



October 2008



FE Teacher Training: Top Marks

Bath Spa Teacher Training Makes Top Grade

Teacher training by Bath Spa University for staff in further education colleges has proved itself to be among the very best in the UK.

Official inspection body Ofsted has given Bath Spa University the highest possible rating, grade one, for the quality of its training programmes for teachers in further education.

In 2007 Bath Spa was also awarded the top grade by Ofsted for its Primary and Early Years teacher training courses.

Bath Spa University delivers its further education teacher training in partnership with four FE colleges in the region – Bridgwater, Norton Radstock, Weston and Wiltshire.

The Ofsted inspectors completed their assessment in June, based on evaluation of the trainees by observing their teaching and monitoring their progress from November 2007. In the Ofsted report there is high praise for the standard of training provided.

“The overall quality of provision is very good,” says the report. “Trainees make very good progress, have high levels of specialist subject expertise and make very good use of self-reflection and feedback to improve their teaching skills and professional practice.”

Other strengths identified by the inspectors include: extremely well designed programmes, with very good links between the taught programmes and trainees’ workplace teaching; highly effective personal and specialist subject support for trainees; very good leadership and management of the training.

Bath Spa University’s Head of Lifelong Learning Jim Crawley said: “This is great news for the University because it shows our work with partner colleges can bring about improvements for teachers and the quality of their teaching, and enhance the experience and learning of their students. An excellent team effort from all involved, both at the university and in our partner colleges, was at the heart of the success. We are all very proud of achieving the top grade.”



High Scores for Bath Spa in National Student Survey

Bath Spa University is a top quality place to study in the opinion of its students. Bath Spa has again scored highly in the latest official survey of what students in all UK universities think about their experience of academic life.

In the National Student Survey 2008 Bath Spa achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 84 per cent. The national average is 82 per cent.

In terms of individual subjects Bath Spa scored 97 per cent for Management Studies (the highest score among all 59 UK universities delivering this subject) and 96 per cent for Food Studies (the highest score among 24 universities in the 'Food and Beverage Studies/Agriculture and related subjects' categories). Other subject areas that gained an extremely high satisfaction rating among Bath Spa students include History, with 96 per cent - 13th position out of 79 - and Education, whose score of 93 per cent is the UK's eighth highest out of 45.

Bath Spa University Vice Chancellor Professor Frank Morgan said: "It is very good news that Bath Spa continues to score highly in the National Student Survey. An even greater proportion of our students are expressing satisfaction with their experience here now than have done so in previous years. This is a tribute to staff throughout the University."

Songwriting Graduate Signs Record Deal

Bath Spa songwriting graduate Andrew Clark has signed a recording deal and is now working on an album of his own compositions.

Andrew has signed up with Helium Records after recently completing Bath Spa's new MA Songwriting course. He is the first student from this unique course, introduced last year, to gain a record label contract.

Andrew, an excellent guitarist as well as songwriter, has an individual style ranging from folk to pure pop. He is now recording with leading producer Chris Hughes, who is perhaps best known for his work with Paul McCartney, Robert Plant and Peter Gabriel.

"I enjoyed the course immensely and learned a great deal," Andrew commented. "I'm now thrilled to be working with Chris, whose experience,

vision and creativity are helping me to take what I have learned and make the album I have always wanted to make."

Andy West, director of the MA Songwriting course, is also delighted about his graduate's achievement. He said: "Andrew has improved greatly as a result of his hard work and application during the course and fully deserves



Andrew Clark



this rare opportunity. He was a really good student and innovative as a thinker and songwriter. These qualities will stand him in good stead in his professional career.”

The MA Songwriting course, one year long for full-time students, was launched in autumn 2007 by the School of Music and Performing Arts and is available only at Bath Spa. Andrew Clark is one of seven graduates from the first intake.

Two Leading Players Exit Bath Spa Stage

Professor Geoff Smith and Gunduz Kalic, inspirational figures in the School of Music and Performing Arts, are both departing – one to pastures new and the other to retirement.

Geoff, the Head of School, is about to take up the post of Deputy Rector at University College Falmouth, which recently merged with Dartington College of Arts and plans to become the Arts University Cornwall in 2012.

Geoff joined Bath Spa 11 years ago as a music lecturer. He was the youngest composer in the history of the label to be signed to Sony Classical.

Geoff has been Head of the School of Music and Performing Arts since it was formed in 2002. He also set up Bath Spa *Live* last year and has been pivotal in increasing student numbers, developing new courses and building the new University Theatre.

Gunduz Kalic, who is retiring as Head of the Drama Department, was also heavily involved in planning the University Theatre. This was officially opened in June by his friend Mike Leigh, the eminent film director and playwright, who in the past taught with Gunduz at East 15 Acting School.

Gunduz designed and launched the BA Performing Arts course and oversaw the recent establishment of Bath Spa’s foundation degrees in Performing Arts, Musical Theatre, Theatre Production and Contemporary Circus and Physical Performance.

He also set up and directed Full Tilt Theatre Company for Drama students and staff and established Shakespeare by the Lake, which has featured his ground-breaking adaptations of Hamlet, Macbeth and the Comedy of Errors.



Professor Geoff Smith



Mike Leigh and Gunduz Kalic



Can Facebook Help You at Work?

Many employers have banned Facebook, MySpace and other social networking sites from the workplace because they are considered a waste of staff's time. But this view is being challenged by Dr Julian Sims, a senior lecturer in Business and Management in Bath Spa's School of Social Sciences.

Dr Sims argues that social networks, far from being a distraction at work, can actually benefit organisations. In a new study he calls for employees' personal use of these sites, the Internet and emails to be encouraged during work time.

He will be presenting his research at the 2008 International Conference on Information Systems in Paris in December.

Dr Sims is an expert on the impact of new technology on organisations. In his paper for the conference he says informal, as well as formal, networks and relationships are needed within a company to create and transfer knowledge. He adds, however, that a balance must be struck.

Dr Sims concludes that rather than trying to eliminate this social activity employers should encourage it in order to help build a culture of knowledge sharing and innovation.



Seaweed at Blue Anchor Bay

Scientists Hunt for Somerset Seaweed

Scientists from Bath Spa University and the Natural History Museum are getting together to comb the beaches of Somerset in a hunt for seaweed.

Dr Nigel Chaffey, course leader for Environmental Science in Bath Spa's School of Science and the Environment, has joined up with Museum expert Professor Juliet Brodie for a survey of the different types of seaweed along the Bristol Channel coastline.

More than 650 species of seaweed are known to exist in the UK – about seven per cent of the worldwide total – and new varieties are still being discovered. However, some sections of the coastline, including Somerset, have not been studied for decades to check how many seaweeds are found there.



One area in Somerset, Blue Anchor Bay, supports a variety of red, green and brown seaweeds, but they were last surveyed back in the 1970s. Professor Brodie and Dr Chaffey are now carrying out a new survey of seaweed species in Blue Anchor Bay and along the rest of the Somerset coast to bring this information up to date.

The results from future studies of the Bristol Channel shoreline can be compared with their data, making it possible to track any changes that take place in local seaweed composition over the coming years.

Dr Chaffey says the survey has wide environmental importance: "First, in the light of concerns about global climate change, it will tell us whether we can see any differences between the species present today and those from 30 years ago and, if so, whether this provides evidence of climate change.

"Second, and perhaps more pressingly, there is renewed interest in building a barrage across the Severn Estuary to harness tidal energy. Unless we know what species are present in the region it is not possible to understand the effects that such a major engineering scheme might have on them, and any knock-on effects there might be on the food webs in this nationally important wildlife area."

You can see a video of Professor Brodie and Dr Chaffey working on their project at Blue Anchor Bay via the Natural History Museum website: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/biodiversity/seaweed-somerset/index.html>

Trainee Teachers Celebrate Indian Arts and Culture



Pupils with Indian Masks

Trainee teachers from Bath Spa have joined local school pupils in a project celebrating the diversity of Indian arts and culture. The PGCE Secondary Art and Design students spent the first weeks of their course working with over 200 children on the project, called *Myth, Meaning and Spectacle*.

The scheme built on links established last year by Course Leader June Bianchi between arts education courses at Bath Spa University, local partner schools, the International Bharti School in Northern India and a Kathakali dance company in Kerala.

The PGCE trainees initially linked Kathakali dance movements with mask-making through a number of workshops, leading to a performance event at Performing Arts specialist school St Gregory's Catholic College, involving many of Bath Spa's partner primary schools.



Sculpture Trail

Inspired by Kathakali and Keralan culture, the trainee teachers also produced their own sculptures, then worked with pupils from St Gregory's and the Grange and Fosseway Schools to create a *Myth, Meaning & Spectacle* sculpture trail on the Newton Park campus from 5-10 October.

The sculpture trail, installed around the lake, was greatly enjoyed not only by the trainees and children but also by many Bath Spa staff and students.

Aims of the project included enhancing the PGCE students' subject skills in two and three dimensional artistic media and Indian arts and culture, as well as broadening understanding of educational development through the arts.

Budding Entrepreneurs Wanted for Innovation Awards

Do you have a really bright idea for a new product or service? If so, apply for this year's Bath Spa University Innovation Awards and turn your idea into a brilliant business opportunity.

Winners of the competition, open to all BSU students and staff, will receive awards ranging from £1,500 to £5,000 to develop their brainchild. This could provide the investment needed to explore its commercial potential.

If you are successful and win funding from one of the Innovation Awards you will also be given support through business review by industry experts, who will advise you over the development phase.

Closing date for applications is 28 November, with prizes to be presented by the Vice Chancellor on 4 December at the Innovation Centre in Bath. Application forms are available from Susan Cherrett at the Business Support Office. Phone 01225 875556 or email s.cherrett@bathspa.ac.uk



2007 Award Winners

Refectory Makes B&NES Top Five on Food Hygiene

You expect a high level of food safety at any eating place. However, the team at Bath Spa's Moreton Refectory have gone beyond the call of duty in looking after their customers' welfare.

Catering Manager Phil Turner and his staff were confident about their hygiene standards but wanted proof. They asked for inclusion in the Bath and North East Somerset Council food safety award scheme, which requires an extra tough inspection in addition to the annual one.



Moreton Refectory



It means that when the environmental health inspector calls he checks out all aspects of food safety, hygiene and production even more rigorously than usual, demanding evidence of 'due diligence'.

The Moreton Refectory not only passed with merit to qualify for an award, but has also been rated in the top five out of 1700 premises in the B&NES area.

Phil is proud of their achievement. He said: "It's tremendous work by all the team and recognition of what they do."

Lifeworks Advice Available to All Staff

Did you know that as a Bath Spa employee you can get invaluable confidential advice, absolutely free, on how to deal with the stresses and strains of everyday life?

This exciting new phone and online service, called Lifeworks, is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, as part of the University's Wellbeing strategy.

Many staff, including members of the Senior Management Team, have attended presentations during recent weeks about the Lifeworks service, which is on offer to all BSU employees and their immediate family.

Lifeworks offers information, advice and support on a whole range of issues to help you face life's daily challenges. These include health problems, caring for elderly relatives, midlife crises, emotional wellbeing, trouble at work, parenting and childcare, retirement, disabilities, addiction and financial or legal difficulties.

It's the first time the University has made available such comprehensive help to staff across the board – and already there has been a favourable reaction from the briefings. Among the comments so far:

"What I found great was the close links they have with medical, social work and legal services, and the expertise of the staff at Lifeworks."

"I was really surprised by the amount of support they offer – even to helping with children's nursery places and elderly relative care home options."

You can find out more about Lifeworks and how to use the service by visiting our Wellbeing website:

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/hr/for-staff/work-life-balance/wellbeing.asp>

