

Quality News

Celebrating our second anniversary



Prifysgol Cymru
University of Wales

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The POWIS Residential Conference

“The dedication of our scholars is clear and I have no doubt they are quickly developing into very talented global innovators for our Welsh companies”.

Professor Jeremy Stone
Chairman of the POWIS Industry Panel



The second Prince Of Wales Innovation Scholarships (POWIS) residential event, took place on 26 – 28 January at the Bluestone national park resort in Pembrokeshire. Participants included POWIS scholars, academics and company representatives. The intellectually challenging sessions included:

- Professor Magnus Klofsten’s workshop on his Business Platform Model – outlining the cornerstones for successful business practice – which we then applied in three ‘live’ case analyses with new POWIS scholars
- Mr Roy Leighton, co-presenter of the BBC’S ‘The

Confidence Lab’ presented a lively post-lunch session introducing us to Dr Clare Graves’ model for emergent personality values

- Dr Martin Rhisiart, Director of the Centre for Research in Futures and Innovation (CRI-FI), University of Glamorgan, gave us an overview of key global drivers in the emerging future economy and the role of consumers and customers as innovators
- Professor Jeremy Stone (pictured above), Chairman of the POWIS Industry Panel, ended the day with a humorous account of ‘how not to pitch’ to potential investors.

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The POWIS Residential Conference (cont'd)

One formal dinner later and a long night spent over computers, the POWIS scholar groups were ready to present their fictional business cases, to an investor panel comprising Professor Stone, Mr Gerald Kelly, Sony UK General Manager and Dr So-Jin Yoo from the Global Academy. Overall the retreat provided an interesting learning experience with lots of good opportunities for networking and exchange.

Already looking forward to the next POWIS residential, Mr Antony Smith, producer at Tornado Films, Port Talbot, explains that “most importantly, as a business leader and scholar of the POWIS programme, I discovered that no matter how experienced you are, listening to the experiences of others and their opinions often brings about solutions to your own issues, and you are more likely to learn something about yourself too.”

By Jacqueline Young and Richie Turner



POWIS Scholars

Upcoming events

- 17 February:** NSA conference *FE-HE Collaboration: Drivers of Change*
London
<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd242/evaluation.php>
- 18 February:** *Developing a high quality learning experience for all students: Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum*
Stirling
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2011/jointevents>
- 24 February:** *Meeting of the Academic Registrars Council's Quality Practitioners' Group*
London
www.arc.ac.uk
- 2/3 March:** 8th annual Enhancement Themes conference *Graduates for the 21st Century: Integrating the Enhancement Themes*
Edinburgh
www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk

Profile: Professor Marc Clement, Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the Academic Board



Professor Marc Clement

He has a successful research career in the field of photo-regenerative medicine – the use of light to initiate natural healing processes in the body – and in the development of associated medical devices. “I find the idea of being able to help improve medical treatment in ways like this incredibly exciting”, he says.

Whether in academia or business, his focus is on innovation, new ways of thinking and doing. This holds true also within his role as Vice-Chancellor, where his attention is always on improvement and development of what the University has to offer, to students, to Wales and on a global scale.

When asked about his main strengths in relation to the post of Vice-Chancellor, he contends that these lie in an ability to work with others, and to communicate ideas, fluently and persuasively. The idea is to promote good engagement with the team and a feeling of ownership of the work of the University among staff members. It is an approach which can ensure that the body which has charge of the University’s academic work conducts its business in the thorough and scrupulous manner required to safeguard quality, standards and the student experience.

By Jenny Childs

A Vice-Chancellor, in general, may seem a faraway figure, presiding over graduations, chairing high level meetings and travelling to external conferences. So exactly who is our VC, and what is his background?

Professor Marc Clement was born and brought up in South-west Wales, studying at the University of Wales Swansea. By academic discipline a physicist, he followed his initial degree with a PhD in Laser Plasma Interactions, and was then awarded a scholarship from the Royal Society to pursue post-doctoral studies at the Centre d’Études Nucleaires in Paris.

Upcoming events

3 March: *AUA Workshop Career planning and professional development: Planning (and enjoying) the journey*
London
http://www.aua.ac.uk/events/workshops_seminars/career_planning/index.htm

For further information email qualitynews@wales.ac.uk.

Pro Vice-Chancellor's (PVC) piece - Programme specifications



Professor Kate Sullivan

As a response to the Dearing report (arising from the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education), Programme Specifications are required to provide summary information on a programme of study, including the level of study, the reference points used for the design of the programme, the intended learning outcomes and how these are evidenced. This summary is intended for a 'non-academic' audience, such as applicants for the programme, existing students and employers.

The programme specification should demonstrate how the other three components of the Academic Infrastructure (AI) (the QAA's Code of Practice, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements) is embedded into the programme of study. Having defined best practice for Higher Education (HE) and provided the means for standardising qualifications within the sector (with due regard for academic subjects), it follows that the next step should be to communicate effectively the value of an academic programme to the public.

This aspect of the AI has been the most challenging to put into operation. In many instances, it appears that there is no simple way to provide this kind of summary information, in a clear, concise manner. The learning opportunities provided by an academic programme may not be easily defined, or described for a 'lay' audience. Other components of the AI, to which the programme specification refers, are couched in technical language that will have little meaning outside of the HE sector. Consequently, stakeholders have turned to other more mainstream information sources, for instance, the programme profiles prepared by Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) and the outcomes from the annual National Student Survey (NSS).

Feedback to last year's consultation on the effectiveness of the AI indicated that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have found programme specifications useful for other purposes. They have become an information source for key quality processes such as programme validation and review. They also provide a focus for the discussion of programme design by colleagues involved with learning, teaching and assessment. In this regard, the programme specification serves an important role within an HEI's processes for safeguarding the standards and quality of its academic provision. However, it has not yet fully addressed its intended purpose, that of providing an easily accessible and authoritative source of information on a programme of study to a wider audience. This tells us that there is more work to be done and it is certainly true that the sector continues to reflect on how best to provide the public with concise information on its academic activities.

By Professor Kate Sullivan
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality)

Profile of a University of Wales collaborative centre: Allfinanz Akademie

<i>Location:</i>	<i>Germany</i>
<i>Collaborated with UW since:</i>	<i>1990</i>
<i>UW validated programmes here:</i>	<i>MBA (Financial Services)</i>
<i>Current number of UW students:</i>	<i>291</i>
<i>Number of UW graduates to date:</i>	<i>1,100 (est.)</i>



*Professor Lothar Streitferdt,
Director of Allfinanz Akademie*

A long-standing collaborative partner of the University of Wales (UW), Allfinanz Akademie (AA) operates under the leadership of Professor Lothar Streitferdt and his colleagues, in cooperation with the Fern Universität, the distance learning university in Germany.

Back in 1990, AA had identified that there was a niche market in Germany for an academic programme that would allow financial services professionals to study alongside their work commitments. Thus, the distance learning MBA was developed and submitted for validation by the University of Wales.

As part of UW's requirements for quality assurance, the content of the MBA programmes has been systematically developed over the last 20 years to meet market demands whilst maintaining the expected standards for an academic award of this kind from the UK.

The validated MBA has undergone three successful periodic reviews (referred to as a Quinquennial Review in UW's Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures), in 1996, 2001 and 2006 respectively. At the moment, AA is working with colleagues in the Validation Unit to prepare for a fourth Quinquennial Review scheduled for later this year and is looking forward to this opportunity for reflection.

Each year the University of Wales applauds its graduates from AA at the annual Graduation Ceremony held in Cardiff. It's a point of pride for AA that the first ever celebration for graduates from UW's validated programmes was held, in 1998, at its request. UW graduates from Allfinanz Akademie have continued attending this annual event ever since. Indeed, AA has, since 1999, played host to the German branch of the University's Alumni organisation.

Needless to say, the collaborative relationship between UW and AA continues to thrive.

By Hannah Croft
Validation Officer

And with thanks to Professor Lothar Streitferdt for his kind contribution

Quality and Standards Board



Chair: Professor Kate Sullivan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality), University of Wales.

The Quality and Standards Board (QSB) has the primary function of providing assurances to Academic Board that the quality and standards of the University's academic awards are maintained. It does so by:

- undertaking detailed scrutiny of key aspects of the University's academic provision
- providing a neutral space for the discussion of themes on quality and standards
- working closely with Taught Degrees Board (TDB) and Research Degrees Board (RDB) on academic regulations and protocols
- steering the development of mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the University's quality assurance processes.

Its membership includes senior members of Alliance and Accredited Institutions who have responsibility and expertise in quality assurance. Representatives

from Collaborative Centres, the UW student community and the UK HE sector were also on hand to help ensure that QSB receives the advice of these key stakeholder groups when discharging its duties. QSB is supported by three standing committees:

- Equivalency Assurance Committee -
Chaired by Professor Andrea Liggins (Swansea Metropolitan University), EAC is tasked with reviewing systems and strategies in place for ensuring the equivalency of academic standards for awards which are within cognate subject areas
- Special Cases Committee (SCC) -
Chaired by Dr Allan Howells (Glyndŵr University) SCC has delegated responsibility for considering and resolving any special cases arising from the University's collaborative and research provision
- Student Affairs Committee (SAC) -
Chaired by Mr John McInally (University of Wales), SAC will assist with the development and implementation of strategies for ensuring the continual enhancement of the student experience.

By Wing Tsz Chow

In our next edition...

....we will be going electronic! This means you can look forward to your next issue of Quality News being delivered direct into your inbox.

Get in touch

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