

The Association  
of Commonwealth  
Universities

# Bulletin

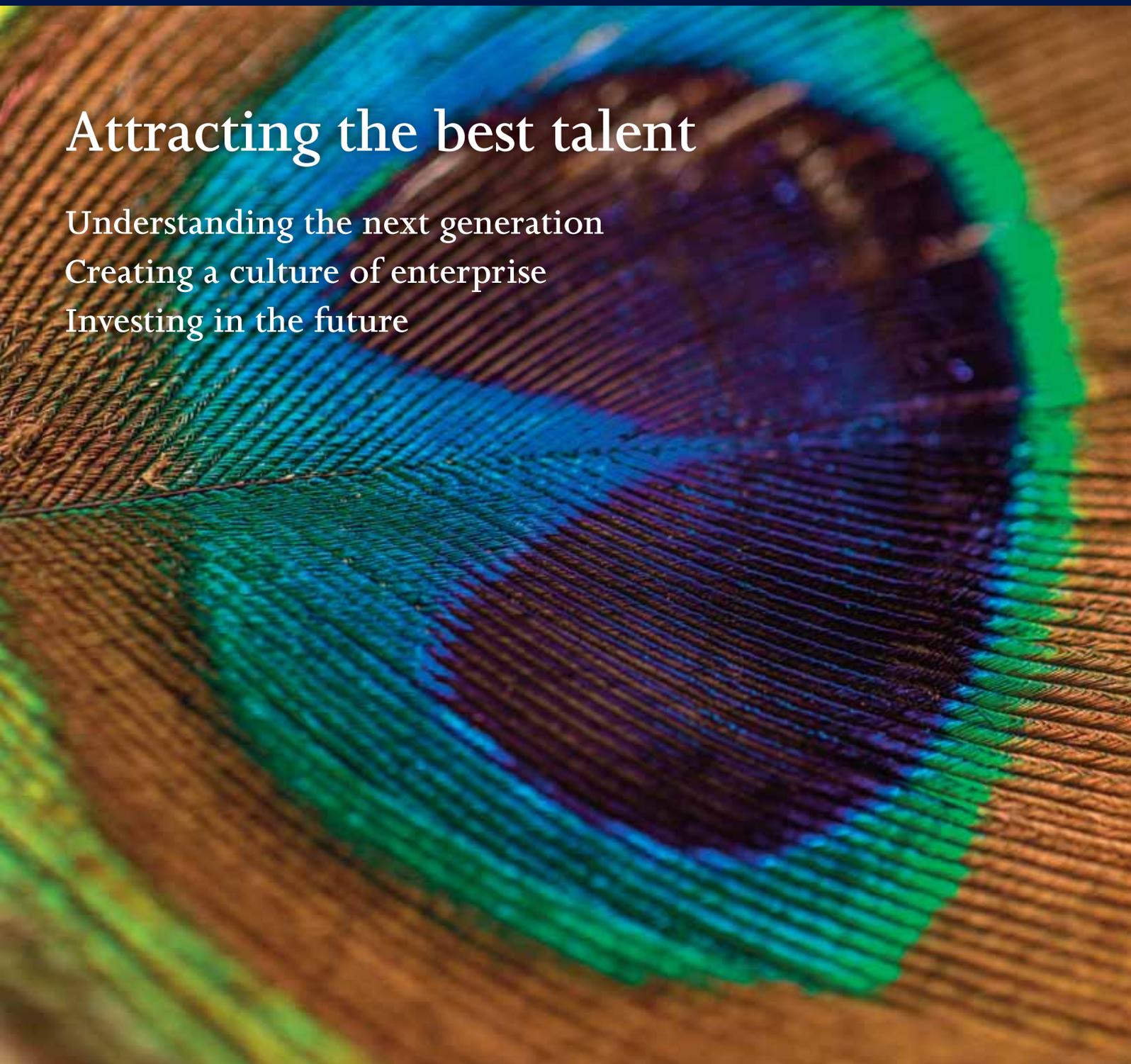
No 189 November 2016

## Attracting the best talent

Understanding the next generation

Creating a culture of enterprise

Investing in the future



# Bulletin

## Editorial team:

Natasha Lokhun, John Kirkland,  
Nick Mulhern, Ben Prasadam-Halls

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Chris Monk

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The Association of Commonwealth  
Universities  
Woburn House  
20-24 Tavistock Square  
London  
WC1H 9HF  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7380 6700  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7387 2655

[www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)

[bulletin@acu.ac.uk](mailto:bulletin@acu.ac.uk)

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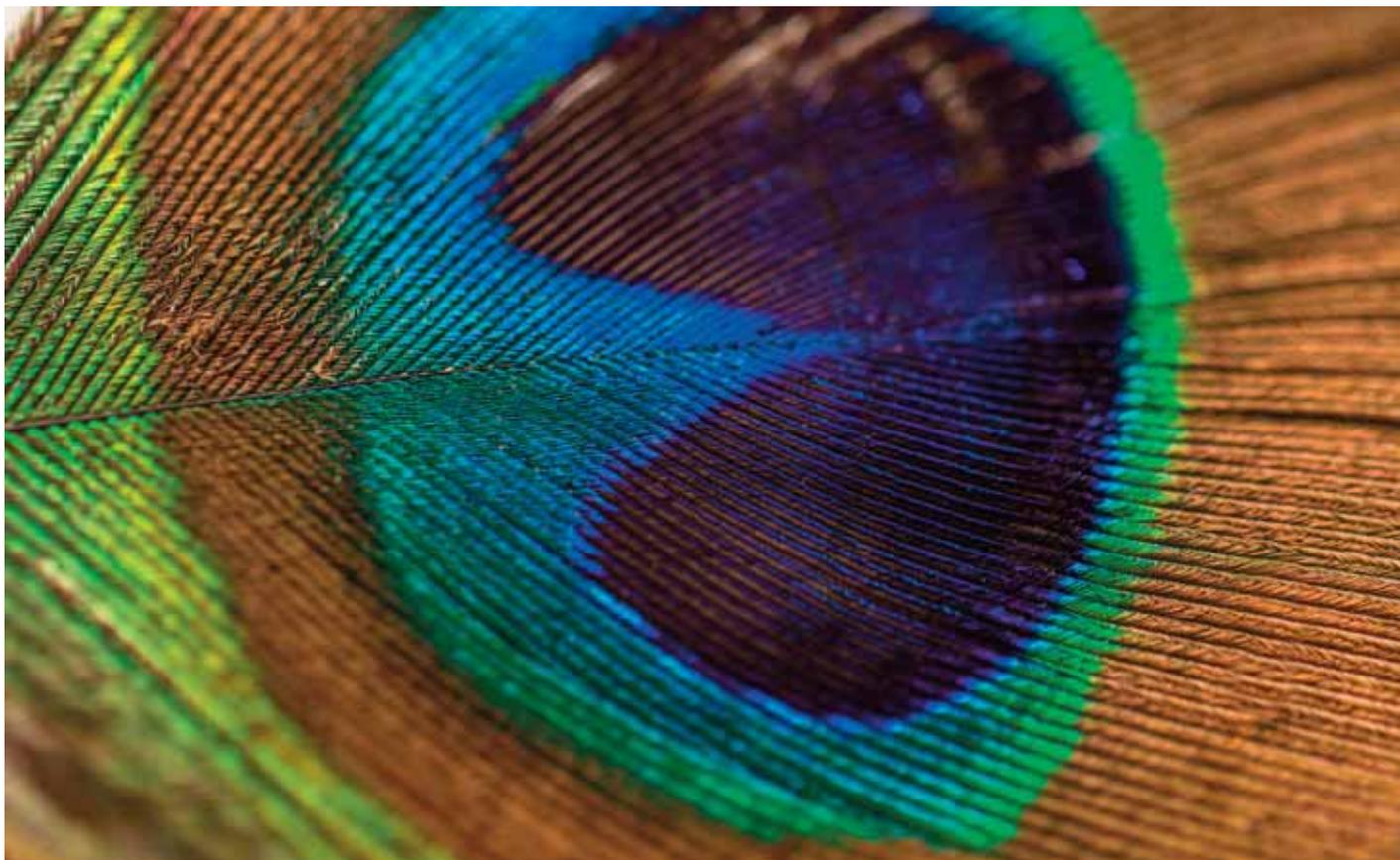
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# Editorial



**L**ord Ashby, who sadly died this year, wrote the 50th anniversary history of the ACU in 1963. In it, he commented on how little the agenda had changed over that period. I wonder what he would have made of our latest conference – ‘Defining the responsible university: society, impact and growth’ – held in Accra, Ghana, in July?

I was one of the final speakers, and surveying the room was quite illuminating. Even for the final session, most of the 250-plus delegates remained. Over 30 had just spoken in our final debate. No one seemed in an undue hurry to head for the airport – although my speech might have changed that.

The experience led me to think about the distinctive characteristics of the ACU. The academic world is not short of networks, even international ones. So what was exceptional about the flavour of our debate? Here we had some of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world engaging with some of the newest and least well resourced, on terms of total equality, and outside the confines of any specific project, reporting mechanisms, or performance indicators.

There was a healthy degree of altruism about the conference. But, in a highly competitive age, most delegates attended to actively

benefit their institutions – to find out more about the west African market and overseas campuses, promote their universities, meet their alumni, or develop collaborations.

The irony is that the more diversity that exists between universities, the more interdependent they are. Future growth in student numbers will be focused on the developing world – a point not lost on institutions in developed countries, anxious to recruit the best talent. Rapidly expanding systems need to find new ways to access global expertise. Funding bodies increasingly demand that international research collaborations are precisely that. And the issues that universities are asked to address cannot be resolved in one region alone.

Society expects more and more from universities, and the conference agenda responded to the challenge. Representatives from Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic universities debated how universities could promote tolerance and respect; African students commented on Canadian measures to preserve the quality of undergraduate education; vice-chancellors from South Africa and the West Indies debated the role of universities in addressing historical injustice; and government ministers, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the first female

Secretary-General of the Commonwealth helped to put it all into a broader context.

These discussions were complemented by highly practical sessions, with topics including how to make best use of a governing body, training for vice-chancellors, the development of early career staff, and how to use scholarships effectively. Findings from the ACU’s annual benchmarking exercise, ACU Measures, were explored, with a particular focus on the insights it offers into academic salaries and benefits in Commonwealth countries. We were also delighted to present certificates to early graduates of our newly-accredited training course for university administrators, as well as recognising the recipients of more than 100 ACU-funded awards in the past year.

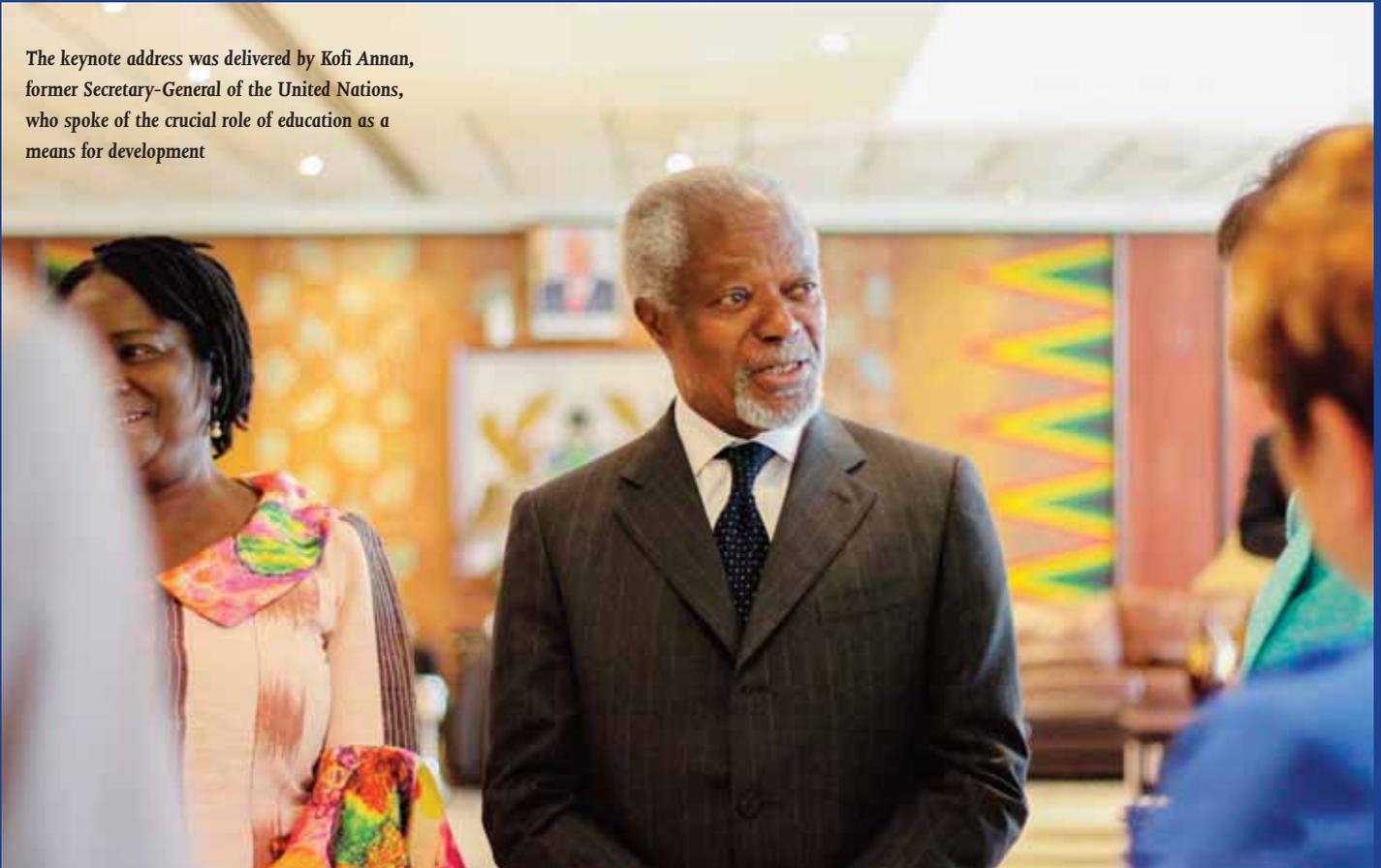
It was a pretty eclectic mix, and a stimulating one. I’m not sure how many of his ‘dreary perennials’ Lord Ashby would have found represented, but I do think he would have found the ACU, a further 53 years on, to be as relevant and stimulating as ever. ■

**Dr John Kirkland** is Deputy Secretary General of the ACU.

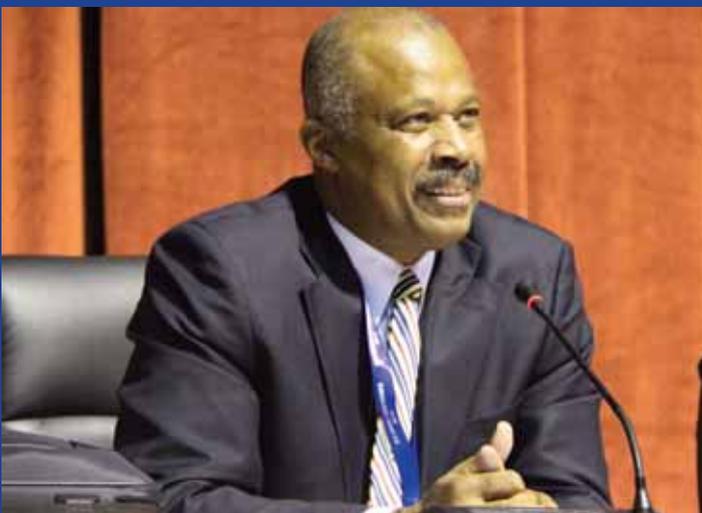
# ACU Conference of University Leaders 2016

In July 2016, the biennial ACU Conference of University Leaders took place in Accra, Ghana, bringing vice-chancellors and other university leaders from across the Commonwealth together to explore the theme 'Defining the responsible university: society, impact and growth'. The three-day event, which was held in partnership with Vice-Chancellors' Ghana, attracted more than 250 delegates from 35 countries.

*The keynote address was delivered by Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, who spoke of the crucial role of education as a means for development*



© Sena Kpodo



*In a session titled 'Addressing historical injustice: from Rhodes to reparations', two vice-chancellors – Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (left) and Professor Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa – explored the critical role of universities in achieving reparatory justice*



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Conference sessions covered a range of topics, including how universities can meet labour market needs, access and inclusivity, and visions of social responsibility



A ministerial panel explored the role of higher education from the perspective of policymakers (l-r: The Hon Dr Becky R K Ndjoze-Ojo MP, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Namibia; The Hon Professor Dr Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Minister for Education, Ghana; The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General)



The conference concluded with a grand debate on whether society expects too much of higher education. After hearing arguments from those supporting and opposing the motion, delegates were invited to comment in contributions of no longer than three minutes

# Generation Z: challenging the undergraduate curriculum

Following her session at the ACU Conference of University Leaders 2016, **Vianne Timmons** reflects on what we know about the next generation of students, and how universities can best meet their needs and expectations.

**W**hen I think about the next generation of students who are coming of age and entering universities around the world, I can't help thinking of the lyrics to a song by Cat Stevens that was part of the soundtrack of my own life 40 years ago: 'Oh very young, what will you leave us this time?'

It is hard to imagine all the possibilities that exist for this so-called Generation Z, and the many contributions they will make in the years to come. At the same time, in a world that is changing so rapidly and in so many ways, it is equally difficult to envision how we can provide the sort of undergraduate education that will help prepare them to make those contributions. As university administrators and professors, we should be reversing the question to ask: 'Oh very young, what will we leave you this time?' And, as we develop and refine curricula for the future, we need to pay close attention to the answers we get.

## Meet Generation Z...

A good first step for all of us is to learn as much as we can about – and from – our Generation Z students. That means doing some 'required reading', and I would recommend two resources as a starting point, both available online. One is the article 'Get ready for Generation Z' that appeared in Canada's *Maclean's* magazine in July 2014. The other is a presentation created by the American marketing firm Sparks and Honey, titled 'Meet Generation Z: Forget Everything You Learned About Millennials'.

So, what do these resources tell us about Generation Z? For one thing, they set an age parameter, defining Generation Z as those who were born in 1995 and the years following. That's the easy part. Then things get more complicated for people like me to process!

Generation Z students are not digitally connected like their predecessors; rather, they are digitally *innate*. They cannot remember a time when the internet did not exist for the simple reason that it has *always* existed in their lifetime. Google has been an integral part of

their lives essentially from day one, providing immediate – albeit not always correct – answers to anything they might ask.

As a result, these students have been brought up to question conventional wisdom and sources of information, and do not necessarily view their professors as experts. We don't instantly command their respect as our own teachers might have commanded ours in generations past. Instead, we have to earn Generation Z's respect.

Having a world of information quite literally at their fingertips for their entire lives has also allowed members of Generation Z to customise their own learning experience. They have had more opportunity than previous generations to pick and choose what they believe is relevant to their lives and interests. In many cases, this has resulted in their having shorter attention spans than ours, but also in their ability to multitask far better than we could ever imagine.

Their immersion in social media has also had an impact on their relations with others. Being in immediate – and sometimes constant! – contact with their peers has helped them develop a strong collaborative spirit that infuses their

**Dr Vianne Timmons at the ACU Conference of University Leaders 2016**



desire and ability to work with others.

Just as importantly, many members of Generation Z have a quality born not out of the digital age into which they were born, but rather out of the real-life experience of their parents and older siblings. Having witnessed the employment prospects of older family members evaporate during the worldwide recession of the past decade or so, many Generation Z students are incredibly industrious and entrepreneurial, and have a clear idea of the career paths they hope to follow – paths that often involve starting their own businesses rather than relying on others for their employment.

## Engaging with a new demographic

Although these qualities might not be universal to all members of the Generation Z demographic, they are common enough – and evident enough – that we as universities must pay increasing attention to them as we consider our curricula and teaching practices. How might we do this?

For one thing, we can rethink the way and degree to which we provide online education options for our students. At my own university, the University of Regina, the number of students taking online courses has increased dramatically in recent years, but not for the reason one might expect. The University of Regina is located in a large province with a substantial rural population, and online courses have traditionally been taken by distance education students. This is rapidly changing, with a growing proportion of students living within our city enrolling in online courses for reasons of flexibility and convenience. Students can customise their class schedules around work and other activities more than ever before, and they are taking increasing advantage of this opportunity. So should we.

We must also heed Generation Z's desire to customise their learning experiences in other ways. Altogether too often, our curricula are collections of courses rather than specific programmes of study. If we listen to our students – students who are increasingly goal



Delegates at Dr Timmons' presentation – 'Maintaining the integrity of the undergraduate curriculum in times of growth'

oriented and career focused – we will offer more coherent programmes that have more explicit paths to careers.

The University of Regina, for example, has created the UR Guarantee programme, an optional offering that runs alongside regular curricula to provide participating students with volunteer experience and career counselling. Ideally, such programmes would not run alongside a curriculum, but be embedded within it. This does not necessarily mean something as dramatic as completely revamping our programmes by eliminating some areas of study and adding entirely new ones. Instead, it can mean working creatively with what we have – packaging existing courses together in new ways and offering multi-disciplinary programmes that provide multiple pathways to a degree.

We must also pay special attention to the relevance – or perceived lack of relevance – of what we teach. Our students – and, in many cases, their parents – want a university education to be 'relevant in the real world', and we do them a disservice when we do not demonstrate that relevance. Making our curricula more relevant to our students does not necessitate 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater'. In almost all cases, the critical thinking skills and technical knowledge we impart already have the relevance that our students seek, but our students are not always fully aware that this is the case. By rethinking how we present our course material and

communicate our intended learning outcomes, we can help our students better understand how they can apply the knowledge they have gained in the real world.

Bringing the classroom and the 'real world' together also appeals to an emerging generation of undergraduates who have a strong interest in social activism. Experiential learning opportunities – such as service learning, internships, and cooperative education placements – add a practical element to courses, allow for the exploration of career options, and engage students by helping them make a difference in the world around them. We should not underestimate the importance of this to our students.

The naturally collaborative nature of Generation Z students also provides opportunities for us to enhance our learning environment. We should explore ways of allowing our students to work more meaningfully with each other, foster learning cohorts whenever possible, and try to incorporate the technologies students use in their daily lives into their learning experience.

We also need to remember that Generation Z students have grown up in a digital world without national borders. They are far more aware of the diversity that exists in the world than we ever were at their age, and providing them with international study opportunities is more important than ever. They are already global citizens by the time they reach university, and it is incumbent on us to build

on this to help develop the next generation of leaders in our world.

#### Asking the right questions

Of course, this is all easier said than done, and there is no 'one size fits all' solution for any university. But successful institutions will be those that develop their undergraduate curricula in collaboration with, rather than in isolation from, the next generation of students. We must balance what we know as educators with what members of Generation Z want to know as learners, and it is only by continually asking the right questions and carefully considering the answers that we can leave our students with the education they both want and deserve. ■

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**Dr Vianne Timmons** is President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Regina, Canada.

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# Transformational approaches: stimulating entrepreneurial activity in higher education

In his presentation to the ACU Conference of University Leaders 2016, **Paul Jones** argued the need for a transformational, holistic approach to the development of sustainable entrepreneurship. Here, he and **Gideon Maas** revisit the theme and highlight some of the ways in which universities can create a culture of enterprise.

**I**n recent years, there has been a struggle for sustained economic growth, with long periods of economic recession. Many national economies have experienced unstable financial systems and regional inequality in terms of the distribution of wealth. Moreover, many developed and developing economies are experiencing high levels of graduate unemployment, which has led many to question the value of a university education as a route to a progressive career path. It is clear that the university sector must play a leading role in enabling and supporting entrepreneurial behaviour.

In the UK, there has been significant government support for the encouragement of entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship education has been perceived as an enabler of self-employment career options and as contributing to the employability of all students. Provision of entrepreneurship education has grown significantly across the higher and further education sectors, with a wide selection of curricula ranging from entrepreneurship modules to full venture creation degrees. Typically, such curricula have resided within business schools.

To support these curricula, many UK universities have created entrepreneurship centres to act as focal points for their entrepreneurial activities. These centres are typically expected to provide support for enterprise start-up, develop a culture of entrepreneurship within the university, capture intellectual property, and generate research income and outputs. Such centres are often regarded as a driver and focal point for graduate business start-ups within their institutions.

## Challenges and lessons learned

In the last decade, many lessons have been learned in the UK regarding effective entrepreneurial education practice. Enabling students to undertake a business start-up is a

**A key determinant of success is buy-in from senior management, with entrepreneurship embedded within the strategic mission and cultural identity of the university.**

complex and multifaceted process requiring significant organisational support. Entrepreneurship centres having to secure their future on the basis of external grant generation is problematic and does not lead to their strategic development. Further, while entrepreneurship is a popular subject at modular level, take-up at award/degree level is less significant – most venture creation degrees typically support relatively low numbers of 20-30 students per cohort, with significant tutor support required.

There have been a number of examples of entrepreneurial centres closing, with universities unwilling to commit further expenditure based on initial returns. Where entrepreneurship activity has focused within business schools, this has often led to a 'silo mentality', with university departments reluctant to engage with another faculty. Business schools are often criticised for providing 'vanilla flavoured' curricula – in other words, you could study the same business programme at one university as you could at another. It is therefore important that any university entrepreneurship provision has an identity, is unique, and offers benefit to the community it serves.

A further criticism has been that graduate start-ups are focusing on non-growth service-

type businesses with limited longevity. This means that while many UK universities have posted impressive graduate start-up returns, the real impact – in terms of wealth creation and reducing unemployment – can be limited. A key issue here could be too great a focus on business students, rather than offering start-up opportunities to all university students. It is often the case that students undertaking a science, engineering, or arts-based degree may have more robust and economically viable business ideas. Hence, an entrepreneurship centre operating as a cross-university entity may enable more opportunities for the creation of businesses with real intellectual property value.

Entrepreneurship education unquestionably requires a different type of hybrid academic, able to teach with an experiential focus, engage with external businesses and business support stakeholders, and undertake academic research and income generation. A key determinant of success for any university is buy-in from senior management. The directorate level must financially invest in the concept of the entrepreneurial university, and embed it within their strategic mission and the cultural identity of the university. There are examples where UK universities have described themselves as 'entrepreneurial' or 'enterprising', without any meaningful underpinning in reality.

## Creating a culture of enterprise

Coventry University's International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship (ICTE) aims to maximise economic and societal impact in all its central activities – namely curriculum provision, academic research, and external projects. The centre has significant support from the strategic leadership of the university, and its activities represent a key element of the university's strategic mission.

In creating an institutional culture that supports enterprise and graduate



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entrepreneurship, Coventry University has found the following to be effective:

- University strategic leadership offering management and leadership of the enterprise agenda
- The provision of a focal point (such as the ICTE) for entrepreneurial activity across campus
- Research activity focused on the global economic environment – e.g. grand challenges
- A student entrepreneurial fund supported by strategic leadership
- Dean-level commitment from faculties
- Engagement from support services – e.g. careers centres/services
- Coordination between the commercial services division and academics to build and support business-facing activity and engagement
- Enterprise scholarships
- Employment of student entrepreneurs
- Pre and post incubation support for start-ups
- Supporting students with office space and mentoring
- Entrepreneurial curriculum provision – e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate, extracurricular, and entrepreneurship education
- Engagement with local and regional small business communities
- Engagement with international partners
- Engagement with alumni

#### Best practice for entrepreneurship education

So, in terms of best practice for entrepreneurship education, there are multiple considerations. First, there must be a clear institutional strategy,

with entrepreneurship forming part of the university’s mission and culture. An entrepreneurship centre must have an identity that differentiates it from its competitors, and must seek to contribute positively to the university, the local community, and to society, through curricula, external projects, business start-up support, and academic research. Entrepreneurship education provision must also have a distinct identity and service the needs of its student community, with a curriculum that is both innovative and experiential in its design. Entrepreneurial research should inform both practice and theory, and student start-ups must be effectively supported with pre and post incubation services.

The ongoing challenge for all university entrepreneurship centres is proving their value and contribution, given the lack of time and funds. Effective entrepreneurship provision remains a multifaceted and challenging undertaking. However, when undertaken effectively, it can offer enormous opportunities and long lasting benefits. ■

**Professor Paul Jones** is Deputy Director of the International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship at Coventry University, UK.

**Professor Gideon Maas** is Director of the International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship at Coventry University, UK.



The final day debate at the ACU Conference of University Leaders 2016

# Maintaining a global outlook for UK universities

**Mostafa Al-Mossallami** and **Dan Shah** reflect on some of the themes of the ACU's recent conference in Ghana, and highlight their relevance to universities in the UK.

One of the highlights of the recent ACU Conference of University Leaders was the warm Ghanaian hospitality that could be seen throughout – from the helpful volunteers at the venue, the jollof rice in the lunch breaks, to the escort through the famous Accra traffic en route to the evening reception. The event itself represented a diverse gathering of people from as far north as Canada, as far south as New Zealand, and as far east as Malaysia.

The conference theme, 'Defining the responsible university: society, impact and growth', felt particularly relevant at a time when the ramifications of the UK's vote to

leave the European Union will create significant challenges for universities. It was also a further reminder that our universities must continue to be global in their outlook, internationally networked, and an attractive destination for talented people from across the world. But perhaps most poignantly, it was a reminder that as the UK changes its relationship with one union of nations, the prominence of the Commonwealth – and the UK's place in it – should only grow stronger.

In her opening remarks, Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, underlined the immense potential and scale of opportunity on offer within the Commonwealth. She reminded delegates that

this voluntary association of 52 sovereign states represents nearly a third of the world's population, of which over 60% are under the age of 30. A very distinctive feature of the Commonwealth, and with it the ACU, is that it brings together universities that are very different in their geographic, economic, and cultural contexts. Yet there is also so much that our sectors share and have in common: academic heritage, language, culture, and sometimes bureaucracy!

## **Does society expect too much of universities?**

A running theme throughout the event, and most prominently featured in the conference debate on the final day, was the social role of

universities and whether society expects too much of them. It was fascinating to hear the range of views on offer from colleagues representing higher education internationally.

We argued that society should expect a lot from universities because of the vital role they play in lifting people out of poverty, tackling disease and climate change, and much more. These issues are crucial for any university and, as UK universities aspire to be global institutions, it is particularly important that they are mindful of their role and responsibility in addressing social and global challenges. Universities across the Commonwealth were founded with social missions and have therefore helped to shape their communities and the modern world, for better or worse. It continues to be part of the mission of all universities to make the world a better place.

There is also something to be said for expecting more from society – in terms of both resources and autonomy – in order to pursue this social mission for the greater good.

Part of the discussion over the course of the conference focused on the tension arising from universities' desire to maintain independence and determine their own priorities, while at the same time receiving state funding. This is an interesting debate, and one which is just as relevant to the UK as it is to other parts of the Commonwealth. The autonomy afforded to universities is what allows them to be active agents for positive economic and social change. Universities are uniquely placed to make a difference, and the advancement of health, wealth, and nutrition, both locally and globally, is a legitimate target – as well as a major academic challenge – for them to strive for, given the freedom and funding.

#### **Funding trends and opportunities**

We were among the speakers at a conference session focused on funding trends and opportunities. During this session, colleagues from funding bodies – including the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Swedish International Development Agency – set out their priorities and current opportunities. We discussed the changing policy environment in the UK, particularly following the Spending Review and launch of the UK government's new Aid Strategy in November 2015. In a joint statement launching the Aid Strategy, representatives from the Treasury and the UK Department for International Development

said: 'We believe this fundamental shift in how we use 0.7% of our national income will show there is no distinction between reducing poverty, tackling global challenges and serving our national interest – all are inextricably linked'. This has meant that new resources and opportunities for international collaboration have opened up for higher education and, as such, is a welcome shift in policy. It coheres with the core mission of universities discussed above, as well as allowing institutions in the UK to operate increasingly in countries where much of the future growth in international higher education lies.

These new resources include the expansion of the Newton Fund, an initiative to strengthen science and innovation partnerships between the UK and selected partner countries around the world. The fund has been expanded in scale and duration to GBP 150 million per annum until 2020-2021, with partner countries including India, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa. A further GBP 1.5 billion has been committed to a new Global Challenges Research Fund to 'ensure UK science takes the lead in addressing the problems faced by developing countries, whilst developing our ability to deliver cutting-edge research'.

Alongside these programmes is SPHEIR (Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform), a new GBP 45 million fund managed by Universities UK International, the British Council, and PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of the UK Department for International Development. SPHEIR is a competitive grant scheme to support the innovation and reform of higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The fund supports diverse, large-scale partnerships between organisations to improve the quality, relevance, accessibility, and affordability of higher education – and at

**UK universities must continue to be global in their outlook, internationally networked, and an attractive destination for talented people from across the world.**

a scale that a single organisation cannot. The first full call for proposals opened in October 2016, and more information is available at [www.spheir.org.uk](http://www.spheir.org.uk). These are just some of the opportunities available that will require universities from across the world to join together in addressing social and global challenges.

Looking to the future, there is reason to be hopeful that universities across the Commonwealth – individually and collectively – can work towards creating a positive change in our societies and communities, contributing to stable and prosperous nations. Higher education has an important role to play in the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and we hope that between now and the next ACU Conference of University Leaders, we will all start living up to the ambitious expectations set in Accra to secure a better future for the generations to come. ■

**Mostafa Al-Mossallami** is Development Policy and Partnerships Manager at Universities UK International.

**Dan Shah** is Assistant Director of Policy at Universities UK International.

# ACU Measures: a valuable benchmarking tool

The ACU's annual online benchmarking exercise – ACU Measures – is a unique opportunity for member institutions to benchmark their performance in a user-focused, non-competitive, and confidential way. Using data from the 2016 exercise, **Emma Falk** looks at how ACU Measures can be used to gain valuable insights into your university's policies and practice.

**U**niversities across the world are increasingly under pressure to demonstrate value for money and showcase their particular strengths to stakeholders. This is particularly salient in a time of growing internationalisation, as new branch campuses are developed and renewed strategies for the recruitment and retention of international staff and students are proposed. With the introduction of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universities may also be required to demonstrate their performance in particular areas, such as equality of access and gender equity.

ACU Measures allows university leaders and staff to gauge their performance in some of these areas. For example, users can explore the gender distribution across key management positions or the student population, remuneration packages offered to academic staff, or how university research aligns with the SDGs. The exercise collects data on salaries and benefits, research management, and gender, as well as basic institutional profile data, allowing comprehensive comparisons across given areas.

## Using the data

For participating institutions, the data can be used in a multitude of ways. It can be used to compare sources of income, for example, or the percentage of staff with PhDs. Participants can benchmark their results against averages across all institutions or comparison groups of their choice – such as a particular region or group of peers – or select from a list of popular variables. The online platform also allows users to generate customisable and individualised reports, tables, and charts – all downloadable – with the additional option of exporting the data for further analysis.

Importantly, ACU Measures only displays results in the aggregate, meaning members are able to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement in a non-competitive and confidential way. Further, the data provides the ACU with a fuller picture of its member institutions – their type and focus, as well as their areas of particular interest – which helps to inform and improve our membership activities and services.

In 2016, 190 institutions across 33 countries contributed their data, representing a third of ACU members and almost doubling the response rate for 2014. There was a particular increase in participation from universities in India, with four times as many institutions providing data. These increases in participation improve both the accuracy and relevance of the data – the more universities taking part, the better the benchmarking.

## Key findings for 2016

Of the institutions participating in 2016, the majority were public universities (81%). Over half of the participating institutions reported providing general or comprehensive programmes to their students, and almost a fifth identified as providing 'specialist' programmes (mainly science and technology or education). A third provided education in at least one language other than English.

As most of the participating institutions were public universities, the highest proportion of institutional income came from public funding (42%) and student fees (41.5%).

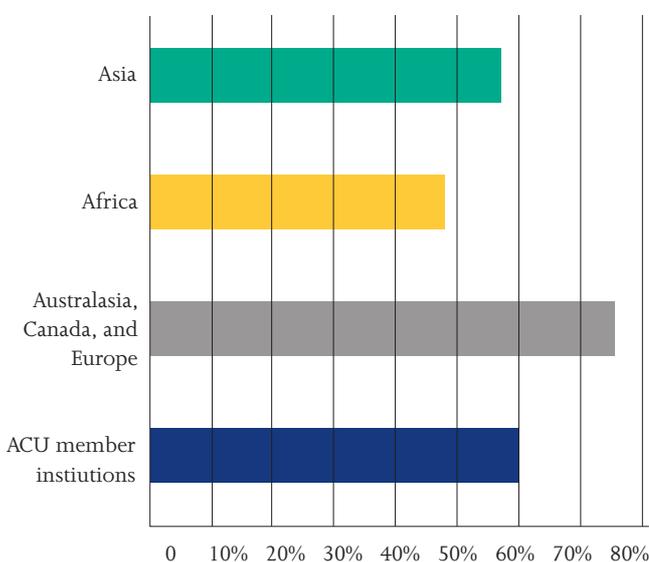


Figure 1: Academic staff with PhDs (%) – 2016

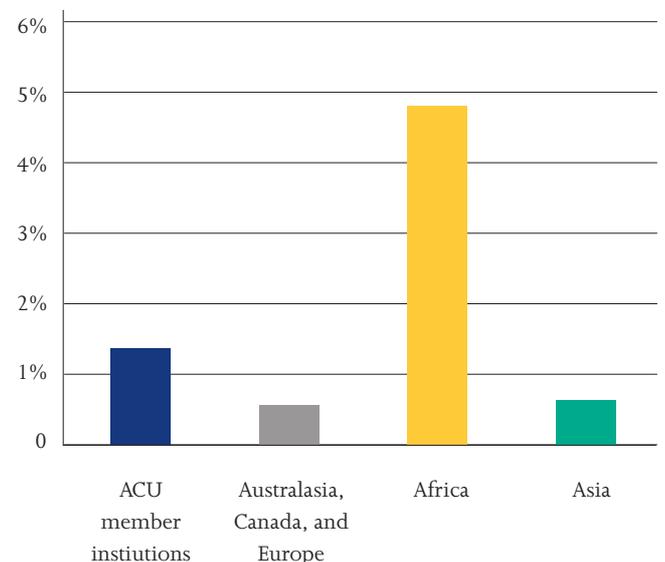


Figure 2: Mean average (%) institutional income from international funders – 2016

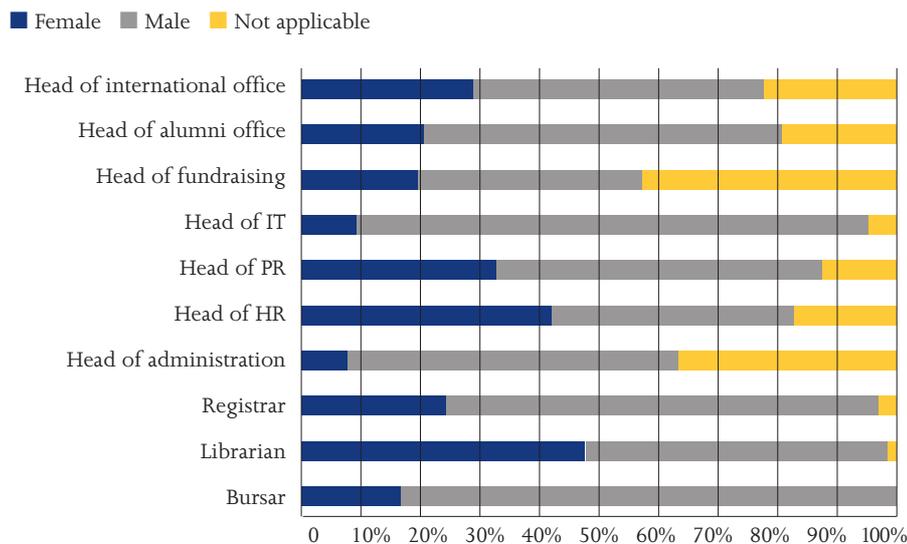


Figure 3: Gender distribution of key positions (%) – 2016

However, universities in Africa received a higher proportion of their income from international funders compared to other regions, at an average (mean) of 4.8% compared with 0.6% in Asia, Australasia, Europe, and Canada (Figure 2).

At the majority of participating universities, male staff held a higher proportion of senior management and academic positions, such as executive heads or heads of academic units. There were, however, regional differences: universities in Australasia, Canada and Europe, for example, had a higher average proportion of female executive heads (28%) compared to Africa and Asia, where the corresponding figures were 17% and 12% respectively. At the same time, over half of university staff in Australasia, Canada and

Europe were female, whereas over 60% of staff in African and Asian universities were male. There was also some gender differentiation in the types of key positions held, with data indicating that female staff were more likely to be librarians and heads of HR and PR, whereas male staff were more likely to be heads of IT, registrars, and bursars (Figure 3).

Most universities were, however, positive about their institutions' ability to achieve gender equity in the near future, and among those whose research focus is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, almost half prioritised achieving gender equality (Goal 5).

#### Academic salaries

For comparisons of salary scales and actual take-home salaries, ACU Measures incorpor-

ates data collected as part of the ACU's long-running analysis of international academic salaries and benefits, with data stretching back to 2004 for Australasia, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and the UK. This allows for the creation of time series that chart percentage changes from previous years. To account for variations in the cost of living across the diverse economies of the Commonwealth, salary scales and data are converted into USD using the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) conversion factor devised by the World Bank. This provides a more accurate picture of the comparative domestic values of salaries by taking into account their relative purchasing power.

Preliminary findings from 2016 suggest that despite a slight decrease since 2014, South African institutions offered the highest overall salaries – in terms of both scales and median salaries – at most academic job levels. The exception is entry level positions, for which Canadian and Australian institutions offered comparatively higher salaries.

Initial findings also suggest differences between average salary scales and actual average salaries received by staff. For the countries shown in Figure 4, overall average scale salaries were below the actual overall average (median) salaries. This difference was significantly larger for institutions in India and Malaysia; and while salary scales in these countries were relatively uniform, allowances on top of basic salaries led to a higher degree of differentiation and significantly higher actual salaries. For Malaysia, this also coincided with the largest rate of increase in overall median salaries compared with the countries shown in Figure 4, with overall salaries reportedly higher than in both New Zealand and the UK.

To see more results and compare your data with that of your peers or other groups of your choosing, we encourage you to explore the useful tools available through ACU Measures, such as tables, graphs, slide shows, and quick reports. For universities that have not yet taken part, we hope that you will participate in 2017. With more than 500 universities in ACU membership, there is great potential scope for this valuable exercise. ■

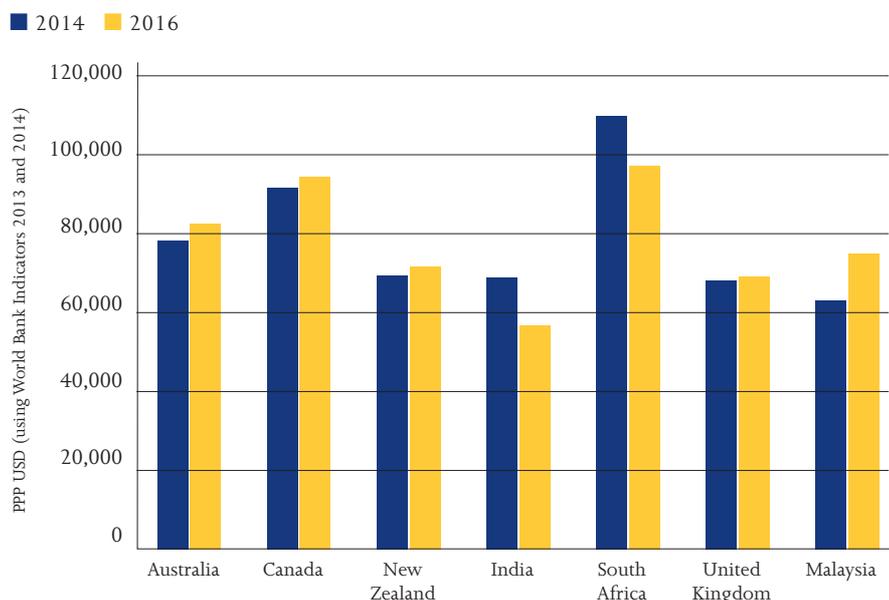


Figure 4: Overall median salary – 2014-2016

**Emma Falk** is Research Officer at the ACU.

ACU Measures opens for data collection on 1 February 2017. To take part or find out more, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/measures](http://www.acu.ac.uk/measures) or email [measures@acu.ac.uk](mailto:measures@acu.ac.uk)

# Noticeboard



In June 2016, **Publishers for Development (Pfd)** – a joint initiative between the ACU and INASP – held its annual conference in Oxford, UK, bringing major academic publishers together with researchers and librarians from the developing world to discuss how to ensure greater access to research.

Delegates explored a number of ideas, including enhancing internal relationships within organisations, increased partnerships with government and NGOs, and collaborative work with local publishers to improve the range of publishing options available. Those giving presentations included junior researchers from Ghana and Uganda and representatives from the Zimbabwean Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education.

For more information about Publishers for Development, as well as presentations from this year's event, visit [www.pubs-for-dev.info](http://www.pubs-for-dev.info)



Building on connections made at an ACU-led seminar in Malaysia last year, SOAS University of London, UK, recently hosted a group of colleagues from the University of Malaya to exchange expertise on **university research management**. The visit (pictured above) was the latest in a series of interactions arising from the 2015 seminar, at which representatives from 18 Malaysian universities, together with officials from the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education, explored international best practice in research management and its growth as a profession.



In August 2016, the annual **ACU Commonwealth Summer School** brought students from 14 Commonwealth countries to Kigali, Rwanda, to explore how universities should implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Hosted this year by the University of Rwanda, the week-long course included lectures from international and local speakers, site visits, skills training, group project work, and opportunities for networking. Those speaking included the Rwandan Minister for Gender and Family Promotion, Dr Diane Gashumba, and Dr Alex Coutinho, Executive Director of Partners in Health Rwanda. To find out more, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/summer-school](http://www.acu.ac.uk/summer-school)



Funding from the ACU enabled early career researchers from Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, and Nigeria to travel to Italy for a 12-day course in **research data science**. The CODATA-RDA School of Research Data, held in August 2016, covered a range of key topics and skills, including the principles and practice of open science and research data management and curation, the use of data platforms and infrastructures, and large-scale analysis. The following researchers were awarded bursaries to attend the event:

- David Adjei at the **University of Ghana**
- Olufunso Alowolodu at the **Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria**
- George Anderson at the **University of Botswana**
- Kingsley Egbo at the **Federal University of Technology Owerri, Nigeria**
- Joseph Kupolusi at the **Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria**
- Tshiamo Motshegwa at the **University of Botswana**
- Elias Mwakilama at the **University of Malawi**
- Olumide Odeyemi at **Ekiti State University, Nigeria**
- Olalekan Oni at **Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria**

Applications are invited for the **2017 Edward Boyle Medical Elective Bursaries**. These awards help medical scholars in the UK obtain valuable practical experience in a developing country of the Commonwealth. In 2016, the bursaries helped students to complete electives in India, Malawi, South Africa, and Zambia. Interested students should contact their medical dean or elective coordinator to check their institution's internal deadline for applications. Deans must submit their nominations to the ACU by 31 January 2017. For more information, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/edward-boyle](http://www.acu.ac.uk/edward-boyle)

Following our latest call for nominations, we are pleased to welcome three new executive heads to the **ACU Council**:

- **Engr Ahmed Farooq Bazai**, Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences, Pakistan
- **Professor Stuart Corbridge**, Durham University, UK
- **Professor Deep Saini**, University of Canberra, Australia

The Council has also approved a recommendation to increase the tenure of Council membership from two years to three years, in order to ensure continuity and maintain oversight of strategic decisions and priorities.

As the overall governing body of the ACU, the Council is collectively responsible for overseeing the ACU's activities and determining its future direction.



The latest talk in the **ACU Perspectives** speaker series sought to explore whether higher education is enabling students to fulfil their civic responsibilities as future professionals in a global society. Dr Helen Rawson – a research fellow and lecturer at Deakin University in Australia, and a registered nurse – focused particularly on the role of higher education in instilling cultural sensitivity in future healthcare professionals. To hear Dr Rawson's talk or speak at future events, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/perspectives](http://www.acu.ac.uk/perspectives)

# The DRUSSA programme: lessons in research uptake

The ACU-led Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRUSSA) programme sought to help universities in Africa improve their capacity to get key research evidence into use. As the programme draws to a close, **Karrine Sanders** and **Liam Roberts** reflect on its achievements and some of the key lessons learned.

**R**esearch evidence is vital to addressing the big challenges of our time. Whether it concerns agriculture policy in Uganda, education in Ghana, or conservation in Mauritius, research from African universities can play an important role in providing decision-makers with reliable evidence to make informed and effective decisions about policy and practice.

However, not all research evidence reaches those in a position to benefit from it – nor is it always used most effectively when it does. Getting research to where it can create impact is often constrained by poor institutional linkages with policymakers, limited public dissemination of university research, and weak interactions between research communities and the wider world.

Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRUSSA) sought to help tackle this problem through an innovative five-year programme involving 22 universities from across Africa. The programme was designed to support institutional change to improve research uptake, provide access to training for academics and research management staff, and engage external stakeholders with the potential of university research.

DRUSSA reached the end of its mandate in September 2016, with dozens of workshops held, numerous resources published, several hundred university staff and civil servants trained, and all partner universities demonstrating real reform in how they strategise and support research uptake activity. But what has the programme taught us about how future multilateral programmes can support sustainable institutional change to bring research into use?

## Informing change with evidence

From the very beginning of the programme, we recognised the need to practice what we preached. While our aim was to support universities in delivering research evidence to effect policy change, it was vital that we – as

programme leads – also collected and examined evidence to inform our own programme of activity, thus ensuring it was as useful as possible.

Our main approach to this was through an evaluative benchmarking process led by the ACU, which sought to find out what DRUSSA partner institutions were already doing to promote research uptake, and what changes they had in store. This useful process enabled institutions to identify, prioritise, and strengthen the organisational processes that support research uptake, share institutional knowledge, and develop better practices. Further rounds of benchmarking involved mapping institutional change in structures and processes over five years, and allowed participating institutions to continually learn from each other. At three biannual conferences, we convened survey respondents and university representatives to discuss the trends we saw in the survey evidence and to agree new programme activity to help support sustainable change.

At the same time as convening senior leaders, DRUSSA also provided access to PhD and Master's programmes in research uptake, led by the University of Stellenbosch's Centre for Research in Evaluation, Science and Technology – one of DRUSSA's lead partners. Another lead partner, Organisation Systems Design in Cape Town, South Africa, developed and delivered a mentoring programme for communicating research, involving a wide range of university staff including public relations managers, science communication managers, early career academics, and research managers. This upskilling of key university personnel was an essential component to ensuring that new organisational structures for research uptake were informed by the best-placed staff and by access to the latest thinking and current practice in the field.

## Working together – but in context

Working across 22 universities, each with different research portfolios and varying levels

of experience in research uptake, meant that DRUSSA needed to be flexible, responsive, and context-appropriate in what it sought to deliver. As well as providing overarching training, mentoring, and sharing of good practice, DRUSSA also worked individually with each university (or sometimes small groups of universities) to develop appropriate policies, strategies, and activities for managing research uptake that would meet the needs of their own particular stakeholders. This work involved campus visits and national or regional meetings, held either solely for DRUSSA institutions or as part of wider conferences.

In one distinct strand of activity focused in Ghana and Uganda, DRUSSA also sought to bring the academic and policymaking communities closer together by facilitating the secondment of academic fellows in ministries of government, training civil servants in assessing research evidence, and holding interactive symposia that provided academics and policymakers with a shared platform to discuss pressing policy issues in the context of locally produced and relevant research. We recognised that any support for those producing research also needs to be complemented by targeted support for its users, and tailored our offering where we could to reflect this.

## What lessons can we learn from DRUSSA?

Over the past five years, we've learned a great deal not only about how universities have come to embrace and embed research uptake practices but also how future research uptake capacity building programmes can be most effective. Some key lessons to take forward include:

- African universities are well placed to provide research evidence that can support their national development programmes, providing that policymakers actually see and apply this evidence. **Policymakers require more awareness of the availability of policy-relevant research evidence** and how it can be found, accessed, and used. When that awareness is raised, the



- programme found that the positive influence of senior officials can be very strong.
- More **partnerships between African academics and policymakers are vital**. Research is best developed not in academic isolation, but in ways that enable researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to work together – not just once the research is completed but also at the beginning of the process, when the research agenda is designed and set.
  - **Researchers increasingly view uptake as an integral part of the research cycle**, representing a significant shift in attitudes from the beginning of the project. This has stimulated demand from the academic community for ongoing training and support in research uptake methods and practice.
  - Through participation in policy symposia, **key players in academia and policy-making have worked together to access and use research evidence to contribute to key policy debates**. These symposia have led directly to evidence-based reviews of Uganda's national policies on energy, universal primary education, fertiliser-use, and agricultural value chain addition.
  - The symposia process also established and strengthened links between policymakers and researchers in Uganda and Ghana,

where academics from DRUSSA universities worked closely with government ministries over a 12-month period to develop internal capacity and share good practice in accessing and using research evidence. Over 100 government staff in six ministries were also trained in accessing, utilising, and applying research as a contribution to evidence-based policymaking. This training is being adopted by the Ugandan government and integrated into the professional development programmes offered to civil servants. This has been an encouraging development, and suggests there is a **significant ongoing interest among policymakers to draw increasingly on research evidence** to inform their work.

### Conclusions

Five years on, it's clear that the DRUSSA programme has met many of the challenges its partner universities have faced in bringing research into use. At the same time, it is not a case of 'mission accomplished'. There remains room – both for those producing and using research – to develop channels of engagement further and to cooperate in the research agenda-setting process.

Although the programme has ended, we have real confidence that this important work will continue. Not only because the demand

for research evidence is so clear, but also because we know that there are highly-skilled, highly-motivated research uptake leaders and champions in place across the DRUSSA network. As has been the case for the duration of the programme, these pioneers have demonstrated an innovative approach to research uptake processes and remain committed to improving them. DRUSSA was fortunate to work with amazing people in its partner universities, whose drive and innovation steered the way. Their ongoing commitment will be one of the programme's most significant legacies. ■

**Karrine Sanders** was DRUSSA Programme Manager at the ACU.

**Liam Roberts** is Programme Officer, Projects and Programmes, at the ACU.

To discover more tools and resources for effective research uptake management, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/drussa](http://www.acu.ac.uk/drussa)

# Comparing fear of crime across cultures

The ACU Titular Fellowships promote mobility among Commonwealth university staff and enable international collaboration on research projects. Here, **Derek Chadee** reports on his visit to the University of Manitoba in Canada, which enabled a cross-cultural analysis of fear of crime.

**M**y ACU Titular Fellowship at the University of Manitoba was nothing less than excitingly new and academically rewarding. My main objective was to compare fear of crime and criminal victimisation in Trinidad in the West Indies with that of Manitoba in Canada, with the wider aim of helping to develop national policy in Trinidad and Tobago to address underreported victimisation and a high fear of crime.

Fear of crime is a major issue in contemporary society and we construct our social world based on our perceptions. These perceptions can include potentially distorted conclusions about our own vulnerability to criminal victimisation. My research seeks to understand the dynamics of fear of crime and its idiosyncrasies within the Caribbean context.

The visit enabled me to access the Canadian General Social Survey database, which allowed

for cross-cultural comparison of key variables against a recently completed study of fear of crime in Trinidad. Specifically, the dataset allowed for comparison at a national level, as well as at a provincial level. Together with Professor Lori Wilkinson at the University of Manitoba, I am currently developing a model to further understand crime victimisation and fear of crime across the two societies. This will be the first Caribbean-Canadian cross-cultural study on fear of crime.

The beauty of a Titular Fellowship is that it gives you the time to retreat and structure your work. I was able to spend late evenings at the university library completing a manuscript on the risk of victimisation and the paradoxes of fear. These paradoxes suggest that groups which are least likely to be victimised are more likely to be fearful. I am currently preparing two other articles from research undertaken during my fellowship. The first focuses on catastrophising and fear of crime, and explores

how people may emphasise the negative outcomes of such events. The second paper questions the view that the media is a major contributor to fear of criminal victimisation.

I particularly enjoyed weekly meetings with Professor Lance Roberts at the Department of Sociology. Among other topics, we discussed the pursuit of further cross-cultural research between the University of the West Indies and the University of Manitoba, with a focus on cultural antecedents in explaining perceptions of criminal victimisation. We also made time to discuss a cross-cultural comparison of gambling, and conceptual frameworks were developed for the pursuit of both projects.

Laying the groundwork for future inter-university collaboration, I also held structured discussions with Professor Andrew Woolford, Chair of the Department of Sociology at Manitoba, to explore future student and staff exchanges, the possibility of seeking joint



Professor Derek Chadee

Image courtesy of the University of the West Indies

## ACU Titular Fellowships 2016

funding, reciprocal visits, and the development of a memorandum of understanding.

As well as giving presentations on the relationship between crime victimisation and fear of crime to faculty and students at the University of Manitoba, I also had the chance to visit the University of Winnipeg and present a paper titled 'Concern for close others: fear of criminal victimisation' at a criminology conference there. While at Winnipeg, I met with Professor Steven Kohm, Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, to discuss future staff exchange and collaboration between our two institutions, including the possibility of criminology staff from Winnipeg becoming external examiners for postgraduate students at my home institution. Also discussed were 'low or no' budget cross-cultural research projects, involving colleagues at both universities collecting data for each other, and collaborative research into vandalism across cultures. While in Winnipeg, I enjoyed tours of the city with colleagues, including a moving visit to the Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

The colleagues I met throughout my fellowship were exceedingly friendly and helpful, and keen to build bridges between the University of the West Indies and their institutions. I felt exceedingly refreshed – not only by all that was accomplished but also by the hope that the relationships built during my fellowship will form a structure for future collaborative links. I intend to maintain these collaborations and disseminate my work through a number of means, including inter-university webinars for staff and students at the University of the West Indies, University of Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg. These will offer a medium for the exchange of ideas and cross-cultural experiences through a virtual platform. I also plan to disseminate my research further through a book chapter, two other manuscripts, and presentations at international conferences.

My sincere thanks to the ACU for awarding me the fellowship, and to the University of Manitoba – particularly the Department of Sociology – for its warm spirit of camaraderie. ■

**Professor Derek Chadee** is Head of the Department of Behavioural Sciences at the University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

We are delighted to announce the winners of the 2016 ACU Titular Fellowships, to be held between October 2016 and September 2017. The fellowships are offered on an annual basis to staff at ACU member institutions and aim to support Commonwealth universities in developing their human resources through the interchange of people, knowledge, skills, and technologies. To find out more, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/titular-fellowships](http://www.acu.ac.uk/titular-fellowships)

**The George Weston Limited, Canada, Fellowship** is awarded in the areas of agriculture, forestry, and food science or technology, and this year has two recipients: Dr Jacob Agbenorhevi at **Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology**, Ghana, and Dr Sofie De Meyer at **Murdoch University**, Australia. Dr Agbenorhevi will visit the **University of Huddersfield**, UK, to continue his collaborative research into the okra plant. Okra remains an underutilised crop in much of Africa, despite the fact that okra pectins have many potential uses. Meanwhile, Dr De Meyer will visit the **University of Cape Town**, South Africa, to investigate the root nodule bacteria of lebeckia – a South African legume with great potential as an agricultural pasture plant – using soil analysis to better understand its survival.

**The Gordon and Jean Southam Fellowship** has been awarded to Professor Heather Lotherington at **York University**, Canada, and Dr Anna Pienkowski at **MacEwan University**, Canada. Professor Lotherington will visit **Curtin University**, Australia, to explore a specific example of multimodality in education – mobile language learning for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Meanwhile, Dr Pienkowski will visit **Bangor University**, UK, to gain an in-depth understanding of sclerochronology, the marine counterpart to the study of tree rings. Sclerochronology focuses on marine organisms that grow their hard parts in discrete bands, each layer recording the conditions prevailing during their growth.

**The Martha Farrell Memorial Fellowship** was launched earlier in 2016 and is specifically aimed at combating sexual harassment on campus. The first of these new fellowships has been awarded to Mohammad Mojibur Rahman at the **University of Dhaka**, Bangladesh. Mr Rahman will receive training and support from the **Martha Farrell Foundation** in India to instigate an effective anti-sexual harassment initiative at his home institution.

**The Swansea University Fulton Fellowship** has been awarded to Dr George Okwadha at the **Technical University of Kenya**. Dr Okwadha's fellowship at **Swansea University**, UK, will explore the use of alternative cementitious materials for the concrete industry, ultimately aiming to promote the use of sustainable materials that will lower the cost of cement in Kenya and reduce the environmental degradation associated with its manufacture.

**The University of Manitoba Fellowship** has been awarded to Dr Sujata Dash at **North Orissa University**, India, and Professor JA Gareth Williams at **Durham University**, UK. Dr Dash will undertake research into high-level algorithmic frameworks for big data analytics, which ultimately aim to provide a better understanding of clinical data used in cancer research. Dr Williams' research will look at selected platinum and copper-containing molecules that have relevance to contemporary applications such as low-energy lighting and solar energy conversion. Both fellowships will take place at the **University of Manitoba**, Canada.

**The University of Oxford Fellowship** has been awarded to Dr Shadreck Chirikure at the **University of Cape Town**, South Africa. Dr Chirikure's fellowship at the **University of Oxford**, UK, will develop his existing work on archaeological material analysis, with a focus on the metallurgy of iron age crucibles recovered from the ruined city of Great Zimbabwe.

**The Wighton Titular Fellowship in Engineering** has this year been awarded to Dr Sobia Baig at **COMSATS Institute of Information Technology**, Pakistan. Dr Baig's fellowship at **Lancaster University**, UK, will look at powerline communication and its utilisation in smart grid communications, with the ultimate aim of improving energy conservation measures in Pakistan.

# Investing in the future: higher education and the rate of return

How is the rate of return to investment calculated for higher education, and to what extent does it vary internationally and over time? **Harry A Patrinos** discusses.

**H**igh economic returns to higher education signal that university is a good investment – especially for the student and his or her family. Added to that are its social benefits – one can argue that higher education has social returns as well. Financing higher education, however, requires a sustainable financial model, which in most countries entails smart cost recovery (via, for example, income-contingent student finance) and targeted support – which means guidance and information, not just money – for those particularly disadvantaged.

How do we know that higher education might be a justified expenditure on the part of students, their families, and society? Typically, we rely on a cost-benefit analysis that gives us an estimate of the rate of return to investment in higher education. This rate of return equals the value of a graduate's lifetime earnings to the net present value of the costs of education. An economically justified investment has a positive rate of return that is higher than the alternative. For the prospective student, assessing costs and benefits means investing until the rate of return exceeds the private discount rate (the cost of borrowing and an allowance for risk). The costs are the student's forgone earnings while studying, plus any fees or incidental expenses incurred while

attending classes. The benefits amount to how much extra money a graduate earns compared to someone with less education. In the case of higher education, the comparison is made with secondary school leavers.

The social rate of return considers society's spending on higher education on the cost side – for example, money spent on renting buildings and professorial salaries – and the benefits to society beyond wages. Ideally, the social benefits should include the non-monetary benefits of education, such as improved health and nutrition practices and intergenerational wellbeing. Given the scant empirical evidence on the social benefits, however, estimates of the social rate of return are typically based on observable monetary costs and labour market earnings.

## Recent estimates

Attempts to estimate the economic rate of return to investment in education stretch back over half a century. Yet, it is only relatively recently that we have had such estimates for the vast majority of countries and regions. Our latest estimates of comparable private returns to schooling cover 140 economies, and show significant wage increases associated with investment in schooling. The global average private rate of return to schooling is 10% per year of schooling. The returns are highest in

sub-Saharan Africa, and are globally higher for women than for men.

The private returns to investment in higher education are now higher than the returns to primary schooling. While returns to primary schooling are just above 10% and returns to secondary schooling are 7%, the private rate of return to higher education is 15%. It is highest in sub-Saharan Africa at 21%, and ranges between 10% (Europe and central Asia) and 17% (south Asia) across the rest of the world.

In high income countries, the economic returns to higher education range from 6% in Estonia to 15% in Portugal. In the five largest European economies – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK – returns range from a high of 14% in Germany to a low of 7% in Italy. The UK is exactly at the EU average of 11%. All estimates of higher education returns are higher than the alternative. For example, returns to higher education are higher than returns to investments such as housing, treasury bills, and government bonds.

## How have the returns changed over time?

Over the past two decades, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of university students and graduates worldwide. Other things being equal, this should have led to a decrease in the rate of return to investment

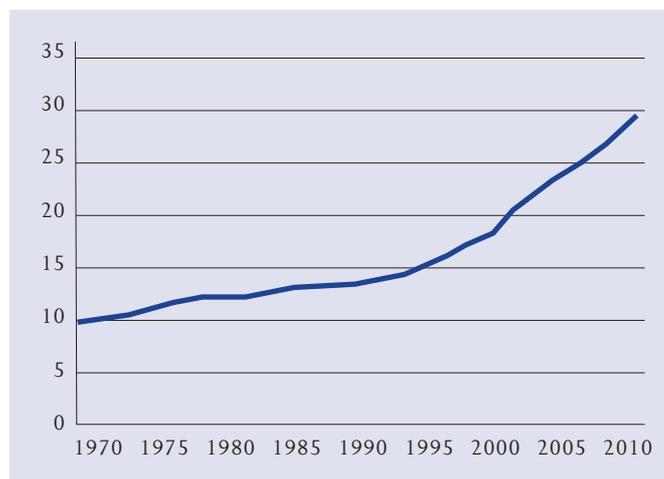


Figure 1: Gross enrolment ratio, higher education, global (%)

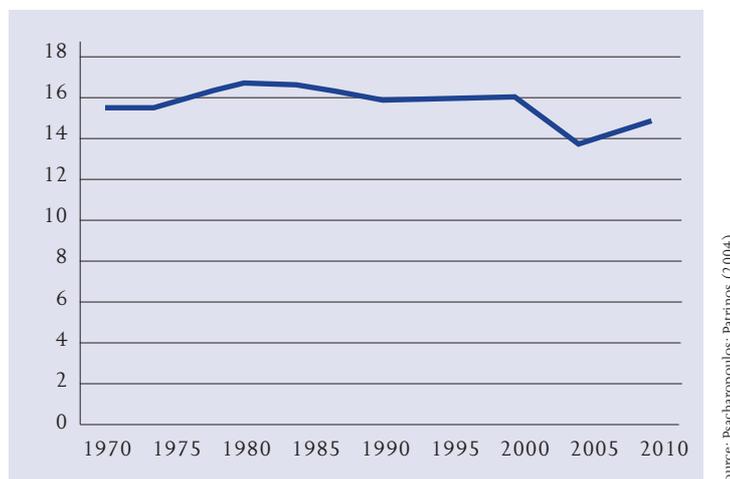


Figure 2: Returns to investment in higher education, global (%)

– as would happen if supply outpaced demand. However, while the rate of enrolment in higher education has grown significantly over time (Figure 1), the returns have remained high over the same period (Figure 2). This suggests that global demand for skills has kept the economic returns to education high. It is thus safe to say that education is a good investment globally, even considering only private monetary gain.

As Figure 2 shows, the returns to investment in higher education have remained remarkably stable over a long period of time. Between 1970 and 2010, they went from 16% to 15%. In between, they ranged from a high of 17% to a low of 14%, but never fell below this. There is variation between and within countries, and by discipline, faculty and school, of course. But overall, the returns are very stable.

Returns to higher education may also vary over time within countries, but usually not very much. A few country examples – those for which we have comparable estimates over a relatively long period of time – are instructive. Looking at the Americas, for example, the returns in Argentina did not change very much between 1992 and 2012 – from 13% to 12% – and ranged between 10% and 17% in that time (which included two significant economic downturns). During the same period, the returns changed from 17% to 14% in Bolivia, and from 20% to 17% in Brazil. In Mexico, they were 21% in 1992, and remained at that level in 2012, with little fluctuation in-between. There was practically no change at all in Canada.

Yet, there are episodes of change. In the Americas, the returns went up from the 1990s to the early 2000s, then declined slightly, before ending up just about where they were two decades before. In Australia, the returns went up over the course of the 2000s, from 12% in 2001 to 15% in 2010. A more significant increase has been seen in India since the 1980s, with returns increasing from 11% in 1983 to 21% by 2009, coinciding with rapid economic growth and the opening of the economy. However, perhaps no other country has seen such an impressive rise as South Africa. In 2000, the returns to higher education in South Africa were already high at 29%. They stayed high through the decade, only to rise to 36% in 2009, and then again to 40% in 2011. This is an unusual increase and a sustained high level.



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In each country, the returns fluctuate due to intertemporal changes in the economy and changes in prices. In most places, however, they have remained quite stable and tend to vacillate within a narrow range.

#### What are the implications?

For the individual and his or her family, the good news is that the returns to investment in higher education remain high. Higher education is likely to be a good investment for people to consider. But decisions on investing should be based on full information about the costs and benefits for each individual student, as well as full information on the course of

study. Enrolling in higher education will not lead to higher earnings if the student is in the wrong school, faculty, or discipline for someone of their particular interests and capabilities.

For society, better-educated citizens and workers are more productive and impart social benefits. However, before committing to increases in funding, governments would be wise to plant incentives for the efficient and equitable use of funds. This might mean fees near the social cost of higher education – i.e. charging students the full cost of their education. If opportunities are expanded so that more students can enter higher education, more student finance options will need to be provided. Given the experience with traditional student loans, options to tap future earnings (such as income-contingent loans and human capital contracts) might be considered. ■

**While the rate of enrolment in higher education has grown significantly over time, global demand for skills has kept the economic returns to education high.**

Harry A Patrinos is Practice Manager, Education, at the World Bank.

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# Australia-Africa partnerships for sustainable futures

A recent conference brought representatives from academia, government, and business together to discuss research partnerships between Australia and Africa, with particular focus on the practical implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. So what does the future look like for inter-university collaboration? **John Kirkland** reports.

**U**niversity networks have never been more numerous – or more necessary. As universities increasingly need to demonstrate that they are global or internationally facing, networks provide a cost-effective way of increasing contacts, gathering intelligence, and raising one's institutional profile.

The ACU is one of the oldest such networks. The Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN), established exactly a century later, one of the newest. Its fourth annual conference, held in Perth, Australia, in September 2016, was an opportunity to take stock of the achievements to date, and reflect on the broader issue of what makes inter-university collaboration successful.

## Strategic and selective partnerships

Targeting and focus are critical to forming successful partnerships. Now, more than ever, universities need to be disciplined in selecting their alliances. For many, this is a question of prestige. Universities increasingly select partners with a suitable rankings profile. It is also a question of time – however great their global aspirations, there is a limit to the number of collaborations that can be maintained.

20 years ago, the ACU was one of relatively few international organisations to take an interest in African universities. At that time, universities across much of the continent were considered to be in hopeless decline, excluded from the priorities of many international development agencies – although some received slightly better treatment from their debt-strapped domestic governments. South African universities, which might have been expected to lead the fightback, were themselves emerging from a period of isolation imposed for other reasons.

That situation has now changed. Now, both Africa and its universities are seen as critical – from both a development and a market perspective. Universities in developed countries have woken up to the fact that virtually all growth in higher education participation rates over the next 20 years will come from

developing countries. Africa will be a major player in this.

If any reminder of this were needed, it came from Grame Barty, Executive Director of International Operations at the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (AUSTRADE). Barty reminded delegates that Africa will be a market of four billion people by the end of the century – many of them young. Many African countries have a median age of less than 20. For almost all of the others, it is under 30. Moreover, the market is accessible – with smartphone ownership and internet penetration soaring across the continent.

## Playing a proactive role

Speakers at the conference emphasised the key role that universities could play in accessing market opportunities in Africa. The same is true for the challenge of developing relationships. However, if universities in developed and developing countries want to forge sustainable relationships, they will have to do the job themselves. Governments – not just in Australia but throughout the world – tend to see inter-university collaboration in terms of short-term projects, rather than long-term relations. Even those that do have a long-term vision lack the capacity to carry it through. Governments cannot commit their successors; universities are better placed to.

The Australian government sees its role as a catalyst, rather than a major funder, of such links, and the conference was well supported

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by relevant departments and high commissioners. There were mentions of over AUD 5 million allocated to African projects last year through Australia's Direct Aid Programme, and of several hundred awards for scholarships and short courses available through Australia Awards. The government has also supported the AAUN itself, and already renewed that support for next year.

Yet the wider picture shows a more ambiguous approach to Africa. After expanding support – including the announcement of a new programme of university research partnerships at the start of the decade – support for the region is retracting. Australia's new aid framework anticipates a 'sharper geographical focus' on the Indo-Pacific region, particularly southeast Asia and the Pacific ('our immediate region'), while there is to be more emphasis on private sector development. This will mean less emphasis on Africa, where Australian aid is not starting from a high base. Not an ungenerous donor globally, OECD figures show that just 10% of Australian aid went to Africa between 2010 and 2013. In absolute cash terms, the figure was below that of Italy and Ireland.

## The need for focus

The increasing attention now given to African universities means that they, too, need to be discriminating. 20 years ago, universities in Africa tended to grasp almost any funding or collaborative opportunity. Today, leading African institutions are inundated with requests, whether at an institutional level or through the expanding range of projects, networks, and partnerships at discipline level. African universities clearly need to be willing to say no to opportunities that have little strategic value, relevance, or quality.

The AAUN recognises the need for selectivity, targeting its activities on areas of expertise where the two regions have strong commonalities – mining, food security, and public health, for example. Meanwhile, its Partnership and Research Development Fund provides seed funding for specific research



Delegates at the 2016 conference of the Australia Africa Universities Network

collaborations between its member institutions, with previous projects exploring the potential role of edible insects in mother and child nutrition, safety monitoring in poultry processing, and the health rights of mining communities.

### Sustainable relationships

While such research collaborations are important, relationships need to extend beyond these. Several participants outlined institutional, as well as research, agendas. Professor Idowu Olayinka, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, outlined an agenda of needs for African universities, including quality and graduate employability. Professor Peter Mbithi, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Kenya, prioritised five areas: the development of literacy programmes; the development of partnerships between universities, industry, and government; outreach activities; sustainable research; and ensuring more sustainable physical operations within universities.

These and other speakers related their agendas to the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Having recognised higher education for the first time, and claiming the support of governments worldwide, the SDGs could provide a natural focus for future

collaboration. Universities need to be at the forefront of the drive to achieve the Goals. Not only that, the importance of their contribution needs to be widely recognised. Demonstrating the critical role of higher education in meeting the SDGs could be of wider importance in convincing governments of the role that universities play more generally.

But the SDGs bring their own problems. While they represent an improvement on their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals, which were completely silent on the role of universities, the SDGs' explicit recognition of higher education is limited to access and teaching – in particular the need for equal access and provision of scholarships. They are silent on research, although university-generated ideas will be critical in meeting a number of the other targets.

Moreover, they are ill defined, overlap with other international objectives, and are difficult to measure. A report by the International Council for Science, quoted to the conference by Professor Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, South Africa, found that only 29% of the 169 targets which accompany the SDGs were well defined and based on the latest scientific evidence, 54% needed more work, and 17% were seriously underdeveloped. Making the methodology

more robust could itself be a topic for university expertise.

For all these criticisms, however, the SDGs are an opportunity. Just as they focus attention on key issues, universities can use them to drive their contribution to solving world problems. Partnerships can increase that contribution, and networks such as the ACU can help to highlight it, providing a platform to bring together and promote the role of universities globally. By 2030, the aim should be not only to have contributed to meeting the SDGs, but also for future agendas to include the development of university research capacity as a goal in itself.

Realising this potential will require commitment and a desire to work together, neither of which can be guaranteed at a time when universities already have full agendas. However, networks such as the ACU and the AAUN can play an important role in encouraging such collaborations, and in making sure that the world knows about their impact. ■

**Dr John Kirkland** is Deputy Secretary General of the ACU.

# Recent publications

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

**Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice: Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity**  
[UNESCO; Council for Higher Education Accreditation; 2016]

[www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)

Guidelines on combating corruption in higher education, with examples of effective preventative action at different levels (from students to government). The statement has an international perspective, not only in covering issues widely relevant to higher education and acknowledging how 'attitudes to the morality of particular practices' vary, but also because of significant international student mobility.



**Broadening Horizons 2016: Maximising the Impact of Study Abroad**

[British Council; 2016]

[www.britishcouncil.org/ihe](http://www.britishcouncil.org/ihe)

The fourth such study analyses the effect of study abroad on returning UK students, including career expectations and engagement.

## CGHE Working Papers

[Centre for Global Higher Education; 2016]

[www.researchcghe.org/publications](http://www.researchcghe.org/publications)

A new series from the UK's Centre for Global Higher Education, including:

**The Entry and Experience of Private Providers of Higher Education in Six Countries**

[Hunt, S.; Callender, C.; Parry, G.]

**Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Disciplines 2016: Engineering**

[Cai Liu, N.]

**The Quest for World-Class University Status: Implications for Sustainable Development of Asian Universities**

[Ho Mok, K.]

## Education at a Glance

[OECD; 2016]

[www.oecd.org/edu](http://www.oecd.org/edu)

The latest OECD statistical trends analysis includes international student mobility patterns. Students from Asia now represent 53% of international students enrolled in OECD countries.



**Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Academic Linkages**

[Banks, C. et al; Institute of International Education;

German Academic Exchange Service; 2016]

[www.iie.org/research-and-publications](http://www.iie.org/research-and-publications)

Trends and case studies in developing higher education partnerships.



**Higher Education in Southeast Asia and Beyond**

[The HEAD Foundation;

Center for International

Higher Education]

[www.headfoundation.org](http://www.headfoundation.org)

A new, biannual newsletter looking at trends and developments in higher education for the region. One of its aims is to build a 'network of ASEAN and Asian higher education scholars and practitioners'.

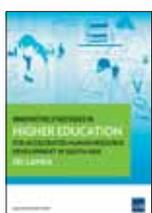
## How Global Competition is Changing Universities: Three Theoretical Perspectives

[Chirikov, I.; Center for Studies in Higher

Education; 2016]

[www.cshe.berkeley.edu/publications](http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/publications)

A paper considering competition in relation to the higher education market (efficiency), between states (status), and as organisations (rationalisation). In practice, 'various elements from each model' exist together.



**Innovative Strategies in Higher Education for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia: Sri Lanka**

[Asian Development Bank; 2016]

[www.adb.org/publications](http://www.adb.org/publications)

One of a series of studies of higher and vocational education in south Asia to be published by the Asian Development Bank. It usefully contextualises Sri Lanka's higher education system, the issues and priorities it has adopted. Internationalisation is one of the issues it suggests should be addressed. ('Linkages with foreign universities have emerged as an important development among public universities in Sri Lanka.')

## International Education in South Australia

[Deloitte Access Economics; 2016]

[www.deloitteaccesseconomics.com.au](http://www.deloitteaccesseconomics.com.au)

A report seeking to estimate the current and potential contribution of international education and training to south Australia. In 2015, it was considered 'a significant contributor to the state economy'.

## Internationally Mobile Students and their Post-Graduation Migratory Behaviour

[Weisser, R.; OECD; 2016]

[www.oecd-ilibrary.org](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org)

An OECD paper which analyses the distribution of international students in the EU, retention rates, and the motivation to stay, with policy recommendations to promote the EU's appeal as a destination for international students.



## Learning Abroad - research reports

[International Education

Association of Australia;

Universities Australia; 2016]

[www.ieaa.org.au/](http://www.ieaa.org.au/)

learning-abroad

Commissioned by Universities Australia as part of a 'comprehensive research project on learning abroad', a number of recent reports examine comparative study abroad trends and policies (including Canada and the UK), funding schemes and support, and the benefits - both individual and social - of learning abroad. International research is referenced, it being acknowledged that for this area of work 'the evidence base in Australia is currently very small'. Titles include:

## International Trends in Learning Abroad

[Gribble, C.; Tran, L.]



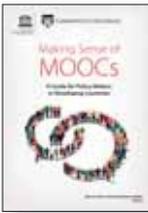
## Learning Abroad at Australian Universities: The Current Environment

[Harrison, L.; Potts, D.]

**Outcomes of Learning**

**Abroad Programs**

[Potts, D.]



### **Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy Makers in Developing Countries**

[Patru, M.; Bilaji, V.; Commonwealth of Learning; UNESCO; 2016]  
<http://oasis.col.org>

A study of massive open online courses (MOOCs) – their benefits and limitations for developing countries. It includes ideas for re-use and collaboration, concluding with discussions of cost and relevant business models.

### **Monitoring Cross-Country Performance in Equality of Access and Affordability of Tertiary Education: A Review of Options**

[Orr, D.; UNESCO; 2016]  
[www.unesco.org/ulis](http://www.unesco.org/ulis)

A useful paper which recommends internationally comparative indicators on access and affordability. Among the issues it acknowledges is the sensitivity of such measures to context – that they ‘reflect the problem that different population groups have unequal chances of entering and succeeding in tertiary education’, for example.

### **Participation in Tertiary Education 2015**

[Tertiary Education Commission of Mauritius; 2016]  
<http://tec.intnet.mu>

A summary of annual enrolment figures for Mauritius, including inward and outward international student mobility.

### **Scholarships for Students from Developing Countries: Establishing a Global Baseline**

[Balfour, S.; UNESCO; 2016]  
[www.unesco.org/ulis](http://www.unesco.org/ulis)

A paper assessing the availability of data on scholarships internationally, progress towards their expansion in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and recommendations for better data collection on scholarships for developing country students.

### **SDG Target 4b: A Global Measure of Scholarships**

[Balfour, S.; UNESCO; 2016]  
[www.unesco.org/ulis](http://www.unesco.org/ulis)

A paper analysing and categorising types of international scholarship, with reference to the SDG target for their expansion. It suggests how the target may be interpreted and any increase measured, with possible indicators including the number of recipients and completed courses, the length of scholarships, and figures for those returning home.

### **Supporting Displaced and Refugee Students in Higher Education: Principles and Best Practices**

[Institute of International Education; University of California, Davis; 2016]  
[www.iie.org/publications](http://www.iie.org/publications)

Principles and related best practice reflecting the experience of US universities and colleges in supporting refugee students in the US, particularly as a result of the war in Syria. The principles are based on ‘higher education’s unique role and responsibility to uphold human dignity, foster democratic and pluralistic values, and build the social bases for lasting and sustainable peace’.

### **Supporting Scholar Practitioners in International Higher Education**

[Streitwieser, B.; Ogden, A.; NAFSA; 2016]  
[www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

One of NAFSA’s regular trends analyses, this focuses on the role of those who both work in and do research on international higher education, and as such are ‘ideally located to identify practical research questions and understand the relationship between data and decision-making’. The immediate context is the US, but the continuing internationalisation of higher education is a general trend.

### **The Alma Mater Effect: Does Foreign Education of Political Leaders Influence Foreign Policy?**

[Dreher, A.; Yu, S.; CESifo; 2016]  
[www.cesifo-group.de/wp](http://www.cesifo-group.de/wp)

A research paper assessing the impact of study abroad on political leaders by analysing their foreign policy decisions – specifically as reflected in their UN voting patterns – and their motives in endorsing, or not, their home countries. Contexts nevertheless vary and are, potentially, influential: where leaders studied, how ‘culturally distant’ those countries were, and whether an election was being faced, also had an effect.

### **The Global Schoolhouse: Singapore’s Higher Education Aspiration**

[Alfaro, L.; Ketels, C.; Harvard Business School; 2016]  
<http://hbs.me/2eqD222>

A profile of Singapore’s higher education system and its contexts (economic and HE markets – global or local), and the factors which have contributed to its development. It suggests, among its recommendations, that the ‘rising demand from Asian students’ (particularly from China) be met.

### **The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World**

[The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity; 2016]  
<http://report.educationcommission.org>

A report setting out the case for supporting education globally, the costs of not doing so, and ways of achieving such goals – ‘education transformations’ – through policy. International, and innovative, ways of financing education are explored. Overall, the project report is presented as ‘an agenda for action that will add up to the largest expansion of educational opportunity in modern history’.



### **The Scale and Scope of UK Higher Education: Transnational Education**

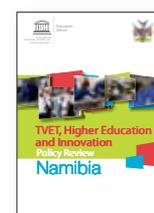
[Universities UK International; British Council; 2016]  
[www.international.ac.uk](http://www.international.ac.uk)

A report using survey and case study evidence to show the extent of the UK’s involvement in transnational education (TNE), and its possible future strategy. In 2014–2015, 99 higher education institutions offered such programmes (28% for students in Asia), with a total of 665,995 students reportedly involved in TNE provision.

### **Themes and Questions for Policy Consultation on Higher Education**

[Ministry of Human Resource Development, India; 2016]  
[www.mhrd.gov.in/nep](http://www.mhrd.gov.in/nep)

A paper listing and outlining issues for higher education in India, along with some of the questions which these prompt. Ranking and internationalisation are included. (‘Should India focus its resources on research universities ... to improve the country’s position in the global rankings?’; ‘How can we encourage foreign education providers?’)



### **TVET, Higher Education, and Innovation Policy Review: Namibia**

[UNESCO; 2016]  
[www.unesco.org/ulis](http://www.unesco.org/ulis)

An analysis of Namibia’s education system, its strategic priorities, and potential policies, which also draws together crosscutting issues. Diversifying higher education provision – what is taught and how – is among its recommendations.

# ACU membership update

The current membership total (as at 1 October 2016) is 522.

## New members

We are delighted to welcome the following institutions into membership:

**Bhagwant University**, India

**Gujarat Forensic Sciences University**, India

**Kumasi Polytechnic**, Ghana

**Kyambogo University**, Uganda

**Lincoln University College**, Malaysia

## Returning members

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

**Plymouth University**, UK

**University of Sheffield**, UK

## Executive heads

**Professor Souvik Bhattacharyya** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani**, India, as of 13 June 2016.

**Professor Lughano Kusiluka** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Mzumbe University**, Tanzania, as of 23 June 2016.

**Professor Ayobami Taofeek Salami** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Obafemi Awolowo University**, Nigeria, as of 24 June 2016.



**Professor Jacques Frémont** has been appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Ottawa**, Canada, as of 1 July 2016.



**Professor Luke Evuta Mumba** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Zambia**, as of 1 July 2016.



**Professor Alfred J Vella** has been appointed Rector of the **University of Malta**, as of 1 July 2016.

**Professor G Nageswara Rao** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Andhra University**, India, as of 17 July 2016.

**Professor K Seetharama Rao** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Doctor BR Ambedkar Open University**, India, as of 25 July 2016.



**Professor Sirandas Ramachandram** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Osmania University**, India, as of 26 July 2016.

**Professor Rajendra Prasad Das** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Berhampur University**, India, as of 1 August 2016.

**Professor Kwasi Obiri-Danso** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology**, Ghana, as of 1 August 2016.

**Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Ghana**, as of 1 August 2016.

**Dr Premavathy Vijayan** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of **Avinashilingam University for Women**, India as of 10 August 2016.



**Professor Santa J Ono** has been appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of the **University of British Columbia**, Canada, as of 15 August 2016.

**Professor Sally Mapstone** has been appointed Principal of the **University of St Andrews**, UK, as of 1 September 2016.



**Professor Deep Saini** has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the **University of Canberra**, Australia, as of 1 September 2016.

**Dr Mohamed Lachemi** has been appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of **Ryerson University**, Canada, as of 30 September 2016.

# Calendar

2017

## January

22-25

Education World Forum  
**Teaching, testing, talent,  
and technology**  
London, UK  
[www.theewf.org](http://www.theewf.org)

## February

19-22

Association of International Education  
Administrators  
**Internationalization through difference:  
transcending boundaries**  
Washington, USA  
[www.aieaworld.org/2017-annual-conference](http://www.aieaworld.org/2017-annual-conference)

## 27 February-2 March

International Network for Quality Assurance  
Agencies in Higher Education  
**Between collaboration and competition:  
the promises and challenges for quality  
assurance in higher education**  
Bahrain  
[www.inqaah.org](http://www.inqaah.org)

## March

1-3

Universities Australia  
**Higher education: gen next**  
Canberra, Australia  
[www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au)

11-14

American Council on Education  
**Annual meeting**  
Washington, USA  
[www.aceannualmeeting.org](http://www.aceannualmeeting.org)

13

Commonwealth Day  
**A peace-building Commonwealth**  
[www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)

15-17

Association for the Development of  
Education in Africa  
**Revitalizing education towards the 2030  
global agenda and Africa's agenda 2063**  
Marrakesh, Morocco  
[www.adeanet.org/triennale-2017](http://www.adeanet.org/triennale-2017)

## April

6-7

European Universities Association  
**Autonomy and freedom: the future  
sustainability of universities**  
Bergen, Norway  
[www.eua.be](http://www.eua.be)

## May

22-24

British Council: Going Global  
**Global cities: connecting talent, driving  
change**  
London, UK  
[www.britishcouncil.org/going-global](http://www.britishcouncil.org/going-global)

22-25

Southern African Research and Innovation  
Management Association  
**Celebrating 15 years of developing the  
research and innovation value chain**  
Windhoek, Namibia  
[www.sarimaconf.co.za](http://www.sarimaconf.co.za)

## 28 May-2 June

NAFSA: Association of International  
Educators  
**Expanding community, strengthening  
connections**  
Los Angeles, USA  
[www.nafsa.org/annual\\_conference](http://www.nafsa.org/annual_conference)

## June

13-16

Royal Society, UK, with the National  
Research Foundation, Singapore  
**Commonwealth Science Conference**  
Singapore  
[www.royalsociety.org/about-us/international](http://www.royalsociety.org/about-us/international)

27-30

Higher Education Research and Development  
Society of Australasia  
**Curriculum transformation**  
Sydney, Australia  
[www.herdsa2017.org](http://www.herdsa2017.org)

## July

5-8

International Association of University  
Presidents (and concurrent Young Scientists  
Conference)  
**Innovation in Education**  
Vienna, Austria  
[www.iauptriennial2017.com](http://www.iauptriennial2017.com)

## August

5-13

ACU Commonwealth Summer School  
**Creating greener narratives through the  
environmental arts and humanities**  
Bath, UK  
[www.acu.ac.uk/summer-school](http://www.acu.ac.uk/summer-school)

## September

3-6

European Higher Education Society  
**Under pressure: higher education  
institutions coping with multiple  
challenges**  
Porto, Portugal  
[www.eairweb.org/forum2017](http://www.eairweb.org/forum2017)

5-7

UKFIET: the Education and Development  
Forum  
**Learning and teaching for sustainable  
development: curriculum, cognition, and  
context**  
Oxford, UK  
[www.ukfiet.org/conference](http://www.ukfiet.org/conference)

12-15

European Association for International  
Education  
**A mosaic of cultures**  
Seville, Spain  
[www.eaie.org/seville](http://www.eaie.org/seville)

# 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

### The Association of Commonwealth Universities

Woburn House  
20-24 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9HF  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7380 6700

Fax: +44 (0)20 7387 2655

[membership@acu.ac.uk](mailto:membership@acu.ac.uk)