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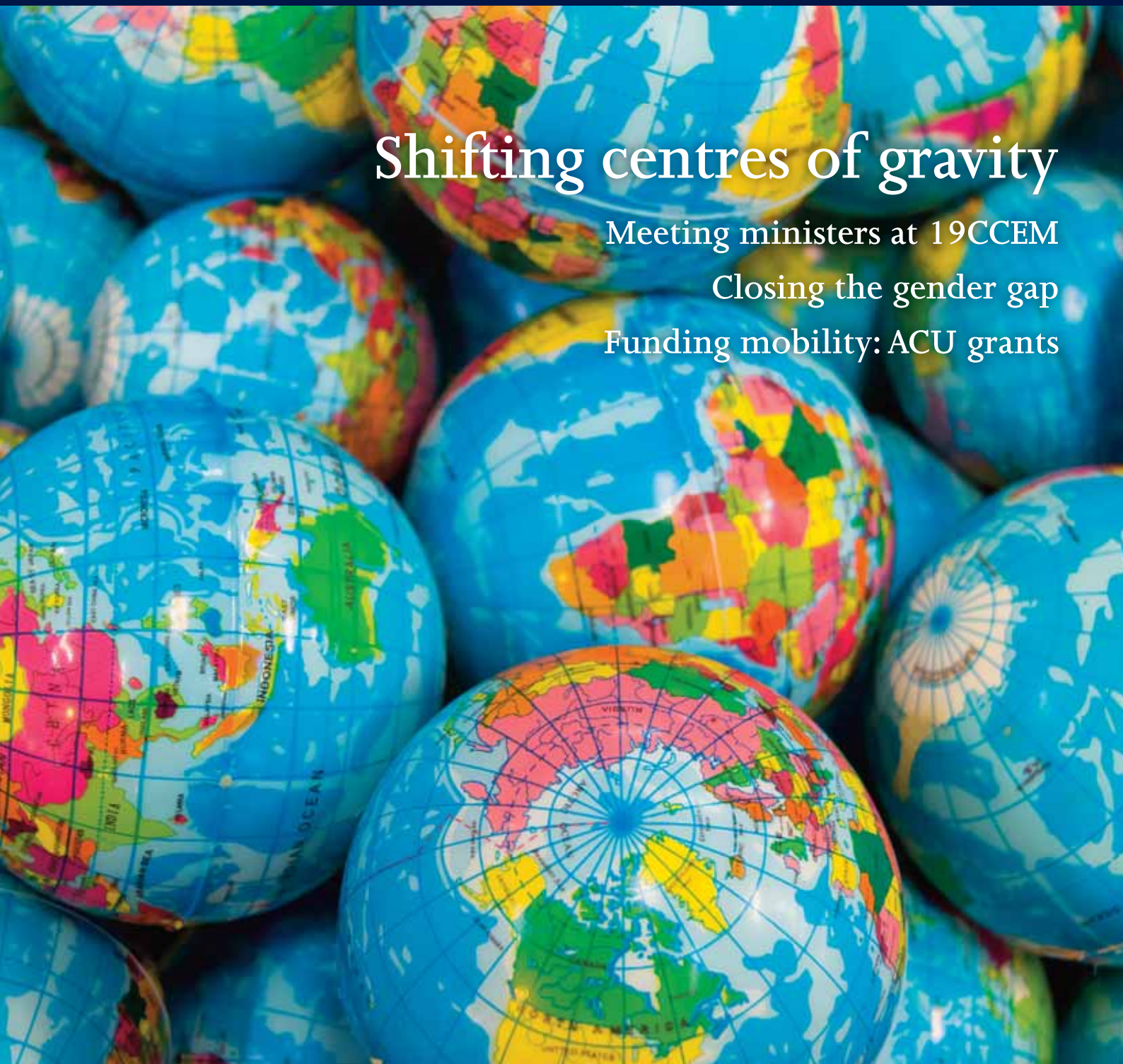

Shifting centres of gravity

Meeting ministers at 19CCEM

Closing the gender gap

Funding mobility: ACU grants

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Editorial

Cover image © Gumpanat / Shutterstock

Much has been written about the increase in international collaboration in higher education. Universities are establishing satellite campuses all over the world, the number of international students is growing, and many degree programmes offer at least some time abroad.

A growing awareness of global challenges – the environment, climate change, water scarcity – but also trade, conflict, and other matters resulting from increased globalisation, have led to many successful multinational, often interdisciplinary, collaborations in academic research. Bibliographic data, too, indicates a continuous increase in multi-authored publications originating from more than one institution, in more than one country. Strategic partnerships to create frameworks and infrastructure for such collaborative efforts are high on university agendas.

Much less attention is paid to the value of academic research collaborations on a managerial or leadership level. Yet not only do all these collaborations need to be managed – and the complexity of local governance structures, cultural differences, governing law, and ethics procedures be disentangled and understood – they also provide an opportunity for a change of perspective and to compare implementation strategies with colleagues working in very different environments.

Often, our priorities and subsequent behaviour are driven by local requirements; the Research Excellence Framework in the UK is certainly one of these parameters. As important as these factors are, they can also become hindrances – and might, on occasion, block our view of the best ways to achieve institutional objectives.

International conferences – such as the ACU's 'Research and innovation for global challenges', co-hosted in Johannesburg earlier this year with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) – are a fantastic place to get a wider perspective on institutional priorities and, more importantly, to swap notes on implementation strategies. In networks, we often have a tendency to partner with those institutions and colleagues who are 'in the same boat'. While it is useful to compare approaches, it can also be somewhat limiting since, quite often, we all look at a matter from a very similar angle. The ACU/SARIMA conference was an opportunity to zoom out of the UK perspective and network with colleagues from all the different places that the ACU brings together. This diversity is what enables me to think outside the box. I arrived home with such a list of insights and ideas to follow up on that, even two months later, I have not yet fully worked through it.

In July 2016, the ACU's Conference for Executive Heads will take place in Accra, Ghana. This will be another opportunity to swap notes – this time in an executive forum – and offers those of us working in higher education a way to gain knowledge in days that could otherwise take years to establish on an institutional or even national level. The conference title – 'Defining the responsible university: society, impact and growth' – promises interesting discussions on how research and innovation strategies at our institutions can enrich, and work jointly with, our societies.

The value of international collaboration stretches through all parts of an organisation, and we should aim to partner with colleagues all over the world – not only in research and teaching, but also in managing our institutions. I am already looking forward to fostering these international collaborations further at my institution. ■

Silke Blohm is Director of Research and Enterprise at SOAS, University of London, UK, and a member of the steering committee for the ACU Research, Knowledge and Information Community.

Universities and the Commonwealth agenda: the ACU puts the case to ministers

What role should the Commonwealth play in higher education? How should the sector address the challenges arising from its rapid expansion? Earlier this year, the ACU posed these questions and more to education ministers from across the Commonwealth, as **John Kirkland** reports.

With the obvious exception of Commonwealth Scholarships, higher education has never had a high profile in Commonwealth circles. Yet the last few decades provide a stark example of what can happen when governments and international agencies ignore the value of universities. In many countries, higher education is still recovering from years of neglect in the 1980s and 1990s. The effects of this hit universities in developed countries, too, through decreased funding for development research and fewer international partnerships and scholarships.

In the run-up to the launch of the new Sustainable Development Goals, the ACU's 'The world beyond 2015' campaign has aimed to ensure that the importance of higher education is not overlooked. The 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM) in June 2015 was an ideal opportunity to press home this case to government ministers directly.

We were very pleased to be asked to facilitate a 90-minute debate on higher education – the first time that such a session has been held at CCEM. We were delighted, too, by the turnout of national delegations. More than 30 countries were present, 17 of which intervened in the higher education debate.

In a pre-conference discussion paper, the ACU argued that higher education is an ideal area through which the Commonwealth can increase its impact. Not only is it critical to social and economic prosperity, higher education is also a genuinely international commodity. The pace of change in the sector is rapid, which leaves many Commonwealth governments in need of international guidance. It is also an area in which the Commonwealth can draw on significant expertise – not only through the ACU, but also through bodies such as the Commonwealth of Learning and the recently-established Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility, and the thousands of former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows who work in the sector.

Making a case

The following four policy areas were highlighted in the ACU's discussion paper for ministers:

Costs and access: We emphasised the extraordinary rate of growth in universities worldwide over the past decade, the likely continuation of that growth, and its increasing concentration in low and middle income countries. In many ways, this represents a great success story. However, growth has not been matched by resources and, as a result, funding per student has often declined sharply. The private sector – in some countries already the dominant provider – and new teaching methods such as MOOCs are often cited as solutions. There is much good practice in both areas, but many questions to be asked, too.

Links with employment: Universities need to expand, but in ways that are sustainable. In expanding, they need to avoid creating expectations that cannot be fulfilled, and nowhere is this more true than in their links with employment. Alarming evidence suggests that the new, expanded generation of graduates expect the same advantages in the labour market as were enjoyed by much smaller cohorts in previous decades. Historical evidence suggests that there will be a significant time lag before this happens, particularly in countries where traditional employment is simply not available. Universities must, on the one hand, devise new approaches to ensure that their graduates are relevant to labour market needs. On the other hand, it must be understood that higher education can only do so much.

Higher education is an ideal area through which the Commonwealth can increase its impact. Not only is it critical to social and economic prosperity, it is also a genuinely international commodity.

Securing the next generation of academics: Expanded universities need an increased number of qualified staff. Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and South Africa, among other countries, have all identified a shortage of academic staff with doctorates as being a major challenge. Studies – such as the *The Nairobi Report*, the product of a major consultation undertaken by the ACU and the British Academy in 2010 – also highlight the issue of how existing qualified staff can best be used. Conversely, some argue that a doctorate is no longer essential to being an effective university teacher. Strategies are needed, however, to determine the need, and how it can be met. The scale of the problem is such that objectives to boost local capacity and utilise international scholarship support, sometimes said to be in conflict, must both play an important role.

Student and staff mobility: The need for strategies to encompass both domestic and international sources leads neatly to the issue of student and staff mobility. International mobility has expanded radically in recent years – so much so that the financing of higher education systems in some developed countries has become dependent on it. Internationally-mobile students remain a minority of the overall student population – perhaps 3%, – yet their importance is disproportionate to their number. Interestingly, a country's Commonwealth membership appears to be less of a magnet for students than, for example,

The 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

membership of the Francophonie. Several factors explain this, such as France's policy of offering subsidised tuition fees for overseas students, the impact of language, and the stronger attraction of the USA for students in Commonwealth countries. The question of whether the Commonwealth could play a more cohesive role is an enticing one, however. Other challenges in this area include the sometimes neglected issue of staff mobility, and the extent to which north-south forms of mobility could be encouraged, countering the overwhelming flow in the other direction.

The ministerial debate

Each of the four policy areas was introduced by an expert speaker. Dr Pauline Rose, Professor of International Education at the University of Cambridge, UK, spoke on costs and access. ACU Council member Professor James McWha, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rwanda (and former VC of Massey University, New Zealand, and the University of Adelaide, Australia), addressed higher education's links with employment. ACU Chair Professor Olive Mugenda, Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University, Kenya, spoke about securing the next generation of academics. And Professor Danny Donoghue, Dean for Internationalisation at the University of Durham, UK, introduced student and staff mobility.

So, what did the ministers think? Botswana was one of several countries that supported Dr Rose in arguing that expansion of higher education should also tackle issues of access and equity. This reinforced the point made in the background paper that increased numbers do not necessarily mean greater access. There was also agreement with Professor McWha's point that an effective national plan was critical in this area.

There was less agreement, however, with an argument made by Dr Rose that higher education already receives too high a share of development aid compared with other sectors of education, with Sierra Leone being one of the countries to argue that this was not their experience. This discrepancy can perhaps be explained by a deeper analysis of the OECD figures on which the initial claim was made. The apparently high proportion of aid indicated by the figures in Table 1 reflects the policy of some European governments to categorise the cost of subsidised tuition fees as aid. While opinions vary over whether or not this is legitimate, what is certain is that very little of this money goes anywhere near the universities or governments of the Commonwealth, as Table 2 illustrates.

On the question of student expectations, Brunei Darussalam pointed out that universities are often encouraged to boost the employability of graduates by promoting entrepreneurial skills. While programmes have shown that this can be effective, even this approach has its limitations – there is a limit to the number of entrepreneurs that society can absorb, for example, in just the same way that the number of employment opportunities is limited. Further, not all students possess the necessary skills.

Some delegations, such as Jamaica, called for greater attention to be paid to the subjects in which expansion is taking place, with more emphasis on technology. The Seychelles was another country to recognise the need for expansion to be planned. Other countries took the opportunity to showcase their own initiatives in higher education – such as the new 'Partnerships in Higher Education' programme, worth GBP 52 million, announced by the UK government.

Direct development assistance for post-secondary education 2012

Table 1: Donors giving USD 100 million or more

	(USD million)
Germany	1181
France	1019
Japan	367
Belgium	138
Austria	129
United States of America	111
Netherlands	109
United Kingdom	102

Table 2: Countries receiving USD 20 million or more

	(USD million)
Morocco	156
Algeria	123
Tunisia	100
Cameroon	83
Egypt	71
Senegal	65
Nigeria	47
Cote d'Ivoire	21
DR Congo	21
Gabon	21
Guinea	21
South Africa	21

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015

What no one disputed, however, was the importance of higher education. Those speaking appeared unanimous in recognising this, as well as the value of future fora in which common experiences could be aired. Working together in areas such as recognition and accreditation was a key example. The role played by the ACU, in bringing together universities throughout the Commonwealth, was another. The final conference communiqué, in fact, specifically highlighted the next ACU Conference of Executive Heads – taking place in Accra, Ghana, in July 2016 – as an important opportunity to continue the discussion. Watch this space!

Dr John Kirkland is Deputy Secretary General of the ACU.

The ACU's discussion paper – *Higher education: what role can the Commonwealth play* – is available at **www.acu.ac.uk/publications**

Free to dream: universities, research, and innovation

In May 2015, ACU members gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, to explore how university research can be used to meet global challenges. We talked to the event's keynote speaker – **Jeremy Farrar**, Director of the Wellcome Trust – about his work and why universities need to be a vanguard of innovation.

The Wellcome Trust has increased activity in developing countries over the last decade. What impact has this had, and does it encourage you to increase your work in these regions?

Jeremy Farrar: I think there are impacts that you can have anywhere in the world. But there's no doubt – given the burden of disease, the lack of research in certain countries, and the need – that the Wellcome Trust can really help contribute, in partnership with others, to bringing about some major change. An example would be its work, over the last 20 years, in transforming malaria globally. Malaria deaths have gone down by 3.5 million over the last seven years, and the Wellcome Trust has made a major contribution to that – with the coming of insecticide-treated bed nets, understanding malaria, artemisinin and combination therapy to treat it, and the development of vaccines. The Wellcome Trust has been involved with all of those and it is an amazing success story for global health.

So we are certainly looking to have greater impact at a global scale, rather than being seen as a UK-centric organisation. I think the question is not whether we want to spend more or less, it's a question of where can we invest, fund research, identify individuals? Where, ultimately, are we having the biggest impact? And, certainly, significant parts of that will be in low and middle income countries.

As Director of the Wellcome Trust, you've been keen to devolve as much project management as possible to local and regional sources. Could you tell us more about this?

Jeremy Farrar: The world is changing, and I feel very strongly that international collaboration being seen as predominantly a one-way flow from north to south – richer world to less rich world, developed countries to less developed countries – is no longer true. And can't be true. Partnerships are partnerships; they're two-way flows. I think the sense that decisions are made in London, Paris, Washington, Tokyo, and Geneva, and then transmitted somewhere – those days are gone. Part of that comes from my own experience of having run a large programme in Vietnam over the last 20 years, for which the decision-making centre of gravity was in Vietnam. I think, as a model, that works. The idea is to ask the right questions; questions that are likely to have the biggest impact, relevant to the right environments. Then you put the centre of gravity for the decision-making and research where the challenges are at their greatest.

The DELTAS (Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science) Africa initiative – which transitions the questions that are being asked and the decision-making out of London to the African Academy of Sciences – is one example of such a shift. It's the same with the Wellcome Trust India Alliance where, again, the process, the administration, the questions that are asked, and the decisions, are all based in Delhi. I think those shifts in centres of gravity are very, very important. In terms of where the questions are asked, where the answers are given, where the decisions are made about what to fund and what not to fund – the closer you can get to where the burden is greatest and research is most needed, the better.

Can universities as organisations do anything to increase the contribution that their research makes to global challenges, or is that something that's best left to research teams?

Jeremy Farrar: I absolutely think they can. Universities have many roles in society, but much of it is about discovery and asking questions; the challenging questions – be they in the arts or the sciences – that companies, governments, and funding agencies can't answer. Universities must never lose that, and they won't.

But they have a responsibility to bring together that expertise – to use those intellects and facilities – to address questions of importance to society. I think universities are actually the prime movers in taking on those big, challenging questions. They need to be the bedrock of where those questions are asked and addressed. The great advantage of universities is that they are free to dream; free in a way that is more of a challenge for those in the commercial sector or government, where there are a lot of constraints. But universities are – or should be – some of the freest organisations globally.

We talk about research needing to demonstrate impact, but what kind of risk does this pose to more exploratory research work?

Jeremy Farrar: Yes, impact is critical. But we need to be careful how we define it. There are large areas of the humanities and sciences where you can't demonstrate – or even think – what their impact on health or society is, because it's going to happen 50 or 100 years from now. Advances 50 years from now will be coming up today through blue-sky thinking in universities – and universities must be left free to have those dreams. There is a danger to saying that everything must have impact.

Presumably it's also a matter of understanding the funders' definition of impact. What do you look for in terms of impact? Is it commercialisation, for example?

Jeremy Farrar: No, it's not *only* that, but it's not *not* that either. It's an element – it's one metric, one measure – of impact. But what we mustn't do is push universities to think short-sightedly about where their impact is going to be. There are a lot of things which take place – and should take place – within the university sector, the impact of which is difficult to predict. It's impossible to know where they're going, but they're asking fundamental questions. If you look at today's advances – let's take one of the most exciting areas of medicine at the moment: the coming of antibody therapies into cancer – that's come about because, 50 years ago, someone was doing some very blue-sky thinking, with no sense where it was going, but which was asking fundamental questions. If we don't continue to invest in that today then, 50 years

Universities need to be places where ideas can generate and be supported and encouraged, and where people can be allowed to think outside the box about the right things to do and the right questions to ask.

from now, we will not have the drivers of impact. So we mustn't constrain universities into thinking that impact must be immediate, and we shouldn't define it too narrowly.

Your keynote speech argued that funders should be prepared to take risks. Could you elaborate on that?

Jeremy Farrar: I think the funding landscape is a very diverse and complex one. Different funders and different investors will see the world differently, so there will inevitably be some relatively conservative funders and investors which – because of either commercial, government, or financial constraints – need to see impact or translation or risk-taking within that context. But there are other organisations, such as the Wellcome Trust, which are independent and lucky enough to have their own financial structures; organisations who don't need to think in a political cycle and are independent of government. I think those organisations have a responsibility to be willing to take bigger risks. You can't expect it from commercial enterprises, who have a very fixed line about their profit margins and shareholders; and you can't necessarily expect governments to invest in really risky projects because they're often constrained by a five-year political cycle and the need for re-election, and so on.

Professor Jeremy Farrar

image credit: Wellcome Library, London

So I think the important point here is that there isn't one model of funding which follows a single pattern. We're very fortunate here in the UK to have organisations such as the Wellcome Trust who can complement, and ask different questions to, government funding. I think that's where the philanthropic sector – the charitable sector – needs to play a bigger role: to take more risks, to be longer-term, and to invest in some of those areas where it's difficult to predict quite where they're going.

What can universities do to make themselves more attractive to funders?

Jeremy Farrar: Whoever they are – government, philanthropists, or private investors – funders are interested in supporting the best; people with the best ideas and universities with the best ideas. Those may be risky ideas or they may be very conservative ideas, but ultimately funders want to identify good people in good environments who are really driving change – whether that change is in the 20-50-year window or longer, or whether that change is tomorrow.

Universities need to be confident, to be places where ideas can generate and be supported and encouraged, and where people can be allowed to think outside the box about the right things to do and the right questions to ask. One of my concerns is that universities may be pushed by ever-increasing societal and government pressures to be impactful in the shorter-term. I think universities need to be confident enough to stay a little bit away from that. Yes, worry about impact, but also take a longer-term perspective.

You've spoken about the importance of funders supporting the right research and the right people. How do you ascertain which projects and researchers are the right choice?

Jeremy Farrar: That's a really good question, and a real challenge. Classically, it's been done through the peer-review process – peers and experts in the area looking at people, proposals and projects, and trying to identify the best ones. It's a very, very imperfect science. I think what we need to see is a balance between classic peer review and a more iterative way of approaching things. There are times when you think that something is of such critical importance that, even though there are elements of the idea which might not be perfect, you're willing to back it because there's a sufficient percentage in it which, if it worked, would transform something. There are times when you say, 'look, I don't know whether this is absolutely right, but I know that if they *could* answer this question, it would really change the field'. I think that's where we have to balance critical peer review, with an awareness that the conservatism of peer review can sometimes throw out the really exciting ideas. ■

Professor Jeremy Farrar is Director of the Wellcome Trust. He spoke to **Neil Johnson**, Member Engagement Coordinator at the ACU.

Sharing developments in structural engineering

The ACU Titular Fellowships promote mobility among Commonwealth university staff and enable international collaboration on research projects. Here, **Khan Mahmud Amanat** reports on his Wighton Titular Fellowship in Engineering, which took him from Bangladesh to the University of British Columbia in Canada to exchange ideas and explore developments in structural engineering.

The Department of Civil Engineering is the largest department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and is playing a key role in the development of Bangladesh – particularly in the infrastructure and civil construction sector. Due to severe financial limitations, however, advanced study and research programmes have not been able to flourish to the extent hoped. Because of this, visiting programmes to other universities can play an important role. Through such visits, academic staff can be exposed to the latest developments in their research areas and gain first-hand experience.

Another challenge for BUET is the need to modernise its laboratories. While funding is a major issue, a lack of knowledge of – and exposure to – modern teaching aids and facilities is also a challenge. The importance of experimental activities is increasingly recognised as an integral element of engineering curricula, and the crucial role that laboratory experiments play in providing a meaningful experience to undergraduate students cannot be overemphasised. Planning for the development of our laboratories, however, requires a clear and thorough knowledge of modern techniques and tools. My Titular Fellowship allowed me to visit the University of British Columbia in Canada for a three-month period, with the principal objective of gaining first-hand experience of the latest research activities and laboratory procedures. Such experience will help in planning a realistic development scheme for BUET.

On reaching the University of British Columbia's Okanagan School of Engineering, I was warmly received by Associate Professor Dr M Shahria Alam, who showed me around the institution and introduced me to university officials, faculty, and students. I also met with Dr Spiro Yannacopoulos, Professor and Associate Dean, and Dr Rehan Sadiq, Professor and Acting Director – both at the School of Engineering – as well as graduate research students working under Dr Alam's supervision. Dr Alam helped me with the required official formalities and to settle into the new working environment.

During my stay at the University of British Columbia, I was mainly engaged with observing the research activities of Dr Alam and his research students. I maintained regular interaction with Dr Alam and his colleagues on research related issues, and attended seminars in which research students presented their ongoing work, followed by discussion on the topic and the exchange of ideas. Dr Alam's

Dr Khan Mahmud Amanat in the structural engineering laboratory at the University of British Columbia

research interests included smart materials and their structural applications, the seismic rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, the performance-based design of reinforced concrete, the application of environmentally-friendly (or 'green') concrete, and the reuse/recycling of industrial waste for structural applications.

Research activities were undertaken in the structural engineering laboratory, which was housed in a single shed of more than 600 square metres in size. The department's laboratory facilities are being actively developed by Dr Alam and his colleagues, including the development of a strong floor system to conduct large-scale tests on concrete elements and frames. I enjoyed thoughtful discussions and the exchange of ideas with Dr Alam regarding the development of this specific testing facility, as I had been involved in developing a similar facility at my home institution in Bangladesh. The department also offered advanced facilities dedicated to the development of smart structures technology, earthquake research (including an earthquake shaking table), and advanced structural health monitoring systems for civil engineering infrastructures.

As well as observing research activities and laboratory practices, I also conducted a seminar on the repair of cracks in the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge in Bangladesh, which gave me an opportunity to present a landmark engineering project from Bangladesh to a Canadian audience. Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge is a 4.8 kilometre-long concrete box girder bridge, built in 1998 over the Jamuna River. It established a key road and rail link between the north-west and eastern parts of Bangladesh. Since 2006, however, numerous longitudinal cracks could be observed on the deck of the bridge. Investigations showed that there had been a design inadequacy which had caused the development of these cracks. Repairs started in 2011 and finished in June 2013, at a cost of approximately USD 35 million. The repair work was a one-of-a-kind project and an excellent example of modern engineering. My presentation looked at the identification of the causes of the cracks, as well as the unique repair techniques and procedures adopted for the bridge. Those attending the lecture hopefully gained an insight into one of the world's most technically-challenging and extensive examples of bridge repair work carried out in recent times.

As well as academic and research related activities, I also took part in many social activities in cooperation with Dr Alam, including seeing a Canada Day parade in Peachland on the west side of Okanagan Lake, and visiting many local places of interest.

My fellowship at the University of British Columbia was very fruitful and enlightening, and the scholarly exchange of ideas and experiences took place in different ways. Through these experiences, my exposure to modern research topics and techniques has been greatly enhanced. This will significantly help me to contribute to the development of academic and research activities in Bangladesh. Dr Alam and I have also discussed plans to collaborate further in the future.

I express my thanks and gratitude to the ACU for this opportunity, and to the University of British Columbia – particularly Dr Alam in the School of Engineering – for its help and cooperation.

Dr Khan Mahmud Amanat is a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

ACU Early Career Academic Grants

We are pleased to announce the latest recipients of the ACU Early Career Academic Grants. These awards enable emerging academics at ACU member institutions to attend conferences or academic meetings outside their own regions, thereby broadening their horizons and helping them to establish key international connections. To find out more, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/early-career-academic-grants**

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- **Joseph Ajayi** at the **Federal University of Technology, Akure**, Nigeria
- **Temitayo Ajayi** at the **University of Ibadan**, Nigeria
- **Ukpe Ajima** at the **University of Jos**, Nigeria
- **Bridget Alichie** at **Nnamdie Azikiwie University**, Nigeria
- **Ogochukwu Amaeze** at the **University of Lagos**, Nigeria
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- **Kunle Olutomilayo** at the **University of Uyo**, Nigeria
- **Ann Osuagwu** at **Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike**, Nigeria
- **Titilayo Osuagwu** at the **University of Port Harcourt**, Nigeria
- **Muhammad Osama Raza** at **Riphah International University**, Pakistan
- **Goutam Roy** at the **University of Rajshahi**, Bangladesh
- **Shehu-Tijani Shittu** at the **University of Ibadan**, Nigeria
- **Cecilia Smith** at the **University of Ghana**
- **Jennifer Stock** at the **University of Greenwich**, UK
- **Lasanthika Sajeevanie Thuduwage** at the **University of Colombo**, Sri Lanka

Terror on campus

How does a university community survive in the face of an unthinkable atrocity? Here, **Richard Mibey** describes how one university coped with the aftermath of a terrorist attack on one of its constituent colleges, the many major challenges it faced, and the determination of those affected to continue their studies.

On an April morning in 2015, heavily armed attackers stormed the campus of Garissa University College in Kenya. The gunmen, all members of the Somali-based militant group Al-Shaabab, opened fire on students and staff, leaving 148 dead – 142 of them students – and many more injured and traumatised.

The college – a constituent college of Moi University – had admitted its first 600 students in 2013, and enrolment had increased steadily since. Through a concerted effort, new lecture rooms, accommodation, and laboratories were constructed, and staff numbers increased, in anticipation of the large number of first-year students due to join the college in September 2015.

Tragically, the gains the college had made were to suffer a terrible setback on 2 April 2015.

Relocating the survivors

Following the terrorist attack, the Kenyan government closed Garissa University College indefinitely, and an order was given to relocate the 650 surviving students to Moi University's main campus in Eldoret – some 430 kilometres away.

A committee was formed to spearhead the smooth implementation of the process, headed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, Professor Nathan Ogechi. Its mandate was to put in place strategies for receiving and settling the surviving students and staff. The students who were relocating would need first to complete their second semester – which had been cut short by the massacre – and, later on, be given an opportunity to integrate with the rest of the student community.

Student survivors of the Garissa attack began streaming onto the Eldoret campus early in the morning of 20 May 2015. It was an eventful occasion. Some had travelled a day earlier in anticipation of the moment. The students and staff of Moi University were at the ready to receive and welcome them, despite a shortage of facilities for their accommodation and learning space.

The mood during registration was sombre and moving. Staff assigned to receive the students carried out the service with great calmness and courtesy, and staff of Garissa University College helped to identify survivors who had lost their identification documents.

By the third day of registration, 612 students had been enrolled. This figure represents 94% of the students who survived the attack in Garissa. The high turnout was clear testimony to their determination to continue with their education, irrespective of any threats from terrorists. This unquenchable spirit was further evidenced by the injured students – who registered in crutches, still nursing their wounds, yet unwilling to defer their studies.

In a week-long orientation, the Garissa students took part in various activities aimed at integrating them quickly into the culture and ethos of Moi University. This included information on what to expect from the institution, the sports and games available on campus, health facilities, and an introduction by the counselling unit on aspects of stress management and trauma/psychosocial issues. The new students were allocated bed space in rooms already occupied by Moi University students, in order to speed up the process of acclimatisation and integration into the new environment.

Ronald Magembe survived the Garissa attack, despite being shot through the ear. He is pictured here undergoing a hearing assessment

Adjustment, healing, and support

Three months after the Garissa University College massacre, Moi University's efforts to integrate its students and staff are beginning to bear fruit.

The process of providing psychosocial support – including counselling services, physiotherapy for those injured during the attack, and even spiritual support – commenced immediately and follow-up exercises are ongoing. Most students are gradually acclimatising to their new environment and are about to end their second semester. Over half the students who came from Garissa have nearly healed and adjusted to student life at Moi, while others are on the road to recovery. The levels of confidence felt by Garissa University College staff are also high, with the enhanced security at Moi creating a relaxed environment.

The university has not been left alone in the struggle to handle and ameliorate the tragic events that took place on 2 April 2015, particularly the plight of those students caught up in the attack. Assistance of all forms has come from many quarters, both within Kenya and beyond. Donors have responded generously with financial assistance and other material help which, though modest, has helped in a moderate way to alleviate the suffering of the traumatised students and aid their progress towards full psychological recovery.

At the time of writing, more than 65% of former Garissa University College students have received one-year scholarships from

Many students – such as Annastacia Mikwa, pictured here – required physiotherapy after the attack

donors both locally and internationally, including 300 awarded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). To date, however, Moi University has spent over KES 70 million (USD 700,000) of unbudgeted funds to settle the students.

Safeguarding the future

With the relocation of surviving students to Moi University, campus security has been increased. A total of 16 police officers have been deployed by the government to provide security services on a 24-hour basis, in addition to security staff employed by the university management.

Once the students have completed the semester which was interrupted by the terror attack, they will join one of Moi University's campuses to continue with their learning until completion of their studies.

The staff of Garissa University College are expected to return to Garissa, once there is an assurance of security on the campus. The college is located in north-eastern Kenya, approximately 200 kilometres from the Somalia border – hence its vulnerability to Al-Shaabab terrorist groups operating from Somalia. The majority of staff, however – both teaching and non-teaching – do not wish to return, due to the traumatic experiences they still hold.

Challenges

Managing the arrival of the Garissa survivors at Moi University has not been without difficulty, and the institution has been confronted with several academic and non-academic challenges. The abrupt and unexpected rise in the student population has meant that laboratories and learning facilities are overstretched. The laboratories for science subjects are unable to accommodate all the necessary students in one sitting, in adition to the shortage of equipment therein. A similar shortage is experienced in the computer laboratories, particularly for students of information sciences.

Moi University did not charge tuition and accommodation fees for the semester ending in July 2015. However, the university cannot afford to do so for subsequent semesters. The students are evidently needy – on the day of reporting to the university, for example, many had to be given bedding, clothing, and toiletries, while some parents did not have the transport fare to return home.

From September, a further 600 students – all of whom were due to start at Garissa University College in the new academic year – will be sent to Moi University, further aggravating the shortage of accommodation and teaching space.

Finally, grave challenges stem from the serious bullet injuries suffered by some of the surviving students, who require specialised medical attention, counselling, and material support. Four students are still in hospital, two require hearing aids, and three need motorised wheelchairs. Encouragingly, physicians have assured us that a majority of the 20 students who currently use crutches will eventually recover fully. However, they require physiotherapy and gym facilities for a speedy recovery.

A large number of students and staff were also traumatised and have been undergoing counselling, but the counsellors also require supervision. The counselling process can take a long time because some students are not recovering fast. Some have also relapsed, meaning they require more intensive support.

The cost implication of all these challenges is enormous and the university is unable to cope with it. Support is still needed from other well-wishers, to whom a passionate appeal for financial assistance is made. ■

Professor Richard K Mibey is the Vice-Chancellor of Moi University in Kenya.

If you are interested in offering support to Moi University, please email **membership@acu.ac.uk**

The ACU has launched a series of new special interest groups – the ACU Member Communities – to connect colleagues and other stakeholders working in three key areas of university activity. The new Communities bring university staff from across the Commonwealth together to share their experiences, explore ideas, and discover potential avenues for collaboration.

The Member Communities are free to join for all staff and students of ACU member institutions.

@KsushaArt/Shutterstock

ACU Research, Knowledge and Information Community

For all university staff who support and encourage, but don't directly engage in, the research process, including those working in libraries and information, as well as research management and administration. To find out more, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/rki** or email **rki@acu.ac.uk**

ACU Engage Community

For all university staff and stakeholders working or involved in university community engagement and outreach, including university public engagement staff, industrial liaison officers, research managers and communication officers, and those specialising in distance or open learning. To find out more, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/engage** or email **engage@acu.ac.uk**

ACU Internationalisation Community

For university staff involved in international education, including such areas as student and staff mobility, international campuses, and the internationalisation of curricula and research. To find out more, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/internationalisation** or email **internationalisation@acu.ac.uk**

ACU Member Communities

Prefer to register by post?

Write to us at the address below with your full contact details, stating which community you'd like to join:

ACU Member Communities
The Association of Commonwealth Universities
Woburn House
20-24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
UK

Big issues and next steps: where we go from Beyond 2015

As world leaders prepare to launch new global targets for international development, **Liam Roberts** looks at the key themes that have emerged from the ACU's Beyond 2015 campaign.

It has been 15 years since world leaders convened at the UN General Assembly to establish the far-reaching MDG framework of international development targets. This September, the General Assembly meets again, and the MDG framework formally expires, with the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework set to replace them. But what are the SDGs going to accomplish that the MDGs couldn't?

To begin with, they are more numerous, and more specific. The SDGs will include 17 goals (instead of the MDGs' eight), counting among them objectives to combat climate change, ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns, and also 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all'. Buried within each goal are even more specific targets – for education, one target resolves to increase scholarships, while another advocates for 'equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university'.

It may seem surprising that tertiary education does not receive a more concerted focus in the SDG framework. But, as the ACU has advocated over the 18 months of 'The world beyond 2015' campaign, the prominence of higher education within specific UN-brokered goals is not actually of primary importance. Much better that governments, research funders, and universities themselves recognise that higher education underpins the achievement of all goals, within both the old MDG and the emerging SDG frameworks. Sustainable development requires research evidence, trained graduates, and women and men in positions of leadership – all of which universities can provide.

But how are those who support the role of higher education in development meant to enable it?

The Beyond 2015 campaign published over 100 voices from across and outside the sector, all speaking to how higher education has supported (and can further support) development processes in all global contexts. Among these diverse voices, several cross-cutting themes have emerged that can help inform higher education policy, as well as national and international development policy.

Engagement

Higher education already plays a leading role in socioeconomic development – and contributors to the campaign have highlighted how. One told us of a Centre for Society-University Interface, established to bridge the gap between the university and rural society, with an emphasis on confidence-building for rural girls. Another outlined how ecological farming practices were being implemented in a small island state, improving local livelihoods while also addressing environmental challenges that are global in nature.

Access

Universities need to be able to accommodate growing cohorts of skilled secondary school leavers to support a new generation of leaders and job creators. One contribution to the campaign in particular emphasised the need for HEIs to strive for both accessibility and quality.

Employability

Universities are expected to generate highly-skilled workers and future employers. Employability, however, requires that graduates have skills that are in demand – and this includes developmental demand as well as the demands of the market. One campaign contributor underlined the benefits of curriculum relevance and private-sector linkages in helping achieve this balance.

Mobility

The increasing internationalisation of higher education places academics and students in a strong position to address transnational challenges. One campaign contributor provided an example of how regional research exchange programmes have enhanced student and staff mobility, and have also helped to lead to harmonisation of curricula to address common development objectives.

Upon distilling these themes from the many voices in the Beyond 2015 campaign, the ACU was invited to table a briefing paper at the 19th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (19CCEM) in The Bahamas in June 2015. Our recommendations were simple: without strong higher education systems, the targets identified in the MDGs and the emerging SDGs will remain far ahead of us. When we speak of going 'beyond 2015', we would prefer to address meeting our goals, rather than always chasing them.

The ACU's briefing to 19CCEM will be expanded as a wider paper on our findings from the Beyond 2015 campaign, to be published to time with the UN General Assembly meeting this September. As world leaders are set to formally launch the SDG framework, the onus shifts back to us to ensure that our institutions and systems are well placed as agents of social and developmental change. Balancing access with quality, imparting skills that are both employable and transformative, and connecting with communities are some ways in which we can do this – and, as evidenced through voices published through the Beyond 2015 campaign, it's what we have always done. ■

If our institutions are to be agents of social and developmental change, we must balance access with quality, impart skills that are both employable and transformative, and connect with communities.

Liam Roberts is Acting Programme Manager at the ACU.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

The world beyond 2015

Is higher education ready?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire in 2015 and will be replaced by a new set of international targets.

What next for universities? How will higher education respond to the challenges and goals that emerge beyond 2015 – and is it ready?

1. Why does the Post-2015 agenda matter for higher education?
2. How are universities already addressing local, national, and international issues?
3. How can universities prepare to respond to the Post-2015 agenda?
4. What partnerships should universities establish to achieve their objectives?
5. How can universities champion their contributions to wider society?
6. How relevant and realistic are the Post-2015 goals likely to be?

Find out more about the ACU's campaign to raise awareness of how higher education can and should respond to global challenges beyond 2015.

www.acu.ac.uk/beyond-2015

Follow us on Twitter **@HEbeyond2015**

Find us on Facebook at **fb.com/HEbeyond2015**

Follow the conversation at **#HEbeyond2015**

Noticeboard

Professor Arun Diwaker Nath Bajpai

Professor Rahamon A Bello

Following a call for nominations, seven new members have been appointed to the **ACU Council**.

As the overall governing body of the ACU, the Council is collectively responsible for overseeing the ACU's activities and determining its future direction. Officers of Council and its Committees will be elected at the next AGM in December 2015.

ACU Council 2015-2017

- **Professor Edward Oben Ako**, University of Maroua, Cameroon
- **Professor Vasanthy Arasaratnam**, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- **Professor David Atkinson***, MacEwan University, Canada
- **Professor Arun Diwaker Nath Bajpai**, Himachal Pradesh University, India
- **Professor Rahamon A Bello**, University of Lagos, Nigeria
- **Professor Amit Chakma***, Western University, Canada
- **Professor Rajesh Chandra***, University of the South Pacific
- **Professor Cheryl de la Rey**+, University of Pretoria, South Africa
- **Professor Romeela Mohee**, University of Mauritius
- **Professor Dr Md Mahbubar Rahman,** Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Bangladesh
- **Professor Idris Rai**+, State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania
- **Professor Christina Slade**, Bath Spa University, UK
- **Professor Jan Thomas**+, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

**Continuing member in first term of office*
+Re-elected to serve a second term of office

Professor Dr Md Mahbubar Rahman

Professor Romeela Mohee

Professor Christina Slade

A new staff training initiative seeks to address the shortage of accredited training for university administrators in developing countries. Designed in association with the Staff and Educational Development Association, the ACU's **Administrative Staff Training Initiative** aims to help university administrators in member institutions identify ways in which they can contribute more effectively to their institution's wider development and influence the design of key policies and procedures. In doing so, the initiative aims to ensure that these pivotal roles are appropriately valued within their instititions.

The initiative is currently being piloted by a group of mainly middle-management level administrators from universities in Africa, with outcomes expected later this year. For more information, contact **roz.grimmitt@acu.ac.uk**

The ACU Symons Award 2015 has been given to **Professor Nathu Ram Puri** – entrepreneur, industrialist, and strong supporter of higher education.

Established in 1973, the ACU Symons Award honours individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the ACU, or to higher education in the Commonwealth. This year's awardee exemplifies these qualities, having been a strong advocate for Commonwealth Scholarships, a founding supporter of the CSFP Endowment Fund, and well known for his philanthropic contributions to educational causes, in India and internationally, through the charitable Puri Foundation.

The ACU's **Low Cost Journals Scheme** helps member universities in low and middle income countries secure access to high-quality print journals at an affordable price.

The increasing cost of journals, declining budgets, and currency weaknesses have combined to place a large number of international journals beyond the budgets of many universities in low and middle income countries.

The ACU's Low Cost Journals Scheme enables libraries to order printed journals through the ACU and pay only 75-80% of the original cover price.

For more information or to take part, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/low-cost-journals**, email **lowcostjournals@acu.ac.uk** or write to the Low Cost Journal Scheme, The Association of Commonwealth Universities, Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HF, UK.

The ACU's most recent major conference – **Research and innovation for global challenges** – was considered by all to have been a huge success. What made the conference so special and such a refreshing experience was, in many ways, a reflection of the distinctive character of the ACU and of the varied profile of actors we bring together. Hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa, in conjunction with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), the conference was attended by over 400 delegates from 45 different countries. In addition to the 13 southern African countries represented, speakers and attendees alike flew in, not just from other parts of Africa but also from places as diverse as Australia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and the UK. Delegates included research administrators, vice-chancellors, ministers, chief scientific advisers to government, and more. And when such a diverse range of individuals come together to consider an issue of common interest, the ensuing discussions can head in some unexpected – but inspiring – directions.

I can't think of another conference I've been to where you could hear, within a single session, an engaging description of initiatives to address the practical challenges facing researchers studying vector-borne diseases within deprived communities in Africa and, without the slightest sense of disjointedness, a presentation on the benefits that can be derived from large infrastructures – such as the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility – through collaboration between researchers and industry. The session in question was just one within a strand of the conference programme exploring open science – an exciting dynamic with the potential to revolutionise the conduct of research across the globe by fostering ever greater and deeper scientific collaboration between researchers (and the public) from all corners of the Commonwealth.

There was also an opportunity to follow a strand of sessions exploring research uptake and the mechanisms through which research can strengthen development policy and practice. Here, again, the reach of the ACU and its partner SARIMA, brought diverse stakeholders together – from community-based researchers to policymakers looking at high-level partnerships and cooperation on a regional and even intercontinental basis. The result was an illuminating and holistic discussion over the course of three days that linked elements of practice and policy from top to bottom and back up again.

A strand of sessions looking at research and innovation management considered issues of professionalisation and knowledge transfer, again joining up diverse approaches from southern Africa and the UK with those from east and west Africa and southeast Asia.

If the conference itself wasn't enough, a dozen or so pre and post-conference workshops helped to complete a truly international tour de force of initiatives to harness research for global challenges.

But the success of the conference can only partly be measured by what happened during those three days in Johannesburg. The range of ideas that emerged through discussions during coffee breaks, at dinner, or in the bar late into the night suggests that the benefits of attending will be enjoyed by participants long after they have returned home. Collaborative research proposals spanning three continents were conceived, new training initiatives scoped, new conferences considered, and ideas for innovative new products and services dreamt up. The future is truly exciting.

Dr Ben Prasadam-Halls is Director of Programmes at the ACU.

Supporting student and staff mobility: the ACU's grants for its members

The potential role of the Commonwealth in promoting student and staff mobility among its member nations was a key element of the ACU's presentation to governments at the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. Here, **John Kirkland** highlights the role of international grants in achieving this, and outlines the funding opportunities offered by the ACU.

Prosperity, employability, human capacity development, international diplomacy: the potential benefits of international student and staff mobility are well documented – benefits which extend beyond individuals to have far-reaching impacts on their home countries and on those which host them. This mobility lies at the very heart of ACU activity and was a key theme of our presentation to governments at the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM) in June 2015.

Through discussion papers, presentations, and a ministerial debate, we sought to remind governments not only of the impact and value of higher education to individuals and nations alike, but also the huge potential to make greater use of the initiatives, brands, and mechanisms already in place – such as the ACU itself and the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP).

The role of scholarships

Scholarships are one area in which the Commonwealth already has a high profile. Although a relatively small proportion of international students receive scholarships, these can be disproportionately important in terms of talent and development impact. Commonwealth initiatives have particular potential to promote two-way mobility across low, middle, and high income countries. They can also be a particularly effective way of influencing wider student destinations – not only for recipients, but also for applicants who broaden their knowledge of the courses available internationally.

Staff mobility

Opportunities for academic staff mobility tend to be less well known than those for students. We know of no international survey which quantifies these, but anecdotal evidence suggests that those opportunities that do exist are heavily concentrated on a small proportion of staff, who often form an 'internationally-focused elite', particularly in universities in low and middle income countries where resources are most scarce.

Our paper to 19CCEM highlighted the need for wider groups of academics and postdoctoral students to have opportunities for international exposure and to develop international collaborations. We also called for the greater use of existing Commonwealth websites and other resources to highlight the opportunities that are available – particularly in areas such as postdoctoral fellowships where information is not currently brought together in a single place.

Another key theme raised by the ACU was how the sector can secure the next generation of academics to respond to the rapid expansion in student numbers. Here, again, staff mobility came into focus, with recommendations including the expansion of split-site doctoral scholarships – which provide doctorates using both local and international expertise – as well as distance learning, bilateral arrangements between universities and governments, and novel partnerships for the development of early career staff.

What is the ACU doing?

As a result of our fundraising endeavours, the ACU is pleased to announce that it will be distributing GBP 3 million in grants over the next five years.

The ACU has long been associated with scholarships and fellowships. We are active advocates for international mobility, and aim to be at the forefront of innovation in helping sponsors to develop new programmes and in stimulating international debate on how best to measure the effectiveness and impact of scholarships. We have managed externally-funded grant programmes for over 60 years – most notably the Marshall, Commonwealth, and Chevening Scholarships offered by the UK government, but also on behalf of other sponsors. We are focused on efficiency; the more efficient our services, the higher the proportion of sponsors' funds which can be spent on the scholarships themselves.

We are therefore delighted to be able to offer our members tangible support, through income from our endowment funds, in the following areas.

Commonwealth Scholarships in low and middle income countries

It is often argued that international mobility is too one-sided, with students travelling from south to north, but with limited opportunities for south-south or north-south travel.

The CSFP endowment fund addresses this issue, supporting international scholarships for students from all over the Commonwealth to study at ACU member universities in low and middle income countries. Scholarships have already been offered in Bangladesh, Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, the University of the South Pacific, and the University of the West Indies.

Often, these scholarships create international dynamics and collaborations that would not exist elsewhere – such as students travelling from Botswana to Sri Lanka, Canada to Tanzania, and Sierra Leone to Bangladesh. The scholarships are typically for two-year Master's courses and are open to candidates from all Commonwealth countries (except the host country). The fund will support up to 30 individuals at any one time. Such scholarships send a powerful signal to indicate the growing capacity of low and middle income countries to host international students.

ACU Early Career Academic Grants

The Early Career Academic Grants enable emerging academics from ACU member institutions to attend conferences or academic

Students at the 2014 Commonwealth Summer School in Malaysia explored issues around global food security

meetings in other Commonwealth countries, thereby broadening their horizons and allowing them to develop key international contacts. The grants are comparatively modest – typically up to GBP 2,000 to attend a first conference or visit an overseas collaborator – but our studies have shown that even small-scale support given at the crucial early stages of academic careers can be critical in determining future progress. By focusing support on those with no previous international exposure, these grants can have a disproportionate impact in kickstarting international partnerships, networks, and collaborations. The ACU will support some 35-40 such awards each year.

ACU Commonwealth Summer School

What makes the Commonwealth Summer School distinctive is not just the huge range of countries represented, but also its focus on students with little or no previous international experience. The fund will provide 20-30 grants per year to support attendance from students at ACU member institutions who have not had previous opportunities to travel outside their own regions.

Administrative Staff Training Initiative

The role of university administrators is undervalued in several parts of the world. Often, little professional training exists, and even less is accredited. The ACU hopes to change this position through the Administrative Staff Training Initiative, the first pilot of which has already been held. This short accredited course helps participants identify ways in which they can contribute directly to the design of key policies and procedures and, in doing so, participate more effectively in their institution's wider development. The ACU will provide support for candidates who would not otherwise be able to attend.

ACU Titular Fellowships

The ACU Titular Fellowships are the longest-running element of our grant-giving portfolio. Endowed by donors, each fellowship is dedicated to a specific purpose, subject area, or institution. All support staff mobility by allowing an established academic or practitioner to visit another Commonwealth university – typically for a period of around three months. The aim is to enable international collaboration on research projects in subject areas or fields of activity in which the needs of developing countries are particularly great.

Supporting leadership

Leadership is critical. Yet the staff who run ACU member universities often have no systematic way of sharing their problems and experiences with those at a similar level. We are exploring ideas for funded events which will allow them to do this – not necessarily through a period of formal training, but by providing a forum for discussion with their peers in a more informal environment.

Moving forward

All our grants will provide a real, additional benefit to ACU membership, but we are keen to do more in this area.

One way of doing this would be to combine the ACU's expertise in award administration with its network of member universities to offer awards on behalf of other donors. One such example is the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, with whom we are exploring the possibility of fellowships to help ensure that ACU members in northern Nigeria involved in teacher training retain their international contacts in a difficult political environment.

We are also considering ways in which we can work more closely with member universities. Several have already expressed interest in putting some of their existing scholarships under 'a Commonwealth banner' – using the ACU to bring such opportunities to a different and wider audience. Another possible area is that of fellowships, which tend to be less well publicised than conventional scholarships. Again, the ACU's network can be used in association with member universities to attract a wider range of candidates.

As part of our growing commitment to this area, the ACU has appointed a new scholarships and fellowships officer to work specifically on ACU-funded awards. If you have ideas for partnerships, channels, or other means through which we can extend our support in this area, we would be delighted to hear them at **acuawards@acu.ac.uk** ■

Dr John Kirkland is Deputy Secretary General of the ACU.

For information on the ACU's awards for its members, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/grants-awards**

Big data: opportunities and challenges for global research

At this year's ACU Commonwealth Summer School, students will explore the challenges and opportunities presented by big data, and the inequality that persists as a result of inadequate access to it. Here, **Andrew Harrison** and **Hugh Shanahan** report on these barriers – and how we might overcome them.

Progress in science is increasingly driven by the analysis of large datasets. The Large Hadron Collider detectors at CERN in Switzerland, the international 1000 Genomes Project, and the Square Kilometre Array in Australia and South Africa are all high-profile examples of this – projects which may generate up to one exabyte of data – or one quintillion bytes – in a single day. And it's not only large-scale projects; scientists of all flavours are increasingly producing copious amounts of data.

Much of this scientific data is deliberately stored in the public domain and is freely available for analysis by scientists anywhere in the world. There has been a historic understanding that large scientific datasets will be made publicly available and, more importantly, that valuable work can be done performing meta-analyses based on these datasets. Funding agencies have specifically introduced policies to ensure that data generated as a result of their funding is available after the lifetime of the project. Moreover, the model of publishing papers without providing links to the data used or the software which enabled the analysis is looking increasingly threadbare and ripe for change.

Data: larger, more varied, and more open

Large and freely accessible research datasets are becoming bigger and more commonplace. In bioinformatics, for example, extensive data collections are already publicly available. Organisations such as the European Bioinformatics Institute and the National Centre for Biotechnology Information have a mandate to manage, curate, and make freely available biological and biomedical datasets. This array of data is ripe for meta-analysis, with applications in human medicine and food security. A wide variety of other datasets are available, too, from disciplines such as climate science, meteorology, and the social sciences. All of these datasets represent billions of dollars of primary research that can be re-used.

Opportunities and challenges

The opportunities resulting from the accessibility of data are great, with new discoveries leading to new disciplines, technologies, and industries. However, the trend for large data in modern science presents challenges for researchers based in low and middle income countries (LMICs).

One of these challenges is infrastructure: how they can make use of such datasets, given the poor connectivity and infrastructure issues that they face. These datasets are often too large to download on high-speed connections, let alone on networks in LMICs. Local power supplies are often intermittent, or do not stay at the appropriate voltage. Variable or old hardware, combined with variable access to funds, make the analysis of even small datasets difficult. This limits the capacity for scientists in the developing world to make vital contributions to the analysis of such data.

These infrastructural problems also limit opportunities to train and educate young researchers in big data and other new and rapidly-growing areas of science. There is a dearth of data science researchers in the developing world, and the small number of researchers in any given institution means it is often difficult for them to find a community of users for support and advice.

Cloud computing – a solution for infrastructure

Infrastructure challenges are now beginning to be addressed. Distributed computing techniques – cloud computing in particular – may present opportunities to sidestep certain infrastructural issues, for example. Cloud computing can circumvent many of the difficulties faced by scientists in LMICs – all a scientist needs to access a cloud computing platform is a relatively low-end computer and an internet connection.

The interfaces provided by cloud computing platforms are independent of the local computer. Intermittency in power supply will not affect the computation, as this occurs in a data centre where the power supply is reliable. Likewise, IT support for cloud computing platforms is also independent of local problems. Adept cloud users can move from one cloud computing platform to another and, over time, the barriers between different clouds are likely to decrease.

Moving to the cloud will offer scientists in developing countries efficient and easy access to the same public datasets available in high income countries, leading to a levelling of the playing field in increasingly important areas of science and technology. By moving the analysis to the data, data storage costs can be eliminated. Limited internet connectivity can be circumvented by the use of lightweight workflows. Cloud computing also enables power intermittency to be mitigated as only the connection to the computing would be interrupted, rather than the computing itself. Initiatives such as CHAIN-REDS (www.chain-project.eu) are playing a role in making such resources available.

Access to research datasets in the public domain, and the computational resources to analyse them, will give researchers in LMICs the infrastructure to contribute to world-class research that is relevant to their society. Researchers will be able to undertake cutting-edge research using these datasets and hence avoid having to invest substantial resources in generating almost identical information.

Human capacity – the other bottleneck

If researchers in LMICs are to gain full benefit from big data, it is vital to build human capacity in the field – particularly the training of researchers to raise awareness of open datasets and the routes to using them. The creation of a cadre of individuals who can analyse, maintain, and curate large datasets is a crucial step, and one that will have a positive impact on local society as enterprises based on data analysis will expand.

A workforce trained in data science and cloud computing will be better able to generate solutions to substantial local challenges, and, by passing on their training, knowledge of this field can be built up and

start to have an impact on research in a comparatively short period of time. To these ends, increasing numbers of educational programmes in data science are being developed across the world. For example, two leading international organisations for increasing capacity in data sharing and accessibility – the Research Data Alliance and the Committee on Data for Science and Technology – have teamed up to develop workshops and educational curricula for data scientists the world over.

There have already been a number of embryonic initiatives to train students in this field. Since 2009, we have been involved in a series of summer schools for bioinformaticians and biologists in China. The goals of these schools are:

- To give students an introduction into the analysis of high throughput biological data
- To make students familiar with the tools necessary to carry this out
- To give students the confidence to present their findings

These summer schools have shown that it is possible to deliver data science material in a meaningful way to students and researchers in LMICs. There are undoubtedly challenges; it is important, for example, to ensure that the logistics of any such initiative are agreed and in place. Open source software is incredibly useful – particularly given the absence of an initial cost – but it can present challenges for new students since it is often not designed for novice researchers.

Cloud computing for all

As the development of training materials gathers pace, it is important to return to the infrastructural difficulties that we discussed initially. In theory, there are no impediments to having a cloud computing platform – with access to all of the open data available – that researchers in LMICs could make use of.

Commercial cloud computing vendors provide substantial resources for researchers in high income countries for very moderate costs. However, because there is a flat rate of usage, these costs become prohibitive for researchers in LMICs. This gap could be bridged for a small fraction of the experimental costs that led to the creation of the large datasets and those funds already being spent by research institutes and their funding agencies to ensure the data is nominally available to all. This change in emphasis would potentially offer researchers in LMICs the opportunity to become leaders in the analysis of large and open datasets.

These are exciting times. We are moving closer to a world in which scientists everywhere will have access to a significant portion of all research data produced globally. They will then be in a position to make discoveries about the signals within the data, as well as to contribute to training which enables local communities to take further advantage of these resources. Vive la data revolution! ■

Dr Andrew Harrison is Senior Lecturer in Bioinformatics and Applied Mathematics at the University of Essex, UK, and sits on the Big Data Analytics Interest Group and the Biodiversity Data Integration Interest Group for the Research Data Alliance.

Dr Hugh Shanahan is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

The **ACU Commonwealth Summer School** takes place from 15-22 August 2015 in Ontario, Canada. Its theme is 'Big data and the digital divide'.

An artist's rendition of the Square Kilometre Array project in South Africa shows how the radio telescopes may look when completed

Image © SKA Organisation

Addressing the gender gap in higher education

Diana Parry reports on one university's participation in a global solidarity movement for gender equality, including an international gender conference held in conjunction with the ACU.

Despite a number of significant advances in the rights and well-being of women and girls, global progress in terms of gender equality continues to be uneven and far from sufficient in many areas – including higher education.

Recognising that the achievement of gender equity requires an inclusive approach that engages men and boys as equal partners, UN Women – the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women – launched HeForShe: a global solidarity movement which aims to engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change for gender equality and women's rights.

Part of the HeForShe campaign is a pilot initiative – IMPACT 10x10x10 – which targets three key sectors of society: government, the private sector, and youth. As part of its work within the youth sector, the initiative has partnered with ten universities at leadership level to commit to making gender equity an institutional priority, mobilising their campuses to reshape the global discourse on gender equality.

The inclusion of universities in the IMPACT 10x10x10 initiative embraces the potential of young people to change the world, and the critical role universities play in shaping gender images and behaviours. At the same time, the initiative contributes to ongoing efforts to combat gender inequality and violence on campuses at a global level, by engaging with universities at an administrative and student level on gender sensitisation and gender-based violence.

For women to be fairly and justly represented across our entire sector, including in STEM fields, is critical to the fundamental idea of a university.

Leading by example

The campaign engaged ten key decision-makers – known as IMPACT champions – from each of the three sectors, including ten heads of state, ten CEOs of leading corporations, and ten university presidents. As well as making key commitments to achieving gender equality and becoming role models for the campaign, the champions were tasked with identifying the most appropriate approaches for addressing gender inequality in their respective sector, and then pilot testing the effectiveness of these interventions.

Among the university presidents invited to lead by example as an IMPACT champion is Feridun Hamdullahpur, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Waterloo in Canada. President Hamdullahpur committed to taking a comprehensive approach to long-term, sustainable gender equity at the university through the development of innovative programming aimed at young girls through to senior leadership. 'As change leaders in gender equity – especially as a leading STEM-focused university – we aim to advance excellence at all levels of our institution while serving as a galvanising force for social change at universities across Canada,' said Hamdullahpur. 'We know that we have some work to do to improve gender equity on our campus, but fulfilling these commitments is fundamental to our university's long-term success, and to the quality and betterment of society.'

Three commitments

As part of the HeforShe campaign's IMPACT initiative, the University of Waterloo made three specific commitments:

1: Boost the participation of girls in STEM experiences to create future female leaders

To reach gender parity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), we need to engage women and girls as young students. Targeted efforts to engage young girls in these subjects can have a long-term ripple effect on the numbers of women pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as in faculty and senior university positions.

Focusing on the most gender-disparate STEM experiences, the university has committed to boosting female enrolment in these subjects to 33% by 2020, by expanding the scope of current programmes and developing a number of targeted new initiatives.

Building on existing expertise, the university will develop best practices in the design, development, delivery, and assessment of outreach programmes targeted at girls and women, and will use these initiatives to build a 'pipeline' of women for future success. Planned initiatives include the creation of specific, STEM-focused scholarships for women, an annual graduate and postdoctoral student conference for women in STEM, targeted STEM-related outreach programmes for girls in Aboriginal communities, and week-long STEM camps for girls in middle and high school.

2: Enhance female faculty representation to drive towards parity in the future

The University of Waterloo recognises that a gender-equal faculty is key to fostering a female-friendly climate on campus and to attracting and supporting the female leaders of tomorrow. As such, the university has proposed a holistic approach to this issue, creating new roles for women as well as the necessary culture and support structures needed to ensure their success. To kick-start change, the university has committed to reach a faculty composition of 30% women by 2020.

To achieve this, the University of Waterloo will champion several initiatives to increase the representation of women in faculty positions, including a comprehensive review and evaluation of hiring policies and practices, and the implementation of new gender-sensitive hiring practices based on the review's findings.

The university also plans to strengthen its campus culture to support gender equality by implementing unconscious bias awareness training, looking to other universities and the private sector for models of success. Other initiatives include the creation of grants to support research initiatives undertaken by female faculty, the development of a leadership and mentorship programme for all faculty, and

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the launch of an annual graduate and postdoctoral student conference for women working in STEM.

3: Advance women into positions that lead the university

Today, 24.5% of senior academic and administrative leaders at the University of Waterloo are female. Recognising that the journey from entry-level faculty to senior leadership takes over a decade, the university is confident that its first and second commitments will actively build the pipeline of women. As these cohorts of women progress through the ranks in academia, the university will benefit from an increasingly large number of women with the potential to take on leadership roles. Increasing the share of women in leadership positions will also have a ripple effect on gender parity at lower levels – as women see other women in these roles, they will feel empowered to take on these positions themselves.

Through the commitments made as part of the HeForShe campaign, and a suite of programmes to target women of great potential, the University of Waterloo has committed to reaching 29% representation of women in academic and senior leadership by 2020.

Initiatives in this area include a leadership programme for all faculty to capitalise on existing talent, with targeted aspects for female members. The university also plans to sponsor an annual speaker series that profiles extraordinary female academics.

In addition, in June 2016, the University of Waterloo will join forces with the ACU to host an international interdisciplinary conference exploring issues connected to gender in higher education leadership. The conference, titled 'Missing and marginalized: ending the erasure of women's lives and experiences', will focus on the role that the post-secondary education sector can play in ending the erasure of women's lives and experiences, and will bring together scholars from all disciplines and Commonwealth nations, as well as activists, administrators, industry leaders, and policymakers.

Fulfilling potential

Ultimately, the University of Waterloo hopes that targeted efforts now to attract more young girls into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will have long-term benefits, increasing the share of women pursuing degrees and available to take on tenure-track faculty positions in traditionally male-dominated disciplines and leadership roles in the future.

'University is about potential: unearthing it, enabling it and unleashing it,' said Hamdullahpur. 'It's about the potential of every human being to realise their talents and abilities and the potential for society to reimagine itself anew. Enabling all students, faculty and staff members to achieve their highest potential – and for historically underrepresented members of our sector, especially women, to be fairly and justly represented across our entire sector, including in STEM fields – is critical to the fundamental idea of a university. It is also fundamental to universities' long-term success, and to the quality and betterment of society.' ■

Dr Diana C Parry is Associate Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies, and Special Advisor to the President on Women's and Gender Issues, at the University of Waterloo, Canada.

'**Missing and marginalized: ending the erasure of women's lives and experiences**' takes place from 14-17 June 2016 at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. A call for papers will issued in September 2015. To register your interest in the event, email **gender@acu.ac.uk**

Approaches to supporting research

The ACU's recent conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, saw the launch of the ACU Research, Knowledge and Information Community – a new special interest group for university staff who support and encourage the research process. As part of the launch, members of the new community took part in a study tour of three South African universities to discuss and compare ways of supporting and enhancing research. Here, **Stephen Akintunde** and **Carlette Hlungwani** report on their experiences.

The study tour was very valuable because it revealed the possibilities that can be realised if key actors in the university research process – research management offices, libraries, and researchers – are fully integrated. Participants visited three research-active universities in South Africa – the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, and the University of Witwatersrand – to explore and discover how research is being supported.

The visits revealed a high synergy between university libraries and their research management offices. A culture of research appeared to be the norm in all three institutions. The university libraries each supported research in a variety of ways, including by providing digital platforms for documentation (such as institutional repositories) and guidance on referencing style.

The University of Johannesburg's Library and Information Centre advises researchers on the appropriate journals in which to publish their research output, undertakes bibliometric analyses, and provides research intelligence which can be used to assess the integrity of a researcher.

The Open Scholarship Project at the University of Pretoria has developed policies on article processing charges, research papers, and electronic theses and dissertations. There is also a research data management policy and a digitisation centre. Each university faculty has a research marketing officer to communicate and promote the research taking place in that subject area.

At the University of Witwatersrand, the library's approach to research support is 'holistic' and is guided by the cyclical paradigm of service – prepare, gather, create, share, and measure. The library has a writing centre and gives workshops on publication outlets, journal impact factors, and accredited journals.

Another common theme in all three universities was the encouragement of innovation which can lead to change. The Universities of Pretoria and Johannesburg both have 'innovation ambassadors' to encourage interaction between 'innovative, motivated, and committed inventors' and the research office, with a focus on discovering talent across the faculties. The University of Pretoria provides a 'Library MakerSpace' in which innovation is laid bare. It is a room in which deep thinking takes place and experiments are conducted by designing software and testing ideas through mechanical and other means. At the University of Witwatersrand, the Director of Technology Transfer, Ela Romanowska, described innovation as a process of 'shifting paradigms' in which research is translated into products and services.

A common theme in all three universities was the encouragement of innovation which can lead to change.

Perhaps the most visible arenas for research in all the universities we visited were the free and flexible learning spaces provided for students and researchers. The library environments of the three universities were particularly conducive to learning because of the provision of individual and group learning spaces, both open and closed. The relationship between research management staff and library staff in the three universities was also complementary. Indeed, they all worked together to support research.

For delegates on the tour, it was a really exciting and engaging learning experience. I particularly enjoyed the camaraderie in the group. The lessons learned from the tour will hopefully trigger improvement in the support that research and researchers receive in other Commonwealth universities, as participants apply the principles learned during the experience. ■

Library staff at the University of Johannesburg gave a presentation on the support they provide to researchers

Dr Stephen Akintunde is University Librarian at the University of Jos, Nigeria.

My colleague and I signed up for the study tour because we saw an opportunity to learn about how other universities support research activities, to explore the different structures within other institutions, and to see how these are linked to the research offices. In addition, as research managers in a faculty of health sciences, it was important for us to find out how central research offices interact with faculty research offices without duplicating services.

The tour was spread over two days and each day came with different experiences. We were able to compare roles and structures, and concluded that the inclusion of formal reporting lines between different offices in universities can help in achieving a more coordinated working relationship. For example, at the University of Johannesburg, research, postgraduate, libraries, and innovation offices all fall under the same deputy vice-chancellor.

It was interesting to see different ways in which these universities create an enabling environment for postgraduate students to do research. The University of Pretoria has an exclusive space for postgraduate students in its main library called the 'research commons'. The area has subject specialists/librarians who offer students assistance in writing their theses. They also help students to identify the best journals to publish in.

We also learned about ways in which we can strengthen our communication with researchers. These included organising workshops in which successful grant recipients can share their experience and tips on how to submit a good funding application; ways of sending out calls for funding opportunities; seminars; and postgraduate forums to offer emerging researchers an opportunity for informal discussions with established researchers. One of the strategic objectives at our own institution is to give more support to emerging researchers and we hope these ideas can be integrated with our own similar programmes to improve the research support we provide.

It was useful to learn about the different strategies universities implement to increase their research capacity. For example, the University of Johannesburg employed more assistant lecturers and visiting professors to alleviate the teaching load, thereby enabling more senior researchers to focus on research.

It was valuable, too, to be reminded of the role libraries can play in assisting the research office – such as collecting publications in an institutional repository, for example, or compiling an annual list of publications to be submitted to the South African Department of Higher Education and Training in order to receive subsidy. Libraries also offer bibliometric information to researchers and research offices to analyse publication output, as well as guidance in the use of valuable tools for research.

The tour helped us recognise that we face some similar issues to the three universities we visited: we are all located in cities and are referred to as 'historically advantaged' institutions. We have similar challenges – an enduring one being the need to increase research funding. We could relate to the issues raised and the tour gave us an opportunity to discuss these with people in similar roles.

We also learned about institutional and research repositories that exist to address different institutional needs, such as digital collections and research output repositories. We gathered information on different approaches universities have taken: their mandates, systems, and staffing, as well as the relationships involved – between the library and research office, central research offices and faculty or contracts offices, and repository staff and authors.

The most important lesson for us was to form stronger links with the other offices that support research, particularly the postgraduate office and health sciences library.

The tour was thought-provoking and made us think more strategically about the ways in which we can improve our systems and support activities, and about how we interact with other offices. The most important lesson for us was to form stronger links with the other offices that support research, particularly the postgraduate office and health sciences library.

We hope that there will be more tours in future to strengthen the relationship between research support professionals for the benefit of research more broadly. ■

The Library MakerSpace at the University of Pretoria

Carlette Hlungwani is Manager of Research Administration at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

For more information on the ACU Research, Knowledge and Information Community, visit **www.acu.ac.uk/rki**

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

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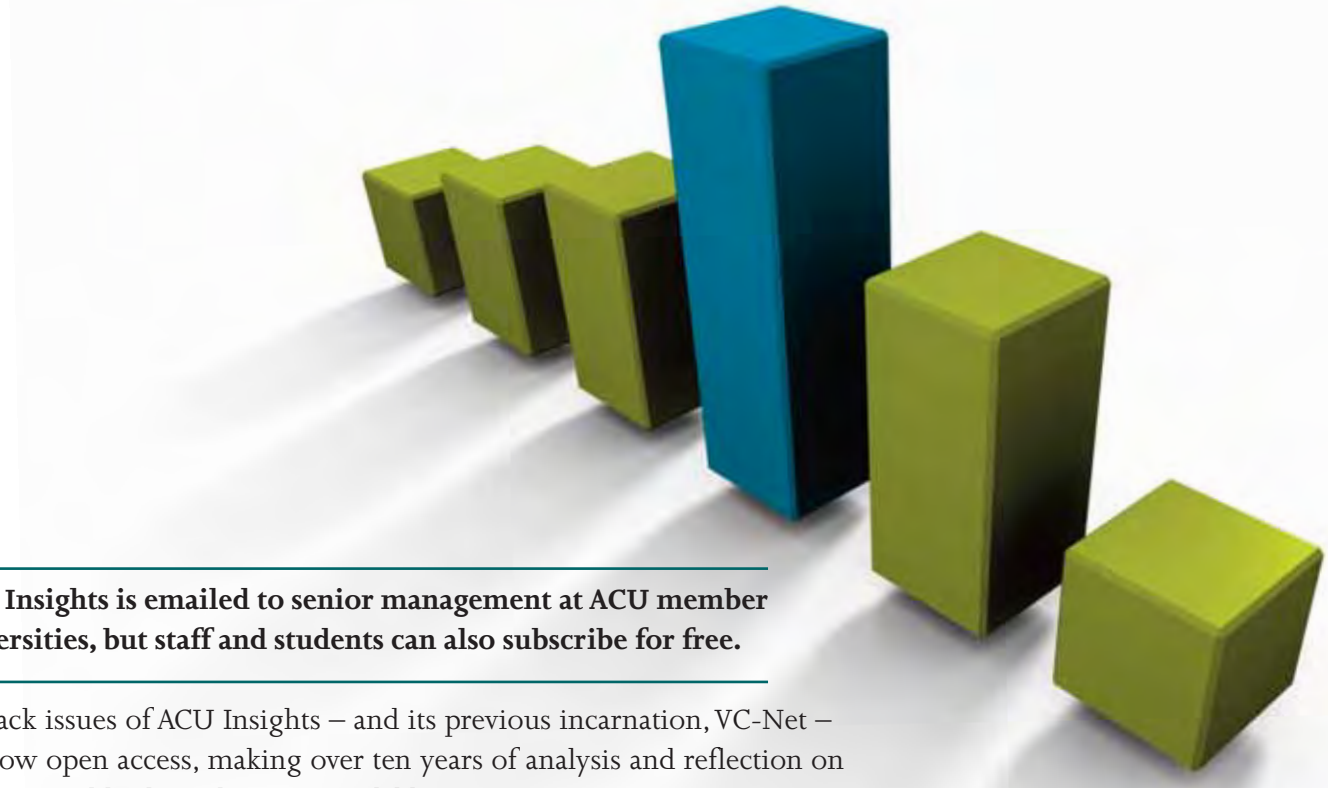
ACU Insights

ACU Insights is a regular report on international trends and issues for university senior management. Each issue features analysis of three topical issues, drawing out international trends and comparisons, together with an international round-up of relevant news, events, and publications.

ACU Insights focuses on issues relevant to leadership, governance, and strategy in higher education. Recent topics covered include:

EU/Africa science collaboration
Higher education regulation in India
The value of international students
Research uptake in Africa
Women in university leadership
Supporting early career researchers
US international education and engagement
Defining, understanding and measuring impact



ACU Insights is emailed to senior management at ACU member universities, but staff and students can also subscribe for free.

All back issues of ACU Insights – and its previous incarnation, VC-Net – are now open access, making over ten years of analysis and reflection on international higher education available.

www.acu.ac.uk/insights

Recent publications

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

Assessing the Feasibility of International Branch Campuses: Factors Universities Consider When Establishing Campuses Abroad
[Clifford, M.; Rand Corporation; 2015]
www.rand.org/pubs
An interview-based (doctoral) study on the process involved in establishing an international branch campus (IBC) and the factors affecting such a decision. As with other areas of internationalisation, the 'unique social, cultural, political, economic, and academic factors relevant to each country' should be prioritised ('the success of the IBC is just as much about how the characteristics of a particular IBC will interact with its environment rather than the mere presence or absence of specific factors').

Bridging the Gap: Enabling Effective UK-Africa University Partnerships
[Smail, A.; McCowan, T.; Rakodi, C.; British Council; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
A summary report based on interviews and a literature review on international university partnerships, specifically on UK perspectives with reference to Africa. Six factors are outlined which could make such partnerships more effective: wide institutional strategies, mutual interests, long-term funding, political context, shared information, and sustainability. Further research within the project will concentrate on African perspectives on university partnerships.

Broadening Horizons: The Value of the Overseas Experience
[British Council; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
One of a series of British Council research publications launched at the 2015 Going Global conference. This comparative survey reviews trends in the numbers of UK and US students studying abroad – their motives, the barriers, and benefits. Cultural experience was cited as a 'significantly stronger' motive than academic or employability factors.

Do Mobility Periods Change Students' Attitudes?
[Centre for International Mobility; 2015]
www.cimo.fi
First findings from a study commissioned by the Finnish-based Centre for International Mobility to survey the experience of students before and after studying abroad ('a clear majority…felt that the mobility period had improved their social skills, interactive skills, ability to function in other cultures, understanding of how to act with people from different cultures, and curiosity').

The EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe
[European Association of International Education; 2015]
www.eaie.org/barometer
A survey of those involved in internationalisation in Europe, reflecting the perspectives of over 2,000 staff in 33 European countries. Motives given for institutions to internationalise include educational quality, students' global futures, and international student recruitment, while improving partnerships with institutions internationally is seen as the greatest challenge.

Educational Pathways of Leaders: An International Comparison
[British Council; Ipsos Public Affairs; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
The study, which covered some 30 countries, concentrates on the perspectives of leaders; the majority of those surveyed had degrees in the social sciences and humanities, while a third had experience of international education. However, skills and networks gained outside formal training were also valued.

Equipping New University Presidents to Lead Effectively in the Developing World
[Brewer, W.; Mahmood, M.; Institute of International Education; 2015]
www.iie.org/research-and-publications
A brief summary of selected issues and conclusions from the annual WISE Program for Education Leadership.

Governments and TNE: Challenges and Opportunities in Asia
[Hill, C.; Razvi, S. D. A.; The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education; 2015]
www.obhe.ac.uk
A paper profiling transnational education (TNE) in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea, outlining the factors – negative and positive – influencing its development, and the impact of government controls/regulation. Despite its focus on a specific form of education, it gives wider perspectives on education strategy and the state – noting, in conclusion, that 'TNE is a vehicle for, not a guarantor of, development or progress'.

Higher Education Strategy for Malta
[National Commission for Further and Higher Education, Malta; Ministry of Education and Employment; 2015]
https://education.gov.mt
Several ambitious goals are set in this strategy: to increase participation, enable greater equality, improve graduate employability, and promote innovative course design.

International Academic Mobility: Towards a Concentration of the Minds in Europe
[van der Wende, M.; Center for Studies in Higher Education; 2015]
www.cshe.berkeley.edu/publications
An analysis of global competition for, and therefore shifting patterns in, international academic mobility. One implication is that the comprehensive university itself may, in some contexts, cede to specialised universities that 'are likely to find change easier'.

International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices
[Helms, R. M.; American Council on Education; 2015]
www.acenet.edu
A valuable synthesis of various standards of good practice in HE partnerships; it identifies their common themes and some practical implications, while acknowledging the 'broader cultural and contextual considerations' which apply. Transparency, faculty/staff engagement, quality assurance, and strategic planning are therefore qualified with consideration of commitments to cultural awareness, access, and academic freedom.

Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)
[Ministry of Education Malaysia; 2015]
www.moe.gov.my
A national strategy which establishes the priorities to help 'create a higher education system that ranks among the world's leading education systems and that enables Malaysia to compete in the global economy'. It is based on five aspirations (access, quality, equity, unity, and efficiency) and ten shifts or goals – including graduate character, lifelong learning, financial sustainability, innovation, and global profile.

Managing Large Systems: a Comparative Analysis: Challenges and Opportunities for Large Higher Education Systems
[British Council India; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
A comparative study which analyses some of the characteristics of large HE systems (including India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the UK), and recommends how they can be best managed. Expansion should not compromise quality, curricula should be adapted to changing needs, and both inward and outward mobility be promoted ('fluidity of movement between institutions is central to a thriving academic environment').

NAFSA International Education Professional Competencies
[NAFSA; 2015]
www.nafsa.org/competencies
A resource listing the necessary competencies for success in international education, based on four areas: comprehensive internationalisation, education abroad, international education enrolment, and international student/scholar services.

Preparing for the Digital University: A Review of the History and Current State of Distance, Blended, and Online Learning
[Siemens, G.; Gasevic, D.; Dawson, S.; Contact North; 2015]
http://linkresearchlab.org/resources
A set of useful overview analyses of educational technology, ranging from distance education to MOOCs and learning technology. Each chapter in the detailed report incorporates a literature review to help inform developments in digital learning. The implications of such changing technology are profound, not simply in teaching and learning, but also 'for how learners are equipped for both employment and engagement'.

Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?
[UNESCO (Senior Experts Group); 2015]
www.unesco.org
A UNESCO-led policy statement, and prompt for further debate, on the role and purpose of education (i.e. 'going beyond narrow utilitarianism and economism').

Regional Conferences on Education Post 2015: Outcome Statements
[UNESCO; 2015]
www.unesco.org
Conference statements issued in advance of the 2015 World Education Forum, highlighting trends and concerns in regional higher education.

Student Success in Open, Distance and e-Learning
[Tait, A.; International Council for Open and Distance Education; 2015]
http://icde.typepad.com/student_success
A brief survey analysis of some of the problems faced by open, distance and e-learning students, with selected recommendations which could be introduced to help them – including a 'framework of practice', curricula relevance, and individual/personalised support.

Students in the Driving Seat: Young People's Voices on Higher Education in Africa
[British Council; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
A UK-commissioned report as part of a three-year study on the perceptions of students in Africa on their university experience and graduate prospects, the overall aim being to help improve HE quality. Universities, it suggests, need to adapt to a new reality in terms of graduate careers. Teaching should shift more towards critical thinking. Empowering students is also encouraged ('Despite the problems, students are unwilling to speak out about the problems their universities face'.)

The State of Higher Education
[OECD; 2015]
www.oecd.org/edu/imhe
The OECD's annual summary, focused on quality, business models, and research funding. Among its commissioned articles is one on the definitions of an international university – from partnerships to branch campuses to jointly developed institutions.

Transnational Education and Employability Development
[Mellors-Bourne, R.; Jones, E.; Woodfield, S.; Higher Education Academy; 2015]
www.heacademy.ac.uk
Research, including a literature review and programme/alumni information, on employability in relation to transnational education. The focus is on generic skills ('many of which are considered to be globally relevant') rather than job-specific training, with perspectives from employers and universities as well as students. ('Universities are not clearly articulating to students why and how international experience or internationalisation of the curriculum…develops transferable, employability skills.')

Transnational Education Data Collection Systems: Awareness, Analysis, Action
[McNamara, J.; Knight, J.; British Council; DAAD; 2015]
www.britishcouncil.org/education
A joint UK/German research project which reviews transnational education data collection in ten countries to raise awareness of the need for current and accurate data, and to help inform related guidelines.

Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities
[Sursock, A.; European University Association; 2015]
www.eua.be
A regular trends survey of over 450 institutions throughout Europe, focusing this year on the prioritisation of, and changes in, teaching and learning. Some 70% of institutions cited internationalisation as the 'most important development over the past five years'. In terms of e-learning, 'digital skills are becoming increasingly important in a wide variety of professions…requiring that higher education respond to this new need'.

Which Factors Influence the International Mobility of Research Scientists
[Appelt, S. et al; OECD; 2015]
www.oecd-ilibrary.org
A research paper which shows the influence of certain policies on science mobility – such as visa restrictions and economic or research conditions. The paper's observations support the view that mobility patterns are leading to a 'brain circulation' effect, rather than a 'brain drain'.

ACU membership update

The current membership total (as at 1 July 2015) is 539.

New members

We are delighted to welcome the following institutions into membership:

Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, India

Cyprus Institute of Marketing

ICFAI University, Nagaland, India

International American University, St Lucia

South Eastern Kenya University

University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Returning members

We are delighted to welcome the following institution back into membership:

University of South Australia

Executive Heads

Professor Neil Quigley has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Waikato**, New Zealand, as of 9 February 2015.

Professor Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University**, Bangladesh, as of 24 March 2015.

Professor Wim deVilliers

Professor Wim De Villiers has been appointed Rector and Vice-Chancellor of **Stellenbosch University**, South Africa, as of 1 April 2015.

Dr Prabir Kumar Bagchi has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **SRM University**, India, as of 1 April 2015.

Professor Siddharthavinayaka P Kane

Professor Siddharthavinayaka P Kane has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University**, India, as of 8 April 2015.

Professor Steve Chapman

Professor Steve Chapman has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Edith Cowan University**, Australia, as of 9 April 2015.

Professor Helen Marshall

Professor Helen Marshall has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Salford**, UK, as of 27 April 2015.

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of the West Indies**, as of 1 May 2015.

Peter Horrocks has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **Open University**, UK, as of 5 May 2015.

Dr S Manian has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Annamalai University**, India, as of 29 May 2015.

Dr H Vinod Bhat has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Manipal University**, India, as of 1 June 2015.

Dr Ramesh Lalwani has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **ICFAI University, Dehradun**, India, as of 12 June 2015.

Professor Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Chittagong**, Bangladesh, as of 15 June 2015.

Professor Tim Blackman has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Middlesex University**, UK, as of 1 July 2015.

Professor Paddy Nixon has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **Ulster University**, UK, as of 1 July 2015.

Dr David H Turpin

Dr David H Turpin has been appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Alberta**, Canada, as of 1 July 2015.

Dr Sanjay V Deshmukh has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Mumbai**, India, as of 7 July 2015.

Calendar

2015

August

15-22
ACU Commonwealth Summer School
Big data and the digital divide
Ontario, Canada
www.acu.ac.uk/summer-school

September

13-16
World Social Science Forum
Transforming global relations for a just world
Durban, South Africa
www.wssf2015.org

15-18
European Association for International Education
A wealth of nations
Glasgow, UK
www.eaie.org/home/conference/glasgow

October

5-8
Global Access to Postsecondary Education
Meeting the global challenge of building equitable knowledge economies
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
www.gaps-education.org

7-9
African Network for the Internationalization of Education
From the MDGs to SDGs: the contributions of international higher education
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
www.anienetwork.org

14-15
OECD, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Singapore
Higher education futures
Singapore
www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings

14-16
International Council for Open and Distance Education
Growing capacities for sustainable distance e-learning provision
Sun City, South Africa
www.unisa.ac.za/ICDE2015

28-30
International Association of Universities
Internationalization of higher education: moving beyond mobility
Siena, Italy
www.iau-aiu.net

November

1-3
Asia Pacific University-Community Engagement Network
Enhancement and innovations in university-community engagement
Gold Coast, Australia
http://ucec2015.com

3-5
Qatar Foundation: World Innovation Summit for Education
Investing for impact: quality education for sustainable and inclusive growth
Doha, Qatar
www.wise-qatar.org/summit

4-7
UNESCO World Science Forum
The enabling power of science
Budapest, Hungary
www.sciforum.hu

22-25
Canadian Bureau for International Education
Global engagement: crossing borders, connecting generations
Niagara Falls, Canada
www.cbie.ca/events/annualconference2015

27-29
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
The Commonwealth: adding global value
Malta
www.chogm2015.mt

December

1-3
Southern African Nordic Centre
What is the role of higher education institutions and north-south collaboration in shaping the UN development agenda post-2015?
Windhoek, Namibia
http://sanord.polytechnic.edu.na

3
ACU Annual General Meeting
London, UK
www.acu.ac.uk

9-11
Society for Research into Higher Education
Converging concepts in global higher education research: local, national, and international perspectives
Newport, UK
www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2015

2016

March

9-11
Universities Australia
Future sense: universities shaping the new era
Canberra, Australia
www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au

14
Commonwealth Day
www.thecommonwealth.org

April

7-8
European University Association
Bricks and clicks for Europe: building a successful digital campus
Galway, Ireland
www.eua.be/eua-events

June

14-17
ACU Gender Programme, in conjuction with the University of Waterloo, Canada
Missing and marginalized: ending the erasure of women's lives and experiences
Ontario, Canada
www.acu.ac.uk/calendar

July

25-29
ACU Conference of Executive Heads
Defining the responsible university: society, impact and growth
Accra, Ghana
www.acu.ac.uk/calendar

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

Who are we?

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is the world's first and oldest international university network, established in 1913.

A UK-registered charity, the ACU has over 500 member institutions in developed and developing countries across the Commonwealth. Drawing on the collective experience and expertise of our membership, the ACU seeks to address issues in international higher education through a range of projects and services.

The ACU administers scholarships, provides academic research and leadership on issues in the sector, and promotes inter-university cooperation and the sharing of good practice – helping universities serve their communities, now and into the future.

Our mission

To promote and support excellence in higher education for the benefit of individuals and societies throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

Our vision

Strengthening the quality of education and research that enables our member institutions to realise their potential, through building long-term international collaborations within the higher education sector.

Our values

The ACU shares the values of the Commonwealth and believes in the transformational nature of higher education: its power and potential to contribute to the cultural, economic, and social development of a nation.

Join us

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