Women as agents of change
Empowering producers through Fair Trade
Leadership and management in HE
Supporting academic freedom
## Contents

**April 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3    | Women as agents of change  
Tessa Blackstone on women’s participation in higher education. |
| 4    | Exploring the power to change  
Ann Le Mare describes her award-winning research with women handicraft artisans in Bangladesh. |
| 5    | Humble beginnings  
Jane Onsongo discusses her experiences as a woman senior manager in Kenyan higher education. |
| 6    | Helping girls and women out of poverty  
Andrew Mitchell explains the UK government’s approach to gender and international development. |
| 8    | International university rankings  
Phil Baty looks at a new approach to university league tables. |
| 10   | From job seeker to job creator  
John Kirkland considers the discussions and outcomes from a recent conference on graduate employment in Africa. |
| 12   | Supporting academic freedom across the Commonwealth  
John Akker and Laura Wintour on the launch of a new CARA/ACU network for refugee academics. |
| 14   | ACU Development Fellowships Fund  
Two new initiatives supported by the ACU. |
| 16   | Noticeboard  
News from around the ACU. |
| 18   | Sharing problems and solutions  
Peter Sanderson shares his experience mentoring a university HR department. |
| 20   | Working together towards common goals  
Evelina Vardanyan reports on the recent Collaborating with the Commonwealth conference. |
| 22   | Surveying the future  
John Kirkland examines what people really think about Commonwealth Scholarships. |
| 24   | Virtual scholars  
David Nicholas and Ian Rowlands explain the characteristics of scholars in the digital age – and the implications for librarians. |
| 27   | ACU publications |
| 28   | Recent publications |
| 30   | ACU membership update |
| 31   | Calendar |
here are now more female than male undergraduates in the universities of many developed countries, including those in the Commonwealth. Fifty years ago, predictions that this would happen would have been dismissed as risible. Today, I am willing to predict that in probably much less than 50 years’ time this will also be true for many, although by no means all, developing countries in the Commonwealth too.

In universities where this change has already happened, it is partly accounted for by the relatively recent inclusion of degree-level courses which prepare students for professions in education and health in which women have long predominated, such as primary school teaching and nursing. It is, however, mainly a result of the social revolution in the role of women, in which they are no longer expected to spend many years of their lives confined to caring for children and other domestic activities. In line with changed social expectations about their future roles, girls leaving secondary education now aspire to professional careers, in which they can get to the top. Their educational achievement matches their aspirations, and is now in many countries higher on average than that of their male peers when they leave school and transfer to university.

It is not a paradox that female undergraduates predominate, but women vice-chancellors are still in a small minority in most countries. The pool of successful senior academics who have moved into management, from which heads of institutions are mainly drawn, consists of many more men than women. But this too is changing. More women are entering university teaching and more are moving up the ranks to become heads of department. From this larger pool of women, deans and then pro-vice chancellors will be appointed, leading eventually to more women executive heads.

This trend is already apparent in countries such as the UK and Australia. In Australia in 1997, six out of 42 institutions (14.3 per cent) were headed by women; in 2011, this had risen slightly to six out of 39 (15.4 per cent). In the UK, the respective figures are 10 out of 145 (6.9 per cent) in 1997, and 18 out of 133 (13.5 per cent) in 2011. In Africa and Asia, with the exceptions of South Africa and India, there has so far been little progress in appointing women to vice-chancellorships. The failure to exploit the potential of women to be good academic leaders and managers in many member countries of the Commonwealth is worth some attention. In the year in which the theme of Commonwealth Day is ‘Women as agents of change’, the ACU might itself become an agent of change by encouraging potential talent in countries where women have not yet broken through. The ACU is already involved in this area, through running regionally-based management training and leadership programmes for women. Other initiatives could include mentoring by recently-retired women vice-chancellors. The lack of role models in some countries can hardly help those women who aspire to the top jobs. Last but not least, the attitudes of the mainly male panels which appoint executive heads may need to be challenged.
Exploring the power to change

Ann Le Mare has conducted award-winning research with handicraft artisans in Bangladesh, considering how socially-responsible business, particularly Fair Trade networks, can contribute to the wellbeing and empowerment of women.

There is growing interest in the outcomes of Fair Trade, a trading relationship based on cooperation between businesses. Its principles include the paying of a fair price/wage, the provision of good working conditions, and attention to the impact on the environment.

While there has been considerable research on the impact of Fair Trade on farmers, businesses and markets generally, there has been less research targeted specifically at the circumstances, problems and benefits to women workers. Handicraft production has the potential to reach some of the poorest people in the world. For many women, it may be their first experience of paid work.

My research was conducted with four Bangladeshi organisations employing women who make goods for export from jute, terracotta, handmade paper, and embroidered cloth. Taking a comparative approach, it included 282 women employed by Fair Trade enterprises and 284 women in similar circumstances but who were not employed in Fair Trade, and used an extensive survey, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and life histories to capture the changes in the lives of the women producers.

It was found that Fair Trade has a significant influence on reducing chronic poverty due to the level of the wage/price, which is higher than other opportunities for paid work. Such employment also has an impact on transitory poverty, because of the many pro-poor financial policies of the Fair Trade businesses (for example, savings and loan schemes, hardship funds) and because of their sympathetic attitude to their employees’ domestic responsibilities. For example, women are allowed to bring their babies with them to work, or to leave to prepare meals or collect children and then return. Such flexible working is not possible in any other paid work.

The research demonstrated a significant impact on the wellbeing of women handicraft producers, primarily because of the way production is organised. Individual artisans are brought into producer groups where they adopt additional roles (chairperson, treasurer), learn social skills (discussing and sharing problems), and develop new social networks (meeting designers, reviewing progress with field workers). In a country where women’s mobility is severely restricted, they are given opportunities to travel to the city, acquiring additional skills relevant to modern society. They achieve many individual social gains – improved mobility and confidence, and increased self-esteem. As a group, they are much more likely to access health services, express their views, and take part in household decision-making than other women not employed in Fair Trade. As one participant in a focus group said, ‘We have some income of our own….our husbands now talk to us…we can discuss amongst ourselves…we are respected’.

My research was supported by an ESRC CASE award, and received the Michael Young Prize 2010 for research that has the potential to make a positive and far-reaching impact beyond academia. The research findings are now being used to address issues of relevance to firstly the women producers, and secondly the businesses themselves. Two booklets have been prepared to explain the research findings to the women producers, many of whom are semi-literate, as part of education and awareness-raising programmes. The booklets, which feature pictures, diagrams, and limited text, will be used to further their understanding of the world outside their village and home, increasing their abilities to learn new skills, take advantage of new opportunities, and engage in collective activities.

Secondly, at the business level, the findings are being used to convey the benefits achieved, and also those aspects of production that could be improved. The research was able to identify policies that are particularly significant in improving the wellbeing of women producers. A constructive dialogue is continuing, and women in Bangladesh are acquiring new voices in new spaces, having more influence on the institutions that affect them. The research also demonstrated that some women can use home-based handicraft work as a stepping stone into more modern, better-paying work, or progress within the sector. Some women producers are becoming trainers, or moving into higher-skilled jobs, such as marketing and quality control; several of the Fair Trade enterprises in Bangladesh now have women managers.

While it is still the norm for women to remain in the home, they are increasingly moving into the public spheres of paid work and having greater involvement in community and national decisions. They want their voice to be heard; the ongoing activities to disseminate and use these research findings to inform policy are a small, but important part of that process.
Humble beginnings

Jane Onsongo is a Kenyan academic with a particular interest in the role of women in higher education, who has faced significant challenges in her own educational and working career.

As a second-born child in a family of 10 siblings, growing up was very difficult and, as a girl, going to school was not easy. I walked barefoot every morning to the local primary school. My attendance at school was sometimes interrupted by domestic chores, such as tilling the land, fetching water, and collecting firewood. My secondary school lacked the necessary teaching and learning facilities but, because I wanted to pass my exams, I worked extremely hard during the holidays, borrowing textbooks and class notes from friends whose schools were better resourced. My hard work bore fruit when I became one of the first girls at the school to qualify for university education.

Following my undergraduate degree at Kenyatta University, I became a secondary school teacher. After six years, I moved on to university teaching, at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). I moved up the ranks, starting off as an Assistant Lecturer and Deputy Head of Department, eventually becoming one of the first girls at the school to become a secondary school teacher. After six years, I moved on to Kenyatta University, I became a secondary school teacher. After six years, I moved on to university teaching, at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). I moved up the ranks, starting off as an Assistant Lecturer and Deputy Head of Department, eventually becoming the first female Associate Professor in Education in 2009. In addition to teaching and managing departments, I was involved in programme and curriculum development and several policy development and review assignments.

I was nominated for an ACU scholarship in 1999, to study an MA in Women and Management in Higher Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, UK. I was the only woman holding a management position (my first) at CUEA when these scholarships were advertised. The MA was an eye-opener and greatly contributed to my interest in gender issues in education generally, and women’s participation in higher education management in particular. The tutorials and sharing of experiences with other women from all over the world enabled me to understand the effects of gender discrimination on women’s lives. After the MA, I started to examine my experiences as a woman in higher education management from a feminist perspective. Some of the women I met in the course of my studies and work served as my role models and mentors. Although there was no formal mentorship programme at CUEA, I was able to benefit from some of these women’s experiences as academics and managers.

As a woman in Kenyan society, I have experienced a number of challenges during my education and career. I have had to work extra hard and make sacrifices in order to achieve what I have at my age. My perceived role in society as a woman has sometimes determined the meetings that I attend, the decisions for which I am consulted, and the respect that I receive from the people I manage. There are times when my gender has denied me access to some of the responsibilities to which my management position entitles me. As a woman manager, I have also experienced a lack of cooperation from senior male colleagues, who refuse to recognise my management responsibility over them. For example, they refuse to perform their professional tasks, or sometimes they carry out their work badly with the intention of blaming or making me appear incompetent. I have also witnessed qualified women being denied opportunities to hold management positions in some organisations.

I must confess that, before encountering feminist theory in the course of my studies, research on women managers, and sharing of experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops, I never saw my experiences with other senior women in ACU-funded workshops. My current role is at the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC); I was appointed Assistant Director of Preventive Services in July 2010, through a very competitive selection process. KACC is a public body, mandated to combat and prevent corruption and economic crimes through enforcement of the law, educating the public and enlisting them in the fight against corruption, and providing preventive services through promotion of best practices.

Professor Jane Onsongo is Assistant Director of Preventive Services at the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission, and an Associate Professor of Education at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
Helping girls and women out of poverty

Gender equality is now at the forefront of development thinking, alongside an increased focus on specific issues such as maternal mortality. Andrew Mitchell explains why the UK government believes in the importance of supporting women in developing countries.

In March 2011, I announced radical changes to how the UK government delivers aid. We said we will work more strategically with our support targeted in fewer countries. We will refocus our programmes on to what works, and we will offer increased support for international agencies that can prove they deliver results. But key to all of this is improving the lives of those who are too often at the bottom of the pile.

I saw this for myself when I visited Rwanda last year, where I met Anne Marie, a 46-year-old woman who has experienced great joy and deep grief in the past two years. In 2009, two of Anne Marie’s daughters, Francine and Josiane, died after contracting malaria. Anne Marie’s grief was compounded by the fact that a medical clinic was available just an hour’s walk away, but she did not have the 20 pence needed for treatment that would have saved her daughters’ lives.

Times have changed for Anne Marie. She and her remaining family are able to sleep safe and well under a UK government-funded, insecticide-treated antimalaria bednet, which cost just GBP 4 and will keep a family safe from mosquitoes as they sleep.

Anne Marie’s story is a clear reminder of what well-spent aid can achieve for families in the developing world – and the life or death situations in which it is used.

According to the United Nations, six out of 10 of the world’s poorest people are still women and girls. To those living in such dire circumstances, events such as Commonwealth Day and International Women’s Day (8 March) might not mean a great deal. However, to those of us in a position to be able to do something about their plight, these occasions should serve as sharp reminders of the challenges ahead.

We know that women in the developing world face situations which, thankfully, few of their counterparts in richer countries will ever encounter. In Rwanda, for example, one woman in every 35 dies in childbirth, while in the UK the figure is one in 4,700. Getting pregnant and giving birth is, quite simply, one of the most dangerous things many women in developing countries will ever do in their lives.

The UK government will enable at least 10 million more women to use modern methods of family planning, allowing them to choose whether, when, and how many children to have. And we will support at least two million women to deliver their babies safely with skilled midwives, nurses, and doctors.

Enabling girls and women to make informed choices and act on them is central to what we will do. Reaching girls early enough can transform their life chances, and give them greater choice and control over decisions that affect them, helping to break the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next. This means getting more girls into school. Women with more years of schooling have better maternal
health, fewer and healthier children, and increased economic opportunities. Adolescent girls who are in school are likely to marry later, less likely to have premarital sex, and more likely to use contraception.

While some of the reasons for girls not being in school are complex, some are extremely easy to address. Adolescent girls do not want to share toilets with teenage boys, so installing separate latrines helps them to stay in school for longer. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our direct support over the next four years to targeted schools will help 180,000 girls enrol and stay in primary school.

We also need to offer girls and women opportunities to work or start their own businesses once they leave school. Research shows that when women earn money, they reinvest the majority of it back into their families, helping to ensure that their children are well nourished and healthy.

That’s why we provide small loans to women to pull themselves — and their families — out of poverty. In Afghanistan, Maryam, a widow and busy mother of two girls, runs a thriving tailoring business. She arrived back in the country five years ago from Pakistan as a penniless refugee but, thanks to a GBP 700 microfinance loan through UK government funding, she now employs six local people and owns her own home and car.

Sadly, we know all this good work will flounder if we fail to free women from the violence that they face every day in the world’s most conflict-affected countries. The ongoing reports of mass rapes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are shocking, with the consequences of rape and sexual abuse continuing to devastate survivors and their communities long after the guns have fallen silent. That is why we are addressing the horrific aftermath of such events in the country through projects which provide 27,000 women with emergency medical care and almost 3,500 women with psychosocial support.

Finally, we will work with bilateral and multilateral partners, and increasingly with the private sector, to improve the international response to supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment. Our recently published Multilateral Aid Review concluded that most multilateral organisations need to do more to deliver for girls and women, and this is a priority issue around which we will be engaging with partners. The UK played a leadership role in the establishment of UN Women, the new UN organisation dedicated to gender equality, and is committed to help it become a powerful agency. It is a historic opportunity to achieve tangible results for women around the world.

Commonwealth Day 2011 recognises the role of women as agents of change, a few days after celebrating the centenary of International Women’s Day. It is fair to say that great strides have been made in many places, but we must ensure that, as we celebrate the dawn of a new century for the advancement of women’s rights, we do so with a renewed vigour and determination to improve the lives of girls and women marginalised by poverty.

Bringing maternal healthcare to rural India

During the course of her PhD fieldwork, Lindsay Barnes, a Commonwealth Scholar from the UK studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, came across ‘appalling living conditions in the coalmines and grinding poverty in the surrounding villages’. Lindsay remained in India after obtaining her PhD in 1990, trying to improve the lives of poor rural women in nearby villages.

Lindsay says ‘The village where I live and work is in the state of Jharkhand, one of the poorest in India. The local area has over 100 villages and a population of nearly 200,000, but no resident doctors. There is a primary health centre with doctors available only during the day. There is no government hospital in the whole district — with a population of nearly 2 million — which provides free or low-cost emergency obstetric care for poor women’. Lindsay’s involvement with childbirth in the villages started in 1994; prior to this, she had no real experience other than having two children herself. When a group of villagers came in the middle of the night to ask her to help a woman in childbirth, she realised how desperate they were for help, and began to get involved in local healthcare.

Lindsay and her husband set up Jan Chetna Manch (‘organisation for people’s awareness’), and started yearly health fairs, monthly camps, and then weekly clinics. Now clinics are open three days a week, providing services to around 600 women each month, mainly for antenatal care. Lindsay says ‘I understood that we had to rely, as far as possible, on local resources: traditional midwives, knowledge and people. This has proved to be one of the strong points of our programme, ensuring its sustainability’.

Over the last five years, 7,000 women have received check-ups through Jan Chetna Manch, and there has been only one maternal death. As Lindsay points out, ‘In an area where the maternal mortality rate is probably around 500 per 100,000 live births, this is no small achievement’.

Jan Chetna Manch provides 24/7 care for women in childbirth, with qualified nurses as well as trained village women available at all times, and an ambulance on hand. Around 50 women give birth at the women’s health centre each month. Lindsay says ‘Many women now come for unproblematic, normal deliveries. In nearby villages a home birth is unusual, rather than the norm that it was 10 years ago.

‘It is not possible for the poor to pay for quality healthcare, and I firmly believe that the poor should get the best!’ Although there are charges for the medical services, when a mother and child’s lives are at risk, no-one is turned away. ‘When emergencies happen, the poor still have to sell their land for medical care. It is something that I find difficult to have to do.’

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Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP is the UK Secretary of State for International Development. www.dfid.gov.uk
International university rankings: a new approach

University rankings are now a well-established part of the higher education landscape. But they are not without their detractors. Phil Baty, one of the speakers at the 2011 ACU Conference of Executive Heads, considers the issues and explains a new and innovative methodology.

University rankings are always controversial. They are highly influential with students, faculty, university administrators, and policymakers all around the world, but they face much criticism: there is too much movement from one year to the next; they count what can be measured, but do not measure what counts; they encourage conformity and fail to capture the diversity of missions between institutions. Worse, they reward the already powerful Western research elite, and fail to capture excellence in the developing world.

Much of this criticism is valid, and some of it cannot be easily refuted. But I’d suggest that there is at least one global university ranking system that is seeking to capture a fuller range of a university’s activities, and striving to see past the simplistic research-driven tables.

That system is the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, powered by data from Thomson Reuters.

Of course, there is some strong work by other ranking providers. Shanghai Jiao Tong University’s Academic Ranking of World Universities is objective, stable and useful — but only if you want a narrow picture of research power. Its six indicators are restricted purely to research, almost exclusively in science.

The Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan’s table is also controversial, as it has shaken up the established order, giving high scores to some smaller institutions with clear pockets of research excellence, and boosting those in the developing world, often at the expense of the larger and older research-intensive universities.

We judge knowledge transfer, at present, with just one indicator — research income earned from industry — and we plan to enhance this category with other indicators. Internationalisation is recognised through data on the proportion of international staff and students attracted to each institution.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings place the most weight on a range of research indicators. We think this is the correct approach in a world where governments are investing heavily in developing the knowledge economy and seeking answers to global challenges such as climate change and food security.

We look at research in a number of different ways, examining research reputation, income, and volume (through publication in leading academic journals indexed by Thomson Reuters). But we give the highest weighting to an indicator of ‘research influence’, measured by the number of times a university’s published research is cited by academics around the globe.

We looked at more than 25 million citations over a five-year period from more than five million articles. All the data was normalised to reflect variations in citation volume between different subject areas, so universities with strong research in fields with lower global citation rates are not penalised.

We also sought to acknowledge excellence in research from institutions in developing nations, where there are less-established research networks and lower innate citation rates, by normalising the citations data to reflect variations in citation volume between different geographical regions. We are proud to have done this, but accept that more discussion is needed on this modification to the citations data.

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The flagship, and the most dramatic, innovation is a new set of five indicators that give proper credit to the role of teaching in universities, with a collective weighting of 30 per cent.

But I should make one thing very clear: we are not measuring teaching ‘quality’. There is no recognised, globally comparative data on teaching outputs at present. What the Times Higher Education rankings do is look at the
teaching ‘environment’, to give a sense of the kind of learning environment in which students are likely to find themselves.

The key indicator for this category draws on the results of a reputational survey on teaching. Thomson Reuters carried out its Academic Reputation Survey – a worldwide, invitation-only poll of 13,388 experienced scholars, statistically representative of global subject mix and geography – in early 2010.

It examined the perceived prestige of institutions in both research and teaching. Respondents were asked only to pass judgement within their narrow area of expertise, and we asked them ‘action-based’ questions, such as ‘Where would you send your best graduates for the most stimulating postgraduate learning environment?’, to elicit more meaningful responses.

The rankings also include a staff-to-student ratio. This is admittedly a relatively crude proxy for teaching quality, hinting at the level of personal attention a student may receive from an institution’s faculty, and it receives a relatively low weighting of just 4.5 per cent.

We also look at the ratio of PhD to Bachelor degrees, to give a sense of how knowledge-intensive the environment is, as well as the number of PhDs awarded, scaled for size, to give a sense of how committed an institution is to nurturing the next generation of academics and providing strong supervision.

The last of our teaching indicators is a simple measure of institutional income scaled against academic staff numbers. This figure, adjusted for purchasing-price parity so that all nations compete on a level playing field, gives a broad sense of the general infrastructure and facilities available.

Our efforts to recognise the importance of teaching have been praised by Philip Altbach, Director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College in the US. He said that, while there are obvious limitations to the proxies, ‘at least Times Higher Education has recognised the importance of the issue... Times Higher Education gets an A grade for effort’.

Other responses to our new tables have been excellent. I will not pretend that there has not been criticism (notably from vice-chancellors whose institutions have taken the biggest hits from our new methodology), but other comments have been positive.

Professor Steve Smith, who represents all UK vice-chancellors as President of Universities UK, said that the new methodology ‘bolstered confidence in the evaluation method’. Professor David Naylor, President of the University of Toronto, summed things up well. He recognised that Times Higher Education ‘consulted widely to pinpoint weaknesses in other ranking systems and in [our] previous approach’.

We are proud of the new and improved Times Higher Education World University Rankings. But, of course, we will continue to engage with our critics, and to take expert advice on further methodological modifications and innovations. That is why I am delighted to be presenting and debating the issues at the ACU’s Conference of Executive Heads in Hong Kong in April. I look forward to the discussions.

From job seeker to job creator

John Kirkland reports on the outcomes from a recent conference looking at graduate employment issues in Africa.

African universities need to produce job creators, as well as job seekers. That was the key message from the opening session of a major conference on graduate employment in Africa, organised by the ACU in conjunction with the British Council in Accra, Ghana, on 16-18 January 2011. The conference was the first major event of the ACU’s new Graduate Employment Network, established last year to provide a forum for those responsible for policy development in member universities.

The conference could not have been more timely. Not only are student numbers in African universities rising rapidly, but also the expectations of key stakeholders that increased access will both benefit individuals and result in wider economic growth. The 160 delegates at the conference discussed the challenges of striking a balance between responding to this challenge and ensuring that the expectations are realistic. Universities, as many speakers pointed out, cannot be responsible for the problems of national economies as a whole.

In initial presentations, Dr Joseph Annan, Deputy Minister of Education responsible for Higher Education in Ghana, called for higher education and human resources to be more closely aligned. Dr Kaba Urgessa, State Minister of Education in Ethiopia, outlined the increasing role of the private sector in providing graduate employment. From the perspective of universities themselves, Professor Lindela Ndlouv, Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, warned that one size would not fit all, and that a variety of approaches will be needed. This theme was taken up by private sector representatives, who called for an expansion of internship programmes in the region, as well as measures within the private sector to attract and encourage young graduates.

Students themselves remain confident about even more acute for universities. If expectations remain high among the ever-increasing cohort of undergraduates, then the risk of disillusionment will be all the greater in the event of these being unfulfilled.

Students’ confidence, however, appears to result more from their belief in the value of a higher qualification than any specific support made available by their universities. 70 per cent said that their universities had not discussed employment opportunities with them. Only 48 per cent knew of any links between their universities and employers, and 57 per cent knew of links with other universities. 67 per cent said that they had not benefited from any such links.

Against this background, delegates were encouraged to hear of several existing initiatives, in both Africa and other parts of the Commonwealth. The British Council’s Africa Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (AKTP) programme is one such example. Based on a successful model developed in the UK over the past 30 years, these partnerships involve real-life problems identified by industry itself. Recent graduates from the universities involved are then employed to work directly on these problems, drawing on the wider expertise of their universities. Early examples of such partnerships demonstrated their potential both to produce real innovation in products and processes and to boost the career prospects of participating graduates. Delegates expressed hope that the programme would expand in future, while recognising that its labour-intensive nature would not allow it to benefit huge numbers.

A range of other models was described. Two African universities reporting significant activity were the University of Botswana, which has taken the lead in developing surveys of graduates’ early career destinations, and the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa, one of the few universities to have developed international links and, through involvement in the South African Graduate Recruitment Association, formal links with major employers. Yet, in both cases, their work also revealed that much still needs to be done.

UCT found that many employers still consider graduates’ preparation for interviews poor, and that stronger focus is needed on skills such as willingness to learn, teamwork, and proactive behaviour. The University of Botswana found graduate employment to be at around 30 per cent some four or five months after graduation in the first two years of its survey, but it recognises that this represents a snapshot in time and that longitudinal data is needed.

Other approaches from the UK were also described, several of which had been funded by the government-sponsored England-Africa Partnerships programme. A project based at the University of Nottingham and involving South African and UK colleges introduced the concept of the ‘employable college’, through which graduate employability and its attendant issues can be recognised at all levels of the institution. The University of Essex has developed an online service to support aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses in Nigeria. Liverpool John Moores University’s WoW (World of Work) initiative provides a qualification to recognise activity relevant to employability.
Not only are student numbers in African universities rising rapidly, but also the expectations of key stakeholders that increased access will both benefit individuals and result in wider economic growth.

Making the most of Africa’s graduates: the Accra declaration

The following statement was agreed by delegates to the international conference on ‘Making the most of Africa’s graduates and the role of international partnerships’, convened by the ACU and the British Council and held in Accra, Ghana, from 16-18 January 2011. It is addressed to all stakeholders – politicians, educationalists, employers, and students.

Universities, technical and further education colleges (hereinafter referred to as ‘the tertiary sector’) have a critical role in furthering social and economic development and thus helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The provision of skilled manpower is one of the main ways through which this potential can be realised. Ensuring that our graduates fill this need therefore represents one of the major challenges to the tertiary sector today.

There needs to be a clear and realistic understanding of the role that the tertiary sector can play. Universities and colleges do not inherit a clean sheet of paper, as their students have been moulded and influenced by other levels of education. Nor do they produce a finished product. Graduates need to develop, enhance, and adjust their skills throughout life to adapt to changing needs. Moreover, what the tertiary sector can achieve is heavily influenced by external conditions, particularly the availability of, on the one hand, employment opportunities to absorb increasing graduate numbers and, on the other hand, environmental/political/financial support for budding entrepreneurs.

Much, however, can be achieved through individual, institutional and collegial response. The conference calls for:

1. the tertiary sector to adopt clear policies and strategies to ensure that the needs of graduate employment are fully integrated into the design of course provision, embracing curriculum design, the development of employment-related skills (including soft skills), and the nurturing of an entrepreneurial spirit and capacity

2. the tertiary sector to maintain clear points of information and advice for their students regarding employment issues, as well as channels through which students can voice their concerns and needs

3. employers to designate staff with specific responsibility for graduate recruitment and liaison with tertiary institutions

4. the development of mechanisms at national and local level for continuing dialogue between employers, tertiary institutions, and other stakeholders

5. the development of clear incentives for teaching staff and employers to prioritise graduate employment issues in their work

6. the development of better mechanisms to survey graduate employment issues, and to feed these back into institutional planning

7. better use to be made of alumni, diaspora, and other contacts in industry, to provide information, advice, and mentoring for students

8. the development of further funding programmes, such as the British Council Africa Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, which provide direct access to industry for graduates and a catalyst for further collaboration

9. the expansion of effective pan-African as well as wider international partnerships and networks (such as the ACU Graduate Employment Network), to develop dialogue between practitioners and facilitate the flow of information regarding job opportunities

10. the inclusion of graduate employment issues in major future policy debates on higher education
Supporting academic freedom across the Commonwealth

The ACU and the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics are launching a new network to support persecuted academics. John Akker and Laura Wintour explain the importance of work in this area.

It is very noteworthy that last year’s ACU Conference of Executive Heads examined a linked area – the role of universities in times of conflict and post-conflict resolution. Professor John Tarrant, the outgoing ACU Secretary General, said that the conference had uncovered a very important issue, which demanded further consideration: how the ACU might facilitate taking forward the Millennium Development Goals agenda and help to reconstruct universities in post-conflict situations, such as those in Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka that were described at the conference.

Albie Sachs, former Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and former CARA grantee, opened this session of the conference and spoke with passion about his own experience. He received a grant from CARA to pursue his PhD at the University of Sussex, UK, after being imprisoned by the apartheid regime in the 1960s and losing an arm and one eye in a bomb assassination attempt by security forces in 1988.

On each occasion, he found a safe haven as an academic in the UK from which to rebound. He has said in interviews that he received two things from CARA: ‘not just material support to do my PhD, but immense moral and emotional comfort, which made me feel one in a long tradition of émigrés who had also been treated with dignity and honour when they came here’.

The case of Albie Sachs is sadly not an isolated one, and the number of persecuted academics who seek CARA’s assistance is ever increasing. Many more would be able to receive help if there was support available. As a recent editorial in *Nature* said, ‘the integration of refugee scholars needs a firmer footing and better funding as well as more institutions to play an active host role’.

It is therefore hoped that the establishment of this Commonwealth network will enable CARA and the ACU to find ways of preserving and nurturing the lives of academics dismissed from their universities and unable to continue their work. Albie Sachs outlined in his presentation at last year’s ACU conference that ‘universities in torn and divided societies have a huge role. Their great strength is derived from being inside and outside at the same time’.

CARA’s work in brokering placements, employment, and sanctuary in universities has been in existence since Sir William Beveridge, Lord Rutherford, John Maynard Keynes and A V Hill founded CARA’s predecessor, the Academic Assistance Council, in response to the persecution of academics across Europe by fascist regimes. One example is that of Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who founded the Paralympic Games and the Stoke Mandeville Hospital for spinal injuries. Within two years of fleeing Nazi Germany, he had overturned the conventional view that paraplegics were beyond help and laid down the basic principles for the management of paraplegia, which are still observed today. This was the result of the warm welcome he received at a UK university where he was able to spend six months as a fellow researching this enormously important issue.

In recent times, CARA has established a fellowship programme assisting those who have fled from Iraq and a programme linking Iraqi academics with universities in the UK, with support from UNESCO. CARA’s UK Grant Programme has supported over 60 individuals, enabling them to continue their research and/or obtain further qualifications. These academics also receive assistance in obtaining employment through funds made available by the European Union.

CARA has recently launched a Zimbabwe fellowship programme, arising from an emerging need for proactive engagement with the decline in
Zimbabwe’s higher education provision and from increasing enquiries from Zimbabwean academics seeking CARA’s support. As a result of a series of higher education consultations with key stakeholders based in Zimbabwe, the UK, and South Africa, CARA succeeded in securing funds for a Grant and Fellowship Programme, as well as a Virtual Lecture Hall to be housed at the University of Zimbabwe. These programmes will go some way towards addressing the problem of brain drain, as well as encouraging academic networking between Zimbabwean academics and their counterparts in the diaspora. This is in line with South African Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande’s call, at last year’s ACU conference, to ‘support the strengthening of initiatives aimed at building exchanges of knowledge and also confronting the brain drain’.

Our new network will be launched at the 2011 ACU Conference of Executive Heads in Hong Kong. Delegates will receive information on how they might be able to assist refugee academics through the provision of temporary teaching and/or research fellowships, reengagement placements, or employment. CARA and the ACU would be very pleased to hear from ACU members who would be interested in joining this new network.

1 The term ‘refugee’ in this context is not defined as a person with legal status under the 1951 Convention, but rather as a person fleeing persecution in relation to their teaching or research or other substantial reason.

Of particular importance is the increased emphasis on ways in which academic refugees can assist with development issues.

Professor John Akker is Executive Secretary of the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics.

Laura Wintour is Zimbabwe Programme Manager at the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics.

www.academic-refugees.org
akker.cara@lsbu.ac.uk
ACU Development Fellowships Fund

The ACU Development Fellowships Fund promotes mobility amongst Commonwealth university staff. To date, the fund has supported fellowships, scholarships, and research and mobility grants – and now two new initiatives.

ACU Visiting Fellowships

As part of our aim to increase both the exchange of knowledge and expertise between and the flow of high-level policy research to members, the ACU is creating up to five Visiting Fellowships in 2011-2012.

The ACU Visiting Fellows will each be expected to provide a thought-provoking study on an aspect of the future of higher education. This theme is deliberately broad, in order to encourage a wide range of ideas. The subject of the study may be Commonwealth-wide, or place particular emphasis on the regional context in which the Fellow operates. It should, however, be a topic of interest to the broad range of ACU membership, and involve some element of international collaboration.

The studies will be published as ACU policy papers and widely distributed to member universities and other higher education bodies throughout the Commonwealth, providing a strong international profile for the work. The ACU would have no objection to the work being published elsewhere also, with appropriate credit. The Fellows need not be based at the ACU offices in London, although they will have the option of spending a period of time there during their award.

The ACU Visiting Fellowship provides a grant of GBP 5,000 (funded by the ACU’s Development Fellowships Fund), made available to the Fellow’s home institution, to cover travel, research costs, and other approved research or international collaboration expenditure. Publication and dissemination costs of the resulting paper will be supported separately. The ACU Visiting Fellowship is tenable for one academic year and, in 2011-2012, can be taken up at any time between September 2011 and March 2012. Applications are invited from staff nominated by any ACU member university. The closing date for applications is 1 July 2011.

Commonwealth Summer School

The ACU’s Development Fellowships Fund is also supporting another new initiative: applications are being invited for the first ever Commonwealth Summer School, sponsored by the ACU and scheduled to take place at the University of Buea, Cameroon, from 27-30 July 2011.

The Summer School is a new event designed to bring together postgraduate and final-year undergraduate students with a particular interest in the Commonwealth and international affairs. The inaugural Summer School will focus on the theme of the Commonwealth, democracy and human rights, and within this will examine how the Commonwealth interacts with several areas of policy.

Sessions will also look at the early careers of postgraduate students and academics, and what measures can be taken to help with career development, particularly for those from low and middle income countries. Several UK and other international academics have already agreed to attend, although the intention is to restrict total numbers to around 50, in order to facilitate discussion.

According to ACU Deputy Secretary General Dr John Kirkland, another aim of the Summer School is to encourage the formation of Commonwealth societies at university level. ‘Initial research suggests that a small number of such societies exist, in locations as diverse as Canada, Cameroon, and the UK,’ he says. ‘However, there seems to be no contact between these existing societies, and hardly any between them and the wider Commonwealth.’ If the Commonwealth Summer School becomes a regular event, as intended, it would encourage this kind of interaction, as well as the establishment of new Commonwealth societies.

Interest in the concept has already been expressed by universities in Australia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, South Africa, and the UK.

To help ensure that the inaugural Commonwealth Summer School is fully international in focus, the ACU is offering up to eight bursaries (funded by the ACU’s Development Fellowships Fund), to cover the attendance of delegates from outside Cameroon. Applicants should be studying at postgraduate or undergraduate level in an ACU member university, and express a demonstrable interest in the Commonwealth and/or international affairs. Preference will be given to candidates who have not previously had the opportunity to travel or study outside their own region. The bursary will cover air travel from the candidate’s home country and Summer School registration fees. The closing date for applications is 9 May 2011.

For more information on any of these opportunities, visit www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/fellowships_mobility

Members of the Yaoundé University Commonwealth Society in Cameroon, planting a tree
ACU Titular Fellowships

The ACU Titular Fellowships (funded by the ACU’s Development Fellowships Fund) aim to enable the universities of the Commonwealth to develop the human resources of their institutions and countries, through the interchange of people, knowledge, skills and technologies. Preference will be given to workers in the following priority subject areas: agriculture, forestry and food sciences, biotechnology, development strategies, earth and marine sciences, engineering, health and related social sciences, information technology, management for change, professional education and training, social and cultural development, and university development and management.

Swansea University Fulton Fellowship
Tenable at Swansea University; awarded for any of the priority subjects.

The Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Fellowship
Tenable in any Commonwealth country (other than home country); open to either professionally qualified accountants or established members of university faculties working in related fields.

Wighton Titular Fellowship in Engineering
Tenable in any Commonwealth country (other than home country); open to full-time academic or technical staff in engineering departments, and intended especially for the enhancement of laboratory teaching capacity.

University of Manitoba Fellowship
Tenable at the University of Manitoba; awarded for any of the priority subjects.

University of Oxford Fellowship
Tenable at the University of Oxford only; awarded for any of the priority subjects.

The Jacky McAleer Memorial Fellowship
Tenable in any Commonwealth country (other than home country); awarded in the field of information technology, with priority given to the computerisation of record systems or computer-assisted learning.

The Gordon and Jean Southam Fellowship
Tenable in any Commonwealth country (other than home country); open to nominees of any Canadian ACU member university; awarded for any of the priority subjects.

Applications are invited from staff at any ACU member institution. The closing date for applications is 1 July 2011.

www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/fellowships_mobility

Postgraduate students in Commonwealth countries can apply to study in a range of new destinations from 2011, thanks to a range of international scholarships launched in March this year.

The first set of scholarships, set to start between September 2011 and February 2012, are for Master’s degree study in Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and the South Pacific. A three-month Commonwealth Fellowship for an established academic at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria is also available. In addition, two Commonwealth Scholarships for PhD and post-doctoral study are also currently available at the University of Pretoria, in South Africa.

These scholarships have been made available by the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan endowment fund. The fund, established to mark the 50th anniversary of Commonwealth Scholarships in 2009 and managed by the ACU, has now raised over £2 million, through contributions from alumni and Commonwealth governments.

According to Deputy Secretary General of the ACU and Fund Secretary Dr John Kirkland, the stated aim of the fund is to broaden the range of destinations in which Commonwealth Scholarships can be held: ‘In the 1960s, there was a sizeable number of international students undertaking postgraduate research at universities in developing countries – particularly in Africa. Now, after a period of decline in the 1980s and 1990s, many of these universities are actively looking to recruit international students again.’

All of the above opportunities are open to citizens of all Commonwealth countries (except the host country). Further details are available at www.csfp-online.org
The UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) is a collaboration of UK medical, agriculture, environmental, engineering and social science organisations working together to maximise the impact of UK research on international development. Its website contains resources for those interested in research and international development. Features include:

- funding opportunities
- news and features
- latest reports and publications
- information on FP7 funding for international development research
- details of key organisations which support development sciences

For further information, visit www.ukcds.org.uk

A major new conference will take place in London, UK, next year to review pressures on the environment and discuss solutions at all scales to move societies on to a sustainable pathway. Planet under Pressure 2012 (26-29 March) will attract participants representing global change science, policy, business, and development communities, and will provide scientific leadership ahead of the 2012 UN Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.

The conference will aim to provide a new vision for international research, build trans-disciplinary research communities, and identify opportunities for enhanced partnerships between global change science and policy, industry, and the public.

The organising committee also considers it vital that the conference has adequate representation not only from development agencies but from the developing world itself, for several reasons:

- The conference needs to hear from those who grapple on a daily basis with the additional problems global change is bringing.
- Solutions must be discussed and developed in collaboration with those who need to implement the scientific findings.
- The need for science capacity building in developing countries is essential as is building capacity in the ‘north’ to understand the issues in the ‘south’. These are prerequisites for stronger and better integrated global change collaboration.
- The conference aims to attract leading business and private sector representatives who should invest in sustainable technologies and approaches in the developing world.

For further information about Planet under Pressure 2012, visit www.planetunderpressure2012.net
The **WISE Prize for Education 2011** will recognise and reward individuals – or teams of individuals – who have made an outstanding contribution to any field or level of education. It is the world’s first major international prize for education.

Nominations are invited from institutions with a demonstrable commitment to education, such as universities, schools, colleges, teachers’ organisations, research facilities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, governments, and private corporations.

The nominees will be screened by an 11-person **WISE Prize Committee**, which will make a pre-selection of no more than 15. An international jury of five distinguished individuals will consider the 15 final nominations and select a winner, who will receive an award of USD 500,000 and a gold medal. The first annual WISE Prize for Education will be awarded at the WISE 2011 Summit in Doha, Qatar.

The closing date for nominations is 30 April 2011. To nominate a candidate for the Prize, visit [www.wiseprizeforeducation.org](http://www.wiseprizeforeducation.org).

The ACU co-hosted a workshop on **early research careers in human and social sciences** at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, on 16 February 2011.

The need to develop new opportunities for junior scholars to establish their research careers was highlighted by The Nairobi Report, the result of a consultation process coordinated by the ACU and the British Academy in 2008 (see Bulletin No 171, September 2010).

As part of the follow-up to the report and its findings, the workshop (organised by the ACU, the British Academy and Higher Education South Africa (HESA)) considered the specific issue of the early career programme and engaged in a deeper discussion around how this might be tackled within South Africa and the sub-region.

For further information on the ACU’s work on early research careers, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/research_and_policy_analysis/africa_social_sciences/early_research_careers](http://www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/research_and_policy_analysis/africa_social_sciences/early_research_careers).
n July 2010, I was approached by the ACU with an interesting proposition: would I be interested in working as a volunteer mentor and consultant for the Human Resources department at the National University of Rwanda (NUR)? I responded very positively to the request; I had been to Africa twice before as a tourist and wanted to go back. This would give me a tremendous opportunity to be exposed to an African country and culture in the depth that you can only get by living and working there.

I was put in contact with Professor Silas Lwakabamba, the Rector of NUR, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the project and a strong advocate for improving the university’s HR practices. His continuing support for human resources and its best practices is something any HR practitioner would appreciate.

I arrived at NUR in October 2010 to find the Human Resources department in the midst of considerable change. The previous week, the contract for the Deputy Director of Human Resources had not been renewed. Michael Maniraguha, a member of the Faculty of Economics and Management, had been appointed as the new Deputy Director; he started the day that I arrived. Three days after my arrival, the Director of Human Resources was advised that his contract would not be renewed. Michael was then appointed Director, after three days on the job. Fortunately, Michael came with a strong sense of poise, a clear purpose, and the emotional intelligence required for the position.

On my second day, I was able to attend a university forum, open to all members of the university community and chaired by the Rector. At that meeting, the Rector discussed in general terms the results of the previous year’s performance evaluation process for faculty and staff. Under Rwandan law, any faculty or staff member who receives an evaluation score of less than 60 per cent must have their contract terminated. It was a tough meeting, and one which I am not sure that many people other than the Rector could have managed successfully. The Rector also reviewed a peer assessment of each unit’s performance. The HR unit’s performance had been rated as one of the lowest of all departments.

We certainly had our challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

Fortunately, Michael and I were able to establish a strong, collaborative working relationship from the outset. No doubt this was aided and abetted by the fact that we had both started on the same day, and were both new to the HR department staff and its operations. Michael also speaks very good English. Language had turned out to be an unanticipated problem. The Rwandan government had recently decreed that all education in the country was to be offered in English instead of French. Prior to this, the university had been bilingual, but primarily French-speaking. Michael also speaks very good English. Language had turned out to be an unanticipated problem. The Rwandan government had recently decreed that all education in the country was to be offered in English instead of French. Prior to this, the university had been bilingual, but primarily French-speaking. Michael also speaks very good English. Language had turned out to be an unanticipated problem. 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I found it gratifying that my experience allowed me to fairly quickly gain some insights into the HR challenges facing NUR.

despite these challenges, at the end of the day, we had achieved a departmental consensus on a set of goals that we could all believe in. The goals were also measurable, and some related to customer service.

There was some excitement for the path ahead. We then used the department goals to establish individual goals for the performance contracts of each staff member.

The university had contracted with a major consultancy group to review and make recommendations covering all facets of HR at the university. I have never seen an HR project of such sweeping scope. Not long after I had arrived, the university received six very thick volumes of the report. Working with the Director, we reviewed the reports and distilled massive amounts of information, to provide the university executive with a 30-page review and critique of the report. More importantly, we developed a five-page document we called ‘The Way Forward’. This was an attempt to extract all of the information into a clear set of implementation steps. A 3½ hour meeting with the Vice Rector for Administration and Finance was hugely productive and resulted in a project plan of tasks, responsibilities, timelines, and deliverables. A subsequent meeting with the Rector was rewarding and lively, and a consensus on the plan was achieved. ‘The Way Forward’ was approved the week before my assignment ended.

Michael and I also worked very hard to understand how the HR department functions, its actual activities, the roles of the staff, how its processes work, and how decisions are made. I was then able to draw up a chart showing the functions that the university want from HR, what the HR department is actually doing, and identifying several key gaps where there are clear expectations, but no staff assigned to the function.

We also noted that virtually every decision and approval requires the Director’s involvement, creating a significant decision-making bottleneck which hampers the unit’s efforts to improve customer service. The role of the Deputy Directors also appeared to have room to grow in terms of scope, responsibility, and job satisfaction. Staff lines needed to be clarified and roles rationalised in the context of the expanded role of the Deputy Directors.

Working with this knowledge, I developed the first draft of a model for a new HR organisation intended to address these issues.

Michael and I reviewed the initial proposal on my laptop as our vehicle bounced and wove on the 2½ hour drive to Kigali (someone else was driving). We received early support from the Rector and ViceRectors for the model at a conceptual level, and then proceeded to work through the proposed model with the HR staff, making changes and amendments based on the feedback we received. With every change and modification, I could see the staff gaining a sense of ownership over what I hope they will see as something that is ‘theirs’. However, as with any significant change exercise, it will continue to unfold in the months after my assignment has ended.

My mentoring role has not followed a prescribed format, and this has seemed to fit both Michael and me. I worked closely with him on numerous HR issues, at both policy and strategic level, and on the day-to-day activities of his work. As we worked together, we bounced ideas off each other and discussed various issues and approaches. I became his shadow, attending as many meetings with him as possible. We also took the time, typically after particularly good or bad meetings and often at the end of the day, when the dust had settled a bit, to go over what had worked and what had not. We learned from each other.

At the end of the day, what did I accomplish? I believe I came to Rwanda with realistic expectations about the amount of change that can be accomplished in three months. In many instances, projects and changes have been launched but have not yet come to completion. I remain optimistic that many of the initiatives we undertook will bear fruit. At the same time, perhaps it will be the day-to-day experience of working together and learning from each other that will have the greatest impact in the future.

The opportunity to work and live in a different culture has been a memorable experience that is truly priceless. Michael and I are planning to meet again – perhaps this time in Canada. As I write this, I am preparing to leave to come home. I have mixed feelings about this; I am glad to go home and reconnect with family and friends yet, at the same time, I know I will very much miss Rwanda and the people I have met here. It has been a wonderful life experience.

Peter Sanderson was formerly Associate Vice-President of Human Resources at the University of Victoria, Canada.
Collaborating with the Commonwealth: working together towards common goals

While opportunities for academic collaboration between Commonwealth countries are expanding, there remains a lack of awareness and communication between funders and researchers. **Evelina Vardanyan** reports on a recent conference which aimed to bridge that gap.

As external funding plays an ever-increasing role in developing teaching and research activities, there is a danger that international activity focuses on those areas where such funding is most visible. In fact, the possibilities for funded collaboration with other Commonwealth countries are substantial, but rarely brought together in one place.

Many of these initiatives were covered at the Collaborating with the Commonwealth conference, which took place in February 2011 at Woburn House in London, UK. The conference, hosted by the ACU and the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), provided a concise yet comprehensive briefing of current opportunities offered by major research funding bodies. Delegates included senior university officials, international development managers, and academics interested in international cooperation. Approximately one third of participants were senior academics from developing Commonwealth countries – currently in the UK under the prestigious Commonwealth Fellowship programme – who were seeking to develop active collaborations.

All of the speakers were senior representatives from funding organisations. The conference started with a presentation by Dr Mark Robinson, Head of Profession for Governance and Conflict at the UK Department for International Development (DFID), who explained...
UK government priorities and directions for research funding.

Philippe Froissard, Deputy Head of the International Cooperation Projects Unit at the Directorate-General for Research of the European Commission, talked about overall EU priorities and funding for research. He mentioned that European funding resources in general, and the Research Framework Programme (FP7) in particular, aim to increase Europe’s competitive advantage through R&D cooperation with industrialised, developing, and emerging economies. Other aims include achieving mutual benefit and interest through addressing problems of global and specific need, and reinforcing the EU’s external relations and other relevant policies. ‘International cooperation,’ stressed Froissard, ‘should be based on the balanced participation of all partners and complementarities of expertise’.

Professor Lorna Casselton, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, looked at the organisation’s role in promoting long-term scientific collaborations internationally and available opportunities, including those for early career researchers. According to Professor Casselton, research capacity can be improved through the establishment of strong and sustainable research collaborations, and the identification of relevant national and regional priority areas, as well as improving PhD programmes and establishing a postdoctoral research tradition to nurture and retain the next generation of talented and well-trained academics.

Sir Richard Brook, Director of the Leverhulme Trust, outlined some of the major obstacles to partnership-building, as seen from the perspective of his organisation, such as:

- identifying the true target
- attaining symmetry of motive
- attaining symmetry of partners
- avoiding crude competition

With annual funding of some GBP 50 million, the Leverhulme Trust is one of the largest providers of all-subject research funding in the UK. Its aim is to provide mechanisms for the support of researchers and students which can be effective at all stages of their careers. Its International Networks scheme is specifically designed to encourage the participation of researchers from different countries.

Based in the UK, the Wellcome Trust is a global charity dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health. Dr Val Snewin, International Activities Manager, introduced the organisation’s strategy for funding opportunities in developing Commonwealth countries. Africa and Asia, in particular, are priorities for international funding, and the trust spends around GBP 80 million each year on research in low and middle income countries. Since 2008, the Wellcome Trust has committed over GBP 60 million towards a range of health research training and capacity strengthening initiatives in institutions in African countries, and another GBP 40 million in India, all of which will be expended over the next five years.

The Wellcome Trust has a particular interest in identifying how best to assess the outcomes of research capacity strengthening activities, network these activities, and share learning with other interested stakeholders and partners—for example, how best to measure the impact of long-term training programmes, and how qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation methods can be adapted and used effectively for this purpose. The Wellcome Trust is also interested in how funders can support activities so that:

- researchers in African countries have simple and up-to-date access to funding opportunities
- funders can understand which other research funders are active in health research in a particular institution, university or country in Africa
- funders and donors can share experiences and learn from each other, forge partnerships where there is complementarity, and work towards an ‘alignment and harmonisation’ agenda for health research

Professor Tim Unwin, Chair of the CSC, explained the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan’s (CSFP) role in promoting international cooperation. The overall purpose of these awards is to establish partnerships to contribute to development. Scholarships and fellowships are offered across all countries of the Commonwealth. The CSC is specifically interested in understanding the impact of its awards on individuals and societies, through its currently expanding Evaluation and Monitoring Programme.

The conference was full of information on partnership opportunities, and also included presentations from senior representatives of other funding organisations, such as the British Academy, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Government of Western Australia, and the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. Each of the speakers provided information on the programmes made available by their respective organisations which encourage collaborations and are open for developing country participants.

During the discussions, some important questions and concerns were highlighted by conference participants. Delegates were concerned about the difficulties encountered when approaching funding bodies. Practical suggestions were made in response: a clear presentation of the idea and proposed activities is imperative for success, and evidence for the genuine necessity of the partnership proposed should be provided, as well as a solid justification of the partnership composition for the implementation of the proposed activity.

Other issues, including newly-introduced visa restrictions in the UK, the complexity of applications to certain funding bodies, and administrative barriers to research cooperation, were also discussed. Funders shared delegates’ concerns about new immigration regulations and their impact on academic mobility.

They agreed that immigration authorities should be alerted about the possible complications caused by the changes. Speakers also agreed that more cooperative effort is needed on the part of funders to reduce the administrative burden; it was pointed out that some funders, such as the UK Research Councils, are already working together to make application procedures more harmonised and easier for applicants.

There were concerns expressed by African researchers about barriers to cooperation with UK academics. One solution to this could be ensuring that partnerships are equally attractive to all parties; it is in the interest of researchers to attract their peers through appealing projects which provoke genuine engagement from all sides and guarantee the long-term success of the collaborations.

The conference was intensive and informative, and participants left with new contacts and a better understanding of available opportunities. The diverse range of delegates from the UK and developing Commonwealth countries, together with a substantial number of representatives of funding bodies, provided a rare opportunity for funders and researchers to interact, share concerns and expectations, and establish contacts for the future. Overall, the conference achieved its aims of improving understanding on both sides, and raising awareness of existing schemes. It is hoped that events like this will both increase the number of partnerships and improve the quality of collaborations throughout the Commonwealth.

Evelina Vardanyan is Programmes Development Officer at the ACU.

www.acu.ac.uk/collaborating_with_the_commonwealth
The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan is one of the primary mechanisms of pan-Commonwealth exchange. The ACU provides the secretariat for the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, which manages the UK government’s contribution to the Plan, and was recently commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat to carry out some research on the scheme.

John Kirkland reports.

Surveying the future: what do people really think about Commonwealth Scholarships?

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) has had a good two years. The publicity surrounding its 50th anniversary in 2009-2010 has helped raise its profile, both education ministers and heads of government in the Commonwealth have recognised its achievements, and governments and alumni have contributed to a new endowment fund, enabling awards to be held in a wider range of countries (see page 14-15). The Commonwealth Secretary-General has himself described Commonwealth Scholarships as one of the two ‘most visible’ Commonwealth activities – the other being the Commonwealth Games.

The question now is: how should the CSFP seek to build on these achievements? With some 27,000 alumni from all Commonwealth countries, who boast an exceptional track record of reaching the highest level of their professions, it would be tempting to ‘stick with a winning team’ and leave the same structures unchanged for the next 50 years. More realistically, it is likely that any initiative established 50 years ago can benefit from some review.

To meet this need, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned the ACU to investigate what key stakeholders think about Commonwealth Scholarships, what they regard as the main strengths and weaknesses of the CSFP, and what steps can be taken to make its operation even more relevant to modern society.

To recap: the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan is the official ‘brand’ for Commonwealth collaboration in this area. Awards are financed not through the formal Commonwealth structure, but by individual member governments as a demonstration of their support for Commonwealth ideals. Governments decide how many or how few Commonwealth Scholarships and/or Fellowships to offer, which countries they should be available to, and what type of award they should be. In practice, most have been for scholarships for postgraduate study or fellowships for mid-career professional development.

As such, governments are key stakeholders. Without their involvement and financial support, there would be no CSFP. But they are not the only stakeholders. Both current and former Scholars and Fellows are critical – they are the best demonstration of the value and impact of the scheme. Now, thanks to the use of electronic application methods, it is also possible to obtain the views of all those who initially apply for the awards, even though the overwhelming majority of them will be unsuccessful and have no further contact with the CSFP.

The ACU surveyed all four of these groups – almost 2,000 individuals took part in the exercise. The findings were, in general, uniformly positive across all groups. When asked to what extent certain words or phrases are associated with the CSFP, 82 per cent strongly agreed that the Plan is ‘academic’, 76 per cent ‘prestigious’, 69 per cent ‘distinctive’, and 63 per cent ‘relevant to the needs of their home country’. When those agreeing to some extent are also added, the figures rise to at least 93 per cent in each of the categories. 95 per cent of respondents also agreed (61 per cent strongly) that the scholarships and fellowships are an effective tool for international development.

That this support exists across all the categories of stakeholder, including unsuccessful candidates who have not benefited from the CSFP, is highly encouraging. Yet other findings suggest that, within this overwhelmingly positive picture, some areas may merit further attention.

When asked whether the CSFP is ‘accessible’, respondents gave a more muted response than in other categories. Only 24 per cent strongly agreed with this statement, and only 67 per cent agreed to any extent. Agreement with the statement that ‘the selection criteria for Commonwealth Scholarships are clear’ was at 50 per cent, whilst 40 per cent agreed that ‘the application procedures for Commonwealth Scholarships are well known’. In each case, the proportion of those agreeing did remain higher than those disagreeing. It is important, too, to recognise that the scheme is highly competitive and selective; thousands of people apply across several countries for a relatively small number of awards. In these circumstances, it may be inevitable that the CSFP is not always seen as accessible.

There were also divided views on future policy. When asked whether more emphasis should be placed on mid-career support, even if this means fewer conventional scholarships are made available, 42 per cent agreed. Opinion was again divided on the issues of whether more attention should be given to new learning methods, such as distance learning (28 per cent agreed), and whether awards should be more concentrated on specific subject areas (34 per cent agreed). 32 per cent agreed that more support should be given to Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows after their awards, even if this meant fewer awards being available. There was strong support for the proposition that ‘Commonwealth Scholarships should be hosted by low and middle income countries’ – a situation which the new CSFP endowment fund is starting to address.

When asked about the relationship between the CSFP and the wider Commonwealth, there were again mixed findings. 75 per cent (divided equally between those agreeing and
those agreeing strongly) supported the statement that the CSFP is ‘one of the best-known activities of the Commonwealth’, thereby endorsing the Commonwealth Secretary-General’s views. 80 per cent felt that the CSFP is ‘associated with wider Commonwealth values’. Yet there was an inference that this does not always translate into wider practical support for the Commonwealth. 80 per cent agreed (37 per cent strongly) that ‘candidates and alumni would contribute more to Commonwealth activities if they had a greater awareness of them’.

Overall, the analysis suggests that Commonwealth Scholarships continue to be a great success. This is evidenced by both the positive views of respondents across all four stakeholder categories, and the increased number of awards and supporting governments in recent years. It also suggests, however, that greater clarity is needed in the application process, more attention could be paid to accessibility, and the scheme is still not fulfilling its huge potential to garner support for the wider Commonwealth and its full range of activities and programmes.

These issues are not easily addressed by national governments alone. Selection, for example, is a two-stage process, in which the home country of the candidate is responsible for advertising the awards and nominating a shortlist of applicants, and the host country makes a final selection. If criteria are unclear, this could be at either stage, or both. There also needs to be a common understanding between the national nominating agencies themselves. Even this cannot be guaranteed, given that they have no regular forum in which to discuss their activities and objectives.

The main recommendation of our report is, therefore, that the CSFP needs to develop a more central leadership structure, without losing its flexibility or negating the ability of national governments to determine their own contributions. A small coordination function within the Commonwealth Secretariat is proposed, together with a meeting of national representatives to discuss future policy. Also proposed is the establishment of an international CSFP management committee – almost entirely virtual in its activity – that would oversee activity between the triennial Conferences of Commonwealth Education Ministers.

The new committee would have much to discuss. Ideas emerging from the review include the proposal that individual universities could play a stronger role in offering Commonwealth Scholarships, that the ‘two-stage’ system of nominating and selecting candidates should be reviewed (whilst maintaining the principle of partnership between home and host countries), and that the CSFP should develop a greater corporate presence, more strongly associated with wider Commonwealth activity.

Those responsible for implementing the findings of our report, however, will inherit many more ‘pluses’ than ‘minuses’. The overwhelming conclusion of the analysis is that Commonwealth Scholarships are as well regarded and prestigious as they have likely been at any time in their history. Whatever changes take place in the coming years, this reputation must be protected.

Dr John Kirkland is Deputy Secretary General of the ACU, and Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK. www.csfp-online.org

Commonwealth Scholars in New Zealand at an event celebrating 50 years of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan in September 2009
Virtual scholars: their characteristics and implications for librarians

The digital transition has transformed the ways in which people seek information. David Nicholas and Ian Rowlands consider what virtual scholarship means, and how academic librarians need to respond.

The virtual revolution is in full swing and transforming many aspects of our lives: the ways in which we socialise, shop, entertain ourselves, interact with public services, and, of course, obtain knowledge and information have all undergone profound change. And the transformation still has further to go. Ever more people and activities will migrate rapidly to the digital space – e-books, mobile devices, and iPads will ensure this.

What this all means is that the majority of scholars will do most of their searching, using, and reading of content, which they once did in the library, in the digital space. The enormous choice of information and 24/7 anywhere access proffered by the digital transition means that scholars have been set free from the intermediary and the chains of the physical space. Everyone has become a librarian. The process, known as disintermediation, is something that librarians have been worried about since the 1990s; it has now arrived and its consequences are being widely felt. A future is unfolding of growing millions of scholars doing it themselves when it comes to information and knowledge acquisition.

A wholesale flight of information activities from the physical to the virtual space on a vast and increasing scale would be sufficiently challenging for academic librarians in itself, but it is compounded by the fact that virtual scholars, by definition, now operate in an environment where everything they do (and don’t do) is remote and anonymous – shielded from view. The worrying thing about this is that people behave very differently in a digital environment. Librarians face the uncomfortable prospect of knowing less and less about their ‘users’. This is a sure-fire recipe for decoupling from the academic base, and that spells professional Armageddon.

We badly need to know what is going on in the scholarly virtual space, and the Centre for Information Behaviour and the Evaluation of Research (CIBER) at University College London, UK, has developed a means of doing this: deep log analysis. Deep log provides detailed and bespoke analyses of digital information services which transform the data in the logs into information-seeking behaviour. This is then transformed into user behaviour by relating it to demographic, attitudinal, and outcome data as furnished in online questionnaire and third party datasets.

Key information seeking and use characteristics of scholars

Huge and growing demand

Scholarly information is astonishingly popular and we should all rejoice in this. The international scholarly publishing community claims there to be 1.6 billion annual article downloads. Very high levels of ‘activity’ indeed and those levels are still rising at an astonishing rate, in some cases by as much as 50 per cent per year. Access is the main driver, with many more people being drawn into the scholarly information net. Existing scholars can now search much more freely and flexibly from office, home, café, airport, and train, all of which raises the volume of their use.

Other factors that are driving up use include:
- the increasing student population worldwide
- the arrival of e-books
- increasing digitisation of back numbers
- growing amounts of scholarly material being made available in an open access form
- the preference of the young to have everything digital
- the popularity of mobile devices to access data

The digital transition has worked wonders for scholars, providing fantastic access. Indeed, CIBER research shows that there is a strong correlation with e-scholarly use and scholarly performance; top researchers are the most voracious users of the literature, and the universities where usage is greater are the top universities. Librarians are helping to deliver more than just access; they are also helping to deliver academic outcomes.

Extended use

Scholars search and use digital resources all of the time. The provision of 24/7 anywhere access extends the scholarly working day and week. This surely is another academic outcome that librarians can boast about; greater access is delivering a good deal of scholarly productivity. A recent CIBER study showed that a quarter of ScienceDirect use by UK researchers occurred outside the ‘traditional’ working day and week. This surely is another academic outcome that librarians can claim to have helped deliver but say very little about, probably because they are not monitoring and reporting on the situation as they should.

Simple searching

Much to the displeasure of librarians, users avoid carefully-crafted discovery systems and opt for simplicity and convenience of searching every time. Speed and pragmatism characterises information seeking. Some examples to illustrate this:
- Advanced searching is used rarely, and hardly at all by users in the most highly-rated research institutions.
- Scholarly website add-ons and innovations (such as email alerts, virtual learning environments, and blogs) are a minority interest. The vast majority of scholars are only interested in getting the PDF, fast.
- Google searching is extremely attractive to scholars of all kinds and of all levels.

Despite plenty of evidence that users like simple, direct and one-stop searching, library websites are hugely complicated, confusing, and crowded. Library-run information ‘literacy’ programmes try to correct such forms of behaviour – seen as inferior – when, in fact, it has become hard-wired and something we all have to work with.
Scholars have been set free from the intermediary and the chains of the physical space. Everyone has become a librarian.

The horizontal has replaced the vertical
Scholars skitter along the information surface in an attempt to see what is there and view as much as possible so that they can make their choices quickly. This leads to a ‘promiscuous’ form of behaviour whereby 40 per cent of visitors do not come back regularly, if at all. What they also do, and this is partly a function of promiscuity, is ‘bounce’ or flick across the panoramic information terrain, viewing on average just 1–3 pages at each site they visit, much to the consternation of web managers who hope that users will make the most of the hundreds of pages on offer, and dwell. We can put this behaviour down to:

- the huge and rapidly increasing choice of information resources on offer, which means that scholars shop around, lured here and there by the ubiquitous search engine
- the possession of basic retrieval skills: the average user enters 2.3 words in their query, which means that they often turn up irrelevant links. There is a huge attrition rate and a general acceptance of search failure on the part of users because of a shortage of time and a wish to avoid information overload
- end-users checking relevance for themselves; after all they are now the librarians and they now have to make their own quality and relevance judgments — and that is far from straightforward

It is mistake to assume that bouncing (looking at only a couple of pages) necessarily represents ‘failure at the terminal’. While it certainly can do, it also represents a highly direct and pragmatic form of information-seeking behaviour. Users may enter a site knowing exactly what they want, not wanting to waste any time. They may have done their homework elsewhere, perhaps at a gateway site, to avoid the pitfalls of searches which retrieve too much information.

Librarians too often are guilty of believing users are loyal, that they want everything on the topic, and the more information the better. They could not be more wrong. Scholars, aware of the dangers of overload and pressured by time, want to get to what they want very quickly; the faster you can speed them through the site the better.

Viewing has replaced reading
There is very little evidence of scholars reading online; indeed many go online to avoid reading. Visits are typically very short; 10 minutes constitutes a long visit. When scholars view a full-text article, it is generally for a period of less than five minutes. Shorter articles are preferred to long ones and, if they are long, they are more likely to read the abstract only.

Of course, scholars might download with the objective of reading offline at a more convenient time and in a more preferable format — something we call squirreling. While a proportion of downloads are read at a later date, there can be no doubt that many are not.

What has replaced full-text reading, if indeed this was ever undertaken to the extent we once assumed, is ‘power browsing’. Scholars view e-journal content strategically, pow- ering in on key messages within documents rather than reading them in a linear fashion. Clearly, researchers have always power browsed, but now it is much easier and faster to do; this explains the preference for the digital form and the rapidly increasing volumes of use.

Librarians need to develop methods to enable fast and effective power browsing. More informative and structured abstracts — ironically the perfect vehicle for power browsing — would help, as would better facilities for moving around full-text articles, such as tabbing. Providing user feedback in the way that Amazon does would also assist people in making fast choices. What is certain is that scholars have taken to fast information as they have to fast food, and are facing the same consequences.

Conclusions
Scholars’ information seeking and usage behaviour is frantic, pragmatic, bouncing, navigating, checking, and viewing. It is also promiscuous, diverse, and volatile. These are not terms you will find in established textbooks on information seeking behaviour. Yet it is by no means certain than ‘bouncing’ and ‘power browsing’ are wholly new phenomena. The logs allow us to observe information usage and seeking in the virtual environment in detail and on an unbelievable scale because every action of everyone who uses a site is recorded. This was never the case in the physical information environment and, in reality, we really knew very little about how people behaved.

Maybe we were living a lie and now we know the reality — we have always been bouncers; the universe of linear exposition, quiet contemplation, disciplined reading, and study was just an ideal which we bought into and developed information services and products around accordingly. The difference today is that the opportunities for bouncing and power browsing are legion, and the pace is not letting up one bit. It is whether this is all leading to major changes in the way we obtain knowledge, and particularly whether this constitutes a possible ‘dumbing down’, that should concern us most.

This article was first published in Issue 11 (December 2010) of LINK, the magazine of the ACU’s Libraries and Information Network.

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Websites

**jobs.ac.uk** carries more than 1,500 vacancies at any one time, and is accessed more than 500,000 times per month (25% of the response is from the USA, and 15% from Europe outside the UK).

The ACU’s own website carries details of vacancies from all over the Commonwealth, provides links to all websites of ACU member institutions, and also offers a ‘jobs by email’ service.

**Guardian Jobs** is one of the UK’s top 10 most popular destinations for internet job hunters, with over a million potential candidates using the site every month. Jobs advertised on the site also reach passive candidates among the 6 million monthly users on Guardian Unlimited.

Press coverage

**Guardian Weekly**, the well-established and highly regarded title, has a worldwide readership of over 170,000 in 180 countries (in addition to the 367,000+ readership of the South African Mail & Guardian).

ACU Vacancies Bulletin

This is sent to all UK universities, to individual subscribers, and to enquirers who contact us about university posts. It is sent by email wherever possible, to ensure instant receipt, but a printed version is also available.

See [www.acu.ac.uk/adverts](http://www.acu.ac.uk/adverts) or email adverts@acu.ac.uk for further details
ACU publications

VC-Net
VC-Net is the ACU’s electronic newsletter for vice-chancellors, senior managers, and other HE policymakers, covering news, trends and developments in international higher education. The subject matter is wide-ranging but concentrates on issues of relevance for the leadership, management, governance and policy development of higher education institutions. Each issue provides brief analysis of recent developments, where possible highlighting parallel developments in different countries, and includes links to sources of further information and a selected bibliography of recent publications.

VC-Net 99 (January 2011)
Competing for China – as China articulates its own plans – competition to benefit from the world’s largest single HE system is clear, with Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US all strengthening their contacts with China. Meanwhile, China has developed its own ambitious strategy for reform, aiming to achieve a world-class, higher quality and more innovative HE system. Universities internationally, keen to recruit more Chinese students, will need to be increasingly alert to China’s own interests.

New universities: finding their fit in a diverse sector — what is the role of the new university in a mass, and diverse, HE sector? What models should it follow, and how will its progress be judged? How wide-ranging or specialist should it be? Whether responding to national ambitions, designed to address more specific local needs, or exploring collaborative models, there is no single blueprint. Greater diversity may make the sector more responsive, cohesive, and effective in the long term.

Questioning quality – as participation rates have soared, as state funding has been withdrawn, and as competition has increased, there has been a new emphasis on quality. The language is of outcomes and benefits. Frameworks, policies and procedures have grown apace in response. But quality has become a frustrating and confusing concept, over-used and under-defined. What would better quality – rather than the frameworks designed to manage it – actually look like?

Forthcoming
2009-2010 Academic Staff Salary Survey
Spring 2011
Recent publications

Nick Mulhern, ACU Librarian, summarises the latest titles in the field of international higher education.

African Development: Higher Education and Research Capacities: Africa in the Globalizing Knowledge Society
[Stamm, A.; Knuth, L.; German Development Institute (DIE); 2010]
The German Development Institute’s (DIE) briefing paper is one in a series analysing change following revived interest in African development, with the ‘significant scaling up’ of R&D cooperation as the context. It refers to achievements in agricultural R&D, and its application, as examples, but implicitly acknowledges a more general concern – ‘not the lack of relevant institutions, but the fact that they largely act independently of each other, and thus fail to actually form a coherent system’. The brief overview recommends incentives to better integrate and strengthen weaker partner institutions, avoiding overconcentration on links with well-established centres.

African Leaders: Their Education Abroad and FDI Flows
[Constant, A.; Tien, B.; Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/hbc1M5)
A paper analysing patterns of foreign direct investment and national development, relating these to education and power: ‘our hypothesis is that a leader who acquired his tertiary education outside Africa will attract significantly more FDI to his country than other leaders who were not educated or were educated within Africa’. It applies Library of Congress, World Bank, and UNCTAD indicators, with reference to national/regional contexts (trade, ethnic and religious diversity, political freedom); in its sample, some 40 per cent of African leaders received their tertiary education abroad. The research confirms a correlation between international study, among other factors, and FDI inflows, but also the ‘powerful role of the social capital networks, and connections that these leaders built and cultivated when they were students abroad’.

Borderless 2011: Perspectives on the Future
[Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE); 2011]
(http://bit.ly/gxIEJ6)
The first in an OBHE ‘Borderless’ series, this short report summarises opinion from analysts and commentators on recent and developing trends in HE internationalisation. Among trends identified is the increasing impact of privatisation and private investment in HE, the application of mobile technology, and the possibilities represented by a ‘global network university’. The value of incremental rather than radical change in student mobility policy is advised, ‘so that potential students looking at long-term study choices can do so in comparative security’.

Comprehensive Internationalization: from Concept to Action
[Hudzik, J.; NAFSA; 2011]
(http://bit.ly/hu0QIf)
A study, commissioned by a NAFSA Internationalization Dialogue Task Force, exploring what comprehensive internationalisation means, how it can be implemented, and what restricts it. Comprehensive internationalisation – a commitment to apply international and comparative perspectives throughout an institution’s work – is seen to involve a range of approaches rather than one prescriptive model, particularly given the diversity of the US education system. The report is useful in drawing attention to the practical issues for HEIs in integrating internationalisation strategies, and that sustaining it depends on inculcating an ethos rather than imposing a plan.

Educating Students for Success in the Global Economy: A Public Opinion Survey on the Importance of International Education
[NAFSA; 2011]
A brief analysis of a NAFSA-commissioned phone survey undertaken in the US last November. It assessed public sympathy for the value of international education, language learning, work opportunities abroad, and immigration. It acknowledges that ‘America’s higher education institutions must do a better job of teaching students about the world if they are prepared to compete in the global economy’. As a whole, it gives strong evidence that international education is seen as ‘vitally important’, perhaps especially as economies falter.

International Education as an Institutional Priority: what every college and university trustee should know
[HE; 2011]
Summarised guidance and evidence for trustees to support the development of international HE policies at US-based institutions. The paper draws together ‘Open Doors’ data on the most significant host institutions and states, source countries, and levels of interest for US students going abroad. As well as listing the benefits of partnerships, it gives best practice examples, and notes IIE-sponsored support, such as its recently established Center for International Partnerships in Higher Education.

International Graduate Outcomes and Employer Perceptions
[Australian Education International (AEI); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/gN72zO)
A survey report of international higher and vocational education graduate outcomes. It also analyses the views of employers, both in Australia and elsewhere, on international graduates from Australian institutions. It therefore gives an alternative context for international student mobility. Rather than data on student flows, this report is based on expectations and changes in global labour patterns, and employers’ perceptions of how the education system relates to current skills needs. Comparisons suggest ‘a mismatch between what graduates thought were the most important attributes that employers look for and what employers actually thought’. Some trends which the report identifies would apply to qualifications and career needs generally, irrespective of being a home or international student. It notes, for example, the value given by employers to effective communication skills and English language competency, and, from a student’s perspective, the importance of effective careers guidance, as well as opportunities for work experience, placements, and internships.
International Student Survey 2010: Overview Report
[Australian Education International (AEI); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/dHcXCU)
This study focuses on satisfaction levels (studying, support services, living in Australia), using the International Student Barometer (ISB), which helps comparison with similar student experience surveys elsewhere. It also makes reference to an earlier 2006 AEI report. For HE, it records an overall 86 per cent satisfaction rate, particularly with teaching and various aspects of learning support, though relatively low levels for areas such as work experience, careers advice, and – specifically for PhD students – opportunities to teach. Factors influencing student choice remained teaching quality, institutional/qualification reputation, safety, and research quality. Apart from the implications for marketing, such research indicates the importance of core strengths in teaching and research, and also the influence of a university’s perceived status and image.

Internationalization at Canadian Universities: Are Students Seeing the Value?
[Kaznowska, E.; Usher, A.; Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA); 2011]
(http://bit.ly/i3VvcC)
A Canadian student perspective on what motivates or hinders study abroad, some expectations of international careers, and perceptions of international students on campus. The online survey results confirm the UK and Australia as the leading student destinations, with cost and credit transfer concerns being cited disincentives. The ‘ability to work in diverse cultural settings’ and the direct linking of study abroad with future careers, were both valued, though there were significant variations according to fields of study and home language. It concludes that, although the value of international study is recognised for some future careers, for others ‘the appeal of internationalisation does not appear to be much more than skin deep’. It suggests that the benefits of improved skills and languages be better promoted in on-campus internationalisation marketing.

Leadership and Management of International Partnerships
[Fielden, J.; Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE); LH Martin Institute; 2011]
A joint UK/Australia-commissioned report focusing on the roles, structures, and skills required in the leadership, management, and governance of strategic international HE partnerships. It outlines the process from developing strategy to its securing its support, funding, and staffing. Sensitivity to cross-cultural differences is also important, whether this relates to personalities, nationality, or institutional cultures, particularly to avoid one-sided exchange arrangements.

Review of Student Support Arrangements in Other Countries
[London Economics on behalf of BIS; UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/ePrOL4)
A study of tuition fee and student support arrangements, covering Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the US, as well as European states, as comparative evidence for the impact of the introduction of variable tuition fees in the UK (September 2006). It also details other related research which could be relevant in planning changes to HE financial support arrangements.

Speaking Across Borders: the Role of Higher Education in Furthering Intercultural Dialogue
[Bergan, S.; van’t Land, (eds.); Council of Europe; IAU; 2010]
(http://bit.ly/gPUEhG)
A study which explores the contribution which HE can make in promoting dialogue and tolerance, with examples from China, Lebanon, and the north Caucasus.

Gender and HE – some recent studies

AIDS, Sexuality and Gender: Experiences of Women in Kenyan Universities
[Kamau, N.; Zapf Chancery (Eldoret, Kenya); 2009]

Bridging the Gap: Improving Capabilities and Expanding Opportunities for Women in the Middle East and North Africa Region
[World Bank; International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/1MDVjd)

Degrees of Inequality: Culture, Class, and Gender in American Higher Education
[Mullen, A.; John Hopkins University Press; 2010]

Gender Issues in Higher Education (Advocacy Brief)
[Ramachandran, V.; UNESCO (Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education); 2010]
(http://bit.ly/0POKR)

Universities Australia Strategy for Women 2011–2014
[Universities Australia; 2010]
(http://bit.ly/g5xruO)

Women in Academic Leadership: Professional Strategies, Personal Choices
[Dean, D.; Bracken, S.; Allen, J.; Stylus; 2009]

Articles
Addressing the issue of gender equity in the presidency of the university system in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region – Forum on Public Policy (2010:2)
[Gamatunhu-Mudiwa, P; 2010]
(http://bit.ly/dM0Q9f)

Attitudes to gender equality issues in British and German academia – Higher Education Management and Policy (22:2)
[Pritchard, R.; 2010]
(http://bit.ly/d0qMyQ)

Gender and shifts in higher education managerial regimes – Australian Universities Review (52:2)
[Carvalho, T.; Machado, M.; 2010]

Gender diversity policies in universities: a multi-perspective framework of policy measures – Higher Education (59:6)
[Timmers, W.; Willemen, T.; Tijdens, K.; 2009]
(http://bit.ly/ekFueT)

Gender Inequalities in Transnational Academic Mobility and the Ideal Type of Academic Entrepreneur – Discourse (31:5)
[Leeman, R.; 2010]
(http://bit.ly/hbQvU3)

Website

April 2011 Bulletin 29
ACU membership update

The current membership total (as at 23 February 2011) is 529.

Returning members
We are delighted to welcome the University of Waterloo, Canada, back into ACU membership.

New members
We are delighted to welcome the following institutions into membership:

- Air University, Pakistan
- Grant MacEwan University, Canada
- Indus Institute of Higher Education, Pakistan
- UCSI University, Malaysia

Executive heads
Dr Timothy M Wachira has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Daystar University, Kenya, as of 11 October 2010.

Professor H B Walikar has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Karnatak University, Dharwad, India, as of 25 October 2010.

Professor Charity Ashimem Angya has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University, Nigeria, as of 4 November 2010.

Professor Constantinos Christofides has been appointed Rector of the University of Cyprus, as of 10 November 2010.

Professor James Epoke has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calabar, Nigeria, as of 30 November 2010.

Professor Chibuzor Obiagu has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Abia State University, Nigeria, as of 1 December 2010.

Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, as of 1 December 2010.

Professor Comfort Memfin Ekpo has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Uyo, Nigeria, as of 1 December 2010.

Professor Sudhir K Sopory has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, as of 17 December 2010.

Dr Arun Uyankatesh Jamkar has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, India, as of 21 December 2010.

Dato’ Ir Dr Radin Umar bin Radin Sohadi has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Putra Malaysia, as of 1 January 2011.

Professor Quintin McKellar has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hertfordshire, UK, as of 4 January 2011.

Professor Michael Gunn has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Staffordshire University, UK, as of 12 January 2011.

Professor Sharon Siverts has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho, as of 7 March 2011.

Obituary: Edgar Temple

Edgar Temple, who died on 29 December 2010 at the age of 90, served Commonwealth universities for 26 years, from 1959 to 1985. During that time he set up and ran Commonwealth Scholarships – an expanding and changing job, which made his name familiar to a whole generation of Scholars and Fellows.

Temple grew up in Birmingham as one of five children, and his first job was in a metal works in the West Midlands. After the Second World War, which he spent as a wireless operator instructor in the Royal Air Force (RAF), he studied German at the University of Birmingham. Just as his Morse code speeds reached 30 words a minute in 12 weeks in the RAF, despite doing no German for four years, he achieved a first. Rather than pursue an academic career, he joined the administrative staff at the University of Manchester, where he so impressed his own (and other) vice-chancellors that, in 1959, he was headhunted to run the newly-established Commonwealth Scholarships. He was given the report of the 1959 Commonwealth education conference and told that that was his job; by his own account, he sketched out a plan for the work of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) on the back of an envelope as he returned home after the job interview. He continued to use that envelope for the rest of his career.

He started as a one-man band, delivering by hand the first applications for scholarships to the selection committee members. He brought from Manchester not only a set of procedures that could be adapted (the CSC’s early minute books are a copy of Manchester’s), but also a vision of what Commonwealth Scholarships might be, a mastery of detail, and a formidable memory. He set up an administrative system at the ACU which got the first Commonwealth Scholars to the UK in a nine-month gestation period, and this has remained the basis of the CSC’s work ever since. While Temple’s formal responsibility was for the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, he had considerable influence on his peers in agencies around the Commonwealth, whom he would meet at triennial Commonwealth education conferences. Tom Symons, of Trent University, Canada, aptly described him as the ‘Mother Superior and Father Confessor of the Commonwealth Scholarship plan’. As such, he balanced his innate modesty against a sureness in his own judgment that followed from his formidable intellectual capacity.

Edgar Temple retired in 1985. By this time, when he travelled on ACU business, he could go from university to university visiting and being remembered by former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, including at least 30 vice-chancellors. After retirement, when he returned to his interrupted reading of German literature, he retained a lively interest in the Commonwealth Scholarships that had been his life’s work, attending, for example, an ACU seminar on their history in his 89th year.

He is remembered with affection as well as respect by all who knew him at the ACU.
Calendar

April
6–8
ACU Conference of Executive Heads
Hong Kong, China
www.acu.ac.uk/hongkong2011

11–12
Global Meeting of Associations of Universities on Internationalisation of Higher Education (GMA IV)
Internationalization of Higher Education: New Players, New Approaches
New Delhi, India
www.iau-aiu.net

May
22–24
ACA (Academic Co-operation Association) Annual Conference
The Excellence Imperative: World-Class Aspirations and Real-World Needs
Vienna, Austria
www.aca-secretariat.be

25–27
Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) Global Forum
Levelling the International Playing Field
Vancouver, Canada
www.obhe.ac.uk/the_2011_global_forum_canada

29–3 June
NAFSA: Association of International Educators Innovation and Sustainability in International Education
Vancouver, Canada
www.nafsa.org/annualconference

30–3 June
Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP) Biennial Conference
Strengthening the Space of Higher Education in Africa
Stellenbosch, South Africa
(http://events.aau.org)

June
16–17
UK and Ireland Institutional Research Network (HEIR)
Scanning the Horizons: Institutional Research in a Borderless World
Kingston, UK
www.heir2011.org.uk

16–18
University World News; Inside Higher Ed; Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)/Academic Matters; Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)/University of Toronto
Worldviews Conference on Media and Higher Education
Toronto, Canada
http://worldviewsconference.com

October
28–30
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)
Perth, Australia
www.chogm2011.org

30–2 November
Shanghai Jiao Tong University
International Conference on World-Class Universities (WCU–4)
Shanghai, China
http://gse.sjtu.edu.cn/WCU/WCU-4.htm

November
1–3
World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE)
Doha, Qatar
www.wise-qatar.org

17–18
IAU International Conference
Strategies for Securing Equity in Access and Success in Higher Education
Nairobi, Kenya
www.iau-aiu.net

TBC
Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18CCEM)
Mauritius
www.thecommonwealth.org

TBC
Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7)
www.col.org/pcf7
Established in 1913, the Association of Commonwealth Universities is the oldest inter-university network in the world. Today’s ACU combines the expertise and reputation of over ninety years’ experience with new and innovative programmes designed to meet the needs of universities in the 21st century.

Higher education is more international than ever before. The market for students and staff is a global one. Research funds are increasingly allocated on an international, collaborative basis. Academic reputations are based on global connections. Innovation and good practice do not stop at national borders.

Our five hundred members are spread across six continents. As you might expect, they represent a diverse range of institutions – but there are also many similarities. As such, we provide forums for universities in Australasia, Canada and the UK to benchmark their research contract/grant activity, and for those in Africa and South Asia to compare their extension work programmes. At a time when tertiary education has never been higher on the development agenda, our experience in fostering collaboration between developed and developing country universities has never been more relevant or important.

At the ACU, our emphasis is on practical solutions. Our portfolio of services includes:

**Information** – the most comprehensive database of Commonwealth universities and their staff available

**Networking** – hands-on networks to bring together practitioners in key functional areas, such as public relations and research management

**Benchmarking** – seminars, surveys and publications allowing members to compare their activities with international good practice

**Developing Capacity** – scholarships and fellowships to meet the needs of tomorrow’s staff – both from our own resources and through the management of prestigious international schemes for external bodies

**Research** – up-to-date reports and analysis of key issues

**Cost Savings** – access to negotiated discounts in areas such as recruitment and academic journals

Our activities are growing – and with your input they can grow further still. If you have ideas for further collaboration, or would like to become a member, please contact:

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