in England. Partly as a result of the report of the DIUS Select Committee, detailed reports have been prepared by HEFCE, QAA and UUK, and the UK government has now responded to the report. Particular concern relates to contact hours, the degree classification system (and in particular the comparability of

standards) and the external examiner system. I have asked Academic Affairs Committee to ensure that published module descriptors all contain clear information about expected contact hours and – more importantly perhaps – the effort required to achieve the declared learning outcomes. The degree classification system will almost certainly be replaced by the Higher Education Attainment Record (HEAR): we already provide transcripts of achievement and are participating in the HEAR pilot. There will be a UK wide review of the external examiner system and we shall have input into it. The requirements are transparency, clarity as to the role and appropriate induction. The approach which we adopt, I believe, satisfy these requirements.

Review of HE

17. The two overriding themes in Wales are the involvement of Higher Education in economic development and recovery, and social justice. I am pleased that universities are seen as playing a key role in economic development – and to this should be added social and cultural development. I welcome the collaboration between WAG departments, specifically D&T and DCELLS in this context.
18. The report of Phase 2 of the review of HE in Wales was submitted to ministers in May. An internal working group was established within DCELLS to prepare an action plan; there is representation of HEFCW on it. A reference group has been established, with representation of the sector and a wide range of other bodies. A ministerial statement is expected within the next month or so.
19. In relation to widening participation and access to HE, Wales generally is performing well in comparison with England. The university's Centre for Widening Participation (CWP) does notable work and works closely with a whole range of schools. The Summer University celebrated its tenth anniversary during the summer; it has made a tremendous contribution and the anniversary events were moving occasions. The transformational effects of Higher Education are demonstrated very clearly in the work both of the Summer University and of the CWP generally. It is recognised that the barrier to widening access is attainment at age 16. This is a deep rooted problem

External relations

20. I am pleased to be able to say that we have established a new Department of Development and Alumni Relations, with Mr Julian Smyth as Director and several other members of staff. A matched funding scheme has now been introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government, and I am sure that fundraising from individuals, corporate bodies, and foundations will be much more important in future – certainly government places considerable emphasis on this stream of funding. Aberystwyth has a very committed alumni base, and we must ensure that we maintain a good relationship with our former students.
21. It is also important that we raise our profile within Wales and the UK, and I am pleased to report the appointment of Mr Lyn Morgan as Head of Communications and Public Affairs. Our involvement externally is important, as are improved internal communications.
22. I emphasise at every opportunity that the university operates at a variety of levels- local, pan-Wales, UK-wide and international. Each is as important as the others and local contribution is at its most effective when the institution is internationally competitive. We must be successful in our core activities. In the present economic circumstances, universities certainly have particular local and regional contributions. A ‘ten point plan’ is being prepared to demonstrate our local involvement (following a pattern used by Newcastle University), and I expect this to be available soon.
23. There is an inevitable tension between autonomy and accountability. There is a solid body of evidence that the relative success of UK Higher Education in large part depends on the greater autonomy of institutions in comparison with the position elsewhere in Europe. A tendency to engage in central planning could be a potentially serious risk to the competitiveness of the UK. There is a tendency to expect universities to be involved in a wide range of activities and initiatives without the required level of resource: ‘doing more for less’ will eventually lead to a decline of effectiveness and international competitiveness.

REPORT TO COUNCIL, DECEMBER 2009

I shall first provide an update on some of the matters which I raised in my report to the November meeting of Council and then refer to the various government reviews relating to Higher Education, in particular *For Our Future*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy and plan for HE in Wales.

Learning and Teaching

- 1 The recruitment of Home/EU undergraduates continues to be buoyant. We are now well into the application round for 2010 and applications are substantially higher than at the corresponding time a year ago. This may be, at least partly, a phase effect, but applications to AU are 12% higher, while the increase for our competitor set is 6%. The conversion rate has also improved further. Overseas numbers are up by about 15% this year compared with 2008/2009, and the objective is to sustain year on year increases of this order.

I have on a number of occasions noted that postgraduate provision is an area which we need to develop. Professor Aled Jones and Dr Hywel Davies will be visiting all departments over the next few months and will work with them to develop an attractive portfolio of taught postgraduate programmes. We need to ensure that we have cohesive provision and that we then market it effectively.

I am pleased that the KESS studentship programme has now been agreed. This is a collaborative venture with Bangor and Swansea, funded by European structural funds, in which postgraduates students are associated with companies in the Convergence area. Another collaborative programme 'Access to Masters' is also funded through structural funds.

- 2 Looking to the future, non-traditional methods of delivery of the curriculum will become increasingly significant. There will be emphasis on part-time provision and study in the workplace, while e-learning and Distance Learning will be important mechanisms.

In relation to e-learning, we have received just over £110k to facilitate implementation of the Funding Council's *Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology* programme. The *Gwella* project at AU has a number of strands, including e-assessment, technology-enhanced learning and student engagement. Other developments have included a new on-line assessment system which has been used successfully for some first year examinations, and access to software for developing on-line learning objectives.

- 3 Distance Learning will be an important challenge for the sector, and Aberystwyth is well-placed to respond. For example, the Department of Information Studies (DIS) has twenty-five years experience of providing Distance Learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. This was originally devised to respond to the changing requirements of the Information professions, and to overcome geographical disadvantages. The initiative has been very successful, and DIS is now major worldwide provider of programmes in this niche market. All programmes, which include courses on Information and Library Studies, Archives Administration and Records Management, lead to professionally accredited qualifications with national and international recognition. A new Master's course in Information Governance and Assurance will be introduced in the 2010/11 session. The

student body has grown to the current 1144 registered students. Most of these are employed in the subject field whilst they study.

Research

- 4 Preparations for research monitoring, especially in the context of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are crystallising. We have now prepared a response to the REF consultation; perhaps the most contentious part remains the use of impact as an important driver. However, the definition of impact and its monitoring will be determined at a disciplinary level.

The monitoring of research will be undertaken by the Research Task Group, and the Deans will play an important part in it. The Research Activity Database (RAD) for 2008 contains outputs associated with 410 members of staff. Departmental responses for the 2009 database are due in January. In addition to outputs, the database captures information on other research activity such as engagement with end-users of research. The Task Group will survey the 2009 database in detail and prepare a report on each department, including a preliminary assessment of possible REF submissions. The Deans will feed back the outcomes to Heads of Department and the reports will be available for the Planning Round discussions with departments. In my letter to departments asking for their planning submissions I have highlighted specific issues in relation to research. The Planning Group will also consider departmental research strategies and will be provided with a range of statistical information.

- 5 Collaboration is an important part of our research strategy. By bringing together the necessary breadth of expertise, focused strategic alliances can enhance the international competitiveness of our research work substantially. The important developments often take place at disciplinary interfaces and our approach must be outcome focused in the sense that important problems are identified and teams assembled to respond to them. Academics typically have a wide range of collaborators in all parts of the world, and all departments have a long list of partners. However a more structured approach is also required (in addition to, not instead of) and the formal collaborations in which we are engaged must be strategic, sustainable and structural.

- 6 The most important collaboration in which we are engaged is that with Bangor, and we are now considering the future of the partnership across the range of our activities. The mid-term review of the Research and Enterprise Partnership (REP) is taking place in Cardiff on 9 December, and I am delighted to report that the five year targets for additional research income have already been exceeded comfortably. Our partnership already encompasses several other areas in addition to the centre funded through the REP. The development of the Mid and North Wales Centre for Initial Teachers' Training is proceeding well, and involves genuine reconfiguration in such areas as meshing together quality assurance mechanisms. Discussions are proceeding on joint provision of some central services, and we recently launched the Aberystwyth-Bangor Skills Centre.

At the recent meeting of the Joint Strategy Board there was unanimity that the Partnership should broaden and deepen, and it was agreed to establish a small sub-group to consider

further developments, with the guidance that it should think radically and that nothing should be ruled out at this stage.

- 7 Several other formal collaborative projects are in place, and I am delighted that HEFCW has now confirmed funding for the Climate Change Consortium Wales (C3W). This is led by Aberystwyth and involves Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea Universities. Other projects include RIVIC (Research Institute of Virtual Computing), WIMCS (Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences) and WISERD (Welsh Institute of Social and Economic Research Data and Methods), launched recently by the First Minister in Cardiff.

Finance

- 8 The financial position is now clearer for 2009/2010. The Welsh Assembly Government's final budget for 2010/11 will have been announced before the meeting of Council. The draft budget indicated a cash increase for the sector in cash terms of 1.4% (the GDP deflator). We now expect this to be resolved into level funding in cash terms for recurrent grant and an increase of around 25% in the Reaching Higher line.

As for Aberystwyth we now estimate a surplus of perhaps £2m for 2009/2010. I hope that we will be able to increase this and get closer to the objective of around £3m. This much improved position reflects the impact of very successful recruitment, and this is the first year on which the improved RAE performance has been a factor. Finance and General Purposes Committee has agreed to a proposal for a Sustainability Improvement Programme.

- 9 The financial position is likely to be very difficult over the next few years, and universities generally in the UK are preparing for reductions in Funding Council recurrent grant and Research Council income. It is clear that there will be substantial reductions in public expenditure from 2011, and this has been emphasised yet again recently in the National Assembly's Finance Committee report on the WAG draft budget. There is uncertainty about the depth of the reductions, their timing and their distribution between government departments, but estimates of 15% over three years are not uncommon. We are planning on a 5% reduction in 2010/2011 and a further 5% the following year.

The task ahead is to manage the decline in funding at a time of increasing demands on universities, but to do so in a way in which capacity for growth and future development is protected.

- 10 In my report to Council in November I mentioned the 'ten-point plan' in relation to our involvement in the locality. I attach a copy at Appendix 1.

Reviews

- 11 A number of reviews are taking place in England or have recently been completed. I note in particular the review of funding. The remit of the committee chaired by Lord Browne is wider than simply an assessment of whether the cap on fees in England should be raised or removed altogether. It encompasses the funding of HE in general and, in particular, the place which private contributions, including from business, will play. It covers postgraduates as well as undergraduates, part-time students as well as full time. Though Wales is not part

of this exercise directly, the conclusion of the review will have significant impact on the position in Wales, and we have emphasised the importance that there should remain a two way line of communication between DCELLS and BIS.

Another important review is that of postgraduate provision, chaired by Professor Adrian Smith, Chief Scientific Advisor to BIS. Responses to the select committee's report on Higher Education, particularly in relation to quality, are moving forward and we will be involved in the review of the external examiner system, which is led by UUK. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is also involved in a number of assessments of the quality regime generally and will conduct a fundamental review over the next year or so.

- 12 A few weeks ago, the BIS framework for Higher Education, *Higher Ambitions* was published. Some of its conclusions are noted in the minutes of PARC and I attach at Appendix 2 a copy of its recommendations.

There is a strong emphasis on widening access, skills and the contribution of HE to the economy. The value of part-time provision and of delivery in the workplace is noted, and there will be a review of e-learning (hence the relevance of the developments described in paragraph 2). The report states that HE - in England – has experienced a benign financial environment recently and that continued support at this level from the public purse cannot be expected during a period of tight fiscal constraint. Thus private sources of funding should be explored.

Particularly noteworthy are recommendation 5 and 9. The text associated with recommendation 5 suggests a direct relationship between funding and quality; some measures of quality are QAA reports, NSS results and retention rates. Recommendation 9 clearly envisages more concentration of research funding, in which a threshold of volume might be a key consideration in the funding formula as well as excellence. This could have a serious impact on some institutions.

For Our Future

- 13 The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy and Action Plan for Higher Education *For Our Future* was published on 25 November, the full text of the report is at www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/091125hedocen.pdf.

The Minister envisages 'radical change' and a remodelling of HE provision, enhancing that which is internationally outstanding. The strategy emphasises an HE system in which providers with different strengths and missions work together. Thus HE in Wales is seen as a system rather than a collection of institutions. It notes that 'joint planning and delivery will be underpinned by funding methodologies'. The plan recognises the autonomy of institutions – which are best placed to respond to the market in teaching and research - and this is balanced against the Assembly Government's requirement to deliver its strategic priorities.

- 14 The twin pillars of the strategy are Social Justice and Economic Success. Naturally, the Funding Council is given the responsibility of delivering key elements of the action plan and emphasis is placed upon a partnership between WAG, HEFCW and the sector. A clear thread is the government's wish for 'strategic' funding in support of its policy objectives. The task for us will be to respond to increased contestability of funding at a time of severe fiscal constraint.

At Appendix 3 I attach a note prepared by the Planning Office on the actions which are described.

- 15 Finally, I note some particular areas in which work is likely to proceed in the near future.
- i. The significance of regarding Higher Education as a single *system* in Wales.
 - ii. Regionalisation – aimed at improving access and widening participation by ensuring local provision and at the same time avoiding nugatory competition. In this context, the value of partnerships between HE, FE and employers is emphasised.
 - iii. The interface with business : collaboration between HE and private sector employers is seen as a mechanism to encourage the exploitation of research
 - iv. Foundation degrees : a new strategy is to be launched, and employer engagement will play an important role. Further Education will be able to apply to QAA for Foundation Degree Awarding Powers.
 - v. The role of universities as 'Corporate Citizens'.
 - vi. The implementation of the Coleg Ffederal network model for Welsh Medium provision.
 - vii. International competitiveness in research is an important driver, and funding will be targeted at areas of strength. Further collaboration will be encouraged.
 - viii. There is emphasis on high level skills and on more flexible learning, including part-time provision, work-based learning and short programmes.
 - ix. Quality of provision : retention rates are seen as an important measure
 - x. There is a commitment to enhance postgraduate provision and participation.
 - xi. A framework for a new national bursary and scholarship scheme will be developed.
 - xii. Institutional governance in Wales is recognised as strong, but it is also recognised that there will be a need to provide a framework of support to help ensure that members of governing bodies have sufficient knowledge and understanding of what is a complex sector.

REPORT TO COUNCIL, MARCH 2010

Recruitment

The position as at 15 March was that the number of applicants to the University was 16.5% higher than a year ago and the number of applications was 14.7% higher. Applications have increased by 18.4% for the sector as a whole but applications to our competitor set have increased by only 10.3%. For the first time for 20 years or so the number of applications to AU has exceeded 10,000 – despite a decrease of the number of choices through UCAS over than period from 8 to 5. Conversion rates are very high: though at a relatively early stage the number of Unconditional Firm (UF) acceptances is 50.3% higher than a year ago and the number of Conditional Firm (CF) acceptances is up by 32%. There is undoubtedly a phasing effect because of the awareness of the increased competition for places, but our estimate at present is for around 3000 UF/CF total at the end of June. The effect of this is that we will be considerably more selective in confirmation and will not enter clearing at all.

In view of the remit letter to HEFCW (attached at Annex A) it is likely that there will be some form of cap on Home/EU undergraduate numbers from 2011/2012. We are currently about 8% above our funded student numbers and this is likely to be considerably more next year. It is important not to exceed funded numbers by more than that, since we must protect the unit of resource and hence the quality of student experience. At the same time we do not know what the baseline might be if a cap were introduced.

As I have emphasised on numerous occasions, we must now make greater efforts in recruitment of Postgraduate students and of students from outside the EU. This year the increase of undergraduate applications from the EU has increased by about 23% and from outside the EU by around 29%.

We continue to have good news from the surveys of student satisfaction that are conducted. The results of the most recent survey, the i-graduate survey for 2009, will be published at the end of March. The latest provisional sector-wide Performance Indicators prepared by HEFCE (the final version of which will be released in June) indicate that we have again exceeded our benchmark in a range of Widening Participation indicators.

Financial position

We hope that the recurrent grant for 2010/2011 will be known by the time of the meeting. The information we have at present is based on the headline steers provided by the Funding Council. This indicates a reduction of £8m for the sector as a whole in recurrent grant (about 2%), a reduction in 3.25% for funding for teaching and a marginal reduction in funding of QR. The Council emphasises that there may be in-year reductions if necessary following budget decisions in Westminster. We estimate a reduction of around £550k in our recurrent grant compared with this year. We had already decided to plan on the basis of a 5% reduction in cash terms, and this seems entirely prudent in the light of this information. We are currently in the middle of budget discussions with all departments and sections, and we are aiming to deliver a reasonable operational surplus despite the general financial stress.

In subsequent years, there is a likelihood of significant reductions in recurrent and capital grants. As I shall explain later there is added uncertainty in relation to the possible changes envisaged in the Remit Letter which is attached. It is very difficult to estimate what the overall reductions are likely to be: we will have more information following the March budget and more especially the General Election. However the way in which UK-wide reductions will affect the block grant to the Assembly Government is uncertain, notwithstanding the decisions needed after that on distribution between WAG departments and then within DCELLS. Further uncertainty arises in relation to the review of fees in England.

Phase 2 of the Sustainability Improvement Programme is underway. This is an important and timely exercise, the purpose of which is to review the University's response to the challenges that are emerging. It can be described as making the case for change, mobilising commitment to change and delivering successful change.

The University's Estates Strategy remains a very important part of preparations for the future, and an update will be provided under other items on the agenda.

We have recently received the draft 'risk letter' from HEFCW; it assesses the level of risk of the University as 'moderate'. This is attached at Annex B together with a copy of my response. This is the start of an engagement on the issues raised with the Funding Council, and the finalised letter will be issued in May. The matters raised are (i) the University's size and future development ; (ii) the financial position; (iii) the research strategy and REF; (iv) collaboration in third mission; and (v) the estates strategy. It is clear that the increase in the operating deficit for 2008/09 is a major element in the classification.

For our Future

The strategy for HE in Wales, *For our Future*, was published before Christmas. We now have the Remit Letter from the minister to HEFCW, and a copy is attached at Annex A. At the same time the Funding Council has just circulated a consultation document on its Corporate Strategy. This is attached for information (Annex C). The minister has also announced a review of governance in HE.

The strategy is based on the twin pillars of social justice and economic contribution. The following are particular areas which are highlighted.

- (i) **Regionalisation.** The implications of a regional approach to provision remain to be worked out. 'Regionalisation' is driven by two factors: responsiveness to the needs of the population within 'travel to study' distance and to those of local employers. It does not cover other areas of activity and institutions certainly will not be constrained to work only within their regions. It is unclear whether any funding will be channelled regionally. HEFCW suggests three regions for this purpose: North and Mid Wales (to include Bangor and Glyndŵr Universities with ourselves), South West Wales and South East Wales. The Open University is included in each.

A consultation document has been circulated by the Funding Council. A copy is included in the supporting papers relating to PARC, and work at AU is taking place on formulating

a response to the Funding Council's consultation. A detailed interrogation of the data and assessment of the regions from which we draw our students has already been completed. Currently the breakdown of the full-time student population is : 47% from England, 18% from Mid and North Wales, 10% from South East Wales, 8% from South West Wales, 10% from the EU and 6% from outside the EU.

The link with Further Education also plays a part: we are updating our MoU with Coleg Ceredigion and formulating such agreements with Coleg Powys, Coleg Llandrillo and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor.

- (ii) **Research.** There is continuing emphasis on increasing the success of institutions in Wales attracting Research Council grants. A factor analysis is required to establish suitable targets both for Research Council grants and research contract success at a pan-Wales level.

The management of research is important and preparations for the REF have started. The Deans are now involved in research monitoring will prepare reports on research outputs. A proposal to enhance the existing research management and support infrastructure is being developed ahead of the REF, with the aim of providing a 'one stop shop' for research support. A network of 'research champions' in departments is also being developed to provide further assistance to researchers in the preparation of applications.

- (iii) **Quality.** The quality of the student experience and of the provision in general is important. Academic Affairs Committee has started preparations for the Institutional Review, which we now know will take place in Spring 2012.

- (iv) **Governance** The minister has announced a review of governance. The announcement is attached at Annex D. In advance of the announcement, HEW and CHEW had established a review of governance which will be conducted by Mr Eddie Newcomb, formerly Registrar of the University of Manchester. Its terms of reference are to advise on good practice in relation to the responsibilities of Chairs and their appointment; the responsibilities and appointment of governors; the information base that is required to discharge responsibilities effectively; the relationship between governors and Chairs and their relationship with the Chief Executive/Executive Team of the institution; the relationship between the Clerk to the Board and the latter's relationship to the executive in view of his/her quasi autonomous role; conducting institutional reviews of governance; presenting the review in the context of the legal and regulatory framework (including the role of the Charity Commission)

The outcomes of the project will also identify current and future governor development needs and set out a framework for future governor development and support.'

- (v) **Strategic Funding** The Remit letter requires the Funding Council to ensure that 20% of recurrent grant is for the support of strategic objectives next year (this is included in the headline steers) moving subsequently to 80%. Clearly there is much to decide here, and we expect discussions with HEFCW on implementation. There is also likely to be a change in the process by which capital grants are allocated; a bidding process may be involved, with all its attendant uncertainties. We will give thought at this early stage to the potential implications for the University.
- (vi) **Collaboration** There continues to be considerable stress on collaboration and reconfiguration of the sector. We are progressing our discussions with Bangor University on the enhancement of the Research and Enterprise Partnership, and in particular we are assessing the opportunities for and feasibility of collaboration in central services ('back office functions'). All academics have networks of collaborators, but the issue here is structural and strategic collaboration at institutional level. This includes working with universities, FE Colleges, industry and public sector laboratories both within Wales and outside.

NGL

March 2010

1 Financial Outlook

By far the greatest challenge to the sector in the next few years will be the consequences of the severe reductions in public expenditure which have now been announced. Across the UK, the overall reductions for non-protected areas of expenditure will be 25% or more in real terms over four years. It will take some time for the details to be known. This will be following the CSR in the autumn and the subsequent calculations that will be needed to understand the effect of this on the block grant to the Welsh Assembly Government. The distribution between capital and revenue is also not known at present. The sensible course is to plan on reductions in cash terms of at least 5% per annum. We have done that for 2010/11 and for the longer term forecasts that we have prepared.

At the same time it is likely that there will be a cap on Home/EU full-time undergraduate numbers. We had hoped that details of the mechanism would be known by now but unfortunately there is still no information – for example, on the base line, the penalty for over-shooting and whether the cap will relate to intake or total student numbers.

With overall reductions of this order it will be essential to diversify income streams – hence the importance of overseas students and increased postgraduate recruitment. The Research Councils likewise will be affected by public spending reductions, and there will be greater emphasis on European funding for research and funding from private sources. While some of the shortfall might be addressed in this way and through the development and fundraising initiatives that we are taking, it is highly unlikely that these reductions can be accommodated by incremental change. When we do have greater certainty about the scale and timing of the reductions, the University will have to decide what aspects of its activity will cease. We must also be careful not to become involved in activity which does not contribute either to the academic objectives of the institution or to the “bottom line”.

The results of the Browne review will be known in the autumn, and though there may be a recommendation for a higher graduate contribution to the cost of HE it is by no means certain that such a change will be politically acceptable and anyway, in the short term, it can only ameliorate partially the affects of the reductions in recurrent grant that we expect.

I shall provide an assessment of the impact for the Emergency Budget on Higher Education in the meeting of Council.

I shall also refer to our financial position, both for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, in the meeting. It is important to generate a reasonable surplus for 2010/2011 in order to position ourselves for the future.

2 'For Our Future'

Following the publication of 'For Our Future' the core messages have been reinforced by the Minister's remit letter to the Funding Council and in a number of statements that have been made since then. The Funding Council has submitted an action plan in response to the remit letter and it will be published soon. It is difficult at this stage to know what the implications of the establishment of the Strategic Investment Fund will be. In this, 80% of recurrent funding from the Funding Council is to be directed in support of the strategic objectives of the Assembly Government. In 2010/11 this figure was 20%, and the Funding Council was able to achieve that relatively easily. The key issues will be what is included as strategic priorities – for example, whether the overall quality of provision will be an element. Looking back to 'Higher Ambitions', the strategic document published by the then Government in England there is mention that some elements of funding will "follow" the quality of provision as measured by QAA reports, the National Student Satisfaction Survey and retention rates.

Perhaps the major new element of the Assembly's strategy is the regionalisation agenda, in response to which HEFCW is developing a regional dimension to the planning and delivery of HE. It has defined 3 regions, one of which is 'Mid and North Wales'. It has now requested that each 'region' should produce a Regionalisation Strategy by November 2010. The component parts of the strategy should include: an audit of HE provision in the region; identification of the 'need for HE provision' in the region; and audit of local progression routes; partnership working with employers and sector skills councils to respond to regional skills needs; reference to Welsh medium provision.

There will be top slicing of recurrent grant to redistribute funded student places on a regional basis and in particular to establish foundation degree courses to be taught in FE Colleges. The underlying principles of the regionalisation strategy are provision for geographically constrained students and access to Universities for regional businesses.

We have had useful discussions with a number of FE Colleges. We have reviewed our memorandum of understanding with Coleg Ceredigion and there have been useful conversations with Coleg Powys. By far the largest FE College in Mid and North Wales is the new Coleg Llandrillo/Coleg Meirion Dwyfor. We have had very useful discussions with representatives of the new institution and these have identified a range of possibilities for collaboration. They include (i) access to HE and defined progression routes, (ii) strengthening links in learning and teaching, (iii) careers advice and guidance, (iv) staff development, (v) a business support portal, a specific part of which will be the training of advisers to SME's. We are also looking at expanding work place learning opportunities and extending our activity in relation to continuing professional development.

Considerable attention has been devoted to reducing the costs of 'back office' functions in Higher Education. This is something that is happening across the public sector, of course, and we are involved in the Local Services Board. This is an initiative lead by Ceredigion County Council to seek greater effectiveness and efficiencies in Local Services within the area. We play a prominent role in this and I hope that it will lead to some genuine efficiencies. This is also one of the areas in which we are working closely with Bangor and I shall say more about that in the next section.

3 Collaboration

Most academics have a network of connections and collaborators across the world; this is very much part of academic life. Such collaboration can take place at the level of the individual but also at the level of a research group or even in some cases a department. Several years ago we identified the need to establish institutional relationships in order to strengthen our position. In particular, the Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership grew from a conviction that institutions of our size could compete internationally, in research, only by working together. Building on an audit of provision that had previously been commissioned we identified the four research centres which became part of the partnership. I have reported consistently on the progress of the partnership and I am pleased to say that the targets established at the beginning in terms of research grant capture have been exceeded very comfortably. The success rates have been notably higher for joint applications as they have been for those involving single institutions. A very successful meeting was held in Cardiff last autumn which had a good impact on the Funding Council and the then Minister. The original partnership led to the formation of Biosciences and Environment Alliance (BEA).

At the beginning of the partnership we made it clear that establishing some collaborative activity of this kind was necessary for the future development of each of the two institutions. In any collaboration, all institutions must bring something to the table and must see perceived benefit from the joint activity. In the case of research it is to become internationally competitive and to raise the quality of output. Such institutional collaborations must be strategic, they certainly must be sustainable and they must be structural. A key feature is that there must be strong support from institutional leaders and a commitment from the departments involved; it is 'top down' and 'bottom up'.

We are taking forward our partnership with Bangor in a number of directions:

- i. We have identified a number of central services and are actively considering establishing joint services in some instances and shared activity in some others.
- ii. The respective commercialisation offices are forming a single entity.
- iii. There are discussions on academic planning. Detailed progress is dependent on information which we hope will be available soon on the capping mechanism: we need to understand how this will effect the two institutions.
- iv. Response to the regionalisation agenda and relationships with Further Education Colleges.
- v. Joint bidding to the new Capital Investment Fund. That decision has been taken by the Funding Council to cease formulaic distribution of funding for capital projects but to establish a bidding process.

We are involved in a number of other significant collaborative activities with a range of partners. I have been very conscious of the importance of some of these for our overall research profile. The following list gives a flavour of the range of activity.

- i. Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences
- ii. Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods
- iii. Climate Change Consortium of Wales (C3W)
- iv. Arrow – Aerospace and Autonomous Vehicles
- v. The Wales Institute of Crime and Social Justice
- vi. High Performance Computing Wales.

- vii. 'Astute' – advanced sustainable manufacturing technologies
- viii. Low Carbon Research Institute
- ix. 'Seacams' – marine science projects
- x. 'BEACON' – biorenewables
- xi. KESS – knowledge economy skills scholarships for postgraduates working with SMEs
- xii. Access to Masters – support for taught Masters with links to SMEs
- xiii. Software Alliance Wales – pan Wales ICT support for businesses

4. Quality Assurance

In the June meeting of PARC, I described some of the current developments in relation to quality issues across the UK. There has been a great deal of political and public attention in England. Quality of provision is at the heart of the university's work and must continue to have the highest level of priority. One of the particular issues the sector faces is to ensure that quality is protected at a time of severe financial constraint.

A number of reviews are taking place, including:

- i. The future of quality assurance and the development of a new institutional audit method in England. The key features are likely to be: audits on a rolling basis (already the case in Wales); due regard to proportionality; a set of common criteria against which all institutions will be judged; in addition to the core, a thematic element which will vary from time to time; terminology on the level of confidence will be reviewed (to avoid league tables!); 'Plain English summaries' to be produced. Definition of 'standards' and 'threshold standards'. I note there is a difference between clarity and simplicity.
- ii. A review of public information about HEI: the efficiency, effectiveness and the use of the Teaching Quality Information initiatives, including National Student Survey, and the needs of the wider public.

- iii. Evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure (UK wide) – the audit method, subject benchmarks etc.
- iv. External examining.
- v. QAA's thematic enquiries: external examiners, public information, contact hours, assessment procedures, support of international students.
- vi. In addition the QAA's 'Courses for Concern' process is being reviewed. There will be three 'sources' of concern: (i) external examiners or registered organisations; (ii) evidenced public complaint; (iii) QAA reviews.

In response to the public and political requirements, QAA is seeking to be more 'public facing' and provide more accessible information, with a greater focus on learners. Finally, the old HERRG (H.E. Regulations Review Group) has been replaced. The burden of regulation continues to be of concern, but the additional issue of public confidence has become an important element.

Professor Noel Lloyd

July 2010



Report to Council, October 2010

1. The Spending Review and the Browne Review

Over the last few weeks, much attention has been given to two matters which will have a big impact on Higher Education in the UK. These are the publication of the report of the independent review of HE funding and student finance chaired by Lord Browne (*Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*) and the announcement of the Government Spending Review. As far as HE is concerned these are closely connected. Though the Browne review relates to HE in England, there will be significant consequences for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In the Spending Review the government has announced large and wide-ranging reductions in public expenditure. For HE in England, it is proposed to reduce the funding to HEFCE by 40% in real terms over four years. This covers funding for teaching ('T- funding') and for student financial support. T- funding itself is likely to be reduced by a much higher percentage. The funding for research will be level in cash terms, which is estimated to be a reduction of about 9% in real terms. This includes funding for the Research Councils (which is not devolved) and HEIF (the HE Innovation Fund) and QR in England.

The overall reductions in public expenditure will lead to a reduction in the block grant to Wales through the Barnett formula. This is estimated as 7.6% in real terms over the period of four years in revenue and 41% in capital. It will be a decision for the Welsh Assembly Government on how to distribute the available resource between departments and between expenditure lines within departments. The reduction is relatively low because the Barnett formula is driven in large part by expenditure on Health and Schools, both protected areas in England. They will also be protected in Wales, though the WAG is not obliged to replicate the reductions in HE funding in England in the same way.

The WAG draft budget is expected to be published in mid November and debated later in the month. The final budget is expected in February 2011.

The reduction in QR in England is not yet known, but it is expected that it will lead to significantly greater concentration of research support. It is already clear that there will be increased concentration in Wales also, given the consultation of HEFCW on the funding formula. It is likely that only research of international excellence will be supported, and only in units of assessment which are large enough. The key to maintaining success in Research Council grant capture is that success in attracting research grants will be forthcoming only if the work is of the highest quality, has impact and lies within the priorities of the relevant Council.

In relation to teaching, the Browne review (as opposed to the Spending Review) envisages a reduction in T funding in England of perhaps up to 80%. It recommends a fundamental shift from public to private sources of finance for HE. If the report is accepted by government, subjects in the Arts, Humanities and the Social Sciences will receive no support for teaching from HEFCE, while laboratory based subjects will only receive a 'top up'. However Browne proposes that the cap on graduate contributions is removed completely, but – importantly – universities retain a diminishing proportion of the resource above £6000 per annum, the remainder contributing to student financial support. In order to recover the totality of the funding lost in the Spending Review, the graduate contribution will have to be between £7000 and £8000 on average across the sector. The philosophy is one of a market driven system.

The response of the Westminster government to the recommendations of the Browne report is not yet known. The issues seem to be whether there will be a cap, or whether there will be a range above which the graduate contribution cannot go. An announcement is expected very soon.

The Welsh Assembly Government will have to decide where on the spectrum of public/private support it wishes to be – and of course what is affordable. The important point for us is that the total resource for HEI in Wales should be comparable with that available in England, otherwise the quality of our provision and the student experience will decline in comparative terms. A significantly different regime in Wales to that adopted in England would of course cause problems in relation to the extensive cross border flow of students (in both directions). The Browne review envisages financial support for part time students who are above a threshold of one third full time equivalent. Timing is obviously a serious issue. The Westminster government is likely to take its proposals on graduate contributions through parliament before Christmas so that universities can give information in prospectuses for entry in 2012 (for Academic Year 2012/2013). This could be an issue for Wales.

The Browne review enunciates a number of principles:

- More investment should be available for HE
- Student choice should be increased
- Everyone who has the potential should be able to benefit from HE
- No one should have to pay until they start work
- When payments are made they should be affordable
- Part time students should be treated the same as full time students for the costs of learning.

The proposals for graduate contribution are that there are no 'upfront' charges, so that students do not pay for the cost of learning, but graduates do. The contribution will be related to the ability to pay, with a threshold of a salary of £21,000 per annum, to be indexed by salary inflation (not RPI or CPI); there will be a real rate of interest, equivalent to cost of borrowing for the government (estimated at around 2 to 3% above inflation); interest does not accrue if earnings fall below the threshold level in any year; and repayment will be written off after a period of 30 years. The Institute of Fiscal Studies calculate that the average student will contribute about just over £20,000 during their working lives, that around one third will pay less than at present and only about 30% of graduates will pay back the full amount of their loans. There is a strengthened set of proposals for student financial support, with emphasis on a simplified structure, higher levels of means tested

maintenance grant and the provision of clear information. The importance of transparent and clear information is a recurring theme in the report, as is the emphasis on quality and the relationship between the quality of provision and of the student experience and the success of HEI in the market. A device is proposed which allows the total number of students to be capped while removing the cap for individual institutions. The report also envisages the growth of private providers of Higher Education. There is little if anything in the report about the devolved administrations, and there is a proposal to merge HEFCE, OFFA (the Office for Fair Access), QAA and the OIA (the Office of the Independent Adjudicator). The first two bodies are England only, the QAA is UK wide and the OIA is an England and Wales body. It seems unlikely that this recommendation will be accepted.

It is clear that we are entering a new era in the financing of HE in England, and inevitably to an extent in Wales, depending on the decisions taken by the Welsh Assembly Government. Institutions will have to demonstrate high quality provision and respond to market pressures in order to succeed. As far as Aberystwyth is concerned, our outstanding success in student recruitment and student satisfaction, in particular, the National Student Survey, will be extremely valuable in this new era, and the financial stringency which is inevitable means that the Sustainability Improvement Programme is even more important than when it was launched. International competitiveness will be a cornerstone of institutions that will be successful and collaboration which is focused and for a well defined objective will also be more important.

2. Institutional Review

The University will be subject to an intensive Institutional Review undertaken by QAA in 2011-12. The process will culminate in a week long visit by a team of external assessors (including one student-nominated representative) beginning on 30 April 2012.

The outcome of the review will be a published report with

Judgements on

- confidence in the management of academic standards of our awards;
- confidence in the management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Comments on

- standards and quality of PGR programmes;
- our approach to the enhancement of the quality of our educational provision;
- the accuracy and completeness of the public information we publish about the quality and standards of our awards.

QAA has already signalled the following issues arising from our Mid-Cycle review in 2009:

- The development of AU's International Strategy and collaborative provision arrangements;
- The enhancement of the student experience;
- The management of QA, jointly with Bangor, for the ITT Centre for North and Mid-Wales;
- The development and impact of strategic alliances;
- The impact of, and the monitoring of the development of, IBERS.

The report will be forwarded to HEFCW in its role as partner in the review process as part of its responsibilities for accountability for public expenditure.

Academic Affairs Committee has established a Working Party under the Chairmanship of Professor Martin Jones to prepare AU's submission to QAA in accordance with the published guidelines for Wales (note: these remain subject to modification in the light of changes to the QAA methodology for England). These cover an extensive range of issues including our academic management framework, programme and departmental reviews, external examining, collaborative links, student representation, learning resources, student support, staff appointment and appraisal, enhancement of learning and teaching and arrangements for research postgraduates.

3. The REF research monitoring process 2009-11

A Deans' Task Group (DTG), chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Aled Jones, was established in August 2009 to restart the research monitoring process after RAE 2008. Its remit was to initiate a continuous process whereby the Deans, in liaison with the Research Support Office and with appropriate Registry support, would meet at regular intervals with Heads of Academic Departments and Directors of Research.

The first two rounds focused on Departmental research strategies, annual action plans and the internal preparations for the REF. The third round paid closer attention to the number and quality of research outputs and applications for research income. Other issues, such as research students and the wider research environment, were considered where appropriate.

In preparation for each monitoring meeting, Departments had been asked to update their lists of research outputs held on the Research Activity Database and to identify from those lists its prospective four REF items and up to four reserve items per research active member of staff. Departments had also been asked to grade the items according to the prospective REF quality levels, where possible.

Issues to be considered in future monitoring rounds will include impact case-study preparation, research environment, mentoring and Early Career Researchers development procedures, and the ways in which the resources of the University as a whole can best be mobilised to improve research activity and quality.

The resulting twice-yearly reports by the Deans on the research progress of each Department are embedded in the Annual Planning Rounds, chaired by the VC.

The first Deans' report was conveyed to Senior Management in the early spring of 2009, ahead of the 2009/10 Planning Round. The second was discussed at a meeting of the Deans' Task Group on 22 September, and presented to the Vice-Chancellor the following week.

The third round of monitoring will start in November 2010, with meetings with Departments in January 2011, and a monitoring report to be circulated to Senior Management ahead of the Planning Round in March 2011.

The new post of Head of the Research Support Office (RSO) was appointed in August 2010, and has been co-opted to the DTG to advise on the support resources of the RSO and to undertake the

administration of the AU REF submission. The RSO also engages with academic staff directly via the Research Forums, meetings of Departmental Directors of Research, the Research Advisory Network and the publication of *Aber Research*. Monitoring and support issues are reviewed by the Research Committee, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research.

4. Information Services

Effective provision of Information Services is an important contribution to the university's work. Members of Council may be interested in recent developments.

The major success has been the realignment of IS services and staff, so that:

- IS works more effectively and efficiently
- Individuals and teams who complement each other in the services delivered should be closer together, so that they work together more effectively.

One of the most visible changes is the restructured physical space on the ground floor where IT and Library help have been brought together into a single team. Behind this there is simplified access to help for email and telephone support for Information Services, so that there is now only one help phone number and one help email address for users to remember.

Freshers Registration 2010 – was very successful, with maximum queue times of ten minutes (an improvement on 40 mins in 2009 and 1-2 hours in 2008). This was a result of a cohesive approach which tested the new integrated “Customer services” team. The main activities included:

- Setting up and managing pre-arrival communications with new students, enabling and supporting online computing/email activations and setup to hall computing networks for all new students
- Giving new students access to register their IS accounts, upload photos, access their web record and complete accommodation induction before arriving in Aber
- Innovative library induction sessions with feedback showing high levels of satisfaction

Other improvements /key areas of work include:

- The student web record has been completely redeveloped and now includes student timetable, attendance monitoring and on-line registration processes
- Public workstations have been upgraded to Windows 7 – Aberystwyth is ahead of any University in Wales.
- The Lecture Capture system has been upgraded to integrate with the new Blackboard “Aberlearn”
- Greening ICT - power management has been implemented on public workstations to potentially save c.£35k per annum (see <http://power.aber.ac.uk/paws/>)
- The Printing service has been upgraded and is significantly more stable
- C22 has been refurbished to include state of the art teaching & learning technology for Aber/Bangor partnership project, particularly in relation to the I.T.T. development.
- Arranged reciprocal library access with Bangor University

- UKRR (UK Research Reserve) have been freed up: through active collection management over 400 metres of shelving space.
- The Primo resource discovery tool has been implemented in 2 months and is now being beta tested with students.
- The Gogerddan library book stock (c7000 items) has been relocated to the Thomas Parry and Hugh Owen libraries as appropriate.

NGL

October 2010



Report to Council

December 2010

In my report I will concentrate on the developments that have taken place since the meeting of Council in November. At that time we knew about the overall reductions in public expenditure in the UK and the effect on the block grant to Wales.

In terms of the research budget, which is not devolved, the settlement for the Research Councils has still not been announced though the research budget in general terms will be constant in cash terms over the next four years.

We do however know proposals in the Assembly Governments draft budget. The final budget will be announced towards the end of January. If the draft budget is eventually confirmed the allocation of funding to HEFCW will be about 9% lower in cash terms in Financial Year 2011/12 than in the current Financial Year. This will impact on the current Academic Year (AY) and overall HEFCW's revenue budget will be about £15m less in the current AY than expected. This will in all likelihood lead to some in year reductions in the recurrent grant for institutions. In addition the resources available for distribution for AY 2011/12 will be less by a further £27m compared with AY 2010/11 giving a total of about £42m less than the current level for this AY. This is calculated on the basis of the indicative budgets provided for Financial Year 2012/13. The indicative allocations given in the budget statement for Financial Years 2012/13 and 2013/14 are subject to change.

The Westminster Government's response to the proposals in the Browne Review was to enable institutions in England to require a graduate contribution of between £6,000 and £9,000 per annum for undergraduate courses. It was stated that the higher levels would be in exceptional circumstances and that institutions with higher graduate contributions would be expected to contribute to a National Scholarship Framework. The mechanisms for repayment were as advocated in Browne and as described in my report to the November Council except that the real rate of interest, broadly equivalent to the cost of borrowing for the Government, tapers from 0 at the salary threshold of £21,000 per annum to around 3% at £42,000 per annum.

The Minister for Education in Wales has now made an announcement on the proposals for Welsh Higher Education Institutions should the Westminster Government proposals be approved in Parliament on 9 December. I attach a copy of the Minister's statement. The basic graduate contribution in Wales will increase to £6,000 per annum from AY 2012/13 and that HEI's would be able to recover up to £9,000 per annum provided that they can demonstrate a commitment to widening access and other strategic objectives through fee plans approved by HEFCW in line with its corporate strategy. There will remain a cap on the number of publicly funded places in Wales.

However, the Welsh Assembly Government will also provide a non means tested tuition fee waiver for the balance of the graduate contribution above current levels. This grant will be payable to Welsh domiciled students no matter where they study in the UK.

The Minister also states that the income for Welsh Higher Education Institutions will be at least the same in real terms in 2016/17 as it will be in 2012/13 and that the cost will be covered by a reduction in the recurrent grant to HEFCW of 35%.

The ability to attract the higher levels of graduate contribution will depend on institutions satisfying the conditions contained in the Corporate Strategy of the Funding Council. One of these relates to the size and shape of the sector. There is considerable emphasis on collaboration and reconfiguration in the Minister's announcement and subsequent public statements. Collaboration is an important part of our activity. We are involved in a range of collaborative projects involving a number of other universities. Some are pan Wales, and these include a number of projects on which I have reported previously: Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences; Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods; Climate Change Consortium of Wales (C3W); The Wales Institute of Crime and Social Justice; High Performance Computing Wales; 'Astute' – advanced sustainable manufacturing technologies; Low Carbon Research Institute; Seacams' – marine science projects; 'Beacon' – biorenewables; KESS – knowledge economy skills scholarships for postgraduates working with SMEs; Access to Masters – support for taught Masters with links to SMEs; Software Alliance Wales – pan Wales ICT support for businesses.

Others are bilateral, and in this context our Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor is an important aspect. We are working closely with colleagues in Bangor to widen and deepen the nature of this partnership.

The reality, of course, is that the landscape for Higher Education Institutions in Wales has already changed and is still changing. We have seen mergers and collaborations. In particular IBERS was recently formed as a result of a merger, and in previous years the Department for Information Studies and what was then the Institute of Rural Sciences were both formed from mergers. We are developing good links with Further Education Colleges in our region and in October the Principal of Coleg Ceredigion and I signed an extension of our Memorandum of Understanding which underlines the commitment of both institutions to fulfil the responsibilities to learners and to the educational, social and economic development of Ceredigion. Last week the North and Mid Wales Regional Partnership submitted its strategy to the Funding Council. The strategy, named CADARN (Collaborating and Developing across Regional Networks), is a robust approach to regional partnership, provision, policy and progression for learners. I am pleased to report on the huge amount of work that went into completing this strategy and the excellent relationship between the partners.

My philosophy of collaboration is that it must be for a clearly defined objective, that it must be of benefit to all parties (all parties bring something to the table and derive some benefit) and that it is both sustainable and strategic. Collaborative activities must have the support of Vice-Chancellors and be driven by those involved in departments (that is, they must be “top down and bottom up”). It is essential to generate effectiveness in order to assemble the range of expertise required to address significant problems. It is not a matter of size but of the collection of expertise one has available. Such projects require organisation (a “organising centre”) and must have well defined measurable outcomes.

In relation to the size and shape of the sector, one of the Funding Council’s targets in the corporate strategy is that three quarters of the institutions in Wales should have a turnover above the median of UK institutions. In 2008/09 the median was £111.6m and our turnover was £110.4m. In 2009/10 our turnover had increased to £120m per annum.

Our responses to the obvious pressures deriving from the overall financial situation and in terms of the requirement to respond to the Funding Council’s corporate strategy are key elements in our

future. I am convinced that Aberystwyth University is in as good a place as most institutions to respond particularly noting the successes that we have had over the last few years, firstly in the RAE but particularly in relation to student recruitment and student satisfaction.

Professor Noel Lloyd

December 2010

REPORT TO COUNCIL, MARCH 2011

Funding Issues

1. Higher Education continues to be in a period of rapid change and very considerable uncertainty. In response to the reductions in public expenditure the effect on universities in Wales has been an in-year 4% reduction in recurrent grant for Academic Year (AY) 2010/11, while the Funding Council's 'headline steers' for AY 2011/12 indicate an overall reduction of 4.2% in that year. There will be no allocation for new capital projects in 2011/12. A 'cap' on the recruitment of full time Home/EU undergraduates will be in place for the first time.
2. We expect information about each institution's recurrent grant to be available at the end of the month. The 4% reduction will be across the board, and the effect of the two together will of course be a reduction in base line of around 8%. For 2011/12 research funding (QR) is maintained in cash terms and becomes more selective. There will be no funding for 2* outputs as measured by the RAE, and 4* will be three times as valuable as 3*. There will also be a volume threshold under which no QR will be available to Units of Assessment without a defined level of 3* or 4* activity. As for funding for teaching, a number of elements, including part time provision and widening access, have been increased, and as a result of all these decisions the unit of resource for teaching will be reduced by 8.5%.
3. In addition there is a 'top-slice' of 5% for funding the regionalisation proposals. Details are seen in PARC minutes, but there are four strands: new provision, redistribution, Foundation Degrees and Regional Initiative Fund. Of these, new Foundation Degree provision and the Regional Initiative Fund funded from other sources. We are unlikely to recover the 5% that we have lost but there is a chance that a proportion of this (perhaps a half) will be recovered, but for that we may of course have to enter into new commitments.
4. The Estates strategy continues to be taken forward and significant progress has been made recently. The 'topping out' ceremony for the IBERS building in Penglais took place on March 21, and work has started on the Gogerddan building. I am delighted to report that the Penglais building won a UUK wide award for BREAM excellence in design. IBERS will move from Llanbadarn in the autumn, and we are now considering the future location of our other activities in Llanbadarn. Following the publication of the Local Development Plan we have now placed a notice in the European Journal to take forward the plans to build student residences on Penglais farm, next to Pentre Jane Morgan. Other aspects of the Estates Strategy are beginning to fall into place.

Remit Letter

5. The remit letter from the Assembly Government to HEFCW has now been received, and a copy is attached to this report. There continues to be emphasis on collaboration and reconfiguration of the sector. Four themes are noted in paragraph 14 of the letter: regionalisation, the front line services review, the governance review, and quality and standards. The regionalisation proposals have been formulated by ourselves and our partners in the North and Mid Wales Region under the leadership of Professor Martin Jones,

and this has seen very effective partnership working, and a good atmosphere. HEW is taking forward an important initiative in relation to shared services and identifying the significant efficiencies which the sector has delivered over recent years. We are fully on board with the requirement to deliver overall savings and to ensure that delivery of core functions is protected.

6. Standards and quality are at the heart of our work, and I do say more about this later in the report. In the remit letter there is emphasis on the importance of the student voice - an emphasis which also occurs in QAA and in the new audit method (see below). The overall student experience, encompassing academic provision and facilities, must continue to be of the highest importance in AU. We must continue to ensure that our portfolio of courses is attractive, and that facilities are appropriate. I am pleased to confirm that applications for entry in 2011/12 are again significantly higher than last year, and that the increase is much higher than that in the sector as a whole.
7. The importance of research is also highlighted in the remit letter, with emphases on international excellence and on industry led research.
8. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has now been established. The board of directors has been appointed, and the work of the Coleg is starting. We look forward to participating fully in it and are making arrangements to ensure that there is effective interface between AU and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Strategic Issues

9. There will be large-scale changes in 2012/13 – indeed the landscape is likely to be very different. By 2015, universities in England will be funded for teaching almost entirely through graduate contributions rather than through the Funding Council. In Wales the position will be somewhat different. Regulations have now been approved by the Assembly which will enable universities to charge a graduate contribution of up to £9000 per annum (for Home/EU full time undergraduates). The basic charge will be £4000 in the sense that if an institution charges above this for any course, a fee plan will be required. Guidance from the Assembly Government to the HEFCW is expected soon; the regulations themselves refer to widening participation and the support of strategic objectives in general. The Minister has noted that ‘setting the basic rate amount at £4000 does not mean that the tuition fees of Welsh institutions will be lower than those in England’. He also stated that retention is as important as widening participation in the first instance, an emphasis which I welcome.
10. The Assembly Government is committed to covering the difference between the current level of graduate contribution and the future level for all students from wherever they study in the UK and for EU students studying in Wales. It is stated that the grant in aid to HEFCW will be maintained at 2012/2013 levels. What is left after fulfilling the commitment to fee support will be called the Public Investment Fund, and will be allocated in support of the range of strategic objectives established by WAG and HEFCW. As I have said, fee plans will be required, and the key elements will be the detail of the guidance on what must be included and, of course, the total funding available for distribution after the required

funding for part time provision is subtracted. We are told that the fee plans will build on the current voluntary arrangements so as to minimise the administrative burden on institutions.

11. We expect guidance from HEFCW on fee plans in early April, with responses in May. Council will need to establish a mechanism to formulate our plans, including the level of graduate contribution.
12. We continue to develop the partnership with Bangor University. As I have said on previous occasions, collaboration in order to be effective must be focused and have well defined objectives, it must benefit all partners and all partners must bring something to the partnership. It must be sustainable and must have been agreed at all levels. We are entering into a phase of detailed discussion with Bangor on extending the scope and depth of the partnership. In particular, depth of the partnership. In addition to the Research and Enterprise Partnership, our current collaboration includes the North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education, the Aber-Bangor Skills Centre, CADARN (the regional strategy), the merging of the Mid/West Wales and North Wales Reaching Wider Partnerships, and work on shared services.

The Partnership Strategy Board, formed to take the partnership forward agreed to submit a joint Learning and Teaching Strategy to HEFCW, and work is proceeding on its preparation. It will also scope the mechanism for joint academic planning and will proceed with a joint structure to manage Enterprise activities. We have also agreed that the Partnership Office will continue after the end of the period of funding for the Research and Enterprise Partnership.

I also emphasise that our partnership is not exclusive, and we look for every opportunity to work with others provided these conditions are satisfied.

13. The report of the Review of Governance chaired by Mr John McCormick was published on 22 March. The report is wide-ranging and we will analyse it carefully in relation to ensuring that governance in AU is as good and robust as possible. A copy has been circulated with the papers. One new proposal is the remodelling of HEFCW to be a new body, with a Chief Executive and Chair, but with six representatives of institutions, other specific representatives and a smaller number of independent members. It remains to be worked out how such a body would discharge its 'regulatory' responsibilities.

Institutional Review and REF

14. Two of the most important issues for Aberystwyth are the outcomes of the Institutional Review by QAA in the spring of 2012 and in the REF, submissions for which will be made late in 2013. Both are critically important for the future of the institution. The Academic Affairs Committee, chaired by Professor Martin Jones, is very much aware of the importance of IR and preparations are well under way. There are imminent changes to the system in England which may have some influence on the expectations of reviewers. QAA has emphasised the role of students at every stage of the process.
15. The Student Experience encompasses academic provision, facilities and student support. Ms Rebecca Davies, whose portfolio as Pro Vice-Chancellor includes Student and Staff Services,

is reviewing student support in general, and the services provided in particular, and in collaboration with the Guild and relevant staff. Internal metrics and external benchmarking will be combined with consultation with students and staff. One objective is to enhance integration of the service so as to ensure ready access for students to the services which they need.

In terms of accommodation we do of course guarantee a place in university managed accommodation for first year students and those in a number of other categories. In order to assist returning students we have put in place an Action Plan, drafted in consultation with the Guild. There are two work streams, one focusing on the student experience and including a range of 'stakeholders', and the other focused on processes and procedures to implement changes and monitor progress. The number of returning students seeking accommodation for next year is about the same as at the equivalent time year ago.

16. As for the REF, the Research Committee, chaired by Professor Aled Jones has established a 'task group' involving the Deans, and this is monitoring the preparations within departments very closely. I am meeting with the group regularly and, following the detailed discussions which they have had with departments, Professor Jones and I are meeting with some departments. I cannot overemphasise the importance of a successful REF for the future position of the university. The impact of research will be a significant consideration, carrying 20% of the weight of assessment, but the primary driver will again be the quality of outputs. We have to be sure that units of assessment are aware of their competitive position and the relative quality of the research which is being undertaken. The likelihood is that there will be even greater concentration and selectivity. All members of staff have been asked for four outputs that are already secured, and the Deans have used a traffic light system to conclude where further support is required. Such support should be focused where there is a realistic chance of ensuring outputs of at least 3* quality. Individual submissions should be broadly 3* in terms of likely assessment of quality. External advice will be taken where appropriate, and that is already happening in a number of departments.
17. I should also like to report on the announcement on 22 March of the partnership between HPC Wales (High Performance Computing Wales) and Fujitsu. This project has huge potential for universities in Wales and their impact in relation to economic development. The event in Cardiff was very positive, with strong political support. We look forward to developing the partnership, which encompasses leading edge technology, training and outreach.
18. I have been asked to draw Council's attention to a scheme (the Queen Elizabeth II Field Initiative) by which we are asked to consider placing a covenant on the use of playing fields. It is unlikely that we can make such a commitment in perpetuity.

NGL

REPORT TO COUNCIL, JUNE 2011

1 Funding

The dominant issue over the last three months has been funding. First, the effects of the reductions in public expenditure, coupled with the top-slicing in support of the regionalisation agenda, led to a reduction in the baseline of HEFCW recurrent grant for Aberystwyth University of about 10% in cash terms for 2011/12 as compared with 2010/11. In the report from Finance & General Purposes Committee it will be seen that for this year (ending 31st July 2011) the University will in all likelihood report a surplus of around £2m. However, the “first cut” of the budget for next year indicated a deficit of something of the order of £3.5m. We have looked at the expenditure of each Department and Section very carefully - and indeed the income streams available to us. We have sought to protect the delivery of courses and the student experience in revising the budget, and the latest estimate is a deficit of between £0.5m and £1m. It remains work in progress and I am hopeful that we will be close to break even. We should of course be aiming for a surplus but it is unlikely that any institution in the present circumstances will be able to deliver a significant surplus next year. We have sought to manage the changes required carefully and smoothly.

The other aspect, of course, has been the question of Home/EU undergraduate “fees”. Council agreed to the charge in Aberystwyth should be £9,000 per annum for the intake in 2012/13, and we were the first in Wales to announce our position. The Fee Plan was submitted to the Funding Council by the end of May and, as had been made clear, a process of iteration is now taking place. The initial response of HEFCW was constructive, asking for clarification of some areas and greater details on some of the targets. The revised Fee Plan will be a separate item on the agenda of Council. There remains considerable uncertainty about the funding mechanism and available funding in the years after 2012/13. It will be important to convey information to prospective students and those advising them, including the fact that Welsh Government policy is that for students ordinarily resident in Wales, the difference in fee between the current and future levels is covered by the government.

On a different note, the Estates Strategy is progressing, and the different elements are falling into place. The two new buildings for IBERS will soon be complete, Penbryn 5 will be available in September for the Department of Psychology and the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, as will be the new student residences in Cwrt Mawrt. In the slightly longer term, work is intensifying in preparation for the new Penglais Farm Residences, as described in the minutes of F&GP.

2 Institutional Review and REF

I have consistently mentioned the importance of Institutional Review (IR) for the University. This is the review by the Quality Assurance Agency and takes place next spring. I am confident that preparations are proceeding well and we are generally compliant with the requirements. We have to make sure that we demonstrate clearly that we are doing what is required in relation to Quality Assurance - IR is as much about demonstration and process as it is about delivery; we cannot 'cut corners'.

The other significant factor going forward is the Research Excellence Framework (REF). It is essential for the institution to improve its research ratings. The last RAE was the best we have had and was creditable, but it is important that we improve our standing in relation to the quality of our outputs and research environment. As important is the enhancement of grant capture, with particular emphasis on the Research Councils but including the wide-range of funders. Some Departments do extremely well, and I congratulate them. While it is acknowledged that the opportunities and, indeed, the need, for external grant income varies between disciplines, we do need to redouble our efforts. Coupled with these requirements, we must also improve upon our recruitment of Postgraduate research students. This is one of the areas of which we have been very conscious for sometime and was reinforced by the SIP Report.

3 Collaboration and Partnership

One of the important threads of the last few years has been the importance of establishing partnerships with other institutions. We are involved in a whole range of collaborative activities; in research, some of which are funded through the Reconfiguration & Collaboration Fund, some from European sources. However, there remains considerable emphasis in Wales on reconfiguring the sector. In the context of the requirement to enhance competitiveness internationally, we established the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor University five years ago and that has been very successful. Of particular note is the decision by the two universities to submit a joint Learning and Teaching and Widening Access strategy.

I have on numerous occasions emphasised that partnership working must be for a clearly defined set of objectives, has to be well focused, must be of benefit to the partners and all partners must contribute to it. In addition, there must be a commitment from the leadership of the Institutions and from members of staff at all levels. It is noteworthy that Professor Hughes, when he came to Bangor, remarked several times on the goodwill and enthusiasm for partnership working with Aberystwyth that he found when visiting departments in Bangor.

The Partnership has now developed into a Strategic Alliance and the proposed developments cover a whole range of activity. I attach to this report the minutes of the last two meetings of the Joint Strategy Board. Some weeks ago, Professor John Hughes and I wrote a joint letter to the Funding Council, and since then Professor Hughes and I have had a meeting with the Chief Executive of HEFCW in which we took forward a number of ideas and explained our approach in more detail.

I should like to remark on the commitment to share Strategic Planning objectives, to report to the two Governing Bodies, and to seek ways in which members of the Governing Bodies themselves can participate in the Strategic Alliance going forward.

4 Concluding comments

This is the last report that I will submit to Council as Vice-Chancellor. It has been a great privilege to lead Aberystwyth University over the last seven years. I am deeply grateful for all the support I have received. I believe that the University is in a good position to face the continuing challenges of the future - the next few years will continue to be a period of some turmoil in HE across the United Kingdom.

The risk factors will, without doubt, include the response of potential students to the new funding regime and the effect of policies in Wales and England, which are likely to be increasingly divergent, on the competitiveness of the institution and on such issues as cross-border flow. As I have indicated earlier, the research profile of the University, including that of research students, must be enhanced while at the same time maintaining the high levels of student satisfaction. The radical change in patterns of student recruitment to Aberystwyth have been dramatic and the University must continue to ensure that its provision is the highest quality and marketed effectively.

I extend to my successor, Professor April McMahon, my very best wishes for the future.

NGL

June 2011

Vice Chancellor's Report to Council, 09/11/11

Congratulations

I am sure members of Council will wish to join me in congratulating the following:

- Dr Elena Korosteleva, Senior Lecturer in the Department of International Politics and Director of the Centre for European Studies, has been awarded a prestigious Jean Monnet Chair for European Integration Studies.
- Two of our former students have won prizes at the National Eisteddfod: Daniel Davies was awarded the Daniel Owen Memorial Prize, while Manon Rhys was awarded the Prose Medal.
- Dr Heike Roms from the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies has won the inaugural David Bradby TaPRA Award for Research in International Theatre and Performance, for an AHRC-funded online resource which locates the early history of performance art in Wales between 1965 and 1979.
- Zoology graduate Victoria Franks, the Science Engineering and Technology Awards (Europe) Biology Student of the Year for 2011, and her supervisor, Dr Rupert Marshall from IBERS.
- Daniel Ladnar, PhD student in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, has won the prestigious Performing Science - Giessen Award for Scholarly Presentation and Lecture Performance 2011. This honours innovative forms of knowledge presentation in any academic discipline.

Engagements and events

I am proud to say that my first two public engagements since taking up my role as Vice Chancellor on 1 August 2011 involved addressing Welsh learners at our Summer School and speaking at the Eisteddfod. I was delighted by the warmth of the welcome on both occasions. I also spoke, alongside the President and the First Minister, at a well-attended event for alumni (especially those recently elected as AMs) at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff on 4 October. I was very pleased to play a part in the 'Bar Kicks Back' alumni weekend at the beginning of October, and the more recent visit of the Development Advisory Board to Aberystwyth. With Senior Team colleagues, I have also met local partners in HE and FE, from Coleg Ceredigion, Coleg Powys, Deeside College, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and Bangor University, as well as attending the HEW/CHEW/HEFCW meeting and Strategic Dialogue last month in Cardiff.

Staff Meetings

Since my arrival on 1 August, we have held 9 open meetings for staff at which I have been able to share some initial ideas about the future direction of Aberystwyth University, and start a conversation with colleagues. More than 800 colleagues chose to attend, and we have had very positive feedback - and some very good questions! I would like to ask Council to join me in thanking all those colleagues who worked so hard to make these meetings happen so smoothly, and who

have also provided us with a good template for future engagement events. Their names are noted on the attached appendix. I have also visited about half the departments (both academic and support) in the University, and am working my way round the others. This is a tremendously enjoyable way of finding out more about the contributions of colleagues to research, teaching and the student experience. In addition, I have given talks to all staff in Information Services, and to the Research Café run by the Research Office; and with help from Lyn Morgan, we have recorded short web interviews for staff and for students.

Working with the Guild of Students

We have been developing new ways of working with this year's sabbatical officers from the Guild of Students, and the Senior Management Team has been meeting all five sabbaticals monthly to discuss issues of mutual concern. This ensures that the student view is reflected in everything we do as a senior team, and that there are regular opportunities to consult student representatives, rather than special meetings set up when we have a particular consultation to respond to, for instance. Paraphrasing the Westminster White Paper, we are aiming to put students at the heart of the system. My own impression is that this is leading to fuller, franker and much more constructive discussion, and that we have been able to move forward faster on a range of issues – as well as incorporating valuable student insights into, for example, our approach to accommodation in the run-up to Freshers' Weekend. We are by no means always going to agree on everything, and it is vital for the Guild that they remain independent; but these regular meetings are making it much easier and more natural to understand and reflect the learner voice.

UK/US Higher Education Forum

I attended a high-level event on 19-21 October at Windsor Castle to take forward plans for funding for trilateral research and joint programme collaborations involving the UK, US and other countries. Planning is still under way, but there is encouraging support from the Westminster and Washington governments, and we were addressed by David Willetts, and by Under-Secretary Martha Kanter. About 15 VCs or other senior representatives were invited from each of the UK and the US, and (leaving aside heads of mission groups), I was the only VC from a university outside the Russell and 1994 Groups. Apart from being involved with planning for future funding, I have come back with some extremely interesting options for international partnerships in North America, our next major area of focus in the internationalisation strategy. I am now working on these opportunities with Aled Jones.

Visits

Over the summer we have signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding with visiting delegations, mainly from China. I am delighted to report that we are hosting an extremely high-profile delegation at the end of October from Xiamen University, which is in the top 20 of 2236 Universities in the Chinese League Tables. The delegation includes the President of Xiamen

University, Professor Chongshi Zhu, who has a status equal to that of a Vice-Minister in the Central Government's Education Department of China, and therefore has considerable influence nationally as well as in Xiamen itself. It is exceptionally important in the current climate for HE that we do all we can to recruit excellent international students, both undergraduates and postgraduates, and that we establish and develop strong partnerships. With this in mind, we are reviewing the International Office during November. On 13 October, we also welcomed HRH Earl of Wessex to the University. His visit formed part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards celebrations held at the MedRus Conference Centre. During his visit, he met with senior members of the University and discussed how the institution is meeting the requirements of future generations of students and staff by providing high quality learning, teaching and research space – all of which contribute to the excellent student experience at Aberystwyth.

Reviews

It became clear to me on my appointment (and indeed in some cases, prior to my arrival) that there were several areas of activity which would benefit from a review, often with external involvement. We have to date completed reviews of the Estates Office (chaired by Glyn Rowlands, with Rebecca Davies PVC) and the Farms (chaired by Wynne Jones, with Martin Jones PVC). We will be pursuing reviews of the International Office (see above, with Shaun Curtis from Exeter and Aled Jones PVC), and of Academic Promotions (chaired by Barbara Bush, Director of HR at the LSE, with Sue Chambers, our own Director of HR). A number of issues have arisen from the Estates Review in particular which have led to ongoing investigations. I will update Council at the meeting.

HEAR

Aberystwyth was a first-stage pilot University for the Higher Education Achievement Report, intended to provide a more comprehensive record of students' curricular and non-curricular attainment, and I was very pleased therefore to be invited to join the Implementation Strategy Board for HEAR, chaired by Sir Robert Burgess, VC of Leicester. It is important for Aberystwyth to be represented on groups involved with teaching as well as research innovation.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

I am very pleased to announce that we have appointed six new Welsh-medium lecturers, under the sponsorship of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. They are Sara Penrhyn Jones (Theatre, Film and Television Studies); Huw Williams (International Politics); Rhun Emlyn (History and Welsh History); Huw Morgan (Institute of Mathematics and Physics); Rhys Dafydd Jones (Institute of Geography and Earth Science); and Hefin Williams (Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences, IBERS). I am sure members of Council will wish to welcome them warmly to the University.

University of Wales

Along with the other 4 VCs of the St David's Day Group universities, I signed a statement calling for the removal of the 'University of Wales' name, noting that 'The changes announced... by the University of Wales represent a fundamental change to the University's mission and the institution now needs a new title which reflects this considerably changed role'. We were very clear that this statement was issued in sorrow more than in anger, but that it was no longer possible to accept the confusion which the UoW title was creating among prospective students, partners and funders, especially outside the UK. Council will be aware of subsequent events. We are currently taking advice on our options in terms of those students who are currently studying at Aberystwyth but registered for a UoW degree.

New student accommodation

On 20 September, I opened the new £3m Rosser G accommodation block in time for the start of the new academic year. The new accommodation on the Penglais campus provides en-suite accommodation for sixty postgraduate students along with six well-equipped kitchen/diner/TV lounge areas and an integral laundry room.

Public Lectures

Lyn Morgan, Natalie Roberts and I have been working on a more 'joined up' approach to public lectures. This will involve providing improved publicity for our key public lectures; ensuring we manage invitations better, and that we meet and greet our guests and take their details; an earlier start time; and some refreshments after the talk to allow the audience more time for a discussion with the speaker. We are inviting departments to put some of their annual lectures forward for inclusion in this programme, and while the new system will come into place fully for 2012/13, we will be piloting some of these revised arrangements this year. Watch this space!

Research in the News

IBERS

It's been a busy few months at IBERS:

Aquatic Biofuel

Findings of research into the viability of kelp as a biofuel for the future have been revealed.

Potential new therapeutic targets for Schistosomiasis

A significant discovery has been made that could pave the way for the development of a new drug treatment for one of the world's deadliest diseases-schistosomiasis.

Sweet success

The work of our plant breeders has been recognised with the presentation of the British Grassland Society Innovation Award for the development of high water soluble carbohydrate or what farmers know as 'high sugar'.

Africa harvest

According to the founder of the leading African agricultural development NGO, Africa Harvest, a centre of excellence in Wales has a vital role to play in transforming aid to developing countries in Africa. Dr Wambugu recently visited us and helped to launch the IBERS International Strategy for Development in the House of Commons.

Research news elsewhere too:**Glacier demise**

Dramatic images taken by Dr Alun Hubbard, a glaciologist at IGES, have revealed the extent to which the Petermann Glacier in Greenland has retreated. The 'detachment' that took place in August 2010 led to the formation of an ice island measuring over 200 square kilometres. Dr Hubbard believes that the cracks and rifts in what remains of the ice shelf means it is also likely to break up at some point in the near future.

Mobile Apps

Aberystwyth University hosted the UK's first conference for developers of apps for iPhones and iPads. iOS DEV UK was organised by Professor Chris Price from the Department of Computer Science, himself a developer of apps for Welsh learners.

History of disability

The Wellcome Trust has granted a research team almost £1m for a project which will bring together academics from Aberystwyth (Dr Stephen Thompson), Swansea, Strathclyde, and Northumbria Universities to explore the history of disability and industrialisation between 1780 and 1948.

April McMahon

28 October 2011

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council, 9/12/'11

Reconfiguration of the HE Sector in Wales: Ministerial Announcement

It was a very considerable pleasure to send Council members early notification of the Minister's statement in the Senedd on 29 November (the Minister's accompanying letter to me, and his statement, are included as annexes to this report). As you will all know, the Minister's previous announcement in July suggested that Aberystwyth and Bangor should strengthen our Strategic Alliance, but also formulate plans for merger. I am delighted that the more recent statement notes: 'I have accepted HEFCW's advice that Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities should substantially widen and deepen their existing strategic partnership. However, I do not expect this partnership to progress to a formal merger at this stage'.

Since my arrival in August, I have held and expressed the view that Aberystwyth has the capacity and energy to succeed as a sustainable, independent institution; and that we should be given the opportunity to demonstrate what we can deliver through the Strategic Alliance with Bangor, and through collaboration with other partners. At our Away Day in September, Council supported this stance, which formed the core of our response to the consultation on the Future of the Sector. The Minister's statement shows no shift in his general view that Wales needs fewer and stronger universities, and he does set out clear plans for reconfiguration. We must now take the opportunity to show that we can indeed progress, through our own plans and actions and in our developing relationship with Bangor. It is imperative that we continue to show commitment to this course and provide increasing evidence of its success.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the University Executive, who have stood with me and supported me in the representations we have been making, and to the Council for your encouragement and your confidence. Most particularly, I thank the Guild, whose intervention in writing their own response to the consultation sent a thoroughly positive and clear signal of student commitment to the future of Aberystwyth University.

Engagements and Events

- During November, I have attended a HEW Committee meeting and meetings with Leighton Andrews and with Angela Burns, the Conservative Shadow Minister for Education.
- I was very pleased to attend the Institute of Welsh Politics 12TH Annual Lecture on 14 November, and to welcome the lecturer, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister of Wales (it is always good to see our alumni, of course, but this was rather special). The First Minister's lecture was entitled 'Next Steps for Devolution: Politics Plus Finance'.
- To mark Global Entrepreneurship Week, the University ran a series of events open to students, graduates and staff from the 14th – 18th November 2011.
- Lifelong Learning and Welsh for Adults students and tutors were recently presented with awards in a special ceremony by the School of Education and Lifelong Learning. The

ceremony also celebrated the success of 25 students who had reached special milestones in their learning journey.

- Martin Jones and I attended an extremely interesting meeting with Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Powys on 11 November, to discuss future collaboration. We are also in the process of scheduling a further meeting with Deeside College. Council members should note that the Minister's statement also includes an exhortation to engage further and more fully with FE partners.
- Aled Jones and I met with Gary Davies, Director of European and External Affairs in the First Minister's Department, on 17 November. We were keen to discuss how we and the Welsh Government can provide mutual support for international engagement and coordinate visits to gain maximum benefit.
- We have held an evening event for international students holding scholarships and other awards. Over 40 students attended, along with colleagues from their departments.

Connectivity

One of our key priorities for the next 5 years is postgraduate recruitment – which means attracting students through developing attractive new interdisciplinary programmes. We held a successful Postgraduate Fair on 2 November, showcasing available programmes, funding and support. More recently, on 22 November and on the same day as a highly successful Business Lunch for alumni and other contacts, we launched the highly innovative new Masters programme in Connectivity. This pioneering programme is driven by the most transformative revolution of the 21st Century. The new one-year Masters provides a unique opportunity to study the ways in which the combined force of the internet, digital technology and multiple media and communications platforms are radically reshaping people's lives, communities and the architectures of economies, societies and cultures around the world.

The new programme is being led by Interpol, and draws on expertise in eight of our academic departments: Art, Computer Science, Information Studies, International Politics, Law and Criminology, SMB, Psychology, and TFTS. I think we might consider a small prize for the first new PGT programme with at least ten departments contributing.

Shaping our Future

Following from my open meetings with colleagues, and the (constructive, creative and very productive) fun Council had at our Away Day with wordles and other activities, we are now running a series of sessions aimed at gathering views and good ideas to feed into our new Strategic Plan. All members of staff and students have been invited to attend, and we have had tremendous help from a team of facilitators, all members of staff who have given up their time to attend planning meetings and to make sure everyone present has been encouraged to contribute. In true Connectivity style, participants are encouraged to send Tweets as they work, and there is a graffiti wall to collect contributions about our vision and our strengths. Particular thanks to Sarah Taylor, Alwena Hughes Moakes and Nerys Hywel who have been tirelessly supporting these events. I do believe this is very

good practice – and there is no question that it is improving interest in and engagement with our new Strategic Plan.

Membership of the University Alliance

There are at present four main mission groups for UK universities: the Russell Group; 1994 Group; University Alliance; and million+. Aberystwyth University joined the Alliance in early 2007, shortly after its formation, and is currently one of 23 members: these are Aberystwyth, Bournemouth, Bradford, Cardiff Metropolitan (previously UWIC), De Montfort, Glamorgan, Glasgow Caledonian, Hertfordshire, Huddersfield, Lincoln, Liverpool John Moores, Manchester Metropolitan, Northumbria, Nottingham Trent, Open, Oxford Brookes, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Salford, Sheffield Hallam, Teesside, University of Wales Newport, and West of England.

As is obvious from this list, the University Alliance is predominantly, though not uniquely, composed of post-1992 universities located in large metropolitan centres, with substantial percentages of mature and part-time students, and often primarily local student recruitment. They are typically 'enterprise universities', with considerable business involvement; and research, which is often applied, is frequently localised in particular areas or departments.

The time seems right to ask whether we are a good fit for the Alliance, either in terms of our current activity and priorities, or our future aspirations. If we are not, then our continued membership potentially sends out the wrong signals in terms of our own character and strategy, but also creates issues for the mission group, who will necessarily be trying to accommodate a non-central member in their campaigns.

If we were to consider leaving the Alliance, we would, in the first instance at least, become a non-aligned University. There are currently 47 institutions in this position; they are, as one might expect, a mixed bag, and range from very small single-disciplinary specialist institutions like the Royal Veterinary College, St George's, and the Royal College of Music; through a range of smaller and newer institutions like Winchester and Chichester; to larger and longer-established universities such as Aston and Brunel. In terms of comparator institutions for Aberystwyth, it is worth noting that Bangor, Swansea, Aberdeen, Dundee, Heriot-Watt, Stirling, Strathclyde, Cranfield, Kent, Hull and Ulster are all non-aligned (Cranfield and Kent are also relatively recent departures from the Alliance).

It is certainly true that membership of a mission group provides access to relevant updates on policy issues, and an avenue for accessing and potentially influencing government; though this is also available through UUK / HEW or by direct lobbying (and it is fair to say that, despite having several Welsh members, the focus of the Alliance tends to be very English). On the other hand, there are subscription fees, and at a time of reducing funding it is essential that we consider expenses carefully to assess whether they provide good value.

The University Executive Group would welcome Council's view on these matters. We have had a discussion with Heads of Department, and a discussion is scheduled with Senate; I will report further at the meeting.

Hywel Dda Health Board

On November 14, following several months of discussion with Hywel Dda Health Board, a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and Hywel Dda was signed by myself and Mr Trevor Purt (CEO, Hywel Dda). The MoU, initially for three years, identifies key areas for collaborative partnership between the two organisations:

- Continual Professional Development
- Shared Services
- Consultancy
- Visiting chairs
- Visiting arrangements for doctors in training
- Research
- Joint training programmes

There is also the possibility of the establishment of a Hywel Dda funded professorial chair of Rural Behavioural Science and Wellbeing. Negotiations between the Health Board and AU are on-going.

The areas of potential collaboration identified by the MoU provide opportunities to enhance the work of the University in several areas. Research links and studies between the Departments of Psychology and Sport and Exercise Science and Hywel Dda are well established. Further joint research opportunities are currently in discussion. A series of meetings have been arranged between Dr Kate Bullen, Professor John Grattan and members of the Hywel Dda senior team over the coming weeks. The meetings will consider how the two organisations can collaborate in areas such as shared services and joint training programmes. As a direct consequence of the developing relationship between the University and Hywel Dda, a training day for physicians studying for their MRCP (Member of the Royal College of Physicians) qualifications will be held on campus on March 8 2012. Dr Kate Bullen and Dr Rhys Thatcher will be speaking to the trainees on the psychology of chronic conditions management (KB), and exercise rehabilitation, (RT).

We owe a very considerable debt of thanks to Kate Bullen and John Grattan for their work on this project so far. I am very supportive of the initiative and hope to see real benefits for our research and our students, not to mention a clear contribution to CPD, in future.

...and now the Research News, from Communications and Public Affairs:

Climate Change

Research published in *Science* shows that marine life off the coast of Wales will need to react as quickly as wildlife on land to combat the effects of climate change. The research challenges previous thinking that marine life in the ocean will respond more gradually than on land because of slower warming in the oceans.

The paper's co-author is Dr Pippa Moore, a lecturer in Aquatic Biology at IBERS.

Modern Milk

The agricultural sector at the Winter Fair in Builth Wells has heard how IBERS is building new dairy facilities to help support future developments for the dairy industry in Wales.

Animal Behaviour

Aberystwyth University has been chosen to host the 2012 Easter Conference of the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB). This exciting meeting will bring together up to 150 scientists from across the UK and Europe from 11th-13th April next year. Organised by Dr Rupert Marshall and Dr Roger Santer of IBERS, the meeting is an important event both in Wales and further afield.

Theatre Passport

Theatre students at Aberystwyth University are part of an innovative project designed to help apply aspects of their academic study directly to professional productions from leading UK and international companies. 340 students are involved in the Theatre Passport scheme, which incorporates ten professional productions over the 2011/12 academic year and is a partnership between the Arts Centre and Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies. It is hoped that the Theatre Passport scheme will act as a model for development into projects with other departments within the University.

Inspiring Physics

A newly refurbished suite of laboratories at the Institute of Mathematics and Physics (IMAP) at Aberystwyth University has been named after Dr Tudor Jenkins, an "inspiring physics teacher" who died suddenly in November 2009.

The new Tudor Jenkins Laboratories have been developed at a cost of over £300,000, and were officially opened on 7 November.

New food test will revolutionise health care

Scientists at IBERS are developing a simple test that will revolutionise health care by showing clearly whether patients are eating healthy or unhealthy food. Even more importantly, it will help prevent illness by showing definite links between particular kinds of foods and specific diseases and could be in practical use within five years. The new test being developed at Aberystwyth, in partnership with Newcastle University.

April McMahon

30 November 2011

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council, 7/2/'12

High Demand for Undergraduate Places

As Council members will be aware, Aberystwyth admitted considerably more first-year students in 2011/12 than our maximum permitted student number. While we were pleased to be able to give these students the opportunity to study here, we must guard as far as possible against future over-recruitment, given the current hard cap on UK and EU undergraduate numbers. We have therefore announced that, due to buoyant demand from well qualified applicants, we will not be accepting any new applications from UK/EU applicants for entry onto undergraduate courses in September 2012 who applied after the UCAS deadline of 15 January. It is particularly pleasing that we have received significant increases in applications to subjects identified by the Welsh Government as priority areas, including Mathematics, Physics and European Languages.

The mid-January deadline represents the first opportunity for us to close to further applications, and in recognition of the fact that applications then stood at very close to last year's record-breaking levels, we felt we had to take that decision. Our surge in applications close to the UCAS deadline seems to reflect the fact that prospective students in the new fee regime are taking their time to make decisions, and researching their choices with greater care. It is hard to predict quite what impact this might have on conversion from applications to acceptances, especially as we have raised our level of offer for many programmes this year; however, we retain the option of entering Clearing should we wish to recruit further students in any discipline. It remains extremely important for departments to welcome successful applicants to our Visit Days this semester, so they can see for themselves the excellent facilities we have available for them at Aberystwyth.

Strategic Reallocation of Maximum Student Numbers

HEFCW issued this extremely important circular on 17 January, and we were able to have an initial discussion at the last Finance and Strategy Committee. Council will have a separate opportunity to debate this matter and the implications of the circular, which has involved the University Executive, led by colleagues in Planning, in a great deal of modelling and discussion. The circular has far-reaching implications for the UG fees to be charged in Wales, and for the allocation of student numbers.

Relationships with FE Partners

Aberystwyth has a range of Memoranda of Understanding and progression agreements with Further Education partners, and as Council members will see elsewhere on the agenda, some successful joint provision, for example in Foundation Degrees. We feel the time is right to review these, and specifically to consider our possible future working relationships with three FE partners, Coleg Ceredigion, Coleg Powys, and Deeside College. We are working towards commissioning a fairly swift options appraisal, and will report back to Council when we have considered the implications of this.

Composite Advert for Academic Posts

As noted at the last Council, we have been working hard to consider bids for academic posts, both new and replacement. We have encouraged departments to submit business plans for these posts, and in some cases have approved pump-priming funds or under-writing against ambitious targets for postgraduate recruitment. The outcome is a major advert to appear in Times Higher Education, with **26** academic posts available at all levels. This is a powerful indication that Aberystwyth University is open for business, and is building an ambitious strategy for the REF and beyond.

Future of the Humanities

I attended a meeting in London in mid-January with a small number of other Vice-Chancellors to discuss the future of the humanities in the new funding regime(s). Those of us in universities which thrive on and celebrate the interaction of a broad range of academic disciplines need to be vigilant that investment in scientific research and high-cost subjects for teaching does not jeopardise the arts and humanities. We will be continuing these discussions with funding bodies.

Public Lectures

As I reported in November, we are revising our arrangements for public lectures. Lyn Morgan and his colleagues in Communications, and Natalie Roberts in the Academic Office, have been working together on publicity material, and we will have our first two 'new style' public lectures by Professor Timothy Ingold of the University of Aberdeen on 13 February, and by your Vice-Chancellor on 21 February. Council members who might be in Aberystwyth are cordially invited to these events.

National Library

I was delighted to be asked to give a short talk and take questions as part of the National Library's Open Day on 28 January. I am looking forward to an excellent opportunity to meet members of the public, discuss the positive relationship between the University and the Library, and speak to other friends and guests of the Library.

International Visit

As I write, I am preparing for my first major international visit since I took up my post. I will be spending the week from 29 January to 6 February in China, Malaysia and Singapore. It is extremely important, given the key role international recruitment and partnerships play in our emerging Strategic Plan, that I should make two or three such visits each year to important markets, keeping our alumni in touch with developments in the University, celebrating old friendships, and launching new ones. As well as hosting and attending events for alumni in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore with Julian Smyth from DARO, I shall be visiting one of our newest and most important partner

universities, Xiamen in the south-east of China, travelling with Pro-Vice-Chancellor Aled Jones, and Professor Qiang Shen from the Department of Computer Science. We are assured that, as the first international delegation to come to Xiamen in the new Year of the Dragon, our visit is extremely auspicious! I will report back on this visit in person at Council.

...and now the Research News, from Communications and Public Affairs:

Birdsong

Singing their songs at a higher pitch helps birds travel further in built-up areas. Previously it was thought that great tits and other common birds sang at a higher pitch in noisy areas to avoid the low pitch noise from traffic and industry.

Now, scientists from Aberystwyth University and the University of Copenhagen have found that it is the buildings that are changing the way birds sing in cities. Their new study, published in the journal PLoS One, suggests that urban architecture may be just as important as background noise in shaping how our birds sing.

A surprise result also showed that urban songs transmitted more clearly in woodland than the rural songs of the local birds. So why don't rural birds also sing urban songs?

Dr Rupert Marshall, Lecturer in Animal Behaviour at Aberystwyth University, commented "In woodland where trees and leaves obscure the view, many species of songbird can tell how far away a rival is by how degraded its song is. In cities there are fewer visual obstacles and song doesn't degrade as quickly, so city birds may just concentrate on being heard".

Polar Medal

Aberystwyth University glaciologist, Professor Michael Hambrey is to receive a second clasp to his Polar Medal from the Queen for his research on glaciers in Antarctica.

Professor Hambrey, a member of the Centre for Glaciology at the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, was first awarded the Medal in 1989 for research in both Polar Regions, and now joins an elite list of recipients who have earned the award a second time.

The Polar Medal was established in 1904 to reward the contribution of Captain Robert Scott's team members to exploration of Antarctica. Other recipients have been the other famed Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, Sir Wally Herbert who made the first crossing of the Arctic Ocean via the North Pole, and contemporary explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

Microbes face extinction

An Aberystwyth University scientist has called for the creation of a revolutionary new field of biodiversity conservation. The Global Strategy for Microbial Conservation would aim to protect the smallest and most neglected forms of life in the natural world.

These organisms include bacteria, fungi and algae, many of which are wrongly seen in popular belief as 'bad' or 'useless'.

However Dr Gareth W Griffith from IBERS warns that failing to protect them could lose the planet a wealth of biotechnological resources and important habitats and even push some endangered animals and plants towards extinction.

The plea by Dr Griffith, a senior lecturer at IBERS has been published in the respected scientific periodical, TREE (Trends in Evolution and Ecology) and has already attracted comment.

Performance and archaeology

Acclaimed theatrical producer Mike Pearson, Professor of Performance Studies at Aberystwyth University has been awarded a Major Research Fellowship by the Leverhulme Trust. Professor Pearson is a member of the University's Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies and has been awarded £87,208 over two years for a project entitled "Marking Time: Performance, Archaeology and the City".

The Leverhulme funding will support a series of research activities and public engagements including the writing of a monograph and journal articles as well as organising guided tours, demonstrations, workshops and both restaged and new performances that trace the origins and development of alternative practices of theatre-making from the 1960s to the present in one particular city – Cardiff.

Medieval famine

A deadly famine that struck England during the 14th century, killing upwards of half a million people in less than three years, will be the focus of a major new study by Aberystwyth University historian Professor Phillipp Schofield.

Professor Schofield, Head of the Department of History and Welsh History, has been awarded a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship worth £140,507 which will run for three years from September 2012.

The study will culminate in the publication of a book on "The Great Famine. Dearth and society in medieval England c.1300". Professor Schofield is a historian of late medieval English history, particularly social, economic, and demographic history.

Prostate cancer diagnosis

An innovative new research project aimed at improving the diagnosis of prostate cancer is taking place at Aberystwyth.

Funded by The Prostate Cancer Charity, it is hoped that if successful, this study will help doctors to more clearly see the size and location of a man's prostate cancer in order to make better decisions about the right treatment to use.

Lead researcher Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar, from the Department of Computer Science, received £60,100 to supervise a PhD project to investigate the novel idea of combining magnetic resonance (MRI) and ultrasound results to give a more detailed initial map of where prostate cancer is present in the body.

April McMahon

27 January 2012

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council, 29 March 2012

Student Numbers

Council members will note elsewhere on the agenda two important matters in connection with student numbers.

First, as Council will be aware, the University over-recruited home and EU undergraduates in 2011/12, exceeding our maximum permitted intake by a considerable margin. While we all understand the factors involved in this situation, not least the 'spike' in applications, acceptances and exam performance in the last year before sector-wide fee increases, we nonetheless did over-recruit and had anticipated a substantial fine from HEFCW. We have made a provision of £1.3m in our 2011/12 accounts for this fine. However, on 13 March we heard that the sector as a whole had remained within student number limits, so that Welsh Government will not be reducing HEFCW's Grant-in-Aid, and in turn HEFCW will not be applying penalties. This is excellent news; but the letter from HEFCW makes it abundantly clear that Aberystwyth is not being fined only because other institutions in Wales under-recruited, and they have asked for a clear indication of actions we are taking to ensure we are not in a similar position next year. We are responding to note that we closed home and EU UG applications as early as we could this year under UCAS rules, preferring to exercise lenience at Confirmation or enter Clearing if need be, rather than risking a recurrence of last year's situation. We will of course continue to keep Council informed as numbers of acceptances become clearer.

Secondly, Council will be aware that Finance and Strategy Committee strongly supported a continuation of our home and EU fee level at £9,000 for 2012/13 and beyond. This position does carry a risk that we could lose more than 500 student places in 2013/14 in non-priority subjects. We have chosen not to declare this position publicly but are continuing to engage closely on these matters. We have had meetings with Dame Gillian Morgan, Permanent Secretary at Welsh Government, and with Emyr Roberts and Owen Evans of the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, to stress that Aberystwyth is in an excellent position to assist in terms of cross-border flows if we were permitted to increase recruitment rather than potentially having to reduce numbers. On 13 March I attended a meeting in Cardiff involving HEW, HEFCW and WG to discuss options for a resolution.

If we do indeed lose student numbers for home UGs, departments will be even more reliant on increasing our PG and international numbers; these are in any case strong priorities emerging from our Strategic Plan discussions. Rachel Tod in the International Office has now introduced a weekly update on numbers of applications for the Executive, and I am pleased to say that as at 8 March 2012, PGT applications were 602 and up by 82% over the 333 applications at the same time last year, while PGR applications stood at 231, up 66% on 139 last year. We are centralising PG application processes and improving efficiency and speed of turnaround while also encouraging departments to continue or develop good practice in their individual engagements with applicants, as conversion from applicant to student has typically been much poorer for postgraduates than for undergraduates.

Fellows

I am very pleased to say that the individuals below have all accepted the offer of a Fellowship of the University:

Professor Michael Clarke	Alumnus, Government advisor on Defence and Security
Sir David Lloyd Jones	Presiding Judge for Wales
Alex Jones	Alumna, television presenter
The Rev. John Gwilym Jones	Alumnus, former Archdruid of Wales
Caitlin Moran	Broadcaster, critic and columnist at <i>The Times</i>
Dr Jan Jaroslav Pinkava	Alumnus, Oscar-winning animator for Pixar
Mark Price	Managing Director of Waitrose
Michael Sheen	World renowned Welsh actor

We anticipate making announcements about these Fellowships shortly.

Unfortunately, because of pre-existing work commitments, Alex Jones and Michael Sheen are unlikely to be able to join us in graduation week in July. However, we are working to identify alternative dates when they might visit Aberystwyth and have their Fellowships conferred. We are also exploring whether they might be able to participate in the graduation ceremonies by some other means, for instance by providing a recorded video message for our graduands and guests.

The Executive would like to ask Council to consider discussing, at a future date, a possible transition from Fellowships to Honorary Degrees. Our experience in approaching prospective Fellows is that the concept of Honorary Degree is considerably more familiar than the idea of a Fellowship. While we are not averse to distinctiveness, we feel there may be merit in exploring this issue further.

Investigation update

Council members will have received the Aberystwyth University Investigation Report, and we have included this matter separately on the agenda, and warmly welcome comments and suggestions on our proposed Action Plan. This report, including the Action Plan, has also been made available to all staff and students, and on 22 February, we held a briefing and question and answer session for all interested staff, in the Great Hall. About 600 colleagues attended and I gave a presentation setting out some of the higher-level findings from the investigation and noting what everyone can do to help the University to move forward. We have received very positive feedback from the session; a particular feature was that every question asked on the day was about the future. While we must accept and acknowledge what has gone wrong, this focus on the Action Plan and on our emerging

Strategic Plan and our ambitions for the University are hugely encouraging. I am extremely grateful to all members of the Executive, who were present at the session and provided tremendous support; to colleagues from HR who managed attendance on the day; and to Lyn Morgan, Arthur Dafis and Alwena Hughes Moakes from Communications, who oversaw the inevitable publicity around the investigation story in a highly effective and proactive manner.

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Members of Council will be aware that we have been restructuring the support for my office (including also the Pro-Vice-Chancellors and the Registrar and Secretary), in preparation for our move to the Visualisation Building where we will be able to adopt a more integrated approach. I am pleased to be able to inform Council that the following appointments have now been made:

Alwena Hughes Moakes	Policy and Executive Officer
Nerys Hywel	Executive PA
Charles Lloyd Harvey	Executive PA
Sara Jones	Diary Secretary
Rhiannon Davies	Receptionist

Where other colleagues have not been successful in securing one of these roles, or have not wished to apply for them, HR is providing support and advice in bringing forward details of vacancies elsewhere in the University. As for the timing of our move, we are minded to manage most of the necessary building work during August. This minimises disruption since it is the period when most colleagues tend to take annual leave, and also allows us to defer some of the necessary costs into the new financial year. In consequence, the support team, the Registrar and Secretary and I will be moving around Easter, with the PVCs working between Old College and Penglais until the summer. We look forward to welcoming Council members to our new home when we have all fully moved.

Invitations and Events

Since the last Council I have been part of a panel (alongside Elin Jones and Sue Balsom) at the Morlan Centre, Aberystwyth, for International Women's Day; have given a paper in an interdisciplinary research seminar series at Bangor; have officially opened Penbryn 5, the new home of Psychology and of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning; attended the UUK Spring Conference in London; and spoken at the St David's Day Assembly for the lower years of Penglais School (held in our Great Hall). I have made visits to our departments of Sport and Exercise Science, Psychology, English and Creative Writing, and History and Welsh History, and have opened an excellent employability event featuring several returning graduates in IGES. I have had the great

pleasure of teaching our final year Psychology undergraduates about the evolution of language, and have attended the annual Science Fair, which attracts upwards of 1000 primary and secondary school pupils and is part of the National Science and Engineering Week, among various other University commitments. In the coming week, I have a training session for AHRC panel members who will be assessing this year's postgraduate Block Grant Partnership applications, and will be in Amsterdam as part of the International Advisory Panel for the Royal Netherlands Academy competition to appoint two Academy Professors. In the week leading up to Council I am looking forward to speaking at the launch event for the Aberystwyth Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and attending the next HEW / CHEW / HEFCW Strategic Dialogue. I will be happy to provide updates and further details on any of these issues at Council.

News from Aberystwyth University

Top of the world

Aberystwyth University is among the top three places in the world to be a student and has the highest level of student satisfaction, according to the 2012 International Student Barometer which has just been published.

Aberystwyth ranks number 3 of 238 Higher Education institutions worldwide for the elements 'good place to be' and 'overall student satisfaction'.

The International Student Barometer is the largest annual survey of students and has gathered information from more than 600,000 students worldwide since its establishment in 2005. It incorporates over 500 institutions in 150 countries on 5 continents.

Women's Poetry

Aberystwyth University academic Dr Sarah Prescott has been awarded a Research Project Grant worth £248,395 by the Leverhulme Trust for a study of 'Women's Poetry 1400-1800 in English, Irish, Scots, Scots Gaelic and Welsh'.

Dr Prescott is a Reader at the Department of English and Creative Writing, and Director of the Centre for Women's Writing and Literary Culture.

She will be working with fellow scholars at the University of Edinburgh, National University of Ireland, Galway and the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth on the three year project.

Diabetes Study

People living in mid and west Wales are being invited to contribute to an important new study into diabetes which is being undertaken at Aberystwyth University.

Researchers at the University's Department of Sport and Exercise Science are looking for 150 volunteers who are willing to take part in the study into the relationship between vitamin D deficiency and type 2 diabetes. They are keen to recruit volunteers who don't have type 2 diabetes as well as those who do. The volunteers will be required to visit the department three times over a period of 12 months

The study is funded by the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS) scheme supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government's Convergence programme and the team are working closely with Dr Sam Rice, Diabetes Consultant at the Hywel Dda Health Board.

Our world in motion

A three day Festival of Science was organised by Aberystwyth University as part of the 2012 National Science and Engineering Week. This is Wales' and the UK's widest grassroots celebration of all things science and engineering.

More than a 1000 school pupils from over 20 schools in Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd signed up for 'Our World in Motion' at the Sports Cage on the University's Penglais Campus

Welcome Boost for West Wales

A £12m initiative to help businesses in West Wales and the Valleys work in a more sustainable way has been given an EU boost.

The WISE Network (Welsh Institute for Sustainable Environments) project, led by Aberystwyth University in partnership with Bangor and Swansea Universities, will support companies to undertake research and development activities to develop 'greener' products and drive business growth.

The project is backed with £6.6m from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government with the remainder of the funding from the universities involved.

New BEACON Research Centre

Environment Minister, John Griffiths, has visited a new facility which will collaborate with local companies to develop green business technologies and opportunities. The BEACON initiative, the first of its kind in Wales, has its centre at Aberystwyth University.

It will help Welsh businesses develop new ways of converting crops such as rye grass, oats and miscanthus (elephant grass) into products including pharmaceuticals, chemicals, fuels and cosmetics.

The facility at the Institute of Biological Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) houses large-scale equipment capable of taking laboratory research to economically viable industrial opportunities.

BEACON is led by Aberystwyth University in collaboration with partners at Bangor and Swansea Universities. It is backed with £10.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

A Glass Act

Three new stained-glass windows have been installed in the Chapel at Conwy Castle, the work of Aberystwyth graduate Linda Norris and Rachel Phillips of Swansea Metropolitan University. Commissioned by CADW, the windows are inspired by the landscape of North Wales, historical events and the contemporary life of the castle today. Welsh poet, Professor Damian Walford Davies from Aberystwyth University, has also written three couplets in Welsh, French and English, which have been incorporated into the designs.

Record numbers use sports centre on campus

The University's Sports Centre is celebrating a record year after discovering that its participation figures have increased by 90% for exercise classes (Fit Together) compared to the same period last year.

Not only are the students making better use of the facilities available but also the local community, who are attending more classes and going to the gym more often.

The vast majority are females who are attracted to the exercise classes with the Zumba dance class being a clear favorite, closely followed by circuit training and bodyfit.

Speed interviews

Students at Aberystwyth University have gained invaluable feedback this week on their interview skills from prospective employers.

Local, regional and major national employers spanning the public, private and third sector attended a speed interview session at Aberystwyth University to help second and final year students develop their interview confidence through enhancing their understanding of how to give a good interview. More than 60 students registered to participate in the event.

Aberystwyth Students Take on Senedd Challenge

A team of three students from the University's School of Management & Business were runners-up at The Pitch event at the Senedd last month, a national challenge set by The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and Big Ideas Wales.

Alexandra Gencheva, Alex Tilvar and Lazar Lulchev, who are all third year Marketing students, were tasked with developing an awareness-raising communications plan for Big Ideas Wales, a Welsh Government-led campaign that aims to inspire young people to start their own businesses.

April McMahon

13 March 2012

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council, 26 June 2012

Olympic Flame and other Sporting Events

We had a superb weekend of sporting activities in Aberystwyth from 25-28 May.

On Friday 25th, the Halfords Cycling Tour came to Aber for its second visit. Following a thoroughly windswept and blustery event last year, it was a great relief to all that the return visit for the Tour fell on a warm, sunny afternoon and evening, with a crowd of about 3,500 turning out for the main race. I am sure Council members will wish to join me in thanking PVC Martin Jones and his colleagues on the organising group who had to work hard to encourage the Tour to return to Aber, and who ensured, alongside many volunteers from the University and the broader community, that the day went smoothly with some excellent publicity for the University.

Saturday 26th May saw the 10th Anniversary celebrations for the Department of Sport and Exercise Science, with two rugby stars speaking – Gerald Davies CBE, a Fellow of the University, and Dafydd Jones, who retired from the game much more recently, and who gave a well-received Gregynog Lecture in question and answer format. Again, I invite Council to join me in congratulating Joanne Thatcher and her team on the ongoing excellent performance of the department; in particular, I would like to draw Council's attention to the approval of the department's first taught postgraduate programme, MSc in Exercise and Health Research, which will have its first intake in the 2012/13 academic year.

Finally, we were delighted to welcome the Olympic Torch to Vicarage Fields for an evening of entertainment at which we welcomed more than 8,000 students, colleagues and friends from the local community. We had good publicity for Aber through items on Radio Wales, and Chris Moyles' Radio 1 breakfast show was presented from our studio in Theatre, Film and Television Studies on the morning of Monday 28th May (assisted by an excellent Tamed Da breakfast provided by colleagues in Residential and Hospitality Services). I was extremely proud to see two of our staff and two students carrying the Olympic Torch, and again I am sure Senate members will wish to congratulate Qiang Shen, Head of the Department of Computer Science; Bridget James from the Sports Centre; Susannah Ditton from IGES; and Shon Rowcliffe from TFTS. There is an excellent short video of Qiang Shen's run, featuring interviews with colleagues from Computer Science, at <http://bit.ly/KC6gZr>

While these events provided excellent opportunities for us to showcase the sporting involvement of the University, and to build on our already strong relationship with the County and Town Councils, they also underline the importance of a diverse range of sporting, social and volunteering activities as part of our student experience. These are the options a residential university can offer its students, and it is vital that we recognise this and talk about it at Open Days, for instance, at a time when some commentators argue that the new fee regime may result in more students seeking to stay at home for their undergraduate years. University is crucially about academic achievement and aspirations, but it is also a time for our students to learn to live with others outside their home environment; and to take part in activities of their choice to the benefit of their own employability prospects and of our community.

New IBERS Buildings Opened

Congratulations to all those who were involved in the opening of the two new IBERS buildings on 14 May. The new Phenomics Facility at Gogerddan was opened by Professor Sir Tom Blundell, Chair of the BBSRC; while the research and teaching building on the Penglais campus was opened by the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews AM. Together, these buildings represent a capital investment of more than £12m. It was a privilege to be able to speak on this occasion, to welcome a wide range of guests and our own staff, students and Council members, and to celebrate the vital and ongoing support from Welsh Government and BBSRC for IBERS and the University. A particular feature of the new Penglais IBERS building has been the use of the IBER bach café for evening events, at which members of other departments have been invited to come and share ideas about future joint projects in research, teaching and outreach and engagement. So far, events have been held with Sport and Exercise Science, Computer Science and IMAPS, with others planned. I am sure Council members will wish to welcome this initiative as a direct and highly effective contribution to our strategic objectives in increasing interdisciplinary postgraduate offerings and in targeting substantial research grants.

League Tables

Colleagues will be aware that the University has dropped from 49 to 58 in the 2013 Complete University Guide, and more substantially in the most recent Guardian University Guide 2013, from 50 to 81. As you would expect, the Executive and Planning are conducting detailed analyses of the factors behind these falls; PVC John Grattan has shared initial results with Heads of Departments and will be sending out a package of relevant data to each department so performance issues can be addressed directly. However, while such league table performance is unwelcome, it is fair to say that it was not unexpected. The league tables for 2013 are based primarily on our performance during 2010-11, and we were already aware that we must improve our standings in terms of spend on facilities (with a particular emphasis on the estate and on learning spaces) and employability (where we did very badly in last year's DLHE survey). Our new Estates Strategy, which will be completed by the end of the summer, already features greatly enhanced projections for spend for the next 10 years, while John Grattan's appointment in January 2012 was explicitly intended to improve the University's focus on employability. I am confident, therefore, that measures to improve our performance in future years are already in place, and that these are central to our new Strategic Plan.

Higher Education Wales and UUK

While John Hughes (Bangor) has one further year to serve as Chair of HEW, the recent announcement that Peter Noyes (Newport) will shortly retire has left a vacancy for a Deputy Chair; Medwin Hughes has been elected to this role for one year.

In John Hughes' absence (because of a QAA visit to Bangor), I presented the regular item providing an update on the Welsh HE situation at UUK on 18th May. I will also be joining the UUK Longer-Term Strategy Network this summer. I have also been invited to represent HEW on the Welsh

Government Programme Monitoring Committee for the Convergence Programme, and on HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC).

Academic Reorganisation

This item will be reported on separately, but Council will wish to note that the Executive is following our developing practice of holding open consultation meetings. These have been well-attended, to the extent that we have arranged two additional meetings prior to the Council meeting. We have circulated a position paper to staff and students; at the request of the Guild, we have also made a shorter paper focusing on possible student concerns available to the student community. We are now moving into a period of consultation over the summer, during which departments are strongly encouraged to discuss options for future co-working within the Institute framework. We will report progress to Council in June and September, with a view to deciding on configurations of Institutes in September, and having all of these established by August 2013 at the latest. I am very grateful to members of the Executive and our support team for their work at the open meetings and in dealing with the 30 or so e-mail responses received so far, which will form the basis for a set of Frequently Asked Questions to be updated and made available on the web. I would also like to thank all those colleagues and students who have engaged with the process so far; I look forward to continuing our conversations over the summer.

New Academic Posts

Council members will recall that we advertised earlier this year for 27 new academic posts, spread across a range of disciplines and departments. We are now progressing through the interview processes for these roles, and are welcoming over 80 prospective colleagues to Aberystwyth before the middle of July. The calibre of applicants has been strong, and in many cases, outstanding; indeed, there have been a few instances where the quality was so high that, financial circumstances for the department permitting, we have been able to offer more posts than we originally advertised. We look forward to new colleagues joining us from 1 August onwards, and will provide a full report to Senate and Council in the autumn.

What was that? Productions

I was very pleased to be invited to a performance of the musical '*Tick Tick Boom*' in the Arts Centre Theatre on 30th May. The company for this performance, *What was that? Productions*, was set up by graduates of our drama programmes to allow them to start producing and performing in their own work and in other full-length public performances. The company for '*Tick Tick Boom*' was composed almost exclusively of our graduates and current students, and showed what a high standard can be achieved by such a group in beginning work on a production, rehearsing, and achieving an extremely accomplished performance – within the space of five days! I found this, and the obvious support of the Theatre Film and Television Studies department for the company, impressive and inspiring, and hope that Council members will look out for future productions.

The Tessa Sidey Print Purchase Fund

Robert Meyrick, Head of the School of Art, has recently received the sum of £128,992 from the Executors of the Estate of the late Tessa Sidey, who left 10% of her estate to the School's Museum and Gallery. In accordance with her wishes, we will be setting up the Tessa Sidey Print Purchase Fund. We are extremely grateful for this generosity and for the capacity this gives us to continue our active and extremely well-informed collections policy.

International Politics

Alistair Shepherd, the Director of External Affairs for International Politics, has informed me that a newly published report based on the views of scholars in International Relations provides the following good news for the Aberystwyth Department:

- Aber is ranked 17th in the world for PhD study (one of only 3 UK HEIs in the top 20)
- We are the 9th best place in the world to study international relations at undergraduate level (again, one of only 3 in the top 20 from the UK)
- The journal *International Relations*, which is edited in the Aber department, is ranked 18th in the world for journals with 'the greatest influence on the way IR scholars think about international relations'.

Well done to all those colleagues and students who have contributed to these clear indications of esteem for InterPol.

US Visit

I write this report shortly after my return from a visit to the east coast of the US, to explore future opportunities for research links, student recruitment, and partnerships. Between 3rd and 9th June, PVC Martin Jones, our Policy and Executive Officer Alwena Hughes Moakes, Rachel Tod from the International Office, Julian Smyth from DARO and I held events for alumni in Washington DC and New York, met the British Council, and visited two existing partners (Pittsburgh University and Utica College), and three Community Colleges; Rachel Tod then continued to Ottawa, following up on a recent visit by our President. North America is an extremely important market for us; a clear priority in our International Strategy; and the location for many of our existing research links. There are interesting recent developments in the demographic of attendance at Community Colleges, which is why we have focussed during this visit on prospects for 2+2 programmes with selected Community Colleges. We have already received extremely encouraging feedback on developing partnerships, and I will be happy to report in more detail at the June Council meeting.

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Members of Council will be aware that we have been restructuring office support for me, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors and the Registrar and Secretary. Catrin, the support team and I have now moved to

the Visualisation Building, and you are very welcome to visit us there; the PVCs are working between our new location and their departmental offices until the summer. Our support team is now complete, and we welcome the following colleagues:

Alwena Hughes Moakes	Policy and Executive Office
Nerys Hywel	Executive PA to the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Secretary, and PVC Aled Jones
Charles Lloyd Harvey	Executive PA to PVCs Rebecca Davies and Martin Jones
Debbie Pryor	Executive PA to PVC John Grattan, and Director of Planning
Sara Jones	Diary Secretary
Rhiannon Davies	Receptionist

While you are always welcome to contact Executive members on our individual and confidential e-mail addresses, ring any member of the team, or call in to see us, you are likely to secure the quickest response through our generic e-mail addresses: diary@aber.ac.uk for any diary or appointment requests; and vice-chancellor@aber.ac.uk. These also allow the whole team to monitor requests and responses, and ensure that we cover any periods of leave.

Graduation

I am sure that members of Council are looking forward to Graduation. We are making a number of changes to the ceremonies this year, with the intention of preserving the tradition and character of the event, while recognising that students have asked for some aspects to be a little more personal. I am very pleased that Heads of Department will be more involved in Graduation this year, reading the names of their students. These events mean a great deal to our students and those who have supported them through their degrees, and in many ways Graduation Week is the most important in our University year. I very much hope that members of Council will join us at the ceremonies as your diaries allow.

Interim Director of Finance

Peter Keegans, who has been with us since January 2012 as Interim Director of Finance, will be leaving us at the end of his six-month appointment at the end of June. The Executive and I are exceptionally grateful to Peter for his work, his wisdom, the experience he has shared, and the infectious sense of humour which has made him a particular pleasure to work with. Not all of the

news we are seeing emerging through the budgeting process for 2012/13 and 2013/14 is good or welcome news; but I am personally confident and secure for the first time since my arrival that we do understand the underlying position. When we know the scale of the issues we need to deal with, we can confront them and plan constructively and ambitiously. We all owe Peter a considerable debt of gratitude for bringing us to that position, and he takes our warm good wishes with him as he leaves Aberystwyth.

We advertised for new Directors of Finance and of Planning in the week beginning 4 June, and hope to have these new colleagues in post during the autumn. Interviews for the Director of Finance post are due to take place during July.

Flooding

I referred at the start of this report to the Olympic Flame weekend, with glorious sunshine and a range of sporting achievements to celebrate. Who could have anticipated the difference a fortnight later, as the rain came down and parts of Aberystwyth were marooned by the floods? It was reassuring to learn that students and staff were as ready as ever to support each other during this frightening time. I would like to commend the actions of our staff, in stepping up to help others so swiftly and effectively. It has been a pleasure to receive compliments from businesses and members of the local community on the actions, thoughtfulness, consideration and innovative ideas of our colleagues. In particular, I commend to Council the leadership and quick thinking of PVC Rebecca Davies, thanks to whom we have been able to assist the Ystwyth Medical Practice who were flooded out of their premises and have relocated for the time being to our Gogerddan campus. I am also very impressed by the resilience of our HR team, very ably led by Sue Chambers, who have had to be relocated from the Mansion at Gogerddan and have brought forward their move to the Science Park by several weeks at an exceptionally busy time for recruitment. We are all grateful for the enquiries and messages of support we have received from Council members during the adverse weather.

News from Aberystwyth University

Mapping Miscanthus

Researchers at Aberystwyth University and in the United States have collaborated to complete the first high-resolution, comprehensive genetic map of a promising energy crop called miscanthus. The breakthrough results from the long-term collaboration between energy crop company Ceres, Inc., based in Thousand Oaks, California, and IBERS at Aberystwyth.

Furthermore, the development of miscanthus has been given a boost with the announcement of an additional £6.4 M in UK Government funding, over five years, for an integrated and collaborative breeding programme. The breeding programme aims to produce new commercial varieties of optimised miscanthus to make a significant contribution to future energy security.

Boost to Welsh medium education

Aberystwyth University has announced the creation of five new Welsh-medium lecturing posts that have been funded by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The Coleg is a national organisation that plays a key role in planning, maintenance and development of Welsh medium education and

scholarly activity in Welsh universities through the activities of the branches. The posts are in Education, Agriculture, Geography, Mathematics, and Part-time studies.

Keats 'stubble plains' revealed

Archival discoveries by researchers at Aberystwyth University suggest that lying beneath the autumnal mellowness of one of the nation's best-loved poems, John Keats's ode "To Autumn", is a murkier world of banking crisis, rising prices and striking workers.

The previously unseen documents also suggest that the traditional site of the famous "stubble-plains" in "To Autumn" should be revised. Long believed to describe the picturesque water-meadows lining the River Itchen, Keats's cornfields are more likely, the researchers argue, to portray the west-facing slopes of St Giles's Hill. The slopes had been turned over to corn – and it is these that Keats would have seen when he climbed the popular tourist spot.

England's most famous field now lies under a multi-storey car park.

The paper 'Keats, 'To Autumn', and the New Men of Winchester' is published in the current edition of *The Review of English Studies*. The authors are Professor Richard Marggraf Turley and Dr Jayne Archer of the Department of English and Creative Writing, and Professor Howard Thomas from IBERS.

University helps farmers

Academics at the School of Management and Business at Aberystwyth University have devised a new function that will help Welsh farmers decide how and when to achieve the best prices for their lambs.

This new online calculator, produced by Aberystwyth University for Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC), will help Welsh farmers make more informed decisions about their livestock. This has been developed thanks to the research of Dr. Nishikant Mishra, Lecturer in Supply Chain Management (SMB), and the expertise of Wyn Morris, Teaching Fellow in Management at the University.

The calculator was produced by SMB through funding received from the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 - 2013.

Huge sun tornado discovered

Scientists at the Institute of Mathematics and Physics have discovered solar tornadoes several times as wide as the Earth on the face of the sun.

Dr Xing Li and Dr Huw Morgan from IMAPS presented a movie of one of the tornadoes at the National Astronomy Meeting 2012 in Manchester on Thursday 29th March.

The solar tornado was discovered using the Atmospheric Imaging Assembly (AIA) telescope on board the Solar Dynamic Observatory (SDO) satellite

£20m Green boost

The BEACON bio-refining centre at IBERS has unveiled new research facilities as part of a £20m initiative.

The centre, officially opened by the Deputy Minister for European Programmes, Alun Davies, will help businesses develop new ways to turn locally grown plant crops into commercial products. It is

the first of its kind in Wales and houses large-scale equipment capable of taking laboratory research and scaling up to produce commercial products, services and technologies.

BEACON is led by Aberystwyth University in collaboration with partners at Bangor and Swansea Universities. It is backed with £10.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund, through the Welsh Government.

Leverhulme grant award

Professor Peter Barry of the Department of English & Creative Writing has been awarded a £232,042 Leverhulme Research Project Grant which will run for three years from September 2012.

The development of Welsh poetry in English since 1997 will be the focus for the major new 'Devolved Voices' research project which will pay particular attention to the work of poets who have achieved prominence and recognition since Wales's devolution vote.

New nursery opens

The University's new purpose built day nursery on Penglais Hill has opened. Originally located in Glenview on Brynymor Road, Penglais Nursery will provide child care services for Aberystwyth University staff and students as well as the local community.

This state of the art facility, which currently employs 22 members of staff, will now be able to accommodate 73 children up to eight years of age.

National Library Vice-President

Professor Aled Jones, Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor at Aberystwyth University has been named as the new Vice President of the National Library of Wales for a term of 4 years, from 1 May 2012.

As Vice President, Professor Jones will promote the Library and its work both within Wales and beyond. He will also represent the Library in its dealings with the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales.

On the write page

Mihangel Morgan, a lecturer in the Department of Welsh, and Tiffany Atkinson, a lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, have been shortlisted for the 2012 Wales Book of the Year Award.

The Award will be presented to the best Welsh and English-language works first published in 2011 in the fields of creative writing and literary criticism in three categories: Poetry, Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction.

The Award, administered by Literature Wales with funding from the Arts Council of Wales, will be presented on Thursday 12 July at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff.

Bioscience nets £13m

Minister of State for Universities and Science, David Willetts, has announced substantial funding for bioscience research in the UK which includes £13m for IBERS.

The funding is provided by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) which has allocated up to £250M of strategic investment that includes 26 strategic science programmes and 14 key national research capabilities, to be delivered by eight of the UK's world-leading bioscience research institutes including IBERS.

Celtic Connection

Students and lecturers of Theatre, Film and Television Studies are set to be the first beneficiaries of a new Memorandum of Understanding which has been signed by Aberystwyth University and Enniscorthy Vocational College (EVC), County Wexford, Ireland.

Under the terms of the three year agreement, staff at TFTS will work with colleagues at Enniscorthy College to develop the curriculum there, with particular focus on Further Education and Training Awards Council Level 6 courses. Once set up, Enniscorthy students who successfully complete the level 6 course will be able to progress onto the second year of a relevant degree programme at Aberystwyth.

Urdd Chair for Aberystwyth student

The winner in the Chair competition at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Eryri this year is Gruffudd Antur, a second year student at the Institute of Mathematics and Physics.

Gruffudd was born in Llanuwchllyn, and learned the skills of cynganedd (the strict meters of Welsh poetry) during his years at Ysgol y Berwyn, Bala.

He won the Chair for Aberystwyth at the Inter-collegiate Eisteddfod in Cardiff last year and Bangor this year; he was also the chaired poet at Llanuwchllyn Eisteddfod in 2011.

Gruffudd will return to Aber to complete his degree in September, and then he hopes to continue his studies at postgraduate level.

Student led teaching awards

The Department of International Politics scooped the Department of The Year award at the very first Student-led Teaching Awards to be held by the Guild of Students on Thursday 24th May.

Hosted by the Guild's Education Officer Jess Leigh and Professor John Grattan, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Learning, Teaching and Employability, the evening was a celebration of teaching excellence as well as the contribution of support staff and student representatives.

Nominations for the Awards were invited from students both online and in conventional ballot boxes – ten of which were located at different locations around the University. In all, over 200 nominations were received with the winners and runners up chosen by a committee of Guild officers and Professor Grattan.

YouthSight top marks

Aberystwyth University has performed exceptionally well in the latest YouthSight Higher Expectations Report 2012.

The University was found to be the best in the UK for the interest taken in students during the course of their application and performed exceptionally well in several other areas.

The findings are based on the latest version of Higher Expectations, a study into the undergraduate student decision making process published by YouthSight (previously OpinionPanel Research). Now in its eighth year, Higher Expectations interviews more than 12,000 new first-year students from over 150 institutions every year and has access to 72,000 interviews from higher education institutions all around the UK.

“Acid Up” for Olympic gold

Dr Mark Burnley from the Department of Sport and Exercise Science (SES) has found new ways of warming up that can help improve an athlete’s performance and make the difference between gold and silver.

Working with researchers from the University of Brighton and Exeter, he has been studying how priming increases concentration of lactate in the blood, making the blood acidic and ultimately, improving performance. This can improve performance in any event that lasts from around two minutes up to about 30 minutes. In an athletics stadium, this means all events from the 800 metres to the 10,000 metres could be improved by priming exercise. Many cycling and rowing events will also be improved by priming exercise.

Consequently, many of the great performances in London 2012 could be achieved by an athlete “primed” by an “acid-up” developed by scientists in UK universities.

Global health

Researchers from the Centre for Health and International Relations, Aberystwyth University, reviewed and discussed how globalisation is changing global patterns of health and disease at Chatham House in London on Friday 11 May.

The Chatham House meeting was attended by a prestigious academic and policy-oriented audience from the UK, Europe, US and Africa.

It was the first in a series of dissemination events presenting the findings of a four year European Research Council-funded project which has taken an innovative approach to the study of global health governance (GHG) and the ways in which competing ideas about health impact upon policy making.

The project team has been led by Professor Colin McInnes from Aberystwyth University and Professor Kelley Lee at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Dr Simon Rushton and Dr Owain Williams, both from Aberystwyth, have also been heavily involved in researching the project.

UN Human rights invitation

On 29-31 May Professor John Williams from the Department of Law and Criminology sat as a member of a panel of fifteen international experts on older people and the law which was convened by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly established a working group to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons.

This group will examine the existing international legal framework for the protection of human rights, identify any gaps and consider how best to address them.

April McMahon

16 June 2012

VC's Report to Council, November 2012

Creative Skillset Accreditation

Given our ongoing emphasis on employability, members of Council will be pleased to know that our undergraduate courses in Film and Television Studies have been accredited by Creative Skillset, the sector skills council. This means that we can use the 'Tick' logo and have industry endorsement - a huge plus point for employability (and recruitment). The accreditation information from Creative Skillset draws particular attention to the strong relationship between the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies and partners in the industry, and to attempts to find placements for students, including working closely with alumni. Congratulations to Jamie Medhurst and the team in TFTS on this outstanding success.

Quality Strategy Network

I was invited to give the keynote talk to the Quality Strategy Network, the professional association for staff with responsibility for quality strategy and management within UK higher education, in Birmingham at the end of September. I took the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between quality, value, values, and price; and about the factors that shape our perceptions, and students' perceptions, of value and quality. At a time when targets and measurables are deeply important to universities, I talked about the importance of recognising the ineffable – the factors we can't measure, but we all recognise, which draw our particular mix of students and staff to our particular university. It seems important that we at least consider finding ways of accommodating, recognising and influencing the subjective aspects of quality as well as measuring and comparing the objective parts.

Sêr Cymru Launch

Edwina Hart, Welsh Government Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science came to Aberystwyth University on 27 September to launch a new £50m fund to attract some of the world's greatest scientific minds to Wales. The Minister was accompanied by Professor John Harries, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Welsh Government, who has been closely involved in the design of the new scheme.

'Stars Wales'/'Sêr Cymru' aims to enhance research excellence by attracting world-class science researchers and their teams to Wales for a minimum period of five years and to increase Wales' cut of the UK Research Council's funding to 5% from its current 3.4%. As well as funding for 'stars', the project is intended to develop National Research Networks in three Grand Challenge research areas, namely advanced engineering and materials; life sciences and health; and low carbon, energy and environment.

We were delighted that the Minister chose to launch the new initiative in Aberystwyth, and also that it coincided with the publication of a major double-page article by PVC Martin Jones in the *Western Mail* publicising research achievements at Aber.

Welsh Language Commissioner

Meri Huws, the Welsh Language Commissioner, also visited the University on 27 September, and spent a productive afternoon meeting PVC Aled Jones, and our colleagues in Welsh Language Services and the local Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol branch. We held a reception for her involving Coleg lecturers and students, and a range of providers and supporters of Welsh medium courses across the University. We are very conscious of the part the University could and should play in the new Welsh language standards – not just conforming to their requirements for ourselves, but also providing a cohort of graduates who are confident in their own use of Welsh. We are actively pursuing options for e.g. summer school courses to develop the capacity of our graduate and our own staff to contribute here. Meri Huws made a very powerful political statement during her visit, telling us that there is no reason why any bilingual graduate should be unemployed in Wales today – there is such a need for excellent Welsh language skills in many professions and sectors. We feel this is of tremendous relevance and help for employability and will be working to communicate this to departments and students.

Out and about

To give a flavour of the four weeks between the last Council meeting and the upcoming one, I have been involved in the following meetings and events:

- I gave an after-dinner speech at the Ceredigion County Council annual dinner;
- We have held productive meetings with CYMAL (also involving PVC Rebecca Davies) and the Welsh Books Council (with Aled Jones), to discuss future collaborations;
- John Grattan, Liz Flint and I were invited to an event showcasing engagement between businesses and universities in Cardiff, arranged by Welsh Government, and I also attended a dinner hosted by Leighton Andrews the night before, where I met representatives of a number of anchor companies;
- We held a successful ‘thank you for all your help’ reception on 10 October, recognising the exceptional contributions of colleagues across the University in the aftermath of the floods; assisting with internal audits prior to our UKBA visit; graduation; working on the timetable at the start of term; preparing for our Open Days in July and October; and ensuring through admissions and Clearing that we dealt promptly with applicants and hence met or exceeded our targets;
- I addressed a reception for our new holders of bursaries and scholarships (according to Opinionpanel Research, Aber has the best range of bursaries, scholarships and awards of any university in the UK);
- With Wayne Powell, I attended a BBSRC partnership meeting and dinner for Chairs and Directors of BBSRC-supported Institutes; PVC Martin Jones and Sue Chambers joined us the following day for a review meeting of our specific partnership relationship with BBSRC;

- A well-attended Research Welcome and Networking Day was held for new academic staff on 22 October, including a range of our new REF-investment post-holders, and followed by an evening reception for new staff and winners of research grants, held at Y Plas;
- I have attended my first meeting of the HEFCW Student Experience and Quality Committee as the representative of Higher Education Wales;
- I met business representatives and colleagues from the Bank of England at a dinner in Cardiff, addressed by Mervyn King;
- On 25 October I addressed an excellent networking evening which we hosted for CiLT Cymru, aimed at teachers of languages from local schools, to discuss what support we are able to offer in the University to encourage students to continue with languages.

Public Engagement Roles

We are currently seeking applications for a Professor of Public Engagement with Science, and a Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination, from colleagues already holding a Chair within the University. Each post is available for a period of 3 years, and will be held alongside a substantive Professorial post. The successful candidates will already be active in public engagement, and will work together and alongside PVCs Martin Jones and Aled Jones to develop and promote an External Engagement Strategy for the University.

These are the first in a series of University-wide portfolio roles, to be developed alongside emerging roles within Institutes, and intended to operate alongside our Pro Vice-Chancellors to provide identifiable 'champions' for specific strands of work. Applications are due in early November, and we will update Council on this initiative in due course.

And finally....Christmas Card Competition

Calling all professional and amateur artists, designers and photographers. Last week saw the launch of a competition to design a card which will be used as the University's official Christmas card and ecard for 2012. The theme can be traditional, modern or humorous, in a landscape or portrait design. Photographs, artwork and/or computer graphics will be accepted.

The winner will receive two tickets to the Arts Centre's specially commissioned play, 'The Dreaming Beauty' and a seasonal hamper courtesy of TaMed Da. Prizes will also be given to runner(s) up.

To reflect the savings made on buying in hard copy cards and encouraging the use of an e-card (which departments will be encouraged to use), the University will also make a donation to Beacon of Hope.

The deadline for entries is Friday, 16th November 2012 and all entries must be sent via email to communications@aber.ac.uk with the subject 'Card Competition'.

Photographs and designs submitted should be original and free of copyright and any images of people must be taken with the subject's consent. The competition is open to our diverse community of students and staff – and I'm sure we would welcome entries from Council members too!

And now, here is the news from Communications and Public Affairs:

Sept-Oct, 2012

New bus link

A new bus service linking Aberystwyth town centre, the University and the National Library has been launched by the Minister for Regeneration, Huw Lewis AM.

The new 03 Mid Wales Travel bus, which provides a three times an hour service, will call from town at the National Library and several locations at the University, via a new link road.

The new road, adjoining the back of the National Library and the University's Sports Centre was funded through a grant worth £192,750 by the Aberystwyth Regeneration Area Fund.

The Shanghai Experience

Dr. Wu Jianzhong, Director of Shanghai Library – one of the ten largest libraries in the world – returned recently to Aberystwyth University to give a public lecture about Shanghai Library being 'a source of creativity'.

Dr. Wu gained a PhD in Library Science from Aberystwyth University in 1992 and was also a cataloguer at the National Library of Wales before working his way up the ranks at Shanghai Library. Made a Fellow of Aberystwyth University in July 2011, he had his Fellowship conferred at the conclusion of the lecture.

Migration Marathon

Thanks to information provided through a solar-powered GPS tracker sponsored by IBERS, researchers have confirmed that the Dyfi osprey chick has completed his migration to West Africa.

Ceulan took just under two weeks to complete his 2,953 mile journey from the Dyfi Estuary near Machynlleth on Monday 3 September, to Rosso on Saturday 15 September.

The Other Mona Lisa

The Head of the School of Art at Aberystwyth University was a member of a team of art experts who unveiled a painting in Geneva that many believe to be an earlier version of the *Mona Lisa*.

Robert Meyrick was invited to speak as the world's leading expert on British art connoisseur and collector Hugh Blaker.

The hunt for Blaker's missing diaries that could provide a vital clue to the origin of the 'Isleworth Mona Lisa', along with the unveiling itself, have both attracted the attention of the world's media.

Robert Meyrick is considered the world's leading expert on Blaker, who is best known in Wales as picture advisor to the Davies sisters of Gregynog.

Reducing the risk of falling

To coincide with the United Nations' International Day of Older Persons, health partners in Ceredigion launched a new website that aims to raise awareness of the preventative actions older people can take to reduce the chances of falling and avoiding harm.

The partners include Aberystwyth University, Hywel Dda Health Board, Age Cymru Ceredigion, Public Health Wales, Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Services, Ceredigion Care and Repair and Ceredigion County Council.

Language genome

'Datblygiad yr Iaith' ('Development of the Welsh Language') aims to create a complete history of the Welsh language by bringing the relevant scholars together and co-ordinating applications for funds for digitization projects.

Searchable texts of all pre-1300 prose manuscripts have been placed on-line by the Department of Welsh at Aberystwyth and this work has been continued as far as 1425 by the School of Welsh at Cardiff University. The project is directed by Patrick Sims-Williams, Professor of Celtic Studies in the Department of Welsh. He is also currently working on an Arts & Humanities Research Council project on ancient Celtic names in eastern Europe.

The latest funding from the British Academy is for 5 years.

Human trafficking

Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz of the Department of Law and Criminology at Aberystwyth University has been nominated by the UK Government for election to GRETA - the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

A specialist in migration law and international humanitarian law, he is currently working mostly on legal issues arising out of trafficking in human beings.

He has advised international organisations, national governments and non-governmental organisations on these matters and has been a member of the European Commission's Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings since 2008.

The election takes place on 12 and 13 November.

BAFTA

John Hefin, former Teaching Fellow in Film in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies (TFTS) at Aberystwyth University, has been awarded a BAFTA Cymru Special Award for Outstanding Contribution to Television Drama.

The award, presented by Elan Closs Stephens, Emeritus Professor of Communications and Creative Industries at Aberystwyth University, was given in recognition of John's invaluable contribution to the creative industries in Wales and beyond over a period of forty years.

The awards ceremony was hosted by The One Show presenter Alex Jones, who is a former Theatre, Film and Television Studies student and a Fellow of Aberystwyth University

BRIT 2012

Having already completed over 1,600 miles out of his epic 2,012 mile "BRIT 2012 Challenge" walk, Phil Packer MBE visited Aberystwyth University on Wednesday 17 October.

Phil is undertaking the challenge after suffering a severe spinal cord injury in 2008 and having been told he was unlikely to walk again; walking 8-10 miles for Phil is the equivalent of over a marathon for a person without a spinal cord injury.

Phil spoke with students and staff at the Students' Union, before moving on to the University's running track, where he undertook a two mile walk, accompanied by staff and students.

Radiocarbon breakthrough

Sediment built up over thousands of years on the floor of a Japanese lake has enabled scientists to make significant improvements to the precision and accuracy of radiocarbon dating. This work means that radiocarbon dating will now be accurate up to nearly 54,000 years.

Until now it has provided an accurate method for dating back as far as 12,000 years or so, but beyond this point, major changes in the climate at the end of the last ice age have made it much harder to get accurate measurements.

Dr Henry Lamb from IGES at Aberystwyth University is one of four Principal Investigators on the project and has played a key role in analysing the sediment cores. Their findings are reported in *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Operation iceberg

Aberystwyth University glaciologist, Dr Alun Hubbard has featured on Channel 4 News. A film crew joined Alun and the team of researchers aboard the SV Gambo, on the Greenland ice sheet. <http://www.channel4.com/news/unprecedented-greenland-ice-melt-may-change-weather>

On October 30th, Operation Iceberg, a ground-breaking expedition featuring the SV Gambo began on BBC Two, in which a team of film makers and scientists document the life-cycle of icebergs from their birth to death, hoping to reveal new scientific knowledge.

Flood risk

A report by researchers at Aberystwyth University into the causes and consequences of the June 2012 flood in Aberystwyth and surrounding villages concludes that events of this magnitude are

characteristic of rivers that flow from the Cambrian Mountains in west Wales and should be expected again in the future.

Professor Mark Macklin, Dr Paul Brewer, Dr Simon Foulds, Rachel Betson and Dr Sara Rassner, from IGES, explain that extreme floods are likely to be repeated in the future and may even become more frequent in a warming climate. However, the report also notes that although June rainfall totals in the Cambrian Mountains were high, they were not extreme and did not approach any UK records.

The researchers completed this report as part of Aberystwyth and Bangor University's Centre for Catchment & Coastal Research and Aberystwyth University's River Basin Dynamics and Hydrology Research Group. The findings were featured in *Week In Week Out* on BBC One Wales.

New life for Old College

Aberystwyth University has announced that it is inviting tenders for the work of completing a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Old College.

The study will also include University properties at 1, 9 and 10 Laura Place, which includes the Joseph Parry Hall, and Numbers 1 and 2 Marine Terrace, which for many years housed the University's Medical Centre.

Amongst the ideas proposed is the development of a 'cultural quarter' based around the Old College, a Postgraduate Centre providing world-class teaching, learning and study spaces, an art gallery, and lecturing and performance facilities.

The feasibility study represents an investment of £60,000 with half being funded by the Welsh Government's Aberystwyth Regeneration Area Fund and half by the University.

The final feasibility study is expected to be presented to the University in March 2013.

Cuban missile crisis

This month sees the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, known also as the October Crisis and the Caribbean Crisis, which was a 13 day confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States over the presence of missile sites in Cuba.

To mark the anniversary, the Centre for Intelligence and International Security Studies at Aberystwyth University and the Cambridge Intelligence Group at the University of Cambridge are hosting a major international conference at Gregynog Hall near Newtown from 25-27 October

April McMahon

26 October 2012

VC's Report to Council, December 2012

Alumni Activities

Colleagues in DARO are working on a range of different formats for events, to test against the more traditional model of 'Business Lunches' in Cardiff and London. On 2 November, we tried out a 'Business Breakfast', with an opportunity for me to talk about the new Strategic Plan, and a guest speaker on a business-relevant topic. The night before, Steve Pickup, our new Events Officer, came up with the idea of a comedy night for alumni, and this was an excellent innovation as it appealed strongly to more recent graduates, and was a tremendous success. (I missed it, unfortunately, being stuck at the time on a train between Cardiff and Newport, behind a goods train full of chemicals, which was on fire. As excuses for lateness go, this is not a bad one, though I hope for better fortune when the next event comes along).

We also currently have a highly dedicated and very successful team of students phoning alumni for this year's Annual Fund. The campaign has only just ended, but the total raised for a range of excellent projects appears to be well ahead of last year – more news on this later, but already congratulations are clearly due to Alix Morley in DARO for bringing together such an excellent team.

Students' Union Assembly

On 8 November I attended the first Assembly meeting of the Students' Union to answer questions from the Assembly members – I hope to be invited back and am planning to take a member of the Executive along with me each time, so students gain a clearer understanding of who the members of the Executive are, and what we do. On this first occasion, Alwena Hughes Moakes, our Policy and Executive Officer, accompanied me and spoke to the Assembly – an excellent choice, as Alwena is a past President of both UMCA and the then Student Guild! As I will be away from Aberystwyth for the Assembly on 6 December, PVC Rebecca Davies will be attending in my place.

UNIGF Report

The United Nations Internet Governance Forum is an annual meeting that brings together policy makers, academics, civil society representatives, the private sector and the technical community to discuss how the Internet should be governed and developed. This year, 1700 delegates from all over the world travelled to Baku, Azerbaijan for the 7th meeting – including Dr Madeline Carr, our newly appointed Lecturer in International Politics and the Cyber Dimension, who had been invited by the Council of Europe to present a paper on Internet Freedom. As part of its outreach program, the UNIGF allows institutions to register as 'remote hubs' of the meeting. These remote hubs are able to follow any of the 10 concurrent sessions via live web streaming but they are also able to interact with the participants and panel members by posing questions – just as they might if they were in the same room. Based on her experience of setting the Australian National University up as the southern

hemisphere remote hub last year, Dr Carr registered InterPol to act as a remote hub for this meeting – with valued technical support from Nigel Thomas in IS.

As Madeline Carr was in Baku for the meeting, a team of colleagues and students in InterPol were to mediate the sessions, chair the local discussions and compose questions from the group to submit to the panels in Baku. She reports that our students did an outstanding job, participating fully in the second panel on cyber-security. They had five questions accepted and put forward to the panel members - a more significant remote input than Dr Carr had ever witnessed either live or in her previous experience of running a remote hub for the UNIGF. Their questions had to be of a standard that would encourage the remote moderator to continue selecting them and putting them forward to the panel. Of course, each time they had a question put forward, it was introduced to the room as coming from Aberystwyth University! Their input was of such a high calibre that in his closing remarks, the chair Mark Carvell (responsible for Internet governance policy at the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport) thanked Aberystwyth University for their contribution towards making the session a stimulating and successful one.

Dr Carr remarks on the enthusiasm and professionalism of our students – and notes that we have not yet begun to teach in this area! How's that as an area to watch for the future?

IBERS successes

Colleagues in IBERS have had a recent spate of grant successes, and it is a pleasure to bring these to the attention of Council:

- ❖ Karl Hoffmann & Martin Swain, 'Flatworm DNA methylation: Deciphering the mark and characterising the machinery', BBSRC, £559,624
- ❖ Denis Larkin, "Assembling the genome organisation in birds beyond 'catalogues of genes'", BBSRC, £328,833
- ❖ Nigel Scollan, 'Improving efficiency and reducing waste in the beef supply chain', TSB, £1,078,465
- ❖ S Ravello & J Gallagher, 'Adaptation and Mitigation through bio-Succinate Innovation', Climate KIC – Biohorizons, £34,404
- ❖ J Gallagher, J Adams & I Donnison, 'MacroBioCrude', EPSRC, £161,158
- ❖ J Gallagher, M Fraser, A Winters, D Bryant, B Van Houten & G V King, Sustainable Ryegrass Products, WG-A4B, £292,000
- ❖ Steve Fish 'Low Carbon Energy and the Environment Strategy', A4B, £225,616

Total: £2,680,100

Recent visits

We continue to hold regular meetings with local politicians, having hosted a visit from Mark Williams MP on 15 November, and with Elin Jones and Simon Thomas from Plaid Cymru due to visit on 17 December. Likewise, we regularly meet the Chief Executive of Ceredigion Council and the Leader of

the Council. On 20 November, we were delighted to welcome David Blaney, the incoming CEO of HEFCW, on one of his first visits to universities as he takes up his new post. This was an excellent opportunity for Dr Blaney to meet Lucy Hodson, for us to show him some of our recent changes on the campus, and for a discussion of future ways of working. The Executive found it an encouraging afternoon, and we look forward to working with Dr Blaney in his new role.

ESRC Festival of Social Science 6 Nov.

Colleagues in the Research Office, notably Jenny Deaville, were successful in securing an ESRC grant as part of the Festival of Social Science in November; the University hosted two events, the only ones in Wales outside Cardiff and Swansea. On 6 November I was delighted to attend the last stages of a mock climate change summit for local schools, involving colleagues from International Politics, TFTS, and IGES. Visiting students (and teachers) had entered into the spirit of the event, with some tough negotiating in evidence, and a number of participants (especially representing OPEC and Russia) dressed for the occasion! This was a very well-organised event, and provided excellent outreach to our local schools and colleges- many congratulations to all colleagues involved.

Speaking engagements this month

November has been quite a busy month in terms of talks and lectures. I have recently spoken to the University Women's Club about our new Strategic Plan and the process of developing it, and was very pleased to hear that the Club's extensive papers have now been donated to the University's archive. Rob McMahon and I gave a joint presentation to the Aberystwyth Science Café on our new book, *Evolutionary Linguistics*, and were very impressed by the size and diversity of the audience and the quality of the questions. PVC Rebecca Davies and I also visited Zurich on 29 and 30 November, when I gave a research talk at the University, and we visited two international schools to meet parents and students. Finally, as I write I am about to leave for Engage 2012, the National Public Engagement conference, in Bristol. As I am joining two panels, giving part of the closing plenary, and hosting an 'in conversation' session, I think there will be little doubt that Aberystwyth is serious about public engagement!

International Student Bursaries and Scholarships

On 20 November I attended an evening event for our international students receiving bursaries and scholarships. At this point it appears that our international numbers are up by about 24% for 2012-13, an excellent step in the right direction in terms of our Strategic Plan targets – and the availability of awards for both hardship and excellence is a major factor in attracting international applicants. I am sure Council members will be interested to know that those attending came from an impressively wide range of countries – just to take two examples, those receiving International Excellence Scholarships for 2012 came from Nepal, the USA, Japan, Canada, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Turkey, Norway, Egypt, Indonesia and India, while recipients of International Undergraduate Excellence Scholarships are from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Norway, India and Thailand.

And now, here is the news from Communications and Public Affairs, for November 2012:

Psychological effects of cancer

Research at Aberystwyth University into the psychological effects of penile cancer on masculinity has been used in the development of a new website launched at the Royal Society in London.

The award-winning experiential website Healthtalkonline, (www.healthtalkonline.org) features a new section on the rarely discussed topic of penile cancer, of which 400-600 new cases are diagnosed in the UK each year.

The work at Aberystwyth University has been led by Dr Kate Bullen, Director, Institute of Human Sciences.

Student competition worth £20,000

Aberystwyth University is providing its students with a great opportunity to possibly win £20,000 towards starting a new business venture. Entries are encouraged from students studying at Aberystwyth during 2012/13. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to present their ideas to the judges in the form of a 'Dragon's Den' panel.

The competition is financed by the Annual Fund through the Development and Alumni Relations Office, organised by the Commercialisation and Consultancy Services Department (CCS) and supported by both the Student Union and the Careers Service.

CV building

Local, regional and major national employers recently attended a speed CV building day at Aberystwyth University to help inspire and prepare students for the workplace. The companies included Network Rail, The National Library of Wales, Cambrian Printers, Antur Teifi, Rachel's Dairy, Hywel Dda Health Board and the Students' Union,

Every student participating in the session was given five minutes with each employer, during which the employers gave students feedback on their CV and tips on how to improve them.

TV detective

Aberystwyth University's Plas Gogerddan is being transformed into a police station over the next six months as part of a major new television detective series.

Between the end of December 2012 and May 2013, actors, producers, make-up, costume, sound and camera engineers from tv production company Fiction Factory will spend a lot of their time at Plas Gogerddan, or the Police Station as it will become known. In partnership with the University, students have been given the opportunity to be part of the production. In the week of 19-23 November, seven students enjoyed a five day work experience with the team, and more students will have similar opportunities over the coming months.

Mathias will be broadcast on S4C and then in English, with the title *Hinterland*, on BBC Wales and BBC 4.

Human trafficking

Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz of the Department of Law and Criminology at Aberystwyth University has been elected to the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

Professor Piotrowicz was nominated for the post by the UK Government and his election followed two days of voting in Strasbourg. He is one of thirteen candidates from across Europe to have been elected and will serve on the Group for four years. A specialist in migration law and international humanitarian law, he is currently working mostly on legal issues arising out of trafficking in human beings.

Pig genome

The genome sequence of pigs has been completed and annotated for the first time by an international team of scientists that includes researchers at Aberystwyth University.

Dr Denis Larkin, a Lecturer in Animal Genomics at IBERS led the Pig Chromosome Evolution Analysis Group within the Consortium. Dr Larkin is one of the primary authors of the paper, which was published in the journal *Nature*.

This is the first time that differences between the pig genome and the genomes of other mammals have been revealed and analysed in detail at whole genome level.

Fish follow the leader

Fish shoals follow the first fish to move; and they follow it because it usually knows where to find dinner. Or so say scientists Victoria Franks and Dr Rupert Marshall from IBERS, publishing their investigations of tropical guppies online in the journal *Animal Behaviour*.

Victoria Franks, lead author of the paper, conducted the research as part of her undergraduate dissertation. The co-author and project supervisor was Dr Rupert Marshall. Victoria's research won her the 2011 Science Engineering & Technology (SET) Award for the Best Biology Student in Europe, as well as a 1st class Honours degree in Zoology.

Law and Cartels

Aberystwyth University's Department of Law and Criminology has been awarded a £87,743 Leverhulme Research Project Grant to study the deterrent effect of legal measures taken against business cartels.

The two year study, *Explaining and Understanding Business Cartel Collusion*, will be undertaken by Professor Christopher Harding and Dr Jennifer Edwards. The study's main objective will be to produce and analyse a number of 'cartel biographies' which will draw upon the experience of dealing with some major international cartels in a number of jurisdictions over the past 30 years.

University launches equine nutrition app

Following the success of Aberystwyth University's inaugural farming app, farmGRAZE, earlier this year, a second app has now been launched on iTunes which is aimed at the equine sector. HorseRATION is the first app to be aimed specifically at equine nutrition and allows the user to accurately calculate the amount of feed their horse needs.

Since its release on the Google Play app store in July 2012, farmGRAZE has been downloaded over 1,000 times by users in the UK and globally including the USA, New Zealand, Australia and South Korea as well as several European countries.

Public and Departmental Lectures

A number of well attended public lectures have been held recently at the University.

1 st November	Internationally esteemed historian, Professor Norman Davies gave the 2012 Annual Lecture at The David Davies Memorial Institute (DDMI), in the Department of International Politics
1 st November	The Rt Hon The Lord Judge gave the Centre for Welsh Legal Affairs Annual Lecture. Lord Judge's lecture was on the subject of "Advocacy Today"
7 th November	Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller of Northampton, Director General of MI5 (2002-7) and currently Chair of Council at Imperial College London, delivered the Annual Lecture of the Centre for Intelligence and International Security Studies (CISS).
12 th November	The Institute of Welsh Politics welcomed Leanne Wood AM, Leader of Plaid Cymru, to deliver its 13th Annual Lecture. The lecture was entitled 'Cymru ar ei Hennill/A Winning Wales',

April McMahon
2 December 2012

VC's Report to Council, February 2013

Western Mail

It will be a pleasure to welcome Council members back to Aberystwyth for our first meeting of the New Year (though we are also very grateful to a number of you who braved difficult weather conditions to join us for the presentations on the new Student Village proposals on 18 January). For the VC Office team and the Executive, however, our first Monday back at work of 2013 got off to a less than perfect start when we saw the front page of the *Western Mail*. The main story suggested that Aberystwyth, along with a number of other Welsh universities, was guilty of 'dumbing down', accepting students with only two E grades at A-level, or even less.

Staff and students were very soon expressing outrage at this story both to us, and out in the Twittersphere. Clearly, we had to address this matter urgently, for reputational reasons – but not for exactly the reasons you might expect. Far from being embarrassed or ashamed to be taking some students with lower than usual UCAS points, we wanted to stress the good news stories of our mature students and Summer University graduates – while making it abundantly clear that our average tariff points have actually increased for a number of the courses named in the article.

We decided to confront this issue head-on, and since our relationship with the *Western Mail* has been a good one, we were very pleased to find that they were willing to print a piece pointing out the good news behind their story. We even managed to sneak in a picture of one of our outstandingly successful students from IBERS. For those of you who did not see the article, we will have some copies available at Council, and a link to the longer version we circulated to staff and students is <http://jump.aber.ac.uk/?tvdr>

I would like to record my gratitude to our Comms team, to Alwena and to members of the Executive for their help and support during a week when we spent more time on journalistic endeavours than anything else. We hope Council members will agree this was worthwhile. We have had very positive reactions to the piece from staff and students and from outside the University and will continue to take every opportunity of stressing the positives in an admissions system that looks beyond the numbers to see the people.

Good news from CCS

Congratulations are in order in CCS. Dr Rhian Hayward, Technology Transfer Officer, has been invited to join the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board, a board of 8 members who are selected to advise the Minister for BETS on grant applications to Welsh Government exceeding £1m in value. This is a public appointment for 2 years in the first instance.

Meanwhile, I am sure you will also wish to join me in congratulating Liz Flint, who has been elected a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Two invitations

As a direct result of my presentations at Engage 2012 in early December, I have been invited to be on the RCUK Public Engagement with Research Advisory Panel. I have also joined the Advisory Board

for Academi Wales, a Welsh Government sponsored body which will develop new approaches to leadership development and training.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol posts

I am very pleased to announce that the University has made a successful bid for further Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol lectureships and Aberystwyth has been awarded four posts. One post will be located in each of the Departments of Computer Science, Information Studies, Law and Criminology, and Welsh. Congratulations to all those who contributed to this successful bid.

MEP launch Cardiff, Aber and Bangor

On 10 January, I attended the Cardiff launch of the new Masters in Educational Practice with Malcolm Thomas, Head of SELL. This new part-time PGT programme leads to the award of a Cardiff University degree, but is jointly delivered by Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Bangor, and the Institute of Education in London. Malcolm and his colleagues are to be congratulated on contributing to the tender for this programme under considerable time pressure, and on designing and delivering much of the Welsh medium provision for the MEP. The programme is Welsh Government funded and is currently available only to this year's cohort of Newly Qualified Teachers – and over 400 have signed up! The successful launch in Cardiff, where around half of the new cohort of students were addressed by Leighton Andrews, was followed by events in Aberystwyth and Bangor.

Congratulations on promotions

We have now completed the first cycle of our new promotions process for Readers and Professors, using an entirely new evaluation methodology where both internal and external evaluators are asked to score candidates for their contributions in research, teaching, and leadership. It is a real pleasure to be able to congratulate Judy Broady-Preston, Patrick Finney and Joanne Hudson, who have been promoted to Reader; and Kate Bullen, Henry Lamb, Nick Perdakis, Robert Meyrick, Heike Roms and Mark Whitehead on their promotion to Personal Chairs.

At the time of writing, we are close to completing the first round of our revised promotions process for Senior Lecturers, and I hope to be able to share the results with Council members on 4 February.

Charity of the Year

Many Council members will have heard the sad news that our first Charity of the Year, the Beacon of Hope, has now ceased to operate, appointing liquidators around the turn of the year. We have made a statement expressing the University's regret, and noting our concern that there remains a real need for the services and support which Beacon of Hope provided. However, we will not be commenting further on the situation. We have also agreed that we will not be nominating a further charity for the rest of this year, but will shortly be announcing the timetable for nominating and voting on candidates for the 2013-14 Charity of the Year, to be announced at this year's graduation ceremonies. If any Council member wishes to make a suggestion, please e-mail vice-chancellor@aber.ac.uk by the end of February.

HEW Committee meeting in Brussels, 23-24 January

I am writing this report on my way back from Brussels, where we have just held our regular HEW Committee as part of two days of meetings and events with Welsh MEPs, and a range of experts on

research and innovation funding, including Maria Graca de Carvalho, the rapporteur on the forthcoming Horizon2020 programme, and Anne Glover, the first Chief Scientific Advisor to the European Commission. This was an excellent opportunity to check our understanding of the current budget negotiations, find out more about likely future funding packages, and publicise some of the successes of Welsh universities.

Event to thank long-serving colleagues

On 29 January we will be holding the first event to celebrate and recognise the contributions of colleagues who have worked for the University for at least 25 years. Because this has not been done before, we find we have substantial numbers of staff who have 30, 40, and in one or two cases even 50 years of service! So the evening promises to be a busy one. I will be presenting everyone with a small gift and a letter including some details from their Head of Department, noting some of the particular contributions the individual has made. I look forward to telling Council members more about the evening.

We hope to make this an annual event and next year propose to include all those who have at least 20 years' service.

And now, here is the news from Communications and Public Affairs, for December 2012 and January 2013:

Creative unit winner

Emerging designer Rose Wood has been selected as the University's 2012 "Year in a Creative Unit" winner. Chosen by a Dragon's Den style panel, Rose will be using the award-winning Creative Unit, adjacent to the Arts Centre, as a base to develop her business - designing and making high quality, luxurious yet innovative jewellery.

The competition, which was open to individuals or new businesses working in any field of the creative industries, offered a year's rent-free studio space at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre Creative Unit.

Icy waters of Lake Ellsworth

As a British team of scientists and engineers realise a 16 year ambition to drill down through over 3 km of Antarctic ice into an ancient buried lake, a small team of scientists at Aberystwyth University will be keeping a very close eye on proceedings.

Dr Henry Lamb from the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences is an expert in analysing sections of mud taken from the floors of lakes around the world.

Detailed analysis of the mud using an x-ray scanner, a technique developed by Dr Lamb, has enabled scientists to build a record of environmental change that extends back over thousands of years.

Dr Lamb was a leading member of an international team that recently analysed sediment cores from Lake Suigetsu in Japan.

Now Dr Lamb is hoping that the team drilling into Lake Ellsworth, will successfully remove a section of mud from the lake's floor. If all goes well, the work of analysing the section of mud is expected to start in Aberystwyth early in 2013.

The Lake Ellsworth Consortium is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council. It features two of NERC's Centres of Excellence – British Antarctic Survey and the National Oceanography Centre – and nine UK universities.

Record numbers study Maths and Physics

The Institute of Mathematics and Physics is celebrating an exceptional year in terms of recruitment. Not only has the Institute recruited record numbers to study mathematics and physics, but the numbers studying an element of these subjects through the medium of Welsh is the best ever.

Many of the Institute's courses now offer 40 credits a year through the medium of Welsh, and are eligible for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Undergraduate Scholarships. 2012 has been the first year for Aberystwyth University to welcome the recipients of these scholarships.

Britain's youngest football manager

A second year human geography student at Aberystwyth University has been made the first team manager of Dolgellau Athletic, making him the youngest manager of a senior football team in the history of British football.

19-year-old Dave Webber from Bristol started coaching two years ago when he was given the chance to do his FA Level 1 coaching qualification through his job as a youth worker teaching children aged between 5 and 13.

Sunshine vitamin study

Vitamin D, also known as the 'sunshine vitamin', could be crucial this winter when it comes to coping with medical conditions such as type 2 diabetes. There is evidence to suggest that there is a link between low levels of vitamin D and type 2 diabetes, which affects more than 160,000 people in Wales.

Ffion Curtis, a researcher at the Department of Sport and Exercise Science, is studying blood vitamin D levels and blood sugar control amongst local people.

The study is funded by the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESs) scheme supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government's Convergence programme and the team are working closely with Dr Sam Rice, Diabetes Consultant at the Hywel Dda Health Board.

On location

Filming of a major new detective drama is underway at Aberystwyth University. Plas Gogerddan has been transformed into a police station and cast and crew will be on location until May, 2013.

Mathias (Hinterland in English) is being filmed in Welsh and English at the same time for broadcast on S4C and BBC4. Dubbed the new Nordic noir, the series will also be shown by Danish broadcaster DR Denmark, the same broadcaster behind *The Killing*. The series will make its TV debut on S4C in autumn 2013.

Smartphone environment

Researchers at Aberystwyth University are set to use information collected on smart phones by people living in the area around the Dyfi estuary to improve flood prediction models and record changes to habitats.

The work forms part of part of COBWEB (Citizen OBServatory WEB), a new four year £8.5m European Union funded project to develop an "observatory framework" that will make it easier for citizens to collect environmental data suitable for use in research, decision making and policy formation.

£1.7m of the project's funding will focus on four organisations working on the UNESCO-designated Dyfi Biosphere (<http://www.biosfferdyfi.org.uk/>); EcoDyfi, Aberystwyth based company Environment Systems, Welsh Government and Aberystwyth University.

Led by the University of Edinburgh, COBWEB consists of thirteen partners from five European member states: UK, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands and Ireland.

Marine biologists choose Aberystwyth

Aberystwyth University has been chosen to host the 10th annual postgraduate conference of the Marine Biological Association of the UK (MBA). This exciting meeting will bring together up to 100 marine biologists from across the UK and Europe from 8th-10th May 2013.

The MBA Postgraduate Conference is an annual scientific gathering of postgraduate students undertaking research in marine biology and related fields. The meeting will be organised by a group of postgraduates from IBERS.

Engaging with science and the public imagination

Recognising the vital role the wider community plays in university life, Aberystwyth University has created two new leading roles which will encourage dialogue with members of the public.

The University has appointed Professor Nigel Scollan as Professor of Public Engagement with Science and Professor Richard Marggraf Turley as Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination.

Both roles will focus on encouraging public participation in all aspects of University activities – from leading research to policy development, discussion on how the University works and active participation in knowledge exchange. The Professors will lead the drive to encourage greater involvement in University events and assist in developing an Open Day for people in Ceredigion.

Public and Departmental Lectures

5th December Aberystwyth University glaciologist, Dr Alun Hubbard, spoke about his on-going research in Greenland and filming for David Attenborough's *Frozen Planet* and more recently, the acclaimed two part series *Operation Iceberg*, in a public lecture at Aberystwyth University's Arts Centre Cinema.

April McMahon
January 2013

CYNGOR / COUNCIL
18/03/2013

Adroddiad yr Is-Ganghellor i'r Cyngor

Amgaeedig:

Adroddiad gan yr Is-Ganghellor, yr Athro April McMahon.

Crynodeb:

Mae'r adroddiad yn cyfeirio at yr eitemau canlynol:

- Aled Jones
- Cyfarwyddwyr a Rheolwyr yr Athrofeydd
- Newyddion am Gymrodoriaethau 2012-13
- Chwaraeon Rhyng-golegol a'r Cantorion Madrigal
- Côr Cymru
- Llwyddiant y Gymdeithas Ddadlau
- Rhodd i Lyfrgell y Brifysgol
- Yr Ysgol Gelf – Achrediad Cyngor Celfyddydau Lloegr
- Newyddion diweddaraf o'r Swyddfa Cyfathrebu a Materion Cyhoeddus

Gweithred:

Gwahoddir aelodau'r Cyngor i nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad, ac fe'u gwahoddir i godi unrhyw gwestiynau gyda'r Is-Ganghellor.

**CYNGOR / COUNCIL
18/03/2013**

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Enclosed:

Report from the Vice-Chancellor, Prof April McMahon.

Summary:

The report covers the following items:

- Aled Jones
- Institute Directors and Managers
- 2012-13 Fellowships news
- Varsity Match and the Mads
- Côr Cymru
- Debating Society success
- Bequest to University Library
- School of Art – Arts Council England Accreditation
- News from Communications and Public Affairs

Action:

Council members are invited to note the contents of the report, and are invited to ask questions of the Vice-Chancellor regarding its content.

Adroddiad yr Is-Ganghellor i'r Cyngor, Mawrth 2013

Aled Jones

Bydd aelodau'r Senedd wedi gweld y datganiad fod y Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor, yr Athro Aled Jones, wedi'i benodi'n Brif Weithredwr a'r Llyfrgellydd Cenedlaethol yn y Llyfrgell Genedlaethol, i olynu Andrew Green. Fel y dywedais yn fy neges i staff a myfyrwyr, ein colled ni yn ddiamheuol yw elw'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol. Cawn gyfle i ddiolch i Aled yn nes ymlaen am ei holl gyfraniadau i'r Brifysgol dros y 34 mlynedd a aeth heibio, yn hanesydd nodedig, yn bennaeth ar ddwy adran, yn Ddeon Cyfadran y Celfyddydau, ac yn Ddirprwy Is-Ganghellor ers 2005. Bydd nifer ohonom yn y Cyngor wedi cydweithio'n agos ag Aled yn yr amrywiol swyddogaethau hyn, ac rwy'n sicr y byddwch am ymuno â mi yn ei longyfarch ar ei benodiad newydd. Edrychwn ymlaen i adeiladu ar y berthynas bwysig ac unigryw sydd gan y Brifysgol eisoes gyda'n cymdogion a'n cyfeillion da yn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru. Bydd Aled gyda ni tan ddiwedd mis Gorffennaf, ac rydym yn mynd rhagom gyda'r cynlluniau i recriwtio ei olynwyr fel Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor ac fel Pennaeth Adran y Gymraeg.

Cyfarwyddwyr a Rheolwyr yr Athrofeydd

Mewn man arall ar agenda'r Cyngor rydym yn ystyried y camau nesaf tuag at ad-drefnu academiaidd, gan ganolbwyntio'n benodol ar drefniadaeth fewnol y darpar Athrofeydd a'u perthynas yn y dyfodol â'n hadrannau gwasanaethau proffesiynol. Yn ystod Ionawr a Chwefror yr ydym hefyd wedi llwyddo i benodi Cyfarwyddwyr a Rheolwyr i'r holl Athrofeydd newydd. Rydyn ni'n ffodus o fod wedi gweld y fath ymgeiswyr mewnol rhagorol yn rhoi eu henwau i'w hystyried ac mae rhestr gyflawn (wedi'i chymeradwyo gan y Cyngor yn y cyfarfod ym mis Chwefror) Cyfarwyddwyr a Rheolwyr yr Athrofeydd i'w gweld isod. Edrychaf ymlaen yn fawr i gydweithio â phob un ohonynt a gobeithio yr ymunwch â mi yn eu llongyfarch a dymuno'n dda iddynt:

Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Wayne Powell; Rheolwr: Emyr Phillips.

Gwyddorau Dynol: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Kate Bullen; Rheolwr: Jo Strong

Athrofa Mathemateg, Ffiseg a Chyfrifiadureg: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Qiang Shen; Rheolwr: Dave Smith

Athrofa Daearyddiaeth, Hanes a Gwleidyddiaeth: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Neil Glasser; Rheolwr: Jackie Sayce

Athrofa yn cynnwys Rheolaeth a Busnes, Y Gyfraith a Throsedddeg ac Astudiaethau Gwybodaeth: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Andy Henley; Rheolwr: Adrian Harvey

Sefydliad Llenyddiaeth, Ieithoedd a'r Celfyddydau Creadigol: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Sarah Prescott; Rheolwr: Kath Williams

Sefydliad yn cynnwys Yr Ysgol Addysg, Y Ganolfan Datblygu Staff ac Ymarfer Academaidd, Canolfan y Graddedigion, Canolfan Saesneg Ryngwladol, Gyrfaedd, a Cymorth i Fyfyrwyr: Cyfarwyddwr: Yr Athro Tim Woods; Rheolwr: Annette Davies.

.

Newyddion am Gymrodoriaethau 2012-13

Daeth Mark Price, Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr Waitrose, ar ymweliad â'r Brifysgol ar 26 Chwefror. Cafodd ei urddo'n Gymrawd (diolch arbennig i'r Is-Lywydd, Gwerfyl Pierce Jones am ei rhan bwysig yn hyn!), ac fe gafodd Mark hefyd daith i weld adnoddau IBERS a dysgu rhagor am bob math o brosiectau sydd ar y gweill. Cyn y seremoni Urddo atebodd gwestiynau gan gynulleidfa fywiog, o fyfyrwyr yn bennaf o bob math o adrannau. Er ein bod yn annog Cymrodwr newydd yn gryf i ddod i un o'r seremonïau graddio ym mis Gorffennaf, mae'n bwysig sylweddoli nad yw hyn yn bosibl i rai o'r ymgeiswyr am Gymrodoriaeth, sydd o bosib ag ymrwymïadau personol neu broffesiynol ar gyfer yr wythnos honno. Rydym felly yn bwriadu gwahodd yr unigolion hyn i Aberystwyth ar amser sy'n gyfleus drwy gydol y flwyddyn, i dderbyn eu Cymrodoriaethau - ac roedd ymweliad Mark yn enghraifft ragorol. Gobeithiwn groesawu Alex Jones yn ystod mis Ebrill i achlysur tebyg.

Chwaraeon Rhyng-golegol a'r Cantorion Madrigal

Ganol mis Chwefror roeddwn wrth fy modd i fod yn rhan o benwythnos o weithgareddau amrywiol, yn cynnwys chwaraeon rhyng-golegol cystadleuol iawn rhwng Aber a Bangor, a chinio aduniad blynyddol y Cantorion Madrigal! Diwrnod pan y caiff ein perthynas agos a chyfeillgar â'n cyfeillion yn y gogledd ei rhoi o'r neilltu am ddiwrnod o gystadlu brwd, sy'n cynnwys dros 30 o wahanol weithgareddau yw diwrnod y chwaraeon rhyng-golegol. Roedd yn bleser croesawu rhai cydweithwyr o Fangor ac aelodau o'r Gweithgorau Chwaraeon i ginio anffurfiol ar y nos Wener, ac rwy'n ddiolchgar iawn i bawb yn Undeb y Myfyrwyr am yr holl drefniadau ac am fy nhwys o amgylch pob math o chwaraeon, rhai ohonynt nad oeddwn erioed wedi clywed amdanynt. Roedd hyd yn oed yn fwy o bleser cael croesawu'r cwpan yn ôl, ar ôl diwrnod o chwaraeon teg a rhagorol a buddugoliaeth haeddiannol iawn i Aber. Yn fuan ar ôl i'r Chwaraeon Rhyng-golegol ddod i ben, roedd yn bleser gen Rob a finau fod yn westeion wrth i aelodau presennol a chyn-aelodau y Cantorion Madrigal ddathlu 63^{ain} pen-blwydd cymdeithas hynaf y Brifysgol. Dydw i erioed wedi clywed canu o'r fath safon ar ôl cinio (ac yn bendant ddim ar ôl achlysur chwaraeon), ac rwy'n hynod falch fod y Cantorion Madrigal wedi cytuno i ganu i ni unwaith eto yn y seremoni Graddio eleni.

Côr Cymru

Hoffwn ddweud da iawn wrth Gôr Pantycelyn, sydd wedi cyrraedd rownd gyn-derfynol cystadleuaeth Côr Cymru eleni. Bu'n fraint eu clywed yn ymarfer cyn eu perfformiad yng Nghanolfan y Celfyddydau – heb sôn am ein myfyrwyr ac aelodau staff a oedd yn canu fel aelodau o gorau eraill ar y rhestr fer. Ni allwn ddatgelu'r canlyniadau wrth gwrs, felly'r unig beth y gallaf ei wneud yw eich gwahodd i wyllo yn ystod mis Mawrth pan gaiff y gystadleuaeth ei dangos ar y teledu.

Llwyddiant y Gymdeithas Ddadlau

Perfformiodd aelodau'r Gymdeithas Ddadlau yn eithriadol o dda ym Mhencampwriaethau Dadlau Prifysgolion y Byd a gynhaliwyd yn ddiweddar yn Technische Universität Berlin. Daeth Roberto Sarrionandia (3^{edd} flwyddyn Cyfrifiadureg) ac Ollie Newlan (2^{il} flwyddyn Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol), ynghyd â Samuel Vincent (3^{edd} flwyddyn Hanes) fel barnwr, yn yr unfed lle ar ddeg yn gyffredinol, ar ôl mynd ymhellach yn y gystadleuaeth nag enwau mawr megis Yale, Princeton, Caergrawnt B, Durham, Coleg Prifysgol Cork, Stanford, Bryste, a McGill. Y buddugwyr o blith 387 o dimau oedd

Monash. Yn yr 16 olaf wynebai Aber yr LSE, Harvard ac Auckland, ac yna Coleg Prifysgol Dulyn, Rhydychen ac Auckland yn y rownd go-gynderfynol. Mae Roberto ac Ollie yn awr yn edrych ymlaen i gynrychioli Cymru yn Rownd Ola Cystadleuaeth Ryngwladol Byrlysg John Smith yng Nghaeredin ganol mis Ebrill – ac ar ôl hynny, i groesawu timau o bob rhan o'r Deyrnas Unedig i Aberystwyth y penwythnos olaf ym mis Ebrill i Gystadleuaeth Agored Baillie Gifford.

Rhodd i Lyfrgell y Brifysgol

Mae Rhys Lewis, cyn-löwr ac athro hanes a fu farw yn 108 oed ym mis Gorffennaf 2012, wedi gadael £10,000 yn ei ewyllys i lyfrgell ei hen brifysgol. Hanes a Hanes Economaidd oedd pwnc Mr Lewis, a graddiodd o Brifysgol Aberystwyth yn 1931, ac ennill tystysgrif athro, hefyd yn Aberystwyth, y flwyddyn ddilynol. Cyflwynwyd rhodd Mr Lewis i'r Brifysgol gan ei fab, John, sydd hefyd yn un o raddedigion Aberystwyth (BA Economeg a Daearyddiaeth 1963) a'i bartner Ms Brenda Dobney.

Defnyddir rhodd Mr Lewis i ychwanegu at gasgliad llyfrau hanes y Brifysgol, sydd eisoes yn helaeth, ac fe roddir plât llyfr ymhob cyfrol berthnasol i gydnabod hyn. Bydd myfyrwyr yn elwa'n hollol uniongyrchol o'r rhodd, diolch i gynllun arloesol i ganiatáu i fyfyrwyr archebu llyfrau sy'n berthnasol i'w cyrsiau, i atodi'r pwrcasiadau a wneir gan staff academiaidd.

Yr Ysgol Gelf – Achrediad Cyngor Celfyddydau Lloegr

Ddechrau mis Mawrth clywsom gan CyMAL fod Oriel ac Amgueddfa'r Ysgol Gelf yn ogystal â'r Casgliad a'r Oriel Cerameg, wedi llwyddo unwaith eto yn y ceisiadau a wnaethpwyd am achrediad Cyngor Celfyddydau Lloegr. Mae'r achrediad yn cydnabod y safonau uchaf ym maes rheoli amgueddfeydd a gofalu am gasgliadau, ond mae hefyd yn cadw gwahanol gyfleoedd cyllido ar agor i ni. Ysgol Gelf Glasgow yw'r unig amgueddfa arall yn y Deyrnas Unedig a achredwyd. Longyfarchwn Bob Meyrick a'i gydweithwyr am eu holl waith ar y cais hwn, sy'n cynnwys llawer iawn o waith dogfennu a phrofion trwyadl ar safonau.

Ac yn awr dyma'r newyddion diweddaraf o'r Swyddfa Cyfathrebu a Materion Cyhoeddus:

Tywyllu Rhewlifau'r Arctig

Am y tro cyntaf mae ymchwilwyr o SDGD ac IBERS ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth, ynghyd â chydweithwyr o Brifysgolion Sheffield a Bryste, wedi mesur y "gyllideb feicrobaidd" ar wyneb rhewlif yn ynysforoedd yr Uwch-Arctig yn Svalbard, Norwy, gan ddarganfod sut y mae bacteria o bosibl yn helpu i doddi rhewlifau.

Gan ysgrifennu yn *Environmental Microbiology*, ymddengys bellach nad y cynnydd yn nhymheredd yr awyr yw'r unig beth sy'n achosi iddynt doddi. Mae darnau mân mân o fater byw sydd i'w gweld ar wyneb yr iâ hefyd yn cynyddu'r toddi.

Cyllidwyd yr astudiaeth gan Gonsortiwm Newid Hinsawdd Cymru a Chyngor Ymchwil yr Amgylchedd Naturiol (NERC).

Y Brifysgol yn croesawu Coleg Brenhinol Astudiaethau Amddiffyn

Ar 24/25 Ionawr croesawodd Prifysgol Aberystwyth grŵp o fyfyrwyr o Goleg Brenhinol Astudiaethau Amddiffyn ar ymweliad.

Roedd yr ymweliad yn rhan o daith wythnos yng Nghymru, a chyflwynwyd y myfyrwyr – pob un ohonynt yn uwch swyddogion milwrol Prydeinig a rhyngwladol – i ystod o arbenigedd ym meysydd astudiaethau strategol, polisi Ewropeaidd ac Addysg Uwch.

Yn ystod eu hymweliad, cyfarfu'r myfyrwyr â staff yn yr Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol i drafod gwaith yr Adran, ac yn benodol, arbenigedd yr Adran mewn Astudiaethau Strategol. Cawsant gyfarfod hefyd â Llywydd y Brifysgol, Syr Emyr Jones Parry i drafod swyddogaethau'r Undeb Ewropeaidd a Chymru, a chael cyfle i elwa ar brofiad helaeth Syr Emyr fel llysgennad a diplomydd.

Creu apiau trwy ymchwil

Er mwyn gwneud y mwyaf wrth drosglwyddo ymchwil ac arbenigedd Prifysgol Aberystwyth yn llwyddiannus i greu apiau a gwasanaethau symudol, mae'n bleser gan y Brifysgol gyhoeddi ei buddsoddiad strategol mewn cwmni o'r Trallwng, sef Codiki Cyf, trwy gyfrwng Cronfa Her Aberystwyth.

Yn 2012 lansiodd y Brifysgol ddau ap yn llwyddiannus, sef *FarmGRAZE* i'r sector ffermio a *horseRATION* a anelwyd at y sector ceffylau, ar y cyd â chwmni Arkuris Cyf a CEMAS (Morgannwg).

Dewis ymgeisydd ar gyfer y llety newydd

Cyhoeddodd Prifysgol Aberystwyth mai cwmni Balfour Beatty a ddewiswyd yn ymgeisydd ffafriedig ar gyfer datblygu ei llety newydd i fyfyrwyr.

Mae'r cynllun, a fydd yn costio tua £45m, wedi ei leoli yn Fferm Penglais, ar dir sy'n union y tu ôl i bentref arobryn presennol y myfyrwyr, Pentre Jane Morgan, ac o fewn cyrraedd yn hawdd i gampws y Brifysgol ym Mhenglais.

Bydd y datblygiad newydd yn darparu llety *en-suite* i 1,000 o fyfyrwyr ac yn cynnwys 100 o fflatiau stiwdio. Bydd y llety'n cynnwys parthau dysgu a chymunedol, yn unol ag agwedd flaengar Aberystwyth; disgwylir i'r myfyrwyr cyntaf ymgartrefu yn y llety ym mis Medi 2014.

Gwahoddwyd aelodau'r cyhoedd, myfyrwyr a staff i weld cynlluniau'r datblygiad newydd arfaethedig ym Mhenbryn Ddydd Gwener 8 Chwefror ac yn yr Hen Goleg Ddydd Llun 11 a Dydd Mawrth 12 Chwefror.

Arweinyddiaeth Amgylcheddol

Ar 8 Chwefror, croesawodd Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol Prifysgol Aberystwyth siaradwyr o bob rhan o Gymru i drafod swyddogaeth arweiniol y wlad ym maes gwleidyddiaeth amgylcheddol ryngwladol.

Teitl y gynhadledd oedd Cynhadledd Arweinyddiaeth Amgylcheddol Cymru, ac ystyriwyd safle Cymru mewn gwleidyddiaeth amgylcheddol ryngwladol a sut, trwy ei harferion amgylcheddol, y gall Cymru atgyfnerthu ei safle wrth greu ymateb rhyngwladol i broblemau amgylcheddol cyffredin.

Etholiad ym maes ymddygiad anifeiliaid

Etholwyd Dr Rupert Marshall, sy'n ddarlithydd ym maes Ymddygiad Anifeiliaid yn IBERS, Prifysgol Aberystwyth, ar Fwrdd Llywodraethol Cymdeithas Ryngwladol Astudio Ymddygiad Anifeiliaid (ASAB).

Mae Dr Marshall yn adnabyddus am ei waith ar gân adar, ac mae'n cyfrannu'n rheolaidd i raglenni radio a theledu, gan gynnwys *The One Show* a *Springwatch* ar y BBC. Yn fwyaf diweddar ymddangosodd ar yr *Antiques Roadshow*, pan ddaeth â George, y parot kakapo o amgueddfa sŵleg y Brifysgol, i'w ddangos i'r arbenigwyr.

ASAB yw'r gymdeithas ddysgedig ryngwladol flaenaf ar gyfer astudio ymddygiad anifeiliaid, ac mae'r Llywodraeth a gwneuthurwyr rhaglenni teledu ar hanes naturiol yn ymgynghori'n helaeth ag aelodau'r gymdeithas.

Dathlu Blwyddyn Newydd Tseinïaidd

Yn ddiweddar, aeth 11 o fyfyrwyr Tseinïaidd o Brifysgol Aberystwyth ar daith i Fae Caerdydd i dderbyniad Blwyddyn Newydd Tseinïaidd a gynhaliwyd yn y Senedd.

Un o'r gwesteion yn bresennol yn yr achlysur, a gynhaliwyd gan Brif Weinidog Cymru, Y Gwir Anrhydeddus Carwyn Jones, AC, oedd Liu Xiaoming, sef Llysgennad Tsieina yn y Deyrnas Unedig. Yn ystod y noson cafwyd perfformiadau ac anerchiadau.

Rhoddodd yr achlysur gyfle unigryw i'r myfyrwyr rwydweithio a chymdeithasu ag Aelodau o'r Cynulliad, a phobl fusnes yn ogystal â myfyrwyr o brifysgolion eraill o bob rhan o Gymru.

Bywyd Moleciwlaidd Planhigion

Gwerslyfr newydd blaengar yw *The Molecular Life of Plants*, a gynlluniwyd i gyflwyno israddedigion i fioleg planhigion arbrofol gyfoes, ac mae gwreiddiau'r awduron yn ddwfn yng Nghymru.

Graddiodd Russell Jones, Helen Ougham a Howard (Sid) Thomas ill tri â doethuriaethau o Brifysgol Aberystwyth, ac mae Helen a Sid yn gweithio yn IBERS. I ysgrifennu'r llyfr, fe ymunodd yr academydd ac athro nodedig Dr Susan Waaland â nhw o Brifysgol Washington.

Mae'r llyfr yn parhau'r traddodiad hir sydd gan Aberystwyth fel canolfan byd ym maes ymchwil ac addysgu gwyddor planhigion. Cyhoeddiad ar y cyd yw *The Molecular Life of Plants* rhwng Cymdeithas Biolegwyr Planhigion America (sef y prif gorff rhyngwladol sy'n cynrychioli gwyddonwyr planhigion ledled y byd) a John Wiley & Sons Cyf.

Pobl, nid y blaned, sy'n ysgogi ffordd werdd o fyw

Yn ôl astudiaeth a wnaed gan gymrawd ymchwil o Brifysgol Aberystwyth yr hyn sy'n ysgogi pobl i geisio lleihau eu hól-troed carbon yw ceisio helpu'r rhai yr effeithir arnyn nhw gan y newid yn yr hinsawdd yn fwy nag 'achub y blaned'.

Ymunodd Dr Rachel Howell, SDGD, â Phrifysgol Aberystwyth fis Medi diwethaf o Brifysgol Caeredin. Mae'n datblygu prosiectau ymchwil yn rhan o thema Consortiwm Newid Hinsawdd Cymru, 'Agweddau Dynol y Newid yn yr Hinsawdd'.

Yr ysgogiad mwyaf i ddewis ffordd werdd o fyw yw pryder am bobl mewn gwledydd sy'n datblygu, am fod eu bywydau'n cael eu peryglu fwyfwy gan effeithiau'r cynhesu byd-eang, yn ôl ymchwilwyr. Ysgogwyr allweddol eraill sy'n annog pobl i wneud dewisiadau amgylcheddol-gyfrifol yw argyhoeddiad moesol unigolion ac ymdeimlad o gymuned.

Cefnogwyd yr astudiaeth, a gyhoeddir yn y *Journal of Global Environmental Change*, gan *Scottish Alliance for Geosciences, Environment and Society*.

Y Brifysgol yn cadw Gwobrau Rhagoriaeth AD mewn Ymchwil

Mae *Vitae*, sef y sefydliad sy'n hyrwyddo ymchwil mewn sefydliadau addysg uwch yn y Deyrnas Unedig, wedi cadarnhau bod Prifysgol Aberystwyth ymhlith y 12 sefydliad yn y Deyrnas Unedig a lwyddodd i gadw gwobr y Comisiwn Ewropeaidd, Rhagoriaeth AD mewn Ymchwil.

Mae'r Wobr yn dystiolaeth o ymrwymiad y Brifysgol i wella amodau gwaith a datblygu gyrfa i staff ymchwil, a fydd yn ei dro yn gwella cyfanswm, ansawdd ac effaith ymchwil er lles y gymdeithas a'r economi yn y Deyrnas Unedig.

Bellach enillodd 72 o sefydliadau yn y DU Wobr Rhagoriaeth AD mewn Ymchwil sy'n eu hymrwymo i raglen o welliannau i amodau gwaith ymchwilwyr ac i werthuso mewnol ac allanol.

Y Brifysgol yn croesawu Comisiwn y Gyfraith

Ddydd Gwener 8 Mawrth cynhaliodd Comisiwn y Gyfraith seminar yn Adran y Gyfraith a Throsedddeg ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth i drafod creu Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol i Gymru.

Bu'r Cadeirydd, Yr Arglwydd Ustus Syr David Lloyd Jones, yn farnwr y Llys Apêl ers mis Hydref 2012, ac ef yw Cadeirydd Comisiwn y Gyfraith. Y mae hefyd yn Gymrawd Prifysgol Aberystwyth.

Y mae corff annibynnol statudol a grëwyd gan Ddeddf Comisiwn y Gyfraith 1965, sef Comisiwn y Gyfraith Lloegr a Chymru, yn anelu i adolygu'r gyfraith yn barhaus ac i argymhell diwygio lle bo angen.

Rhaglenni Meistr newydd

Mae Newid yn yr Hinsawdd, lawnderau Dynol, a Rheoli Menter a Blaengaredd ymhlith ystod o gynlluniau gradd uwchraddedig newydd sy'n cael eu lansio gan Adran y Gyfraith a Throsedddeg ac Ysgol Rheolaeth a Busnes Prifysgol Aberystwyth ar gyfer mis Medi 2013.

Mae'r rhaglenni newydd hyn yn rhan o'r cynllunio ar gyfer yr Athrofa newydd mewn Rheolaeth, y Gyfraith ac Astudiaethau Gwybodaeth, a fydd yn caniatáu cydweithio agosach ar draws yr adrannau, ac yn cynnwys cynlluniau am well adnoddau i uwchraddedigion yn rhan o gymuned fywiog broffesiynol.

Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Merched

Roedd y codwr pwysau Olympaidd, Natasha Perdue, yn un o'r siaradwyr ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth ddydd Gwener 8 Mawrth i nodi Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Merched. Ganwyd Natasha yn Abertawe ac fe gynrychiolodd Cymru yng Ngemau'r Gymanwlad yn 2006 a 2010, ac roedd yn aelod o dîm codi pwysau Prydain yn Llundain 2012.

Ymunodd â menywod lleol sy'n hoffi chwaraeon i sôn am eu profiadau, y rhan y mae chwaraeon yn ei chwarae yn ei bywyd, ac ysbrydoliaeth, mewn achlysur *Women Talk Sports* yng Nghanolfan Chwaraeon y Brifysgol. Roedd yr achlysur yn rhan o raglen bedwar diwrnod ac fe gafodd ei gyd-lynu gan Adran Seicoleg y Brifysgol.

Dathlu Pythefnos Masnach Deg

Dathlodd y Brifysgol ac Undeb y Myfyrwyr bythefnos Masnach Deg, gydag ystod o hyrwyddiadau arbennig.

Dyfarnwyd statws Masnach Deg i Brifysgol Aberystwyth (gan gynnwys Undeb y Myfyrwyr) gan y Sefydliad Masnach Deg yn 2009 ac mae'n ymrwymedig i gynorthwyo, hyrwyddo a defnyddio nwyddau Masnach Deg.

Mae Pythefnos Masnach Deg yn tynnu sylw bob blwyddyn at y ffordd y caiff egwyddorion a nwyddau Masnach Deg eu hyrwyddo a'r cysylltiadau rhwng cwsmeriaid a chynhyrchwyr.

Chwilio am fywyd gwyllt mewn ras yn erbyn y cloc

Mae arbenigwyr a gwirfoddolwyr bywyd gwyllt ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth yn galw am gymorth myfyrwyr, staff a'r cyhoedd i ganfod a chofnodi cynifer â phosibl o wahanol fathau o blanhigion ac anifeiliaid.

Ddydd Sadwrn, 11 Mai mae'r Brifysgol yn cynnal *Bioblits* ar gampws Penglais, gyda'r nod o dorri record am nifer mwyaf y rhywogaethau a ganfyddir ar gampws prifysgol mewn un diwrnod.

Mae Prifysgol Aberystwyth yn ymfalchïo yn un o'r lleoliadau harddaf sydd gan unrhyw brifysgol yn y wlad. Aberystwyth hefyd yw'r unig gampws prifysgol yn y Deyrnas Unedig wedi'i lleoli yn un o warchodfeydd biosffer penodedig UNESCO.

Gwyddonwyr Aberystwyth yn datblygu dull newydd o wneud graffen

Y mae tîm o ffisegwyr deunyddiau yn y Sefydliad Mathemateg a Ffiseg, dan arweiniad Yr Athro Andrew Evans, wedi darganfod dull newydd o gynhyrchu graffen, sy'n ddeunydd a chanddo nodweddion optegol ac electronig rhyfeddol.

Haen unigol o atomau carbon wedi'u clymu ynghyd mewn dull tebyg i graffeiit yw graffen. Ond, y mae iddo hefyd nodweddion gwahanol iawn a gwell fel deunydd.

Bu'r tîm yn Aberystwyth yn gweithio ar y cyd â chydweithwyr ym Mhrifysgol Gwyddoniaeth a Thechnoleg Norwy yn Trondheim, ac ym MaxLab yn Lund, Sweden. Bellach, gwnaeth y tîm gais am batent rhyngwladol ar gyfer y dull newydd hwn o wneud graffen.

Cyllidir y gwaith ymchwil gan Gyngor Ymchwil y Gwyddorau Peirianegol a Ffisegol (EPSRC) ac fe'i gweithredir o fewn i'r Ganolfan Deunyddiau a Dyfeisiadau Swyddogaethol Uwch, sef partneriaeth ymchwil a menter rhwng Prifysgolion Aberystwyth a Bangor a gyllidir gan y Cyngor Cyllido.

Darlithoedd Cyhoeddus ac Adrannol

Dydd Iau 14 Mawrth 2013

Darlith Goffa E. H. Carr

'If International Relations lives in the street, what is it doing in the classroom?'

Peter Vale (Athro'r Dyniaethau, Prifysgol Johannesburg, a Deiliad Emeritus Cadair Nelson Mandela mewn Gwleidyddiaeth, Prifysgol Rhodes)

Yr Hen Neuadd, Yr Hen Goleg, 6:00-8:00pm

April McMahon

7 Mawrth 2013

VC's Report to Council, March 2013

Aled Jones

Members of Council will have seen the announcement that Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Aled Jones has been appointed the next Chief Executive and National Librarian of the National Library of Wales, succeeding Andrew Green. As I said in my message to staff and students, our loss is undoubtedly the National Library's gain. There will be opportunities for us to thank Aled later for his many contributions to the University over the past 34 years, as a distinguished historian, head of two departments, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and as Pro Vice-Chancellor since 2005. Many of us on Council will have worked with Aled closely in these various roles, and I am sure you will want to join me in congratulating him on his new appointment. We look forward to building on the important and unique relationship the University already enjoys with our good friends and neighbours at the National Library of Wales. Aled will be with us until the end of July, and we are taking forward plans for recruiting his successors as PVC and as Head of the Welsh Department.

Institute Directors and Managers

Elsewhere on the Council agenda we are considering the next steps towards academic reorganisation, specifically focusing on the internal organisation of the future Institutes and their future relationship with our professional support departments. During January and February we have also successfully appointed Directors and Managers for all the new Institutes. We are very fortunate to have seen a range of excellent internal candidates coming forward for consideration, and the full list of Institute Directors (approved by Council at the February meeting) and Managers is below. I look forward very much to working with them all and hope you will join me in sending them congratulations and good wishes:

IBERS: ID Professor Wayne Powell; IM Emyr Phillips.

Human Sciences: ID Professor Kate Bullen; IM Jo Strong

IMPACS (Institute for Mathematical, Physical and Computing Sciences): ID Professor Qiang Shen; IM Dave Smith

Institute of Geography, History and Politics: ID Professor Neil Glasser; IM Jackie Sayce

Institute including SMB, Law and Criminology and DIS: ID Professor Andy Henley; IM Adrian Harvey

Institute of Literature, Languages and Creative Arts: ID Professor Sarah Prescott; IM Kath Williams

Institute including SELL, CDSAP, Graduate Centre, IEC, Careers and Student Learning Support: ID Professor Tim Woods; IM Annette Davies.

2012-13 Fellowships news

Mark Price, the Managing Director of Waitrose, visited the University on 26 February. We conferred Mark's Fellowship (special thanks to Vice-President Gweryl Pierce Jones for her important part in this!), and Mark also toured facilities at IBERS and found out more about a range of ongoing projects. Prior to the Fellowship ceremony, he answered questions from a lively audience, mainly composed of

students from a range of departments. While we do strongly encourage new Fellows to come to one of the graduation ceremonies in July, it is important to recognise that this may simply not be possible for some of our Fellowship candidates, who may already have personal or professional commitments for that week. We therefore aim to invite these individuals to Aberystwyth at a mutually convenient time through the year, to have their Fellowships conferred – and Mark Price’s visit was an excellent example. We hope to be welcoming Alex Jones during April for a similar event.

Varsity Match and the Mads

I was delighted to be part of a weekend of varied events in mid-February, featuring the keenly-fought Varsity Match between Aber and Bangor, and the annual reunion dinner for the Elizabethan Madrigal Singers! The Varsity Match sees our usually close and amicable relationship with our friends in the North suspended for a day of sporting rivalry involving more than 30 events. It was a pleasure to welcome some colleagues from Bangor and members of both Sports’ Executives for an informal dinner on the Friday night, and I am very grateful to all at the Students’ Union for their feats of organisation and for escorting me round to see a range of sports, some of which I had not previously known existed. It was an even greater pleasure to welcome the trophy back, after a day of excellent sportsmanship and a well-deserved Aber win. Shortly after the Varsity Match ended, Rob and I were pleased to be guests as past and present members of the Madrigals celebrated the 63rd birthday of the oldest society in the University. I have rarely heard after-dinner singing of such high quality (certainly not previously after a sporting event), and I am particularly pleased that the Madrigals have agreed to sing for us again at Graduation this year.

Côr Cymru

Well done to the Pantycelyn Choir, who qualified for the semi-finals of Côr Cymru this year. It was a privilege to hear them rehearsing before their performance in the Arts Centre – not to mention all our students and staff members who were singing as members of other short-listed choirs. We can’t give away the results of course, so I can only invite you to tune in during March when the competition will be shown on television.

Debating Society success

Members of the Debating Society performed extremely well at the World Universities Debating Championships which were held recently at the Technische Universität Berlin. Debaters Roberto Sarrionandia (3rd year Computer Science) and Ollie Newlan (2nd year International Politics), accompanied by Samuel Vincent (3rd year History) in the role of judge, reached 11th place over all, having progressed further in the competition than big names such as Yale, Princeton, Cambridge B, Durham, University College Cork, Stanford, Bristol, and McGill. Monash emerged the winners from a field of 387 teams. Aber faced the LSE, Harvard and Auckland in the last 16, and then University College Dublin, Oxford and Auckland in the quarter finals. Roberto and Ollie are now looking forward to representing Wales at the John Smith International Mace Final in Edinburgh in mid-April. After that, they are looking forward to welcoming teams from across the UK to Aberystwyth on the last weekend of April for the Baillie Gifford Aberystwyth Open.

Bequest to University Library

Former miner and history teacher Rhys Lewis, who died at the age of 108 in July 2012, has bequeathed £10,000 to the library of his former university. Mr Lewis graduated from Aberystwyth University in 1931 having studied History and Economic History, and gained his teacher's certificate, also at Aberystwyth, the following year. Mr Lewis' bequest was presented to the University by his son, John, who is also an Aberystwyth graduate (BA Economics and Geography 1963), and his partner Ms Brenda Dobney.

Mr Lewis's bequest will be used to add to the already extensive collection of books in the University's history section, and will be acknowledged by a bookplate in each acquired volume. This will benefit students very directly, thanks to a pioneering initiative to allow students to order books relevant to their courses, complementing purchases made by academic staff.

School of Art – Arts Council England Accreditation

We learned from CyMAL in early March that both the School of Art Gallery and Museum and the Ceramic Gallery and Collection have once more been successful in our accreditation applications to Arts Council England. Accreditation recognises the highest standards of museum management and collection care, but also keeps open alternative funding streams for us. Glasgow School of Art is the only other accredited museum in the UK. Very well done to Bob Meyrick and his colleagues for all their work on this application, which does involve an extensive amount of documentation and rigorous demonstration of quality.

And now, here is the latest news from Communications and Public Affairs:

The darkening of Arctic Glaciers

Aberystwyth University researchers from IGES and IBERS, together with colleagues from the Universities of Sheffield and Bristol, have measured the "microbial budget" of a glacier surface in the Norwegian High-Arctic archipelago of Svalbard for the first time, discovering how bacteria may help melt glaciers.

Writing in *Environmental Microbiology*, it now appears that it's not only rising air temperatures that are causing their decline. Tiny specks of living matter that appear on the ice surface are also increasing the melting.

The Climate Change Consortium of Wales (C3W) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funded the study.

University welcomes Royal College of Defence Studies

On 24/25 January, Aberystwyth University hosted a visit from a group of students from the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS).

The visit was part of a week-long tour of Wales, and introduced the students - all high ranking British and international military leaders – to a range of expertise in the areas of strategic studies, European

policy and Higher Education.

During their visit, the students met with staff at the Department of International Politics to discuss the work of the Department, and in particular, the Department's expertise in Strategic Studies. The students met also with University President, Sir Emyr Jones Parry to discuss the role of the EU and Wales, whilst also benefitting from Sir Emyr's extensive experience as a diplomat and ambassador.

Turning research into mobile apps

To maximise the successful translation of Aberystwyth University research and expertise into mobile applications and services, the University is pleased to announce its strategic investment in Welshpool based company Codiki Ltd through the Aberystwyth Challenge Fund.

In 2012, the University successfully launched two apps, farmGRAZE for the farming sector and horseRATION aimed at the equine sector, in collaboration with Arkuris Ltd and CEMAS (Glamorgan).

Preferred bidder for new accommodation

Aberystwyth University has announced that Balfour Beatty has been selected as the preferred bidder for the development of its new student accommodation.

The circa £45 million pound scheme will be located on Penglais Farm, on land immediately behind the existing award winning Pentre Jane Morgan student village and within walking distance to the University's Penglais campus.

The new development will provide en-suite accommodation for 1000 students and include 100 studio flats. The accommodation includes enhanced learning and communal zones, in keeping with Aberystwyth's progressive approach; the first students are expected to take up residence in September 2014.

Members of the public, students and staff were invited to view the designs of new proposed development at Penbryn on Friday 8 February and at the Old College on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12.

Environmental Leadership

On the 8th of February, the International Politics Department at Aberystwyth University welcomed speakers from across Wales to discuss the nation's leadership role in international environmental politics.

The conference entitled *Wales Environmental Leadership Conference* explored Wales' place in international environmental politics and how, through its environmental practices, Wales can strengthen its position in generating an international response to shared environmental problems.

Animal behaviour election

Aberystwyth University Animal Behaviour lecturer Dr Rupert Marshall has been elected to the governing Council of the international Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB).

Dr Marshall, a lecturer at IBERS, is known for his work on bird song, and is a regular contributor to radio and tv, including the BBC's *The One Show* and *Springwatch*. Most recently he appeared on the *Antiques Roadshow*, bringing along George the kakapo parrot from the University's zoology museum.

ASAB is the premiere international learned society for the study of animal behaviour. Its members are widely consulted by Government and natural history TV programme makers.

Celebrating the Chinese New Year

Recently, 11 Chinese students from Aberystwyth University made the journey down to Cardiff Bay to attend a Chinese New Year reception in the Senedd.

The event, hosted by the First Minister of Wales Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, also saw the Chinese Ambassador to the UK in attendance, Liu Xiaoming, and the evening consisted of performances and speeches.

The event provided the students with a unique opportunity to network and socialise with Assembly Members, business men and women, as well as students from other Universities across Wales.

The Molecular Life of Plants

The Molecular Life of Plants, an innovative new textbook designed to introduce undergraduate students to contemporary experimental plant biology, has been written by authors with strong roots in Wales.

Russell Jones, Helen Ougham and Howard (Sid) Thomas are all doctoral graduates of Aberystwyth University. Helen and Sid are based in IBERS. In writing the book, they were joined by distinguished academic and teacher Dr Susan Waaland of the University of Washington.

The book continues the long tradition of Aberystwyth as a world centre of plant science research and teaching. *The Molecular Life of Plants* is a co-publication by the American Society of Plant Biologists (the leading international body representing plant scientists worldwide) and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

People not polar bears prompt greener lifestyles

A study carried out by an Aberystwyth University research fellow suggests that people who cut their carbon footprint are motivated by helping those affected by climate change more than by 'saving the planet'.

Dr Rachel Howell from IGES joined Aberystwyth University last September from the University of Edinburgh. She is developing research projects as part of the 'Human Dimensions of Climate Change' theme of the Climate Change Consortium of Wales.

The biggest incentive for choosing green lifestyles is concern for people in developing countries, whose lives are increasingly put at risk by the effects of global warming, researchers say. Other key drivers that encourage people to make environmentally responsible choices include individuals' moral convictions and a sense of community.

The study, which is published in the Journal of Global Environmental Change, was supported by the Scottish Alliance for Geosciences, Environment and Society (SAGES).

University retains HR Excellence in Research Awards

Vitae, the UK organisation championing research in higher education institutions, has confirmed that Aberystwyth University is among 12 UK institutions to have successfully retained their HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission.

The Award demonstrates a university's commitment to improving the working conditions and career development for research staff, which will in turn improve the quantity, quality and impact of research for the benefit of UK society and the economy.

Seventy two UK organisations now have the HR Excellence in Research Award committing them to a programme of improvements in working conditions for researchers and internal and external evaluation.

University welcomes Law Commission

On Friday 8 March, the Law Commission held a seminar at the Department of Law and Criminology at Aberystwyth University to discuss the creation of a Welsh Advisory Committee.

The chair, Lord Justice (Sir David) Lloyd Jones, has been a judge of the Court of Appeal since October 2012, is Chairman of the Law Commission and also an Aberystwyth University Fellow.

A statutory independent body created by the Law Commissions Act 1965, the Law Commission of England and Wales aims to keep the law under review and to recommend reform where it is needed.

New masters programmes

Climate Change and Human Rights, and Enterprise and Innovation Management are amongst a range of new postgraduate degrees being launched by Aberystwyth University's Department of Law and Criminology and the School of Management and Business for September 2013.

These new programmes are part of the planning for the new Institute of Management, Law and Information Science, which will allow closer working across Departments, and involves plans for improved facilities for postgraduates, as part of a vibrant new professionally-based community.

International women's day

Olympic weightlifter Natasha Perdue was one of the speakers at Aberystwyth University on Friday 8th of March to mark International Women's Day. Swansea-born Natasha represented Wales at the 2006 and 2010 Commonwealth Games and was a member of the British weightlifting team at London 2012.

She joined local sports women to talk about their experiences, sporting lifestyles and inspiration at a Women Talk Sports event in the University's Sport Centre. The event forms part of a four day programme and has been co-ordinated by the University's Psychology Department.

Celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight

The University and Students' Union have celebrated Fair Trade Fortnight, with a range of special promotions.

Aberystwyth University (including the Students' Union) was awarded Fairtrade status by the Fairtrade Foundation in 2009, and is committed to supporting, promoting and using Fairtrade goods. Fairtrade Fortnight each year highlights how the principles and products of fair trade are promoted and the links between consumers and producers.

Searching for wildlife in a race against the clock

Wildlife experts and volunteers at Aberystwyth University are calling on students, staff and member of the public to help to find and record as many different types of plants and animals as possible.

The University is holding a Bioblitz on its Penglais campus on Saturday 11 May, with the aim of breaking the record for the largest number of species found on a university campus in a single day.

Aberystwyth University boasts one of the most picturesque settings of any university in the country. It is also the only UK university campus located in a UNESCO designated biosphere reserve.

Aberystwyth scientists develop new method for making graphene

A team of materials physicists in IMAPS, headed up by Professor Andrew Evans, have discovered a new method for producing graphene, a material with amazing optical and electrical properties.

Graphene is a single layer of carbon atoms bonded together in a similar way to graphite. However, it has very different and superior material properties.

The team at Aberystwyth has been working in collaboration with colleagues at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) at Trondheim, Norway and at MaxLab in Lund, Sweden. The team have now filed an international patent application for this novel method of making graphene.

This research work was funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and carried out within the Centre for Advanced Functional Materials and Devices, a HEFCW-funded research and enterprise partnership between Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities.

Public and Departmental Lectures

**Thursday 14
March 2013**

E.H. Carr Memorial Lecture

'If International Relations lives in the street, what is it doing in the classroom?'

Peter Vale (Professor of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Chair of Politics Emeritus, Rhodes University)

Old Hall, Old College. 6:00-8:00pm

April McMahon
7 March 2013

CYNGOR / COUNCIL
29/04/2013

Adroddiad yr Is-Ganghellor i'r Cyngor

Amgaeedig:

Adroddiad gan yr Is-Ganghellor, yr Athro April McMahon.

Crynodeb:

Mae'r adroddiad yn cyfeirio at yr eitemau canlynol:

- Canolfan y Celfyddydau
- Llwyddiant Aber mewn arolwg myfyrwyr
- Gwobrau'r Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig 2013
- Llwyddiant Undeb y Myfyrwyr
- Newyddion am y Gronfa Flynyddol
- Bwrdd Cyngori Cymwysterau Cymru
- Dysgu yn y Gweithle ar gyfer Diwydiant y Theatr
- Myfyrwyr y Gyfraith o Malaysia
- Cydnabyddiaeth ar gyfer y Rhaglen Dysgu Gydol Oes
- Cais [REDACTED]
- Newyddion diweddaraf o'r Swyddfa Cyfathrebu a Materion Cyhoeddus

Gweithred:

Gwahoddir aelodau'r Cyngor i nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad, ac fe'u gwahoddir i godi unrhyw gwestiynau gyda'r Is-Ganghellor.

CYNGOR / COUNCIL
29/04/2013

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Enclosed:

Report from the Vice-Chancellor, Prof April McMahon.

Summary:

The report covers the following items:

- Arts Centre
- Aber success in student survey
- Civic Trust Awards 2013
- Students' Union Success
- Annual Fund News
- Qualifications Wales Advisory Board
- Work Based Learning for the Theatre Industry
- Malaysian Law Students
- Recognition for Lifelong Learning Programme
- [REDACTED] Bid
- News from Communications and Public Affairs

Action:

Council members are invited to note the contents of the report, and are welcome to ask questions of the Vice-Chancellor regarding its content.

Adroddiad yr Is-ganghellor i'r Cyngor, Ebrill 2013

Canolfan y Celfyddydau

Rydym yn sicrhau bod aelodau'r Cyngor yn cael gwybod am y sefyllfa o ran Canolfan y Celfyddydau, lle mae ymgyrch ar y cyd, sy'n seiliedig ar wybodaeth anghywir, wedi bod yn achosi dryswch a phryder mawr i lawer o gefnogwyr a defnyddwyr Canolfan y Celfyddydau ac i aelodau o'n staff, a hynny'n ddiangen. Fel y gŵyr aelodau'r Cyngor eisoes, mae'r Brifysgol wedi ymrwymo'n llwyr i sicrhau bod modd i'r cyhoedd a'r gymuned leol ddefnyddio Canolfan y Celfyddydau, ac nid oes unrhyw gynlluniau i gyfyngu ar hawliau'r cyhoedd i ddefnyddio Canolfan y Celfyddydau – i'r gwrthwyneb yn llwyr.

Rydym wedi anfon dolen gyswllt â Chynllun Strategol Canolfan y Celfyddydau at aelodau'r Cyngor. Dylai hynny helpu i dawelu rhai o'r pryderon ynghylch y cynlluniau at y dyfodol. Ni fydd dim byd annisgwyl ynddo, gan fod y Cyngor eisoes wedi cymeradwyo'r Cynllun yn ein cyfarfod ym mis Mawrth.

Efallai fod aelodau'r Cyngor hefyd yn gwybod bod rhywfaint o ddyfalu wedi bod yn y wasg leol ynghylch dau aelod o'n staff. Nid yw'r Brifysgol yn gwneud sylwadau am faterion sy'n ymwneud ag unigolion, ac ni fyddwn yn cadarnhau nac yn gwadu i'r cyfryngau a gafodd aelod o'r staff eu gwahardd ai peidio. Rydym wedi darparu rhywfaint o wybodaeth gyffredinol am natur gwaharddiadau a'r amgylchiadau lle y gall gwaharddiadau ddigwydd, ac ynghylch y prosesau cadarn sydd gennym pe bai angen cynnal ymchwiliad. Bydd rhai aelodau allanol o'r Cyngor sydd wedi cyfrannu at ymchwiliadau yn y gorffennol yn gwybod am y prosesau hyn.

Os hoffai unrhyw aelod o'r Cyngor gael y wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am Ganolfan y Celfyddydau neu unrhyw fater cysylltiedig, bydd aelodau'r Weithrediaeth yn fodlon darparu diweddariad o'r fath yn y cyfarfod ar 29 Ebrill. Os hoffech drafod y mater yn gynt, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â'r swyddfa ac fe drefnwn i rywun eich ffonio.

Llwyddiant Aber mewn arolwg myfyrwyr

Daeth Aberystwyth i'r brig yn y DU yn arolwg gwefan 'Apply to Uni' ynghylch bodlonrwydd cyffredinol myfyrwyr. Roedd 96.8% o'r myfyrwyr a ymatebodd yn hapus â'u cwrs a'r dysgu, gan sicrhau ein bod ar y brig yn yr arolwg hwn o leiaf. Cewch wybod mwy yn <http://www.applytouni.com/articles/the-uks-most-satisfied-university-students.aspx>.

Gwobrau'r Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig 2013

Mae adeilad ymchwil a dysgu newydd IBERS ar Gampws Penglais wedi ennill clod yng ngwobrau uchel eu bri'r Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig. Mae'r rhain yn dathlu prosiectau neilltuoel o ran pensaernïaeth a'r amgylchedd adeiledig, ac eleni cydnabwyd 86 prosiect o blith cyfanswm o 263 o gynigion cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol. Cyflwynir gwobrau i'r goreuon ym maes adeiladau newydd, mannau cyhoeddus, adnewyddiadau a chelf gyhoeddus, gan ganolbwyntio'n arbennig ar fudd i'r gymuned leol. Llongyfarchiadau mawr i'n cydweithwyr yn IBERS ac i'r Adran Datblygu Ystadau, ac wrth gwrs i benseiri'r prosiect, Pascall and Watson.

Llwyddiant Undeb y Myfyrwyr

Yng ngwobrau diweddar NUS Cymru, enillodd Undeb Myfyrwyr Aberystwyth 'Ymgyrch y Flwyddyn' am waith o dan arweiniad Laura Dickens, Swyddog Cymorth i Fyfyrwyr, ynghylch tai myfyrwyr yn Aberystwyth. Yn ogystal, cyflwynwyd Cynnig Cynnar-yn-y-Dydd yn Senedd San Steffan ar 19 Mawrth, ac mae'n cyfeirio at Adroddiad yr Arolwg ar Dai Myfyrwyr fel hyn:

That this House commends Aberystwyth University Students' Union (AUSU) on the publication of its recent Student Housing Survey Report (2012); praises AUSU for recognising the positive work of many landlords and the need to encourage good practice through initiatives such as landlord awards; believes that more must be done to ensure that both the standard and amount of student housing is satisfactory; encourages students in Aberystwyth to educate themselves as to their rights as tenants and to shop around where possible, to ensure good value for money; and recognises the work which Aberystwyth University has done and is doing to ensure that sufficient affordable student housing stock of a satisfactory standard exists for every student in Aberystwyth.

Llongyfarchiadau mawr i Laura ac i Undeb y Myfyrwyr ar y llwyddiant hwn.

Newyddion am y Gronfa Flynyddol

Mae ymgyrch galwadau ffôn y Gronfa Flynyddol, lle mae myfyrwyr hyfforddedig yn ffonio cyn-fyfyrwyr, wedi dod i ben ar gyfer 2012-13, felly gallwn roi newyddion da. O gyfuno cyfnodau galw mis Tachwedd a mis Chwefror, mae'r swm a addawyd eleni 178% yn uwch na 2011-12, gyda chyfanswm o dros £225,000 wedi'i addo o'i gymharu ag £81,000 y llynedd. Mae nifer y rhoddwyr, canran y cyn-fyfyrwyr y bu i ni gysylltu â nhw sydd wedi dewis rhoi, a maint cyfartalog y rhodd i gyd yn sylweddol uwch na'r flwyddyn flaenorol. Yn ogystal â chodi arian ar gyfer nifer o wahanol brosiectau rhagorol, mae'r Gronfa Flynyddol hefyd yn gyfle da o ran cyflogadwyedd i'r myfyrwyr sy'n ffonio. Llongyfarchiadau i'r holl fyfyrwyr a gymerodd ran eleni, ac i'n cydweithwyr yn y Swyddfa Datblygu a Chysylltiadau *Alumni*, yn enwedig Alix Morley, Swyddog y Gronfa Flynyddol.

Bwrdd Cyngori Cymwysterau Cymru

Fel y gŵyr aelodau'r Cyngor, cyhoeddodd Leighton Andrews ym mis Rhagfyr y byddai'n derbyn argymhelliad yr Adolygiad Cymwysterau, sef y dylai Llywodraeth Cymru sefydlu corff newydd, Cymwysterau Cymru, i reoleiddio, i sicrhau ansawdd ac i ddyfarnu cymwysterau yng Nghymru. Gofynnwyd i Huw Evans, Cadeirydd yr Adolygiad hwnnw, gadeirio grŵp gorchwyl a gorffen (Bwrdd Cyngori Cymwysterau Cymru) i oruchwylio'r camau i sefydlu Cymwysterau Cymru. Gofynnwyd i mi ymuno â'r Bwrdd Cyngori yn fy enw fy hun, a disgwylir i'r cyfarfod cyntaf gael ei gynnal ddechrau mis Mai. Er y bydd Cymwysterau Cymru'n ymwneud â chymwysterau ysgolion ac Addysg Bellach a'r cwricwlwm 14-19 oed yn bennaf, mae'n amlwg bod y mater hwn yn berthnasol i Addysg Uwch, gan mai'r rhain yw'r cymwysterau sydd gan ein myfyrwyr pan fyddant yn dod i'r brifysgol. Felly rwy'n falch iawn o gael cyfle i gyfrannu'n gadarnhaol at sefydlu Cymwysterau Cymru.

Dysgu yn y Gweithle ar gyfer Diwydiant y Theatr

Mae Prifysgol Aberystwyth yn cynnig cyfle i unigolion sy'n gweithio yn niwydiant y theatr ennill cymhwyster Addysg Uwch am ddim drwy'r Rhaglen Dysgu Seiliedig ar Waith a ariennir gan Gronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop drwy Lywodraeth Cymru.

Mae'r Rhaglen Dysgu Seiliedig ar Waith yn darparu cyrsiau bach, cryno wedi'u hachredu gan brifysgolion i'w cyflawni tra bydd gweithiwr neu gyflogwr yn parhau i weithio. Bydd yn caniatáu i unigolyn ennill hyd at 60 credyd Prifysgol, sy'n gyfwerth â diploma Prifysgol.

Richard Cheshire yn yr Adran Astudiaethau Theatr, Ffilm a Theledu sy'n arwain ein prosiect Dysgu Seiliedig ar Waith, a byddwn yn cynnal dau gwrs i gychwyn; bydd hi'n cymryd tua thri mis i'w cwblhau drwy astudio rhan-amser. Bydd cwrs Mentora Ymarferwyr y Theatr yn ceisio gwella sgiliau beirniadol a chreadigol unigolion ym maes actio, cyfarwyddo theatr, dylunio, rheoli technegol a rheoli llwyfan; a bydd y cwrs Datblygu Cwmni Creadigol yn gyfle i weithwyr sy'n ymwneud â diwydiant y celfyddydau perfformio ddatblygu ac estyn eu sgiliau creadigol a rhai sy'n benodol i'w meysydd eu hun.

Myfyrwyr y Gyfraith o Malaysia

Mae'r ffigurau diweddar yn dangos mai yn Aberystwyth (ynghyd â Phrifysgol Gorllewin Lloegr) yr oedd nifer uchaf myfyrwyr y gyfraith o Malaysia yn y DU yn 2011-12.

Cydnabyddiaeth ar gyfer y Rhaglen Dysgu Gydol Oes

Mae Alison Pierse o'r Adran Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes wedi rhoi gwybod i mi fod y rhaglen Dysgu Gydol Oes ym maes Celf a Dylunio wedi ennill Gwobr Dysgu Gydol Oes Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Prifysgolion yn 2013, a hynny ar gyfer y cyrsiau Uwchgylchu Dillad a baratowyd i ddatblygu diwydiannau cartref ym maes tecstilau yn y gymuned leol. Mae'r myfyrwyr sy'n cwblhau'r cwrs at safon lwyddiannus yn cael eu gwahodd i gyflwyno gwaith i fenter gydweithredol o'r enw Co-Create sy'n dylunio dillad, ac sy'n cael ei rhedeg gan un o'n tiwtoriaid. Cynlluniwyd y cwrs i fod ag elfen ecogyfeillgar, er mwyn atal rhai dillad diangen rhag mynd i safleoedd tirlenwi. Defnyddir pob un darn o ddefnydd yn y cwrs; a lle bo modd, cynhelir y cyrsiau mewn adeiladau cynaliadwy yn y gymuned, fel Theatr y Byd Bychan yn Aberteifi. Mae dros 80 o fyfyrwyr wedi dilyn y modiwl hwn yn ystod y 18 mis diwethaf ac mae tri chwrs arall wedi'u hysgrifennu erbyn hyn i sicrhau dilyniant. Llongyfarchiadau i bawb sydd ynghlwm â'r cwrs!

Cais 







[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ac yn awr, dyma'r newyddion diweddaraf gan yr Adran Cyfathrebu a Materion Cyhoeddus:

Shakespeare – celciwr grawn

Mae'r Athro Richard Marggraf Turley a'r Dr Jayne Archer o'r Adran Saesneg ac Ysgrifennu Creadigol, mewn cydweithrediad â'r Athro Howard (Sid) Thomas (IBERS), wedi ennill cystadleuaeth gyntaf INSPIRE ac ASLE-UKI ar gyfer Darlith Gyhoeddus am Lenyddiaeth a Chynaliadwyedd. Byddant yn cyflwyno eu darlith fuddugol, *'Reading with the Grain: Sustainability and the Literary Imagination'*, yng Ngŵyl y Gelli nos Iau 23 Mai 2013.

Ar ôl eu darlith, a fydd yn taflu goleuni newydd ar weithgareddau Shakespeare fel celciwr grawn collfarnedig, cynhelir trafodaeth o dan gadeiryddiaeth Jane Davidson, Cyfarwyddwr INSPIRE a chyn-Weinidog Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd Llywodraeth Cymru.

Cyrhaeddodd gwaith y tîm ymchwil am Shakespeare y penawdau ar draws y byd dros benwythnos y Pasg, gyda stori ar dudalen flaen y *Sunday Times* ac erthygl arweiniol (gydag erthygl olygyddol) tu mewn i'r papur. Yn wir, rhwng 31 Mawrth ac 15 Ebrill, cyfeiriwyd at Brifysgol Aberystwyth gannoedd o weithiau yn y cyfryngau ar draws y byd, ac mae nifer y cyfeiriadau'n dal i gynyddu, gan gynnwys y rhan fwyaf o bapurau dyddiol cenedlaethol y DU a chyfweiliadau â'r BBC a sefydliadau eraill yn y cyfryngau.

Cyflwynir adroddiad llawn ar ddiwrnod cyfarfod y Cyngor ei hun.

Darganfyddiad newydd ynghylch graffin

Mae Ffisegwyr Deunyddiau o'r Sefydliad Mathemateg a Ffiseg wedi darganfod dull newydd o gynhyrchu graffin, deunydd â phriodweddau optegol a thrydanol anhygoel.

Haenen o atomau carbon wedi'u bondio gyda'i gilydd mewn ffordd debyg i graffit yw graffin. Fodd bynnag, mae iddo briodweddau materol gwahanol iawn a gwell. Mae arbrofion wedi dangos mai graffin yw un o'r deunyddiau cryfaf y gwyddom amdano a'i fod yn un o'r dargludyddion gwres a thrydan gorau. Mae hefyd bron yn dryloyw i olau gweladwy.

Erbyn hyn mae'r tîm, o dan arweiniad yr Athro Andrew Evans o IMAPS, wedi cyflwyno cais am batent rhyngwladol ar gyfer y dull newydd hwn o gynhyrchu graffin. Ariannwyd y gwaith ymchwil gan Gyngor Ymchwil Peirianeg a Gwyddorau Ffisegol y DU (EPSRC) ac fe gyflawnwyd y gwaith yn y Ganolfan Uwch Ddeunyddiau a Dyfeisiau Swyddogaethol, partneriaeth ymchwil a menter rhwng Prifysgolion Aberystwyth a Bangor a ariennir gan CCAUC.

Hwb i'r ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg

Mae Prifysgol Aberystwyth wedi sicrhau pedair swydd academiaidd cyfrwng Cymraeg arall wedi'u hariannu'n llawn. Fe'u sefydlwyd gan y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol i ddarparu cyfleoedd newydd i fyfyrwyr astudio drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Mae'r pedair swydd newydd ym maes Astudiaethau Gwybodaeth, Cymraeg Proffesiynol, Peirianeg Meddalwedd a'r Gyfraith yn ychwanegol at y deg swydd darlithydd a ddyfarnwyd i'r Brifysgol eisoes ers 2011. Bydd deiliaid y swyddi newydd yn gyfrifol am ddysgu a datblygu darpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg yn eu priod feysydd.

Mae'r Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol yn darparu £1M y flwyddyn dros gyfnod o bum mlynedd, yn y lle cyntaf, i gefnogi swyddi academiaidd cyfrwng Cymraeg. Disgwylir y bydd y cynllun hwn yn darparu dros 100 o swyddi academiaidd cyfrwng Cymraeg erbyn y flwyddyn academiaidd 2015-16.

Recriwtwyr graddedigion blaenllaw

Mae rhai o recriwtwyr graddedigion mwyaf blaenllaw'r DU wedi bod yn cydweithio â myfyrwyr Prifysgol Aberystwyth i'w helpu i ddatblygu eu technegau cyfweld.

Daeth cynrychiolwyr y Gwasanaeth Sifil a Network Rail, sy'n ymddangos ymhlith rhestr y *Times* o'r 100 Cyflogwr Graddedigion gorau, ynghyd â Dŵr Cymru ac Enterprise Rent-a-Car, i sesiwn cyfweiliadau cyflym yn Aberystwyth ddydd Iau 8 Mawrth.

Trefnwyd y digwyddiad gan Wasanaeth Gyrfaoedd y Brifysgol, gan adeiladu ar sail digwyddiad peilot llwyddiannus a drefnwyd gyda Network Rail y llynedd.

Cafodd y myfyrwyr gyfres o gyfweiliadau pedair munud â'r gwahanol recriwtwyr a chawsant adborth ar unwaith am eu perfformiad, ynghyd ag awgrymiadau ynghylch sut i wella eu technegau cyfweld.

Dyfeisio a darganfod

Ar 19-21 Mawrth, croesawodd Prifysgol Aberystwyth dros 2,000 o ddisgyblion o 20 o ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd Ceredigion, Powys a Gwynedd i ŵyl wyddoniaeth.

Roedd yr ŵyl dridiau, a drefnwyd gan Ganolfan Ehangu Cyfranogiad a Chynhwysiant Cymdeithasol y Brifysgol, yn rhan o Wythnos Genedlaethol Gwyddoniaeth a Pheirianeg 2013. Hwn yw dathliad mwyaf Cymru a'r DU ar lawr gwlad o bopeth sy'n ymwneud â gwyddoniaeth a pheirianeg.

Menter fasnachol ieithyddol yn ennill £20,000

Sylfaenydd cymuned gymdeithasol ar-lein i ddysgwyr ieithoedd yw enillydd cyntaf y gystadleuaeth Gwobr CaisDyfeisio, werth £20,000, a gynhaliwyd ymhlith myfyrwyr Prifysgol Aberystwyth

Myfyriwr yn ei ail flwyddyn sy'n astudio Marchnata a Sbaeneg yn Aberystwyth yw Jake Stainer ac ef yw sylfaenydd a Rheolwr-Gyfarwyddwr y wefan iaith, Papora, www.papora.com.

Ymweliad cyfnewid â dinas Gijon yn Sbaen yn 2007 a ysbrydolodd Papora, ynghyd â dyhead Jake i gadw mewn cysylltiad â ffrindiau a gwella'i Sbaeneg.

Gallwch ddefnyddio Papora'n rhad ac am ddim a'i nod yw dod â siaradwyr brodorol a dysgwyr ynghyd i gyfnewid ieithoedd. Erbyn hyn, mae gan Papora tua 11,000 o ddefnyddwyr o 135 o wledydd sy'n dysgu dros 100 o ieithoedd.

Mae Jake yn bwriadu defnyddio'r wobr £20,000 i ddatblygu'r wefan, i ychwanegu nodweddion newydd, i gynyddu ei phresenoldeb ar y we ac i ddatblygu rhaglenni symudol.

Trefnwyd y gystadleuaeth gan Wasanaethau Masnacheiddio ac Ymgynghori'r Brifysgol a darparwyd y wobr gyntaf, sef £20,000 gan gyn-fyfyrwyr Prifysgol Aberystwyth, drwy Gronfa Flynyddol y Brifysgol.

Gwella effeithlonrwydd ffermydd

Mae academyddion o'r Ysgol Rheolaeth wedi dyfeisio system newydd a fydd yn helpu ffermwyr Cymru i fesur effeithlonrwydd eu busnesau.

Bydd y gyfrifiannell effeithlonrwydd ŵyn newydd, a gynhyrchwyd gan y Brifysgol ar gyfer Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC), yn cynorthwyo ffermwyr i werthuso perfformiad eu diadellau a'i gymharu â mentrau defaid eraill yng Nghymru.

Y llynedd, cyhoeddodd HCC a'r Brifysgol eu bod wedi dyfeisio cyfrifiannell ar-lein newydd i helpu ffermwyr i benderfynu sut a phryd i gael y pris gorau am eu hŵyn. Cynhyrchwyd y gyfrifiannell gan yr Ysgol Rheolaeth a Busnes ar gyfer HCC drwy arian a dderbyniwyd gan Gynllun Datblygu Gwledig Cymru 2007 – 2013.

Y Siwrnai Oeraf

Mae gwyddonwyr o Brifysgol Aberystwyth yn rhan o brosiect a fydd yn mesur sut mae tîm taith anturus 'Y Siwrnai Oeraf', sef yr ymgais gyntaf erioed i geisio croesi'r Antarctig dros y gaeaf, yn ymateb i fisoedd o fyw mewn tywyllwch llwyr ar dymheredd sy'n cyrraedd -70 °C.

Bydd prosiect White Mars yn defnyddio'r tebygrwydd rhwng yr amodau y mae'r teithwyr yn byw ynddynt yn ystod gaeaf yr Antarctig a'r rhai a geir yn y gofod. Bydd tîm y daith yn cael ei ynysu am flwyddyn, gyda chyfnodau hir o dywyllwch llwyr, oerfel eithafol a straen aer tir uchel.

Mae'r prosiect yn cael ei arwain gan Goleg y Brenin Llundain a'i gydgyssylltu gan y Dr Alex Kumar o'r Asiantaeth Ofod Ewropeaidd.

Mae gan dîm IBERS ddiddordeb mewn gweld a yw'r straen ar sut mae'r system anadlu yn gweithio yn sgil oerfel ac uchder eithafol yn effeithio ar ficrobiom yr ysgyfaint yn yr un modd â salwch cronig yr ysgyfaint, fel emffysema.

Llwyddiant Ilaeth

Owen Ashton, myfyriwr yn ei flwyddyn olaf sy'n astudio ar gwrs BSc (Anrh) Amaethyddiaeth yn IBERS, yw Myfyriwr Ilaeth y flwyddyn.

Cyflwynwyd gwobr ariannol o £1,000 i Owen yn Llundain ar 22 Mawrth 2013 a derbyniodd y Brifysgol £500 tuag at brosiect addysg ym maes Ilaeth.

Yn ystod rownd ragarweiniol y gystadleuaeth a gynhaliwyd gan Gymdeithas Frenhinol Ffermwyr Ilaeth Prydain gyda chefnogaeth Dairy Crest, holwyd 11 ymgeisydd ar y rhestr fer am sut y gallai fferm Ilaeth greu lle i'r genhedlaeth nesaf o safbwynt ariannol.

Aeth chwe ymgeisydd yn eu blaenau i'r rownd nesaf lle y gofynnwyd iddynt roi cyflwyniad am yr anfanteision a'r manteision y mae ffermwyr Ilaeth Prydain yn eu hwynebu o'u cymharu â'r rhai sy'n cystadlu â nhw.

Yna, gofynnwyd i'r pedwar ymgeisydd yn y rownd derfynol roi cyflwyniad ffurfiol yn Llundain am y modd y byddent yn datblygu eu gyrfa ym maes Ilaeth a pha rwystrau y gallent eu hwynebu.

Iechyd gwledig a lles cymunedol

Mae Prifysgol Aberystwyth, Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda a Phrifysgol Cymru y Drindod Dewi Sant wedi cyhoeddi penodiad Mr Manoj Kulshrestha fel Darllenydd cyntaf Cymru mewn Iechyd Gwledig a Lles Cymunedol.

Mae'r swydd yn cydnabod y cyfle unigryw sydd gan y GIG a'r prifysgolion lleol yn y Gorllewin i gydweithio'n strategol ac i ailddiffinio sut y gall polisïau a gwasanaethau wella iechyd a lles pobl sy'n byw mewn cymunedau gwledig.

Bydd Mr Kulshrestha, Offthalmolegydd Ymgynghorol blaenllaw sy'n gweithio yn Ysbyty Bronglais ac ym Meddygfa Ffordd y Gogledd yn Aberystwyth, yn cychwyn yn y swydd ar 1 Mai 2013 am gyfnod cychwynnol o 12 mis.

Wedi'i benodi ar y cyd gan Brifysgol Aberystwyth a Phrifysgol Cymru y Drindod Dewi Sant, bydd Mr Kulshrestha hefyd yn cydweithio'n agos â'r Bwrdd Iechyd i roi cyngor ar faterion polisi a gwasanaeth ac i greu fframwaith ymchwil ategol a hunangynhaliol ar gyfer y swydd drwy sicrhau grantiau a chyllid ymchwil.

Dysgu ac addysgu sy'n ysbrydoli

Bydd academyddion ac aelodau staff ar draws y Brifysgol sy'n disgleirio oherwydd eu gallu i ysbrydoli, herio ac ennyn diddordeb myfyrwyr yn cael eu cydnabod gan gorff y myfyrwyr.

Dan arweiniad Undeb y Myfyrwyr, gyda chefnogaeth y Brifysgol, nod y Gwobrau Addysgu o dan Arweiniad y Myfyrwyr yw annog myfyrwyr i gymryd rôl fwy rhagweithiol yn eu profiad dysgu ac addysgu a thynnu sylw at arferion gorau y darlithwyr yn yr ystafelloedd dysgu, llawer ohonynt yn arwain y byd o ran eu harferion addysgu arloesol.

Bydd myfyrwyr yn gwneud enwebiadau ar-lein mewn 8 categori a bydd panel o fyfyrwyr, staff a phobl allanol yn cwrdd ganol mis Ebrill i lunio rhestr fer. Yn yr enillwyr terfynol yn cael eu cyhoeddi a'u gwobrwyo mewn noson wobrwyo ar y cyd i staff a myfyrwyr, a gynhelir gan Undeb y Myfyrwyr ar 30 Ebrill.

Rhythm bywyd

Bydd y Dr David Wilcockson, darlithydd o Brifysgol Aberystwyth, yn datgelu cyfrinachau am y ffordd y mae anifeiliaid yn addasu i'r llanw a'r trai, a hynny mewn rhaglen ddogfen o'r enw 'The Secret Life of Rock Pools' a gaiff ei darlledu ar BBC4 ar 16 Ebrill 2013.

Bydd cyflwynydd y rhaglen, yr Athro Richard Fortey, yn mynd ati i ddarganfod mwy am fywydau eithriadol y creaduriaid sy'n byw mewn pyllau glan môr. Bydd y Dr David Wilcockson, darlithydd ar fywyd dŵr yn IBERS, Prifysgol Aberystwyth, yn ymuno ag ef, ynghyd â biolegwyr morol blaenllaw eraill i helpu i archwilio'r amgylchedd anarferol hwn.

Mae ymchwil y Dr Wilcockson yn cael ei ariannu gan y BBSRC (mewn cydweithrediad â Phrifysgolion Caerlŷr a Bangor a'r Labordy Bioleg Foleciwlaidd, Caergrawnt) a NERC.

Darlithoedd cyhoeddus ac adrannol

14 Mawrth	Darlith Goffa E.H. Carr <i>'If International Relations lives in the street, what is it doing in the classroom?'</i> Peter Vale , Athro'r Dyniaethau ym Mhrifysgol Johannesburg, a deiliad Emeritws Cadair Nelson Mandela mewn Gwleidyddiaeth ym Mhrifysgol Rhodes.
19 Mawrth	Darlith flynyddol Sefydliad Coffa David Davies (DDMI) <i>'Is it realistic to think we can advance democracy and human rights?'</i>

	Darlith gyhoeddus gan Thomas O. Melia , Dirprwy Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cynorthwyol yn Adran y Wladwriaeth yn yr Unol Daleithiau.
15 Ebrill	Darlith gyhoeddus <i>'Eurozone Reform and the British EU policy'</i> Yr Arglwydd David Owen
17 Ebrill	Darlith gyhoeddus Mark Bishop (Yr Asiantaeth Troseddau Cyfundrefnol Difrifol)
25 Ebrill	Darlith Walter Idris Jones <i>'Lludw folcanig, lâ a Mwd: hel cliwiau am hinsawdd y gorffennol'</i> Yr Athro Siwan Davies (Prifysgol Abertawe)

Cofiwch nodi yn eich dyddiaduron hefyd ein bod yn bwriadu cynnal Diwrnod Agored i'r dref a'r gymuned leol ar 22 Mehefin, sef yr un diwrnod â'r ŵyl gerddoriaeth boblogaidd, Mid-Mad. Bydd nifer o wahanol weithgareddau a digwyddiadau'n cael eu cynnal mewn gwahanol adrannau, a bydd llawer o'n hadnoddau ar agor. Bydd croeso cynnes i unrhyw aelod o'r Cyngor sydd yn Aberystwyth ar y diwrnod hwnnw!

April McMahon
15 Ebrill 2013

VC's Report to Council, April 2013

Arts Centre

We are keeping Council members informed about the situation around the Arts Centre, where a concerted campaign based on misinformation has been needlessly causing great consternation and worry to many of the supporters and users of the Arts Centre and to members of our staff. As Council members will already know, the University is wholly committed to the use of the Arts Centre by the public and for the local community, and there are no plans to reduce public access to the Arts Centre – quite the converse.

We have sent Council members a link to the Strategic Plan for the Arts Centre, which should help to put some of these concerns over future plans to rest. There will be no surprises here, as the Council has already approved the Plan at our March meeting.

Council members may also know there has been some speculation in the local press about two members of our staff. The University does not comment on issues involving individuals, and we will not be confirming or denying to the media whether there have been suspensions. We have made available some general information about the nature of suspension and the circumstances in which suspensions can take place, and about the rigorous processes we have in place should an investigation be required. External members of Council who have contributed to investigations in the past will be aware of these processes.

If any member of Council wishes to have an update on the Arts Centre or on any related matter, members of the Executive will be happy to provide that at the meeting on 29 April. If you would like to discuss these issues sooner, please do get in touch with the office and we will arrange for someone to call you.

Aber success in student survey

Aberystwyth has come top in the UK in the 'Apply to Uni' website survey of overall student satisfaction. 96.8% of students who responded were happy with their course and their teaching, putting us at number one for this survey at least. You can find out more at <http://www.applytouni.com/articles/the-uks-most-satisfied-university-students.aspx>.

Civic Trust Awards 2013

The new IBERS research and teaching building on the Penglais Campus has won a commendation in the prestigious Civic Trust Awards. These celebrate outstanding architecture and built environment projects, and this year recognised 86 projects from a total of 263 national and international entries. Awards are presented to the best new buildings, public spaces, restorations and public art, with a particular focus on benefit to the local community. Many congratulations to colleagues at IBERS and in the Estates Development Department, and of course to our architects for the project, Pascall and Watson.

Students' Union Success

At the recent NUS Wales awards, Aberystwyth Students' Union won 'Campaign of the Year' for the work Laura Dickens, Student Support Officer, has led on student housing in Aberystwyth. In addition, an Early Day Motion in Parliament was tabled on 19 March, and refers to the Student Housing Survey Report as follows:

That this House commends Aberystwyth University Students' Union (AUSU) on the publication of its recent Student Housing Survey Report (2012); praises AUSU for recognising the positive work of many landlords and the need to encourage good practice through initiatives such as landlord awards; believes that more must be done to ensure that both the standard and amount of student housing is satisfactory; encourages students in Aberystwyth to educate themselves as to their rights as tenants and to shop around where possible, to ensure good value for money; and recognises the work which Aberystwyth University has done and is doing to ensure that sufficient affordable student housing stock of a satisfactory standard exists for every student in Aberystwyth.

Many congratulations to Laura and to the Students' Union on these achievements.

Annual Fund News

The Annual Fund telephone calling campaign, which involves trained student callers phoning alumni, has now been completed for 2012-13, so we are able to report some good news. Combining the November and February calling periods, the amount pledged to the Annual Fund this year has been 178% higher than in 2011-12, with a total of over £225,000 being pledged, as against £81,000 last year. The number of donors, the percentage of alumni contacted who choose to give, and the average gift size are all substantially higher than in the previous year. Not only does the Annual Fund raise money for a range of excellent projects, it is also a good employability opportunity for student callers. Congratulations to all students who participated this year, and to colleagues in DARO, especially Alix Morley, the Annual Fund Officer.

Qualifications Wales Advisory Board

As Council members will be aware, Leighton Andrews announced in December that he would be accepting a recommendation from the Review of Qualifications, for the Welsh Government to establish a new body, Qualifications Wales, to regulate, quality assure and award qualifications in Wales. Huw Evans, the Chair of that Review has been asked to chair a task and finish group (the Qualifications Wales Advisory Board) to oversee the establishment of Qualifications Wales. I have been asked to join the Advisory Board in a personal capacity, and anticipate that the first meeting will be in early May. While Qualifications Wales will be engaged primarily with school and FE qualifications and the 14-19 curriculum, this is obviously a matter of relevance for Higher Education, as these are the qualifications our students enter university with. I am therefore very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute positively to the establishment of Qualifications Wales.

Aberystwyth University is offering individuals in the theatre industry the chance of gaining a free Higher Education qualification through the Work Based Learning Programme (WBL) funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.

Richard Cheshire in Theatre, Film and Television Studies is our WBL project leader, and two courses will be offered initially; these will take approximately three months to complete part time. They are a Mentoring Theatre Practitioners course, which aims to improve an individual's critical and creative skills in the areas of acting, theatre directing, designing and technical and stage management; and a Creative Company Development course, which will provide employees engaged in the performing arts industry the opportunity of developing and extending their creative and subject specific skills.

Recent figures show that Aberystwyth (jointly with the University of the West of England) had the highest number of law students from Malaysia in the UK for 2011-12.

Alison Pierce from SELL tells me that the Art and Design programme for Lifelong Learning has recently been awarded a National Universities Association for Lifelong Learning Award for 2013, for the Up-cycled Clothing courses written to develop cottage industries in textiles in the local community. Students who complete the course to a successful standard are invited to submit work to a clothing design cooperative called Co-Create run by one of our tutors. The course is designed with an eco-slant to prevent waste clothing going in to land fill sites. Every scrap of material is used in the course; and where possible, courses are delivered in sustainable buildings in the community, such as the Small World Theatre, Cardigan. Over 80 students have gone through this module in the last 18 months and three other courses have been written to allow for progression. Well done to all those involved!

[REDACTED]

And now, here is the latest news from Communications and Public Affairs:

Shakespeare – grain hoarder

Professor Richard Marggraf Turley and Dr Jayne Archer of the Department of English and Creative Writing, in collaboration with Professor Howard (Sid) Thomas (IBERS), are the winners of the inaugural INSPIRE and ASLE-UKI Public Lecture Competition on Literature and Sustainability. They will present their winning lecture, *'Reading with the Grain: Sustainability and the Literary Imagination'*, at the Hay Festival on the evening of Thursday 23 May 2013.

Their lecture, which sheds new light on Shakespeare's activities as a convicted grain hoarder, will be followed by a discussion, to be chaired by Jane Davidson, Director of INSPIRE and former Welsh Government Minister for Environment and Sustainability.

The research team's work on Shakespeare hit the headlines worldwide on Easter weekend with a front page story in the Sunday Times and a page lead (with editorial) inside the paper. In fact, between March 31st and April 15th, Aberystwyth University has registered hundreds of worldwide media references and still counting, including most of the UK national dailies and interviews for the BBC and other media organisations.

There will be a full report on the day of Council itself.

Graphene breakthrough

Materials physicists at the Institute of Mathematics and Physics have discovered a new method for producing Graphene, a material with amazing optical and electrical properties.

Graphene is a single layer of carbon atoms bonded together in a similar way to graphite. However, it has very different and superior material properties. Experiments have shown that Graphene is one of the strongest known materials and one of the best conductors of heat and electricity. It is also almost transparent to visible light.

The team, led by Professor Andy Evans of IMAPS, has now filed an international patent application for this novel method of making graphene. This research work was funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and carried out within the Centre for Advanced Functional Materials and Devices, a HEFCW-funded research and enterprise partnership between Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities.

Welsh medium boost

Aberystwyth University has secured a further four fully-funded Welsh medium academic posts set up by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to provide new opportunities for students to study through the medium of Welsh.

The four new posts in Information Studies, Professional Welsh, Software Engineering and Law are in addition to the ten lectureships that have already been awarded to the University since 2011. The new post holders will be responsible for teaching and developing Welsh medium provision within their respective subject areas.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is providing £1M annually for a period of five years, in the first place to support Welsh medium academic posts. It is anticipated that this scheme will provide over 100 Welsh medium academic posts by the 2015-16 academic year.

Top graduate recruiters

Some of the UK's top graduate recruiters have been working with Aberystwyth University students to develop their interview techniques.

Representatives from The Civil Service and Network Rail, who feature in the Times Top 100 list Graduate Employers, along with Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water and Enterprise Rent-a-Car attended a speed interview session at Aberystwyth on Thursday 8 March.

Organised by the University's Careers Service, the event built on a successful pilot event organised with Network Rail last year.

Students attending undertook a series of four minute interviews with the different recruiters and received immediate feedback on their performance as well as tips on how to improve their interview technique.

Invention and discovery

Aberystwyth University welcomed more than 2,000 pupils from 20 primary and secondary schools in Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd on 19-21 March for a festival of science.

The three day festival, which is organised by the University's Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion, formed part of the 2013 National Science and Engineering Week. This is Wales' and the UK's widest grassroots celebration of all things science and engineering.

Language entrepreneur wins £20,000

The founder of an online social community for language learners is the first winner of the £20,000 Aberystwyth University InvEnterPrize student competition.

Jake Stainer is a second year student studying Marketing and Spanish at Aberystwyth and founder and Managing Director of language website Papora, www.papora.com.

Papora was inspired by an exchange visit to the Spanish city of Gijon in 2007 and Jake's desire to keep in touch with friends and improve his Spanish.

Free to use and designed to bring native speakers and learners together to exchange languages, Papora now boasts around 11,000 users from 135 countries learning more than 100 languages.

Jake plans to use his £20,000 prize to develop the site, add new features, increase its online presence and develop mobile applications.

The competition was organised by the University's Commercialisation and Consultancy Services and the first prize of £20,000 was provided by the alumni of Aberystwyth University, via the University's Annual Fund.

Improving farm efficiency

Academics at the School of Management and Business have devised a new function that will help Welsh famers measure the efficiency of their business.

This new lamb efficiency calculator, produced by the University for Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC - Meat Promotion Wales), will help Welsh famers evaluate the performance of their flock and compare it against other Welsh sheep enterprises.

Last year, HCC and the University announced that they had devised a new online calculator to help famers decide how and when to achieve the best prices for their lambs. The calculator was produced by the School of Management and Business for HCC through funding received from the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 - 2013.

The Coldest Journey

Scientists from Aberystwyth University are part of a project which will measure how the expedition team of 'The Coldest Journey', the world's first ever attempt to cross the Antarctic in winter, respond to months of complete darkness in temperatures reaching minus 70°C.

The White Mars project will use the similarities that exist between the conditions humans encounter on a winter Antarctic expedition and those found in space. The expedition team will be isolated for a year, with long periods of complete darkness, extreme cold and altitude stress.

The project is led by King's College London and coordinated by the European Space Agency's Dr Alex Kumar.

The IBERS team are also interested in whether stresses on respiratory function from extreme cold and altitude affect the lung microbiome in the same way as chronic lung illnesses such as emphysema.

Cream of the crop

Owen Ashton, a final year student studying BSc (Hons) Agriculture at IBERS, is the Dairy Student of the Year.

Owen was presented with a £1,000 cash prize in London on 22 March 2013 and the University received £500 towards a dairying educational project.

The preliminary round of the competition, run by the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers and with the support of Dairy Crest, questioned 11 shortlisted applicants on how a dairy farm could make room financially for the next generation.

Six then went through to the next round, where they were asked to make a presentation on the disadvantages and advantages of British dairy farmers compared to their competitors.

The four finalists then had to make a formal presentation in London on how they would further their career in dairy and what obstacles they may face.

Rural health and community well being

Aberystwyth University, Hywel Dda Health Board and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David have announced the appointment of Mr Manoj Kulshrestha as Wales' first Reader in Rural Health and Community Wellbeing.

The position recognises the unique opportunity available to the NHS and local universities in West Wales to work strategically in partnership and redefine how policies and services can improve the health and wellbeing of those living in rural communities.

Mr Kulshrestha, a Consultant Ophthalmologist based at Bronglais Hospital and North Road Surgery in Aberystwyth, will take up the role on 1 May 2013 for an initial 12 month period.

Appointed jointly by Aberystwyth University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Mr Kulshrestha will also work in close partnership with the Health Board to provide policy and service advice and through securing research grants and funding, to create a self-sustaining, supporting research infrastructure for the post.

Inspired teaching and learning

Academics and members of staff from across the University who stand out for their ability to inspire, challenge and engage students are to be recognised by the student body.

Led by the Students' Union, with the support of the University, the Student Led Teaching Awards aim to encourage students to take a more proactive role in their learning and teaching experience and highlight areas of best practice by lecturers on the ground; many of whom are world leaders in innovative teaching practices.

The Awards will see students nominating online in 8 categories with a student, staff and external panel meeting in mid-April to choose a shortlist. The eventual winners will be announced and rewarded at a joint staff and student awards evening, hosted by the Students' Union on 30th April.

Rhythm of life

The secrets of how animals adapt to the ebb and flow of the tide are to be revealed by Aberystwyth University lecturer Dr David Wilcockson in 'The Secret Life of Rock Pools' a television documentary due to be broadcast on BBC4 on 16 April 2013.

The programme's presenter, Professor Richard Fortey embarks on a quest to discover the extraordinary lives of rock pool creatures. He is joined by Dr David Wilcockson, aquatic lecturer in IBERS, Aberystwyth University and other leading marine biologists to help explore this unusual environment.

Dr Wilcockson's research is funded by the BBSRC (in collaboration with Leicester and Bangor Universities and the Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge) and NERC.

Public and Departmental Lectures

14th March	E.H. Carr memorial lecture <i>'If International Relations lives in the street, what is it doing in the classroom?'</i> Peter Vale , Professor of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Chair of Politics Emeritus at Rhodes University.
19th March	David Davies Memorial Institute (DDMI) annual lecture <i>'Is it realistic to think we can advance democracy and human rights?'</i> Public lecture by Thomas O. Melia , Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the United States Department of State.

15th April	Public Lecture <i>'Eurozone Reform and the British EU policy'</i> Lord David Owen
17th April	Public Lecture Mark Bishop (Serious Organised Crime Agency)
25th April	Walter Idris Jones Lecture <i>'Lludw folcanig, lâ a Mwd: hel cliwiau am hinsawdd y gorffennol/ Ash, Ice, Mud: gathering clues on past climates'</i> Professor Siwan Davies (Swansea University)

Please also note for your diaries that we are proposing to hold an Open Day for the town and local community on 22 June, the same day as the popular Mid-Mad music festival. There will be a range of activities and events in different departments, and many of our facilities will be open. Any Council members in Aberystwyth that day will be very welcome!

April McMahon
15 April 2013

CYNGOR / COUNCIL
24/06/2013

Adroddiad yr Is-Ganghellor i'r Cyngor

Amgaeedig:

Adroddiad gan yr Is-Ganghellor, yr Athro April McMahon.

Crynodeb:

Mae'r adroddiad yn cyfeirio at yr eitemau canlynol:

- Dirprwy Is-Gangellorion;
- Cais [REDACTED];
- Alex Jones;
- Ymweliad ag UDA a Chanada, Mai 2013;
- Prifysgol Aberystwyth a Myfyrwyr Rhyngwladol;
- Cymrodoriaeth Windsor;
- Gwobrau Dysgu dan arweiniad Myfyrwyr;
- Achlysur Alumni a Busnes yng Nghaerdydd;
- Wythnos Cychwyn Busnes;
- Gwrthryfel y Mau Mau;
- Wythnos y Prifysgolion, 10-14 Mehefin; a
- Newyddion diweddaraf o'r Swyddfa Cyfathrebu a Materion Cyhoeddus

Gweithred:

Gwahoddir aelodau'r Cyngor i nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad, ac fe'u gwahoddir i godi unrhyw gwestiynau gyda'r Is-Ganghellor.

CYNGOR / COUNCIL
24/06/2013

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Enclosed:

Report from the Vice-Chancellor, Prof April McMahon.

Summary:

The report covers the following items:

- Pro Vice-Chancellors;
- [REDACTED] Bid;
- Alex Jones;
- US and Canada Visit, May 2013;
- Aberystwyth University and International Students;
- Windsor Fellowship Award;
- Student-Led Teaching Awards;
- Cardiff Alumni and Business Event;
- Business Start-Up Week;
- Mau Mau Uprising;
- Universities Week, 10-14 June; and
- News from Communications and Public Affairs.

Action:

Council members are invited to note the contents of the report, and are welcome to ask questions of the Vice-Chancellor regarding its content.

Adroddiad yr Is-Ganghellor i'r Cyngor, Mehefin 2013

Dirprwy Is-Gangellorion

Mae gennym sawl achos i'w cofnodi gan y Senedd o Ddirprwy Is-Gangellorion yn cyrraedd ac yn gadael. Yn gyntaf, Yr Athro Martin Jones, Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor dros Ymchwil, Cysylltiadau a Menter, fydd Cyfarwyddwr newydd Canolfan Hyfforddi Doethuriaid Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol y White Rose (*White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Centre*). Mae'r Ganolfan, achrededig gan y Cyngor Ymchwil Economaidd a Chymdeithasol (ESRC), yn bartneriaeth ar draws y gwyddorau cymdeithasol ym mhrifysgolion Leeds, Sheffield ac Efrog. Penodwyd Martin Jones hefyd i Gadair mewn Daearyddiaeth Ddynol yn Sheffield.

Ymunodd yr Athro Jones â'r Brifysgol yn Ddarlithydd yn 1998, ac ers hynny bu'n Ddarllenydd, Athro, Cyfarwyddwr SDGD, Deon y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol a Chyd-Gyfarwyddwr Sefydliad Ymchwil, Data a Dulliau Cymdeithasol ac Economaidd Cymru (WISERD). Bu'n Ddirprwy Is-Ganghellor ac aelod o dîm Gweithredol y Brifysgol ers 2009. Byddwn yn gweld ei eisiau pan fydd yn gadael ddiwedd Awst, ond dymunwn yn dda iddo yn ei rôl newydd, gyffrous a diolchwn iddo am ei wasanaeth i Aberystwyth dros nifer sylweddol o flynyddoedd.

Rydym wrthi bellach yn ceisio recriwtio'n fewnol i rôl ddiwygiedig Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor dros Ymchwil ac Ansawdd Academaidd. Wrth gwrs, rydym wedi recriwtio'n llwyddiannus iawn yn fewnol i rolau ar y lefel hon o'r blaen. Yn fwyaf diweddar mae penodiad yr Athro John Grattan ym mis Ionawr 2012; a'r penodiadau Cyfarwyddwyr Athrofeydd diweddar wedi cadarnhau'r cyfoeth o dalent sydd gennym yn y Brifysgol.

Fel y gŵyr aelodau'r Senedd eisoes, bydd yr Athro Aled Jones hefyd yn ein gadael ddiwedd mis Gorffennaf er mwyn cychwyn ar ei swydd fel Prif Weithredwr a Llyfrgellydd Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru. Edrychwn ymlaen at weithio gydag ef yn ei swydd newydd, ond rwy'n hynod falch o gael cyhoeddi penodi Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor newydd dros y Gymraeg a Diwylliant Cymru, a Chysylltiadau Allanol.

Bydd Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, sy'n gyn-fyfyriwr o Adran Hanes y Brifysgol, yn ymuno â'r Brifysgol ym mis Medi 2013. Ar hyn o bryd mae'n Bennaeth Cefnogi Polisi yng Nghyngor Sir Ceredigion, ac yn gyn Ddirprwy Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Addysg a'r Gymuned. Bydd nifer ohonom o fewn cymuned y Brifysgol yn ei adnabod yn barod yn sgil ei waith fel aelod o Fwrdd Ymgynghorol Canolfan y Celfyddydau a Chadeirydd Cymraeg i Oedolion. Mae hefyd yn aelod o Gyngor Partneriaeth yr Iaith Gymraeg, y corff sy'n gyfrifol am gynghori a mynegi barn i Weinidogion Cymru ar faterion ynghylch eu Strategaeth yr Iaith Gymraeg.

Daw Dr Morgan â chyfoeth o brofiadau sy'n pontio'r byd academaidd a gweithredol. Fel rhan o'i rôl flaenorol yng Nghyngor Sir Ceredigion, bu'n gyfrifol am reolaeth y Gwasanaethau Llyfrgell, Archifau Ceredigion, Amgueddfa Ceredigion, addysg gymunedol, Cymraeg i Oedolion, Hyfforddiant Ceredigion, dysgu cymunedol a Strategaeth Iaith Ysgolion, Gwasanaeth Cerddoriaeth Ysgolion, Theatr Felin-fach a chefnogaeth i'r Celfyddydau, a CERED. Yn fwy diweddar, mae ei bortffolio wedi cynnwys Polisi a Strategaeth, Partneriaethau a gwaith ar y cyd, yr Iaith Gymraeg, cydraddoldeb, Cyfathrebu ac ymgysylltu â'r Cyngor. Cyn hyn bu'n gweithio i Fwrdd yr Iaith, Prifysgol Caerdydd a BBC Cymru.

Edrychwn ymlaen yn fawr at groesawu Dr Morgan i'r Brifysgol ac i'r Tîm Gweithredol.

Cais [REDACTED]

Alex Jones

Yn dilyn ymweliad llwyddiannus Mark Price, a dderbyniodd ei Gymrodoriaeth mewn achlysur arbennig yn Aber yn gynharach eleni, dychwelodd cyflwynydd *The One Show*, Alex Jones, i Aberystwyth ddydd Sadwrn 27 Ebrill 2013 i gael ei derbyn yn swyddogol yn Gymrawd. Mae Alex yn gyn-fyfrwraig yn y Brifysgol ar ôl graddio gyda BA mewn Drama yn 1998.

Yn rhan o'i hymweliad â'r Brifysgol, cyfarfu Alex â myfyrwyr, staff ac aelodau o'r gymuned leol yn ystod ffug gyfweiliad *The One Show* a sesiwn holi ac ateb dan arweiniad Pennaeth Astudiaethau Theatr, Ffilm a Theledu, Dr Jamie Medhurst. Wrth gloi ymweliad y prynhawn, cafodd Alex ei chyflwyno i Is-Lywydd y Brifysgol, Gwerfyl Pierce-Jones, gan Dr Jamie Medhurst ar gyfer derbyn y Gymrodoriaeth.

Bu hwn yn ymweliad ardderchog, yn achlysur ffurfiol a seremonïol yn ogystal ag yn ddigwyddiad bywiog a difyr. Rwy'n ddiolchgar iawn i bawb a fu ynghlwm â'r achlysur, yn arbennig o'r Adrannau Cyfathrebu ac Astudiaethau Theatr, Ffilm a Theledu, am eu gwaith caled yn rhoi'r rhaglen at ei gilydd. Bu Alex yn hynod hael gyda'i hamser, gan dreulio amser gyda myfyrwyr yn arbennig, a phwyso arnynt bwysigrwydd dysgu sgiliau ymarferol. Bu'n ddigon caredig i dynnu sylw at y tebygrwydd rhwng adnoddau gwych Astudiaethau Theatr, Ffilm a Theledu heddiw a stiwdio'r One Show! Roedd hi'n amlwg fod Alex wedi mwynhau'r diwrnod ac wedi pwysleisio'r angen i fyfyrwyr fod yn barod i weithio'n galed a dechrau ar y gwaelod wrth symud i sefyllfaoedd proffesiynol cystadleuol. Roedd hi'n amlwg hefyd fod derbyn y Gymrodoriaeth yn foment emosiynol iddi ac roeddwn yn hynod falch i fod yn rhan o anrhydeddu ei llwyddiant a'i hoffter amlwg o Aberystwyth yn y ffordd hon.

Ymweliad ag UDA a Chanada, Mai 2013

Teuliais wythnos brysur ddechrau Mai yn ymweld â sawl sefydliad partner cyfredol ac arfaethedig yn UDA a Chanada, yng nghwmni Rachel Tod, Cyfarwyddwr y Swyddfa Ryngwladol, ac Alwena Hughes Moakes, Swyddog Polisi a Gweithredol. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Gobeithiwn gytuno ar bartneriaethau newydd â [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Bu'n hynod ddefnyddiol i weld y gallai ein

dewisiadau o ran gwneud ffilmau ymarferol a chelfyddyd gain gyd-fynd â'u dewisiadau hwythau o ran y sinema a hanes celf, gan wneud Aber o bosibl yn lleoliad deniadol iawn ar gyfer mwy o fyfyrwyr cyfnewid.

Gwnaethom hefyd gynnal achlysur hynod ddymunol a defnyddiol i gyn-fyfyrwyr yng Nghlwb Cosmos yn Washington DC, a drefnwyd drwy garedigrwydd un o'n cyn-fyfyrwyr a gwaith caled arferol cydweithwyr yn DARO. Bu grŵp brwdfrydig o gyn-fyfyrwyr a dinasyddion amlwg eraill o gefndiroedd Cymreig neu a ymddiddorai yng Nghymru wrthi'n trafod ein dyheadau ar gyfer y dyfodol ac roedd ganddynt ddiddordeb arbennig yn ein cynlluniau ar gyfer yr Hen Goleg – ac roeddent yn gwybod llawer iawn am Y Gwyll!

Prifysgol Aberystwyth a Myfyrwyr Rhyngwladol

Gyda thipyn o lwc, cysylltodd Mark Williams AS â ni pan oeddem ar yr ymweliad uchod i holi am fanylion am yr hyn y mae Aber yn ei wneud o ran rhyngwladoli. Roeddem yn falch o ymateb gan roi manylion nodau'r Cynllun Strategol, a'r Strategaeth Rhyngwladol sy'n datblygu.

Ar 15 Mai, cyfeiriodd Mark Williams at ddyheadau ein Cynllun Strategol i wella recriwtio myfyrwyr rhyngwladol yn ystod cwestiynau i Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru yn Nhŷ'r Cyffredin. Awgrymodd fod ein cynlluniau i dreblu nifer y myfyrwyr tramor erbyn 2017 'yn hanfodol i'r economi leol, ac ar gyfer meithrin cysylltiadau ag economïau sydd ar dwf ledled y byd'. Wrth ymateb, dywedodd Is-Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru, Stephen Crabb AS, fod arolwg rhyngwladol o fyfyrwyr wedi pennu mai Prifysgol Aberystwyth oedd y Brifysgol dramor orau o ran bodlonrwydd myfyrwyr, a'r lle gorau i fyw. Aeth ymlaen i ddweud bod Aberystwyth 'ar flaen ac wrth wraidd' ymdrechion y Llywodraeth i ddenu mwy o fyfyrwyr o dramor.

Cymrodoriaeth Windsor

Mae Vivian Ezugha, myfyrwraig yn ei hail flwyddyn yn yr Ysgol Gelf, wedi ennill Cymrodoriaeth Windsor, sef rhaglen datblygiad proffesiynol a phersonol o flwyddyn ar gyfer israddedigion Duon a Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig (BME) sydd wedi ymrwymo i weithio yng Nghymru.

Vivian yw'r unig ymgeisydd o Gymru sydd wedi ennill y Gymrodoriaeth eleni, a'r haf hwn bydd yn cael cyfnod chwe wythnos o brofiad gwaith gyda Llywodraeth Cymru yn ogystal â rhaglen gyflogaeth 50-wythnos ar ôl graddio. Yn ystod y flwyddyn, fe fydd yn mynd i seminarau sy'n ymwneud â sgiliau arwain, sgiliau datblygiad personol yn ogystal â dysgu sut i adeiladu dyfodol mwy disglair i Leiafrifoedd Du ac Ethnig yng Nghymru a Lloegr.

Dengys ymchwil fod unigolion o gefndiroedd BME yn llai tebygol o fynd ymlaen i wneud y gorau o'u dawn a'u haddewid ar ôl gadael y brifysgol. Mae myfyrwyr BME yn llai tebygol o ddod o hyd i waith ar ôl cwblhau gradd, ac mae cyfraddau cymharol diweithdra neu dan-gyflogaeth ymhlith oedolion o'r cymunedau hyn ar gyfartaledd ddwywaith yn uwch na'u cymheiriaid gwyn. Meddai Vivian "Rwy'n ymwybodol bod llawer iawn o waith i'w wneud i helpu pobl o gefndiroedd du a lleiafrifoedd ethnig i gyflawni eu potensial. Rwyf eisiau helpu i chwalu'r rhwystrau hynny a helpu pobl i gyflawni eu hamcanion a'u dyheadau. Rwyf hefyd yn credu mewn helpu pobl ifanc o gefndiroedd gwahanol i fagu hyder a gwybod eu bod yn gallu cyflawni eu potensial beth bynnag yw eu sefyllfa gymdeithasol."

Rwy'n sicr y bydd aelodau'r Cyngor am ymuno â mi wrth anfon ein llongyfarchiadau i Vivian.

Gwobrau Dysgu dan arweiniad Myfyrwyr

Yr Adran Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes enillodd Adran y Flwyddyn yn ail seremoni Wobrwyo Dysgu dan arweiniad myfyrwyr ddydd Mawrth, 30 Ebrill.

Cynhaliwyd y noson gan Swyddog Addysg Undeb y Myfyrwyr, Jess Leight, a'r Athro John Grattan, Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor Profiad Myfyrwyr a Rhyngwladol, yn ddathliad o ragoriaeth addysgu yn ogystal â chyfraniad staff cymorth a chynrychiolwyr y myfyrwyr. Derbyniwyd dros 250 o enwebiadau a dewiswyd yr enillwyr a'r rhai a dderbyniodd glod gan banel o feirniaid: Jess Leigh, Swyddog Addysg, Rebecca Davies, Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor; John Glasby, Prif Weithredwr yr Undeb, Grace Burton, Darpar Swyddog Addysg a'r Swyddog Polisi, Kieron Rees, o Undeb Cenedlaethol y Myfyrwyr.

Cafwyd noson wych i ddathlu a chydabod ymdrechion staff dysgu a chymorth, a chynrychiolwyr y myfyrwyr.

Ceir rhestr lawn isod o'r buddugwyr a'r rhai a enwebwyd. Llongyfarchiadau i bawb a dderbyniodd wobr a'r rhai a enwebwyd, a diolch i'r cannoedd o bobl a fu wrthi'n enwebu.

Gwobr Staff Cymorth y flwyddyn

Gwenan Creunant, Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol.

Addysgu Arloesol

Dr Alun Hubbard, Sefydliad Daearyddiaeth a Gwyddorau Daear

Tiwtor Personol y Flwyddyn

Balasz Pinter, Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Mathemategol a Ffisegol

Addysgu drwy Dechnoleg

Dr Madeline Carr, Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol

Effaith Cyflogadwyedd

Dr Iwan Owen, Sefydliad Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig

Gwobr Addysgu Rhagorol

Mike Smith, Adran Saesneg ac Ysgrifennu Creadigol

Cynrychiolydd uwchraddedig y flwyddyn

Alexandra Kilcoyne, Sefydliad Daearyddiaeth a Gwyddorau Daear

Cynrychiolydd israddedig y flwyddyn

Kevin Wingfield, Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Mathemategol a Ffisegol

Achlysur Alumni a Busnes yng Nghaerdydd

Ym mis Mai, drwy wahoddiad un o'n cyn-fyfyrwyr, Chris Nott, cynhaliwyd achlysur gyda'r nos llwyddiannus ar gyfer alumni, yn *Capital Law* yng Nghaerdydd. Rydym yn arbrofi gyda digwyddiadau amser brecwast ac yn gynnar gyda'r nos i gymryd lle'r fformat 'cinio busnes' blaenorol, ac roedd hwn yn gyfle ardderchog i gwrdd â chyn-fyfyrwyr lleol, i glywed am waith *Capital Law*, ac i gyflwyno'r diweddaraf am ein Strategaeth Ystadau.

Wythnos Cychwyn Busnes

Cynhaliwyd Wythnos Cychwyn Busnes flynyddol y Brifysgol rhwng 3 a 7 Mehefin. Fe'i cydlynwyd gan Tony Orme o'r Gwasanaethau Masnacheiddio ac Ymgynghori a gwahoddwyd myfyrwyr, graddedigion, staff ac unigolion sy'n ymddiddori yn y maes i gymryd rhan mewn wythnos o weithgareddau gyda'r nod o annog entrepreneuriaeth.

Trefnwyd yr wythnos ar ffurf "gwerysll busnes" dwys ac roedd yn cynnwys cyfres o ddeg gweithdy a chyflwyniad, wedi'u cynllunio i alluogi'r rheiny â syniadau da am fenter newydd i ddatblygu'r syniadau yn fusnesau newydd hyfyw. Cafwyd sesiynau ar gynllunio busnes, ymchwil i'r farchnad, marchnata a marchnata digidol, cyllid, prisiau, gweithrediadau, Eiddo Deallusol a datblygu cadwyni cyflenwi ochr yn ochr â chyflwyniadau gan entrepreneuriaid lleol yn cyflwyno astudiaethau achos ar eu busnesau a'r modd y bu iddynt hwythau ddechrau, gan gynnwys un o raddedigion Aber a ddechreuodd fenter newydd ar ôl cwblhau gradd Gwyddor Chwaraeon ac Ymarfer Corff.

Cafodd y 40 cynrychiolydd gyfle gwych yn ystod yr wythnos i rwydweithio ac i ddysgu mwy am gefnogaeth barhaus i'w mentrau newydd, a hynny gan y Brifysgol a'n partneriaid cefnogi busnes, yn cynnwys Antur Busnes a Menter a Busnes.

Roedd nifer uchel yn bresennol ym mhob un o'r deg sesiwn ac roedd cyffro amlwg yn ystod yr wythnos a digon o rwydweithio yn digwydd. Edrychwn ymlaen at glywed am eu llwyddiannau yn y dyfodol ac rwy'n ddiolchgar i'r tîm am drefnu wythnos wych o weithgareddau.

Gwrthryfel y Mau Mau

Bu Dr Huw Bennett, Darlithydd yn yr Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol, yn cyfrannu at sichrau'r costau a'r iawndaliad o £19.9m a gyhoeddwyd yn ddiweddar i fwy na 5000 o bobl Kenya a ddioddefodd artaith a chamdriniaeth yn ystod gwrthryfel y Mau Mau yn y 1950au.

Cwblhaodd Huw Bennett ddoethuriaeth yn yr Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol yn 2006, ar wrthryfelgarwch Byddin Prydain a'r defnydd o rym yn Kenya, 1952-56 ("British Army counter-insurgency and the use of force in Kenya, 1952-56"). Wrth addasu ac ehangu'r ddoethuriaeth yn fonograff, cysylltodd cwmni o gyfreithwyr o Lundain, Leigh Day, ag ef, sef y cwmni oedd yn cynrychioli nifer o gyn-filwyr gwrthdaro'r Mau Mau. Dechreuodd gynorthwyo'r pum hawlydd ym mis Chwefror 2011, gan ddarparu cyngor arbenigol ar rôl Byddin Prydain a lluoedd trefedigaethol wrth rwystro'r gwrthryfel yn Kenya. Darparodd gyngor ar lafar, sylwebaeth ar safle'r Swyddfa Dramor a Chymanwlad wrth amddiffyn yr achos, ac ysgrifennodd bedwar datganiad arbenigol. Y datganiadau hyn a arweiniodd at lunio'r achos a chynorthwyo'r barnwr, Mr Ustus McCombe, i ddod i benderfyniad.

Mae cysylltiad Dr Bennett â'r achos wedi denu sylw'r wasg a'r cyfryngau ledled y byd.

Wythnos y Prifysgolion, 10-14 Mehefin

Rwy'n gorffen llunio'r adroddiad hwn yn ystod ymweliad tridiau â Chaerdydd ar gyfer Wythnos y Prifysgolion. Y thema yw 'Prifysgolion Cymru yn Tanio Tyfiant', a bore heddiw roedd y Llywydd a minnau'n bresennol pan lansiwyd adroddiad ar effaith economaidd sector Addysg Uwch Cymru, a gomisiynwyd gan Addysg Uwch Cymru. Mae'r canlynol ymhlith prif ganfyddiadau'r adroddiad, sy'n seiliedig ar ffigyrau 2011-12.

- mae sefydliadau Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru yn cyflogi'n uniongyrchol fwy na 16,000 CALI a mwy nag 20,000 o bobl.

- mae gwariant ein myfyrwyr oddi ar y campws yn creu 1720 o swyddi ychwanegol yng Nghymru.

- cynhyrchodd prifysgolion Cymru a'n myfyrwyr 4% o GVA Cymru yn 2011, sef mwy na hanner cymaint â'r diwydiant adeiladu yn ei grynswth.

Rydym yn cychwyn nawr ar gylch o gyfarfodydd, sesiynau briffio a gwybodaeth gydag ACau a Gweinidogion, a byddaf innau'n rhoi tystiolaeth gerbron y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifainc yn y Senedd ar 13 Mehefin.

Mae gan bob Prifysgol y cyfle yn ogystal i gyflwyno un gweithgaredd neu fenter sy'n dangos ein cysylltiad â busnes, cyflogadwyedd ac entrepreneuriaeth, ac rwy'n falch o ddweud ein bod ni wedi dewis ein Cynllun Hyfforddi Graddedigion. Mae'r rhaglen hon, sy'n cael ei threialu eleni, yn rhoi'r cyfle i fyfyrwyr sy'n dymuno aros yn Aberystwyth neu yng Nghymru baratoi am yrfa bosibl yn Addysg Uwch, gyda phrofiad o flwyddyn am dâl a hyfforddiant ar brosiectau yn un o'n meysydd cymorth proffesiynol. Mae targed y Cynllun Strategol yn anelu at 40 lleoliad hyfforddi erbyn 2017, ac i ddefnyddio un o ddywediadau John Grattan, rydym yn bwriadu ei chwalu. Ond beth am anelu tuag at raglen i Gymru gyfan yn ogystal, gan sicrhau mai ein sector ni fydd y cyntaf yn y byd i greu cynllun hyfforddi cenedlaethol, proffesiynol, mawr ei gefnogaeth o'r math hwn? Dewch yn ôl cyn bo hir i glywed mwy...

A nawr, dyma droi at y newyddion diweddaraf o'r Adran Gyfathrebu a Materion Allanol:

Nofelwyr ifainc gorau

Enwyd un o gyn-fyfyrwyr Prifysgol Aberystwyth, Sarah Hall, a raddiodd mewn Saesneg a Hanes Celf yn 1995, ymhlith ugain nofelydd ifanc gorau Prydain ar restr unwaith-mewn-degawd y cylchgrawn *Granta*.

Ysgrifennodd Sarah Hall nifer o nofelau arobryn megis *Haweswater* (2003), *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004), a *The Carhullan Army* (2007), a restrwyd yn un o 100 Llyfr Gorau'r Degawd gan *The Times*. Cafodd ei nofel ddiweddaraf *How to Paint a Dead Man* (2009) ei chynnwys ar restr hir Gwobr Man Booker. Cyfieithwyd ei gwaith i fwy na dwysin o ieithoedd.

Effeithiau seicolegol cancer

Cafodd arddangosfa gelf a ysbrydolwyd gan brofiadau cleifion cancer y pidyn ei chynnal ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth ddydd Mawrth a dydd Mercher 23-24 Ebrill. Hefyd, croesawodd Aberystwyth Dr Peter Branney, Uwch Ddarlithydd mewn Seicoleg Gymdeithasol ym Mhrifysgol Metropolitan Leeds, i siarad am yr ymchwil sy'n cael ei wneud i brofiadau dynion yn dilyn llawdriniaeth cancer y pidyn.

Mae Dr Branney yn arwain grŵp ymchwil Profiadau Cleifion Cancr y Pidyn (PEPC), sy'n cynnwys Yr Athro Kate Bullen, Cyfarwyddwr yr Athrofa Gwyddorau Dynol yn Aberystwyth.

Darganfod cath fawr

Mae ailddarganfod anifail dirgel mewn storfa danddaearol yn profi bod 'cath fawr' nad yw'n frodorol wedi crwydro cefn gwlad ar droad y ganrif ddiwethaf.

Max Blake, myfyriwr PhD, yn Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig ailddarganfyddodd y gath benodol ymhlith cannoedd o filoedd o sbesimenau yn Amgueddfa ac Oriel Gelf Bryste. Bu Max wedyn yn rhan o dîm aml-ddisgybledig o wyddonwyr o Brifysgolion Aberystwyth, Southampton, Bryste a Durham a ddadansoddodd sgerbwd a chroen yr anifail.

Casgliad yr ymchwil oedd mai lyncs o Ganada oedd y creadur, sef ysglyfaethwr cigysol a oedd fwy na dwywaith maint cath ddomestig. Mae'r ymchwil, a gyhoeddwyd yn y cylchgrawn *Historical Biology*, yn cadarnhau mai'r anifail hwn yw'r enghraifft gynharaf o gath fawr estron i grwydro'n rhydd yng nghefn gwlad y Deyrnas Gyfunol.

Y fasnach mewn pobl

Athro yn y Gyfraith o Brifysgol Aberystwyth, Ryszard Piotrowicz, yw prif awdur astudiaeth sy'n sail ar gyfer menter fawr gan y Sefydliad ar gyfer Diogelwch a Chydweithrediad yn Ewrop (*Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*) er hyrwyddo a gwarchod hawliau dioddefwyr masnachu mewn pobl.

Mae'r astudiaeth ar Daclo'r Fasnach mewn Pobl yn nodi ac egluro cyfrifoldeb awdurdodau gorfodi'r gyfraith i gydnabod mai dioddefwyr yw pobl sy'n cael eu masnachu ac na ddylent gael eu trin fel troseddwy'r nac ychwaith eu cosbi am droseddau y cânt eu gorfodi i'w gwneud gan eu masnachwyr. Lansiwyd yr adroddiad gan Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Cynrychiolydd Arbennig yr OSCE ar 25 Ebrill yn Fiena.

Merlod brodorol Cymru'n unigryw

Mae ymchwilwyr ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth wedi canfod bod y merlod gwyllt sy'n pori ar Fynyddoedd y Carneddau yng ngogledd Cymru yn boblogaeth unigryw o ran geneteg ac y dylid eu cadw er mwyn diogelu eu bodolaeth.

Mae cadw adnodd genetig unigryw merlod y Carneddau yn arbennig o hanfodol gan fod stormydd gaeafol o eira yn ddiweddar wedi achosi marwolaeth llawer o'r anifeiliaid hyn, a lleihau eu nifer yn sylweddol.

Cafodd yr astudiaeth, y cyntaf ar nodweddion genetig y merlod gwyllt, sydd â'u cynefin yn cyrraedd uchder o dros 600 metr yng ngogledd Eryri, ei chynnal gan wyddonwyr yn Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig, gan ddefnyddio samplau a gasglwyd yn yr helfa flynyddol o ferlod uwchben pentref Llanfairfechan.

Glaswellt yn atal y lli

Gallai croesiad o ddwy rywogaeth glaswellt newydd a ddatblygwyd gan ymchwilwyr ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth helpu i leihau effaith llifogydd.

Mae gwaith ymchwil diweddar gan gasgliad o wyddonwyr planhigion o bob cwr o'r Deyrnas Gyfunol, yn dangos bod gan y croesiad glaswellt newydd a ddatblygwyd gan fridwyr planhigion yn Sefydliad y Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig y potensial i atal llifogydd.

Gall yr hybrid croes ddal mwy o ddŵr yn y pridd nag sy'n bosibl gyda gweiriau amaethyddol eraill ar hyn o bryd. Mae hyn wedyn yn lleihau dŵr ffo felly byddai'n bosib lleihau llifogydd

Teyrnas hynafol y Nîl

Mae ymchwilwyr wedi datrys y dirgelwch ynghylch sut y llwyddodd un o wareiddiadau mwyaf Affrica oroesi sychdwr trychinebus a ddinistriodd freinliniau enwog eraill.

Yn ôl geomorffolegwyr ac arbenigwyr dyddio o'r Sefydliad Daearyddiaeth a Gwyddorau Daear yn Aberystwyth, Manceinion ac Adelaide, yr Afon Nîl a sicrhodd fod teyrnas adnabyddus Kerma, sydd yn yr ardal a adnabyddir bellach fel gogledd Sudan, yn llwyddo.

Mae eu dadansoddiad o dair sianel hynafol lle'r arferai'r Nîl lifo, yn dangos am y tro cyntaf, nad oedd ei llifogydd yn rhy isel nac yn rhy uchel i gynnal bywyd rhwng 2,500 CC a 1,500 CC.

Maent hefyd yn dangos i'r gwareiddiad mil o flynyddoedd ddod i ben oherwydd bod lefelau llifogydd y Nîl yn annigonol a bod sianel bwysig wedi sychu.

Myfyrwyr yn diolch am gefnogaeth ragorol

Yr Adran Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes enillodd Adran y Flwyddyn yn ail seremoni Wobrwy Dysgu dan arweiniad myfyrwyr ar 30 Ebrill ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth.

Cynhaliwyd y noson gan Swyddog Addysg Undeb y Myfyrwyr, Jess Leigh, a'r Athro John Grattan, Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor Profiad Myfyrwyr a Rhyngwladol, a bu'n ddathliad o ragoriaeth addysgu yn ogystal â chyfraniad staff cymorth a chynrychiolwyr y myfyrwyr.

Gwahoddwyd enwebiadau ar gyfer y Gwobrau gan fyfyrwyr ar lein a thrwy'r blwch pleidleisio confensiynol – a lleolwyd nifer o'r rhain mewn gwahanol safleoedd ar gampws y Brifysgol.

Bioblitz

Er gwaethaf y tywydd ofnadwy o oer a gwlyb, bu'r Bioblitz cyntaf i'w gynnal yn Aberystwyth, ddydd Sadwrn 11 Mai, yn llwyddiant mawr yn ôl y trefnwyr o IBERS, Dr John Warren, Dr Pippa Moore a'r fyfyrwraig ôl-raddedig, Charlie Long.

Ar y cyfrif diweddaraf (02 Mehefin) roedd 2370 o rywogaethau wedi cael eu canfod a'u hadnabod, gan gynnwys microbau, planhigion, mamaliaid, adar, pryfed, ymlusgiaid, amffibiaid a physgod; ac, wrth i'r gwaith o gofrestru'r holl rywogaethau barhau, maent yn ffyddiog y gallant dorri'r record am nifer mwyaf y rhywogaethau i'w cofnodi mewn 24 awr.

Er gwaetha'r tywydd ymunodd mwy na 200 o bobl frwd ag arbenigwyr o grwpiau lleol a fu'n cynorthwyo i arwain sesiynau, a myfyrwyr, llawer ohonynt yn gweithio drwy'r dydd a'r nos, er mwyn rhoi trefn ar y data, pwysu dros ficrosgopau i adnabod y gwahanol rywogaethau a gweithredu fel rhedwyr a chynorthwyo ar weithgareddau.

Darlledwyd ddigwyddiadau'r dydd hefyd ar raglen BBC Radio Wales, Science Café, ar 14 Mai. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01sdwdf>.

Cyngor cynaliadwy

Ar 15 Mai, lansiodd Edwina Hart, Gweinidog yr Economi yn Llywodraeth Cymru, gam nesaf prosiect sy'n anelu i helpu busnesau yng Ngorllewin Cymru a'r Cymoedd i fod yn fwy cynaliadwy a chefnogi'r economi carbon isel.

Mae Rhwydwaith WISE yn brosiect ar y cyd rhwng Prifysgolion Aberystwyth, Bangor ac Abertawe, ac mae'n galluogi busnesau ymhob rhan o'r rhanbarth i gymryd mantais lawn o'r twf yn yr economi werdd.

Drwy weithio mewn partneriaeth ag arbenigwyr ar ymchwil a datblygu mewn prifysgolion, a defnyddio cyfleusterau'r prifysgolion hynny, nod y prosiect yw galluogi busnesau i ddatblygu cynnyrch, prosesau a gwasanaethau cynaliadwy, ac i fod yn fwy cynaliadwy yn economaidd, cymdeithasol ac amgylcheddol.

Llyfr y Flwyddyn

Mae casgliad o straeon byrion gan Dr Matthew Francis o'r Adran Saesneg ac Ysgrifennu Creadigol ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth wedi ei gynnwys ar y rhestr fer ar gyfer Llyfr [Saesneg] y Flwyddyn yng Nghymru 2013.

Mae *Singing a Man to Death* yn un o dair cyfrol ar y Rhestr Fer Ffuglen. *The Testimony* gan James Smythe ac *A Girl's Arm* gan Gee Williams yw'r ddwy arall.

Cafodd mwy na 100 o lyfrau Saesneg cymwys eu cyflwyno ar gyfer Gwobr 2013 ac mae 9 wedi ymddangos ar y rhestr fer, tair ym mhob un o'r tri chategori. Caiff enillwyr Llyfr [Saesneg] y Flwyddyn yng Nghymru, ynghyd ag enillydd Barn y Bobl, eu cyhoeddi yng Ngholeg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama Cymru ddydd Iau, 18 Gorffennaf 2013.

Pump o uwch benodiadau newydd

Cyhoeddodd y Brifysgol benodiad pump o benaethiaid adran academiaidd newydd a fydd yn hwb pellach i enw da'r Brifysgol ym maes addysgu a rhagoriaeth ymchwil.

Bydd yr Athro Steven McGuire yn arwain yr Ysgol Rheolaeth a Busnes, Yr Athro Chris Thomas, Daearyddiaeth a Gwyddorau Daearyddiaeth a Dr Elisabeth Salter, Saesneg ac Ysgrifennu Creadigol. Cafodd Dr Jenny Mathers, a oedd yn Bennaeth Gweithredol yr Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol, ei chadarnhau yn y swydd, tra bod yr Athro David Trotter wedi cael ei benodi am gyfnod pellach fel Pennaeth Ieithoedd Ewropeaidd.

Aber yn y Gelli

Cafodd gwaith ymchwil o safon fyd-eang o Brifysgol Aberystwyth ei weld a'i glywed yn 2013 yn un o'r gwyliau llenyddol mwyaf yn y byd.

Bu chwe academydd o Aberystwyth sy'n cael eu cydnabod yn rhyngwladol a dau Gymrawd Anrhydeddus yn siarad yng Ngŵyl y Gelli eleni, rhwng 23 Mai a 2 Mehefin. Y llynedd, ymwelodd dros 225,000 o bobl â'r ŵyl. Er bod aelodau o'r staff wedi bod ynghlwm â digwyddiadau yn y Gelli dros y blynnyddoedd, dyma'r flwyddyn gyntaf i'r Brifysgol gynnal digwyddiad yn ffurfiol, a gobeithiwn ymestyn hyn y flwyddyn nesaf.

23 Mai	Yr Athro Richard Marggraf Turley, Dr Jayne Elisabeth Archer a'r Athro Howard Thomas yn traddodi darlith INSPIRE 2013 ar Lenyddiaeth a Chynaliadwyedd
28 Mai	<p>Gwen Davies, Golygydd y cyhoeddiad llenyddol chwarterol mawr ei fri, <i>New Welsh Review</i>, sydd â'i gartref ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth, yn siarad gyda Lloyd Jones a Cynan Jones am y gyfres <i>New Tales From The Mabinogion</i>.</p> <p>Clive Hicks-Jenkins, Cymrawd Anrhydeddus o Brifysgol Aberystwyth ac un o artistiaid gweledol mwyaf blaenllaw Cymru, yn gweithio gyda Cherddorfa Siambr Canolbarth Cymru i gynhyrchu fersiwn newydd wedi ei hanimeiddio o waith clasurol Stravinsky gyda delweddau a dilyniannau animeiddio.</p> <p><i>New Welsh Review</i> (NWR) yn dathlu ei ben blwydd yn 25 oed a'i 100^{fed} rhifyn yn y Tŷ Haf. <i>Noddwyd y noson hon gan Gadair Rendel Prifysgol Aberystwyth a Chyngor Llyfrau Cymru.</i></p> <p>Matthew Francis a Tiffany Atkinson, y ddau o Adran Saesneg ac Ysgrifennu Creadigol Aberystwyth, yn darllen o'u casgliadau barddoniaeth newydd ar Lwyfan Landmarc.</p>
29 Mai	Yr Is-Ganghellor, April McMahon, yn estyn croeso cynnes i dderbyniad Aberystwyth yn y Gelli sy'n cynnwys darlenniad arbennig gan y bardd a'r awdur, Owen Sheers.
1 Mehefin	<p>Damian Walford Davies ac Owen Sheers yn dathlu canmlwyddiant geni R S Thomas. Gwahoddwyd un ar ddeg o feirdd i lunio cerddi mewn ymateb i gerddi R S Thomas.</p> <p>Damian Walford Davies yn siarad â Jill Piercy a Peter Lord.</p> <p>Owen Sheers yn darllen o'i waith newydd, <i>Pink Mist</i>.</p> <p>Francesca Rhydderch yn rhannu llwyfan a'i chyd-awduron, Alicia Foster a Joanna Rossiter.</p>

Galw ar bob mentwr busnes

Mae Wythnos Cychwyn Busnes Prifysgol Aberystwyth (3-7 Mehefin) yn cynnig cyfle i rwydweithio ac i gael eich rhoi ar ben ffordd i wireddu'ch syniadau busnes. Y nod yw rhoi golwg gyffredinol ar y sgiliau a'r ystyriaethau hanfodol sydd eu hangen wrth ddatblygu menter newydd.

Yn ogystal â'r gweithdai sy'n canolbwyntio ar sgiliau busnes allweddol, gan gynnwys Cynllunio Ariannol, Gwerthu, Marchnata Digidol a Datblygu Cyflenwyr, mae'r wythnos yn cynnig cyflwyniadau i'ch ysbrydoli gan fentwyr i fyd busnes a fydd yn siarad am eu profiadau nhw am sefydlu a datblygu busnesau llwyddiannus.

Mae'r sesiynau yn agored i bawb, gan gynnwys myfyrwyr, staff a graddedigion Prifysgol Aberystwyth, a gellir cofrestru am weithdai unigol penodol neu am bob un o'r deg sesiwn a gynhelir yn ystod yr wythnos.

Gŵyl Beicio Aberystwyth

Dychwelodd prif gyfres feicio Prydain ar y teledu, sef Cyfres Taith Pearl Izumi, i Aberystwyth yn ddiweddar, yn rhan o raglen lawn o feicio.

Daeth y timau proffesiynol gorau yn y Deyrnas Gyfunol i Aberystwyth ddydd Gwener 24 Mai ar gyfer Gŵyl Beicio Aberystwyth, a gynhelir mewn partneriaeth â'r Brifysgol, yn eu plith yr enillydd Olympaidd Ed Clancy ac enillydd Taith Brenin y Mynyddoedd SKODA Prydain, Kristian House, ill dau yn gyn-enillwyr y digwyddiad yng Nghymru.

Meddai'r Athro Martin Jones, Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor Prifysgol Aberystwyth:

"Dyma drydedd flwyddyn y digwyddiad cyffrous hwn ac mae Prifysgol Aberystwyth yn falch o fod yn bartner craidd".

Prifysgolion yn Tanio Tyfiant

Mae ymchwil newydd a gyhoeddwyd wedi canfod fod gan brifysgolion Cymru effaith o bron i £2.6bn ar economi'r genedl, a bod y ffigwr hwn yn cyrraedd £3.6bn unwaith y cynhwysir gwariant oddi ar y campws gan fyfyrwyr.

Mae'r adroddiad annibynnol a gomisiynwyd gan Addysg Uwch Cymru ac a gynhaliwyd gan *Viewforth Consulting* yn dangos fod y sector AU yn un o ddiwydiannau mwyaf gwerthfawr Cymru trwy greu miloedd o swyddi, cynhyrchu tua 3% o Gynnyrch Domestig Gros y genedl ac ennill mwy na £400m o incwm allforio mawr ei angen trwy reffeniw tramor a thrwy i fyfyrwyr tramor ddod i astudio yng Nghymru.

Cyhoeddwyd yr astudiaeth yn ystod wythnos Prifysgolion Cymru – Tanio Tyfiant, ymgyrch sy'n tanlinellu pwysigrwyd y sector i economi Cymru.

Cynllun Hyfforddi Graddedigion Prifysgol Aberystwyth a Thanio Tyfiant

Rhwng 10 a 14 Mehefin, bydd Prifysgol Aberystwyth yn tynnu sylw at ei rôl hanfodol yn darparu swyddi a thwf yng Nghymru drwy ei Chynllun Hyfforddi Graddedigion arloesol.

Mae'r digwyddiadau yn cynnwys ffilm fer (www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/driving-growth/) ac arddangosfa yn y Senedd ym Mae Caerdydd am y rhaglen sy'n rhoi i raddedigion Prifysgol Aberystwyth fynediad i yrfa eithriadol o gyffrous ac amrywiol mewn Addysg Uwch.

Cynhaliwyd nifer o ddigwyddiadau ar y campws yn Aberystwyth hefyd, mewn cydweithrediad â'r Gwasanaeth Gyrfaoedd a'r Gwasanaethau Masnacheiddio ac Ymgyngori.

April McMahon
Mehefin 2013

VC's Report to Council, June 2013

Pro Vice-Chancellors

We have a number of PVC arrivals and departures to mark at Council. First, Professor Martin Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Enterprise and Engagement, will be the new Director of the White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Centre. The Centre, accredited by the Economic and Social Research Council, is a collaboration across the social sciences at the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York. Martin Jones will also be taking up a Chair of Human Geography at Sheffield.

Professor Jones joined the University as a Lecturer in 1998 and has since held the positions of Reader, Professor, Director of IGES, Dean of Social Sciences, and Co-Director of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD). He has been a Pro Vice-Chancellor and member of the University Executive since 2009. We will miss him when he leaves the University at the end of August, but wish him well in his exciting new role and thank him for his considerable number of years of service to Aberystwyth.

We are now in the process of seeking to recruit internally to a revised role of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Academic Quality. We have of course recruited highly successfully internally to roles at this level previously, most recently with the appointment of Professor John Grattan in January 2012; and the recent appointments of Institute Directors has confirmed the wealth of talent we have in the University.

As members of Council are already aware, Professor Aled Jones will also be leaving at the end of July to take up the post of Chief Executive and Librarian for the National Library for Wales. We look forward to working with him in his new capacity, but I am also delighted to announce the appointment of our new Pro Vice-Chancellor for Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement.

Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, a History alumnus of Aberystwyth, will be joining the University in September 2013. He is currently the Head of Policy Support at Ceredigion County Council, having previously held the post of Assistant Director of Education and Community Services. Many of us within the University community will already know him from his work on the Arts Centre Advisory Board and as Chair of Welsh for Adults. He is also a member of the Welsh Language Partnership Council, the body responsible for advising and making representations to the Welsh Ministers in relation to their Welsh Language Strategy.

Dr Morgan brings with him a wealth of experience, which spans both the academic and operational spheres. His role within Ceredigion Council included the management of the Library Services, Ceredigion Archives, Ceredigion Museum, community education, Welsh for Adults, Ceredigion Training, community teaching and the Schools Language Strategy, Schools Music Service, Theatr Felin-Fach and support for the Arts, and CERED. More recently, his portfolio has included Policy and Strategy, Partnerships and collaborative arrangements, the Welsh Language, equalities, Communications and Council relations. His previous roles include working for the Welsh Language Board, Cardiff University and BBC Wales.

We look forward to welcoming Dr Morgan to the University and the Executive team.

Bid

[REDACTED]

Alex Jones

Following our successful visit from Mark Price, who received his Fellowship at a special event in Aber earlier in the year, the One Show presenter Alex Jones returned to Aberystwyth University on Saturday 27 April 2013 to have her Fellowship formally conferred. Alex is an alumna of the University, and graduated with a BA in Drama in 1998.

As part of her visit to the University, Alex met with students, staff and members of the local community during a mock One Show interview and a question and answer session hosted by the Head of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, Dr Jamie Medhurst. Concluding the afternoon's visit, Dr Jamie Medhurst presented her to Vice-President Gwerfyl Pierce-Jones for conferral of the Fellowship.

This was an excellent visit, and succeeded in being both an appropriate formal and ceremonial occasion, and a lively and entertaining one. I am very grateful to everyone involved, especially from Comms and TFTS, for their hard work on putting together the programme. Alex was extremely generous with her time, and in particular spent time with students, impressing on them the importance of learning practical skills. She was good enough to point out how similar the superb facilities in TFTS today are to the One Show studio! Alex clearly enjoyed her day and impressed on students the need to be willing to work hard and start at the bottom when moving into competitive professional settings. She clearly found receiving the Fellowship an emotional moment and I was extremely pleased to be involved in honouring her achievements and her evident attachment to Aberystwyth in this way.

US and Canada Visit, May 2013

I spent an eventful week in early May visiting a number of current and prospective partner institutions in the US and Canada, in the company of Rachel Tod, Director of the International Office, and Alwena Hughes Moakes, Policy and Executive Officer. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We hope to agree new partnerships with [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It was extremely helpful to find that our options for practical film-making and fine art may complement their own offerings in cinema and art history, making Aber potentially a very attractive destination for additional exchange students.

We also held an extremely enjoyable and useful alumni event at the Cosmos Club in Washington DC, arranged through the generosity of an alumna and with the usual hard work of colleagues in DARO. An enthusiastic group of alumni and other prominent citizens with Welsh backgrounds and interests discussed our aspirations for the future and were particularly interested in our plans for the Old College – and remarkably well-informed about Hinterland / Y Gwyll!

Aberystwyth University and International Students

By a helpful stroke of serendipity, Mark Williams MP contacted us while we were on the aforesaid visit to ask for some details on what Aber is doing on internationalisation. We were happy to oblige with details of our Strategic Plan aims, and the emerging International Strategy.

On 15 May, Mark Williams duly mentioned our Strategic Plan aspirations to improve recruitment of international students in questions to the Secretary of State for Wales in the House of Commons. He suggested that our plans to treble the number of overseas students by 2017 'will be essential for the local economy, and for building links with emerging economies throughout the world'. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, Stephen Crabb MP, stated in response that in an international survey of students Aberystwyth University was voted best overseas University for student satisfaction, and the best place to live. He then went on to describe Aberystwyth as at the 'front and centre' of the Government's efforts to attract more overseas students.

Windsor Fellowship Award

Vivian Ezugha, a second year student in the School of Art, has been awarded a Windsor Fellowship which is a one year professional and personal development programme for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) undergraduates committed to working in Wales.

Vivian is the only Wales-based candidate to have been awarded the Fellowship this year and will this summer be undertaking a six-week internship with the Welsh Government as well as a 50-week employment programme upon graduation. During the year she will be attending seminars which relate to leadership skills, personal development skills as well as learning to work on building a brighter future for Black and Ethnic Minorities in England and Wales.

Research shows that individuals from BME backgrounds may be less likely to go on to maximise their talent and potential after leaving university. BME students are less likely to find employment upon completing degrees, and the relative rates of unemployment or under-employment for adults from these communities are on average twice as high as that experienced by their white counterparts. Vivian says, 'I am aware that there is a great deal of work to be done with helping people of black and minority ethnic backgrounds to achieve their potential. I want to help break down those barriers and help people to fulfil their goals and aspirations. I also believe in helping young people from all backgrounds in gaining confidence and knowing that they can achieve excellence regardless of their social situation.'

I am sure Council members will want to join me in sending congratulations to Vivian.

Student-Led Teaching Awards

The Department of Education and Lifelong Learning scooped the Department of the Year award at the second ever Student-led Teaching Awards on Tuesday 30th April.

Hosted by the Students' Union Education Officer Jess Leigh and Professor John Grattan, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Student Experience and International, the evening was a celebration of teaching excellence as well as the contribution of support staff and student representatives. In all over 250 nominations were received with the winners and runners up chosen by a panel of judges: Jess Leigh, Education Officer; Rebecca Davies, PVC; John Glasby, SU Chief Executive; Grace Burton, Education Officer-elect; and Kieron Rees, Policy Officer, NUS Wales.

This was a superb evening of celebration and recognition of the efforts of teaching and support staff, and student representatives.

A full list of the award winners and nominees is below. Congratulations to all those who received an award and those who were nominated, and thank you to the hundreds of people who made nominations.

Support staff of the year award

Gwennan Creunant, Department of International Politics.

Innovative Teaching

Dr Alun Hubbard, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences

Personal Tutor of the Year

Balasz Pinter, Institute of Maths and Physics

Teaching through technology

Dr Madeline Carr, Department of International Politics

Employability Impact

Dr Iwan Owen, Institute of Biology and Rural Sciences

Outstanding teaching award

Mike Smith, Department of English and Creative Writing

Postgraduate rep of the year

Alexandra Kilcoyne, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences

Undergraduate rep of the year

Kevin Wingfield, Institute of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Cardiff Alumni and Business Event

In May we held a successful evening event for alumni, generously hosted by alumnus Chris Nott at Capital Law in Cardiff. We are experimenting with breakfast and early evening events to replace the previous 'business lunch' format, and this was an excellent opportunity to meet local alumni, hear about the work of Capital Law, and provide an update on our Estates Strategy.

Business Start-Up Week

The University's annual Business Start-up Week was held between 3-7 June. Coordinated by Tony Orme of CCS, the week invited students; graduates; staff and interested individuals to participate in a week of activities with the aim of encouraging entrepreneurship.

Run as an intense "boot-camp" style event, the week comprised a series of ten workshops and presentations, designed to allow those with good ideas for new enterprises to develop these ideas into viable new businesses. Business planning; market research; marketing and digital marketing; finance; pricing; operations; IP and supply chain development sessions were complemented by bringing in local entrepreneurs to give case studies on their businesses and how they had started up, including an Aber graduate who started a new enterprise following his Sports and Exercise Science degree.

The week also gave the 40 delegates a great opportunity to network and to learn about on-going support for their new enterprises, both from the University and from our business support partners, including Antur Business and Menter a Busnes.

Attendance at all ten sessions was high and there was a noticeable buzz about the week, with plenty of networking going on. We look forward to learning of their successes in the future and I am grateful to the team for arranging such a fantastic week of activity.

Mau Mau Uprising

Dr Huw Bennett, a Lecturer within the International Politics Department, was instrumental in securing the recently announced £19.9m costs and compensation payment to more than 5000 Kenyans who suffered torture and abuse during the Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s.

Huw Bennett completed a doctorate in the Department of International Politics in 2006, on "British Army counter-insurgency and the use of force in Kenya, 1952-56". Whilst modifying and expanding the thesis into a monograph, he was contacted by the London law firm Leigh Day, who were representing a number of veterans of the Mau Mau conflict. He began assisting the five claimants in February 2011, providing expert advice on the role of the British Army and colonial forces in suppressing the rebellion in Kenya. This involved the provision of oral advice, commentary on the position taken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in defending the case, and the writing of four expert statements. These statements guided the construction of the case and assisted the judge, Mr Justice McCombe, in reaching his judgements.

Dr Bennett's involvement in the case has attracted widespread global press and media interest.

Universities Week, 10-14 June

I am finishing this report during a three-day visit to Cardiff for Universities Week. The theme is 'Welsh Universities Driving Growth', and this morning the President and I attended the launch of a report on the economic impact of the Welsh HE sector, commissioned by HEW. Among the key findings are the following, based on 2011-12 figures;

- HE institutions in Wales directly employ more than 16,000 FTEs, and more than 20,000 people.
- the off-campus expenditure of our international students creates an additional 1720 jobs in Wales.
- Welsh universities and our students generated 4% of Welsh GVA in 2011, which is more than half as much as the entire construction industry.

We are now embarking on a round of meetings, briefings and information sessions with AMs and Ministers, and I will be giving evidence to the Children and Young People's Committee in the Senedd on 13 June.

Each University also has the chance to showcase one activity or enterprise demonstrating our engagement with business, employability and entrepreneurship, and I am very proud to say we have chosen our Graduate Trainee Programme. This programme, piloted in the current year, gives students who may wish to stay in Aberystwyth or in Wales the preparation they need for a possible career in HE, with a year's paid experience and training on projects in one of our professional support areas. We have a Strategic Plan target of 40 traineeships by 2017, and to use a John Grattan phrase, we intend to smash it. But why not also aim for a Wales-wide programme, making our sector the first in the world to create a well-supported, professional, national training scheme of this sort? Watch this space...

And now, here is the latest news from Communications and Public Affairs:

Best young novelists

Aberystwyth University alumna, Sarah Hall, who graduated in English and Art History in 1995, has been named as one of the twenty best young British novelists in *Granta* magazine's once-in-a-decade list.

Sarah Hall has written a number of prize-winning novels such as *Haweswater* (2003), *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004), and *The Carhullan Army* (2007), which was listed as one of The Times 100 Best Books of the Decade. Her most recent novel *How to Paint a Dead Man* (2009) was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Her work has been translated into more than a dozen languages.

Psychological effects of cancer

An art exhibition which has been inspired by patients' experiences of penile cancer was held at Aberystwyth University on Tuesday 23rd and Wednesday 24th April. Aberystwyth also welcomed Dr Peter Branney, a Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology at Leeds Metropolitan University, to talk about the research that is being done to investigate the experiences of men following surgery for penile cancer.

Dr Branney leads the Patients' Experiences of Penile Cancer (PEPC) research group, which includes Professor Kate Bullen Director of the Institute of Human Sciences at Aberystwyth.

Big cat discovery

The rediscovery of a mystery animal in a museum's underground storeroom proves that a non-native 'big cat' prowled the countryside at the turn of the last century.

Max Blake a PhD student at IBERS rediscovered the specimen among hundreds of thousands of specimens at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Max was part of a multi-disciplinary team of scientists from Aberystwyth, Southampton, Bristol and Durham Universities who analysed the animal's skeleton and mounted skin.

The specimen was found to be a Canadian lynx – a carnivorous predator more than twice the size of a domestic cat. The research, published in the academic journal *Historical Biology* establishes the animal as the earliest example of an alien big cat at large in the UK countryside.

Human Trafficking

Aberystwyth University law professor Ryszard Piotrowicz is the main author of a study which is the basis for a major initiative of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) aimed at promoting the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking in human beings.

On 25 April, in Vienna, the OSCE's Special Representative for Combating trafficking in human beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, launched the study, which sets out and clarifies the obligation of law enforcement authorities to recognise that trafficked people are victims who should not be criminalised or punished for offences they are forced to commit by their traffickers.

Native Welsh ponies unique

Researchers at Aberystwyth University have established that the wild ponies grazing the Carneddau Mountains are a genetically unique population, which should be conserved to safeguard their existence.

Preserving the genetic resource provided by the Carneddau ponies is particularly crucial since recent snow storms led to the death of many of these animals, dramatically reducing their numbers.

The study, the first into the genetic characteristics of the wild ponies, whose habitat in northern Snowdonia reaches heights of over 600 metres, was undertaken by scientists at IBERS using samples collected at the annual round-up of ponies above the village of Llanfairfechan.

Holding back the flood

A new grass species hybrid developed by researchers at Aberystwyth University could help reduce the impact of flooding.

Recent research published by a collaboration of plant scientists from across the UK, shows that a new grass hybrid developed by plant breeders at IBERS has the potential to alleviate flooding.

The hybrid can capture more water in soils than is possible with current agricultural grasses. This then reduces run-off which could help minimise flood generation.

Ancient kingdom of the Nile

Researchers have solved the riddle of how one of Africa's greatest civilisations survived a catastrophic drought which wiped out other famous dynasties.

Geomorphologists and dating specialists from IGES in Aberystwyth, The University of Manchester, and Adelaide say that it was the River Nile which made life viable for the renowned Kerma kingdom, in what is now northern Sudan.

Their analysis of three ancient river channels where the Nile once flowed shows, for the first time, that its floods weren't too low or too high to sustain life between 2,500 BC and 1,500 BC.

They also show that the thousand year civilisation came to end when the Nile's flood levels were not high enough and a major channel system dried out.

Students reward excellent support

The Department of Education and Lifelong Learning scooped the Department of the Year award at the second ever Student-led Teaching Awards on 30th April at Aberystwyth University.

Hosted by the Students' Union Education Officer Jess Leigh and Professor John Grattan, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Student Experience and International, the evening was a celebration of teaching excellence as well as the contribution of support staff and student representatives.

Nominations for the Awards were invited from students both online and in conventional ballot boxes – a number of which were located at different locations around the University.

Bioblitz

Despite the horribly cold and wet weather, the very first Aberystwyth Bioblitz which was held on 11 May has been hailed a great success by the IBERS based organisers, Dr John Warren, Dr Pippa Moore and postgraduate student Charlie Long.

At the latest count (02 June) 2370 species had been spotted and identified, including microbes, plants, mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and fish; and, as the work of registering all the species continues, the record may yet be broken for the highest number of species recorded in 24 hours.

Despite the weather, more than 200 enthusiasts joined experts from local interest groups who helped lead sessions, and students, many of whom worked through the day and night collating the data, sitting over microscopes to identify the various species and acting as runners and assisting on activities.

The day's events also featured on BBC Radio Wales Science Café on 14th May.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01sdwdf>.

WISE move

On 15 May, the Welsh Government's Economy Minister, Edwina Hart, launched the next phase of a project aimed at helping businesses in West Wales and the Valleys become more sustainable and support the low carbon economy.

The WISE Network is a collaborative project between Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea universities that enables businesses across the region to take full advantage of the growth in the green economy.

By working in partnership with university research and development experts and making use of their facilities, the project aims to better equip businesses to develop sustainable products, processes and services, and to become more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Book of the Year

A collection of short stories by Dr Matthew Francis from the Department of English and Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University has been shortlisted for the Wales Book of the Year 2013.

Singing a Man to Death is one of three volumes to feature on the Fiction Short List. The others are *The Testimony* by James Smythe and *A Girl's Arm* by Gee Williams.

Over 100 eligible English language books were submitted for the 2013 Award with 9 volumes shortlisted, three in each of three categories.

The Wales Book of the Year Award winners, along with the People's Choice Award winner will be announced at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama on Thursday 18 July 2013.

Five new senior appointments

The University has announced five new academic Heads of Department appointments who will serve to further bolster the University's reputation for teaching and research excellence.

Professor Steven McGuire will lead the School of Management and Business; Professor Chris Thomas, Geography and Earth Sciences and Dr Elisabeth Salter, English and Creative Writing. Dr Jenny Mathers, who was Acting Head of the Department of International Politics has been confirmed in the post, whilst Professor David Trotter, has been appointed for a further term as Head of European Languages.

Aber at Hay

Some of Aberystwyth University's world-leading research will be showcased in our extensive presence in 2013, at one of the world's biggest literary festivals

Six internationally recognised Aberystwyth academics and two Honorary Fellows will be speaking at this year's Hay Festival which runs from 23 May to 2 June. Last year's festival attracted more than 225,000 visitors.

23 May	Professor Richard Marggraf Turley, Dr Jayne Elisabeth Archer and Professor Howard Thomas deliver the 2013 INSPIRE Lecture on Literature and Sustainability
28 May	<p>Gwen Davies, Editor of Wales's most distinguished literary quarterly, <i>New Welsh Review</i>, which is hosted at Aberystwyth University, will be talking to Lloyd Jones and Cynan Jones about the series <i>New Tales From The Mabinogion</i>.</p> <p>Clive Hicks-Jenkins, an Honorary Fellow of Aberystwyth University and one of Wales' most celebrated visual artists, will be working with <i>The Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra</i> to produce a new animated version of Stravinsky's classic work with imagery and animated sequences.</p> <p><i>New Welsh Review</i> (NWR) celebrate their 25th birthday and their 100th edition at the Summer House. <i>The evening has been sponsored by The Rendel Chair at Aberystwyth University and the Welsh Books Council.</i></p> <p>Matthew Francis and Tiffany Atkinson, both members of the Department of English and Creative Writing at Aberystwyth, read from their new poetry collections at the Landmarc Stage.</p>
29 May	The Vice Chancellor, April McMahon, offers a warm welcome to the Aberystwyth at Hay reception which including a special reading from poet and author Owen Sheers
1 June	<p>Damian Walford Davies and Owen Sheers celebrate the centenary of the birth of RS Thomas. Eleven poets have been invited to write poems in response to poems by RS Thomas.</p> <p>Damian Walford Davies also talks to Jill Piercy and Peter Lord.</p> <p>Owen Sheers reads from his new work <i>Pink Mist</i></p> <p>Francesca Rhydderch will take the stage with fellow writes Alicia Foster and Joanna Rossiter</p>

Calling all entrepreneurs

Designed to provide an overview of the skills and essential considerations required when developing a new venture, Aberystwyth University's Business Start-up Week (03-7 June) offers networking opportunities and signposting to help turn business ideas into reality.

In addition to workshops focusing on key business skills including Financial Planning, Selling, Digital Marketing and Supplier Development, the week includes inspirational talks from entrepreneurs who will provide an insight into their experiences of setting up and developing a successful business.

Sessions are open to all, including students, staff and graduates from Aberystwyth University, with individuals having the option to register for specific workshops or all ten sessions during the week.

Aberystwyth Cycling Festival

Britain's leading televised cycle race series, the Pearl Izumi Tour Series, returned to Aberystwyth recently, headlining an action packed programme of cycling.

The UK's top professional teams headed to Aberystwyth on Friday 24 May for the Aberystwyth Cycling Festival, hosted in partnership with the University, with the likes of Olympic Champion Ed Clancy and The Tour of Britain's SKODA King of the Mountains winner Kristian House, both former winners of the Welsh event.

Professor Martin Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor at Aberystwyth University added:

"This is the third year of this exciting event and Aberystwyth University is pleased to be a core partnership player" .

Universities Driving Growth

New research has found that Welsh universities have an impact of almost £2.6bn on the nation's economy, with this figure reaching £3.6bn once total off-campus spending by students is taken into account.

The independent report commissioned by Higher Education Wales and conducted by Viewforth Consulting, shows the higher education sector is one of Wales' most valuable industries by creating tens of thousands of jobs, generating some 3% of the nation's GDP while earning over £400m in much-needed export earnings through overseas revenue and international students coming to study in Wales.

The study was published during Welsh Universities – Driving Growth week, a campaign highlighting the sector's importance to the Welsh economy,

Aberystwyth University Graduate Training Scheme and Driving Growth

From June 10th to 14th, Aberystwyth University is highlighting the crucial role it plays in delivering jobs and growth in Wales through its innovative Graduate Training Scheme.

Events include a short film (www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/driving-growth/) and exhibition in the Senedd in Cardiff Bay about the programme which provides Aberystwyth University graduates with an entry point into an extremely exciting and diverse career in Higher Education.

Several events were also held on the campus in Aberystwyth, in association with the Careers Service and CCS.

