Following an international path
INTRODUCTION

Our international reputation as a communities across the globe, using and have academics who win major impact. We host international conferences to have global significance and collaborate with institutions, range of staff and students. We look beyond our borders and aspire place in Wales but equally proud to far from it... should not stop at Offa’s Dyke, are proud to say we are. But our A university based in Wales, for Wales: should not stop at Offa’s Dyke, are proud to say we are. 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The Deans’ View

The title of ‘International Dean’ may conjure up an image of an international jet setter but the day-to-day reality is very different. With it comes a heavy and demanding workload. Here, we catch-up with the University’s three international Deans and gain a unique insight into their work…

Dr Dianne Watkins

Dr Dianne Watkins is an International Dean with a University-wide remit for Transnational Education. She has been a frontrunner in driving the educational agenda across the University as an active member of the Collaborative Provision Committee. Dianne has a clinical background as a nurse, midwife and specialist public health nurse; her research interests lie in evaluating the impact of education and practice and she is leading on collaboration between the School of Medicine through a Joint Research Centre, and potential links with the School of Pharmacy are being considered.

The offer of student mobility placements at the University of Hong Kong in Medicine is now available to healthcare students from Cardiff, secured as part of the visits. A typical day working as an International Dean is usually spent meeting a range of people from philanthropic work with the University of Malta. The greatest challenge is choosing who to follow-up contact with, ensuring time is not wasted pursuing those we are unlikely to partner with.

Success can be difficult to measure in the short term, as the majority of collaborations take time to establish, and some may never come to fruition. However there are surely not many jobs where one can combine a love of cultural experience and travel, a passion for new developments and academic skills and experience into one role.

The work is not glamorous; international travel is exhausting, research is working unnoticeable hours and the quality of hotel beds, pillows and food is variable. Nevertheless, the rewards are immense and I feel privileged to work and learn from other countries. International work enhances our academic profile and reputation as an international University and this in turn helps develop our students for the world of work and research.

Professor Kenneth Hamilton

Professor Kenneth Hamilton was described as “an outstanding virtuoso - one of the finest players of his generation” by Moscow’s Konservatoriya Daily. A graduate of the University of Glasgow and of Balliol College, Oxford, his doctoral dissertation at Balliol was a critical study of the opera fantasies and transcriptions of Franz Liszt. He joined the University in 2012 as Professor of Music.

“Colleagues do occasionally ask me what exactly an “International Dean” is, and how a more serious end up being one.

It’s true that I did rather uns unspectacularly drift into international work in my previous post at Birmingham University. The Birmingham International Office had noticed that I tended to travel rather extensively as a concert pianist, which made me a satisfyingly cheap university representative. “If you’re in Korea anyway, why not negotiate a collaborative agreement while you’re there?” ran the argument. Why not indeed?

I subsequently arrived in Cardiff around a year and a half ago, just at the point when the University was becoming more internationally engaged. By then I had a fair amount of international experience under my belt.

There are many more universities with students and international research projects, and hosts of potential collaborators, such as a delegation from Hong Kong, a pending visit of a Vice-Chancellor from an Indian University, a Skype call planned to Monash University, and a collaborative bid for Horizon 2020 monies to develop a joint Masters programme with the University of Malta.

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Professor Walter Gear

Professor Walter Gear is the Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy and Dean for International Engagement. He graduated from Queen Mary and joined the Royal Observatory Edinburgh in 1986, where he led the construction of the SCUBA camera for the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope in Hawaii. He moved to University College London Mullard Space Science Laboratory and in 1999 moved up to take a new chair in Astronomical Instrumentation at Cardiff University – growing it to the largest group in the School with over 40 members.

The International Dean role is an interesting and exciting one, although it did take me a while to figure just what exactly it was supposed to be done! Within the College of Physical Sciences and Engineering I am responsible for leading on all aspects of international activity, from recruitment of students at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research levels, to outward mobility of our own students and international research and collaboration.

Mostly this involves liaising with the Directors for International (DoI) from each School within the University, and initiating collaborations with institutions in Singapore. Nevertheless, the rewards are immense and I feel privileged to work and learn from other countries. International work enhances our academic profile and reputation as an international University and this in turn helps develop our students for the world of work and research.

Despite the daily torrent of overly detailed emails, there is, ultimately, no substitute for getting out there and actively building institutional relationships face-to-face. I really wish I could say that the travel is of the James Bond sitting-by-the-pool-while-sipping-your-third-Martini type, but also it’s more of the emerging jet-lagged-from-a-plane-while-facing-a-string-of-formal-meetings type.

They don’t make films about this sort of international work—not successful films at any rate—but the upside is the fascination exactly the sort of international experience that we want our students also to have.

And the QS rankings will, I’m sure, eventually reflect this too.

Taking on the challenge of International Dean for the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences has proved to be an interesting, stimulating and highly motivating experience. Student mobility and international recruitment are at the top of the agenda, as is international education. Sharing links across the College and “piggybacking” on existing partners has been my strategy, and a thriving College of Biomedical and Life Sciences Student Mobility Group has brought together staff from across Schools to share good practice and successful links.

In addition to this the College International Steering Group is setting the direction for the College International strategy.

So what have been the highlights of the last year? Many visits to Oman to further develop collaborative provision have proved successful, with the latest contract for 4EM agreed with the School of Healthcare Studies, to establish a third degree programme for nurses. This is now the largest and most successful transnational educational programme delivered overseas by Cardiff University.

The VC and I are due to visit Oman in January 2015 to build on this success and discuss opportunities for further collaboration across the University. I have also just developed a University Strategy for Transnational Education.

Two visits to China have resulted in a collaboration with CapMed Medical University Beijing for student exchange and student transfer with the School of Biosciences.

Joint undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are being investigated, research links are already established with the College of Medicine through a Joint Research Centre, and potential links with the School of Pharmacy are being considered.

The offer of student mobility placements at the University of Hong Kong in Medicine is now available to healthcare students from Cardiff, secured as part of the visits. A typical day working as an International Dean is usually spent meeting a range of people such as academics, clinicians, and students to discuss the potential for collaboration with an overseas institution.

The types of collaborations vary from philanthropic work with organisations such as Libera; working to establish a new Healthcare University in India, or developing opportunities for student mobility across the world.

The list is endless and checking out the status of the proposal is my first job, to make sure that links formed would not damage the reputation of Cardiff University.

Endless emails are received from Universities abroad wishing to establish partnerships and Skype calls to check on the status of any funding regarding various opportunities comprise part of the role.

Some result in Cardiff hosting visits from potential collaborators, such as a delegation from Hong Kong, a pending visit of a Vice-Chancellor from an Indian University, a Skype call planned to Monash University, and a collaborative bid for Horizon 2020 monies to develop a joint Masters programme with the University of Malta.

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Thus, the post of International Dean beckoned.

As for the role itself: we are mostly I think, facilitators, whether of international research collaborations, student recruitment, mobility or transnational teaching. We are also vitally concerned with joining up the dots among all four in order to help push Cardiff back into the top 100 Global Universities in the QS Rankings.

We support their in our international initiatives, liaise between the Colleges and the International Office, and report both to our College PVCs and to the PVC International.

In addition to our College responsibilities, we each have general university-wide remits.

My own is student international mobility. In that area, I work with Rose Matthews and her team in the new Global Opportunity Centre (GOC) to hit our 17 per cent target.

It’s worth remembering, however, that targets aren’t an end in themselves. International experience is nowadays of crucial importance to many students’ career success.

As a world-class university, we should be aiming to produce culturally sophisticated graduates with a truly global outlook—ideally 100 per cent rather than 17 per cent.

The first stage in the “mobility project” was to map current activity. We therefore devised a mobility survey for Schools, collated and analysed the ensuing information, and on that basis worked out the details of an International Mobility Bursary Scheme that was approved by University Executive Board.

We’re also developing new exchange links with Universities worldwide—whether, for example, the University of Hong Kong, the University of Rhode Island, and several others.

Within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences we are, among other things, taking steps to consolidate and expand international recruitment activity, strengthening research and teaching links with Xiamen and Beijing Normal Universities in China, and initiating collaborations with institutions in Singapore.

Now, there isn’t any doubt that one downside of these activities is the frequent flying.

And the QS rankings will, I’m sure, eventually reflect this too.
At college level, I have persuaded the College Board that we need a coordinated international student recruitment office, based locally on the successful Engineering model, and this is now being put in place.

I also liaise closely with the two other College Deans, Professor Bob Lark and Professor Roger Whitaker, particularly on European and other International funding opportunities.

University-wide I have been given the remit for International research.

The first thing I did in this role was to try to find out how many international research links academics across the University actually had, and recognising that the data held centrally was incomplete I initiated a survey which was sent out to all academic staff in the University.

With a roughly 75 per cent response rate for staff on teaching and research contracts the data revealed a far more impressive picture of collaboration with the best Universities around the world than I think anyone really expected or hoped for!

One specific outcome has been that the KU Leuven has been identified as a possible European University with which Cardiff has the broadest and deepest research links in place, and is a prime candidate for a strategic partnership agreement, if they are willing to have a Professor Hyysy Thomas, Richard Cotton and I are visiting Leuven at their invitation to discuss this possibility further.

Another initiative I have led is the proposal of an international collaboration fund to encourage the development of even stronger links with the world’s best Universities. This has been approved by UEB and is in the process of being set up; we are expecting an announcement shortly of an opportunity to bid for funds.

People always ask whether being an International Dean involves spending all my time travelling, at which point I respond that in reality I have always had a rather hectic academic career and so the move has been less radical than might have been expected. In fact, I spend far more time trying toorganise visiting parties in Cardiff from around the world who want to see how we do things and talk to us about partnerships. One major trip involved me as part of a large delegation of 14 academics, headed by the VC, who visited Xiamen in China in March.
Mothers of Africa return to Zambia

Cardiff University supported charity Mothers of Africa, led by Professor Judith Hall, has returned from its latest trip to Zambia’s Chongwe District.

The charity, established to help local communities in sub-Saharan Africa address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals through education, has been working in Zambia’s Chongwe District for the last three years.

The Go Zambia project is centered on the Chongwe District Hospital and the nearby rural village of Shiyala. The project has a community-to-community base, with the core activities in Chongwe supported by activities in Cardiff, such as school engagements and art exhibitions.

The latest visit saw a multi-disciplinary team providing hands-on teaching in the hospital and further community developments at the Shiyala village solar classroom, which the charity has helped develop with substantial support from the University’s School of Engineering.

More images from this and previous trips can be found at: www.flickr.com/gozambia
European library link-up

It’s not just students who can benefit from time spent working abroad. Staff can too...

Since 2009, members of the University’s Library Service have been building links with colleagues from libraries across Europe through its Erasmus Staff Development Programme.

The programme of international training events has been developed by Cardiff University Libraries as part of the European Union’s Erasmus scheme, which encourages staff and student mobility for work and study among universities across Europe. The events enable librarians from across Europe to learn from each other.

Janet Peters, Director of University Libraries, said: “I’m delighted with the success of our Erasmus Staff Development Programme. We have grown considerably from the six visitors at our inaugural event in 2009, to this year’s 24 – a figure double that of the last programme in 2012.”

This year’s programme featured a range of library-related topics, including approaches to social media; the University’s Special Collections and Archives (SCOLAR); information literacy; and Open Access publishing.

“Future world leaders welcomed

Future world leaders have been welcomed to the University as part of a prestigious global scholarship programme designed to foster close relationships with future decision-makers.

Some 50 Chevening scholars – including two Cardiff students – visited the University as part of a programme of events to widen their knowledge of the UK.

Chevening is the UK government’s global scholarship programme and a key part of the UK’s diplomacy effort to bring young professionals who have already displayed outstanding leadership talents to study in the UK.

“The Chevening programme is one of the most prestigious international schemes, awarding scholarships to help the world’s emerging leaders study in the UK,” Vice-Chancellor, Professor Colin Riordan.

“With Cardiff University’s renewed commitment to the internationalisation agenda, I am delighted that not only are we able to support the programme but we can play our part in helping to create lasting positive relationships with the world’s future leaders, influencers and decision-makers,” he added.

Welcomed by the University’s Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Riordan and Pro Vice-Chancellor for International & Engagement, Professor Hywel Thomas, the scholars also received a presentation on the Welsh language by the Head of the School of Welsh, Professor Siôn Davies, visited the home of the Welsh Assembly and were briefed on Welsh politics by Professor Roger Scully from the University’s Wales Governance Centre.

Funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) the scholarships allow students to pursue a one-year Master’s degree in any subject and at any of the UK’s leading universities.

Chevening Scholarships operate in some 118 countries worldwide. Scholars are personally selected by British Embassies and High Commissions throughout the world.

During the week-long visit the Vice-Chancellor was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the People in Beijing.

During their visit, the group also included an opportunity to celebrate, build and renew these links.”

Drawing on a life with HIV

5M people in South Africa live with HIV/AIDS – around 460,000 are children.

Coping with a life threatening condition is difficult at any age, but one Cardiff academic is using the unusual medium of the comic book to help South African teenagers come to terms with their condition by putting pen to paper.

Dr Lilo El Refaie, Cardiff University’s School of English, Communication and Philosophy, who has worked alongside South African health education charity Whizzkids United (WKU) to produce their own comic strips highlighting their feelings and experiences of living with HIV.

Award winning British comic artist Stephen Minnett was then enlisted to turn some of the entries into a full-colour comic book.

Dr El Refaie said: “I suggested WKU might run workshops on how to draw comics, as a way to encourage the teenagers to explore and express their own experiences and feelings, and create educational messages relevant to other young people in their community.”

“The results were remarkable, with the teenagers telling some extremely moving stories for the first time.”

Since 2010, healthcare education charity Whizzkids United has been successful in using football training as a metaphor for educating South African teenagers about the risks of HIV/AIDS with 55,000 graduates of the programme so far.

The targeted young people live in areas where up to 60 per cent of adults are infected with the disease. WKU was keen to find other ways of reaching teenagers, and of ensuring that those taking part in their football programmes found their way to the WKU Health Academy where they can be tested for HIV and receive counselling and information.

The comic book workshop has been extremely successful in getting the teens to open up and express their feelings while receiving support and education.

Strengthening links with China

A high level University delegation headed East to renew and enhance the University’s international profile.

The Cardiff visit followed a UK Government delegation to China where the Vice-Chancellor, accompanied David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, on the delegation led by George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, which linked with a delegation led by Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, at various points during the visit.

The Vice-Chancellor undertook a series of high profile engagements which further strengthened the links that Cardiff University has with China. The schedule included visits to Peking, Capital Medical (CMU) Xiamen and Hong Kong Universities.

There was also an opportunity for the University to celebrate the achievements of Cardiff alumni and meet Hong Kong based Welsh business leaders as well as awarding an Honorary Fellowship to Professor Yang Wei, President of the National Science Foundation of China.

“The new prospects that an economy like China offers the University in helping create new research collaborations are exciting both with other universities and with private companies.

“Cardiff University already enjoys long standing research collaborations with China. This visit was an opportunity to celebrate, build and renew these links,” according to Vice-Chancellor Professor Riordan, who led the delegation.

“Cardiff University already enjoys long standing research collaborations with China. This visit was an opportunity to celebrate, build and renew these links.”
She continued: “My days at the hospital instilled in me a desire to learn more about genetic disorders. Genes, when seen at a molecular level, are minute. But their influence on a person’s propensity to addiction, their health and life expectancy can be huge.

“I found that very little can be done once neurodegenerative diseases such as Huntington’s and Alzheimer’s take their grip. Alzheimer’s is an extremely common disease for which a cure is yet to be found – it runs in my family. I recently lost my grandfather to the disease.”

Stem cell therapy, she points out, is currently being researched for its application in the treatment of Alzheimer’s.

“Studies into stem cells are beginning to show huge potential in managing the effects of Alzheimer’s. My ambition would be to explore this potential through research to ultimately improve the quality of life for sufferers.

“Studying molecular biology at Cardiff’s School of Biosciences will enable me to do this – I hope to go on to do a PhD after graduation and possibly even work for a pharmaceutical company to develop disease-beating drug interventions.

“I’m not entirely sure what I want to do yet but my studies are giving me plenty of options.”

She counts Genetic Manipulation, Non-Bacterial Pathogens, Cytogenetics and Advanced Cell and Immunobiology among her favourite modules.

“The School of Biosciences offers some fantastic opportunities that not only assist your degree but help prepare you for your chosen career.

“The best advice I could give to a student planning on studying a science related subject is to choose a degree you have a passion for, as a lot of work and outside reading is required thus a strong interest in your chosen degree is needed. And dream big!”

Given that Alice is currently balancing exam revision with a part-time job and a modelling career, few could accuse her dreams of being small.

Having been crowned as Miss Wales, she is now preparing to fly the Welsh flag in this year’s Miss World competition.

“The School of Biosciences offers some fantastic opportunities that not only assist your degree but help prepare you for your chosen career.”
Meet the Team: Cardiff University Students’ Union, Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)

Ensuring Cardiff’s 5,000 strong international student community get access to free, impartial and confidential advice on a range of issues from housing to employment is the job of Cardiff University’s Students’ Union Advice and Representation Centre (ARC) team.

Meet the Team Cardiff People

Richard Cotton

I joined Cardiff in January 2013, after 14 years working in the UK and overseas for the British Council.

I moved here from Abu Dhabi, where I was the British Council’s Director in the United Arab Emirates. Prior to that, I had worked in China focussing on the UK’s Arts and Education links with China and Hong Kong. I have also worked in Thailand for a number of years, developing bilateral Science and Education links there and in Cambodia.

In between overseas postings, I worked in London as Head of the CEO and Chair’s Office, focussing on the development of the British Council’s relationships with Government Departments and Ministerial Offices.

My role as Director of the International Office at Cardiff involves working with both partners overseas and colleagues here to ensure that our Internationalisation Strategy is being implemented and we are maintaining and enhancing our global position.

This involves developing agreements to increase the flow of students in and out of Cardiff and exploring new ideas for partnerships in research and teaching overseas.

Dead or alive - who would be your three ideal dinner guests and why?

Zandra Enslin – China’s Premier during the Cultural Revolution, to find out how he emerged relatively unscathed during such a turbulent era.

Lord Kinnock – I used to work with Neil at the British Council and he is a great raconteur. Plus it would be fascinating to see him at the same table as a communist leader.

Henry Kissinger – from one extreme to the other.

What makes you get out of bed in the morning?

Ditto Facebook.

China study sparks interest in global opportunities

A three week stint studying Mandarin and business, plus a series of cultural visits, helped spark a new interest in global opportunities according to Cardiff student, Benjamin Gavier Roach.

Benjamin, who is currently in his third year studying mechanical engineering, spent last summer at Zhejiang University in China. Organised via the StudyChina scheme, he took up the challenge to take himself out of his comfort zone and embrace new ways of thinking.

“Thе whole process of taking on a new challenge really feeds my thirst for problem solving and understanding new ways of thinking,” according to Benjamin.

“I have made loads of friends and industrial/academic links through the scheme too. I also got the opportunity to travel before and after the program started, allowing me to discover a much wider view of Asia and also spur my interest even further in Chinese culture,” he added.

Since returning, Benjamin says he has become much more interested in global opportunities and his focus has shifted towards career opportunities offering international mobility, something that fits especially well with his degree discipline.

So much so, he is all set to return to China.

Ben added: “I am now currently in the process of organising a return trip this summer, this time to work with an engineering/green tech company in Shenzhen, South China through the CRCC Asia internship schemes. Both trips are supported by Cardiff University.”
One-stop-shop for global study

Students looking for opportunities to study, work and volunteer abroad can access all the information and support they need through the University’s new Global Opportunity Centre (GOC).

The dedicated Centre offers advice and information for all current and prospective Cardiff students looking for opportunities to study abroad as part of their studies.

It also acts as the main point-of-contact for incoming study abroad, exchange and Erasmus students.

As well as practical advice and support, the GOC is also responsible for administering the University’s mobility programmes – including study, work and volunteering and monitoring incoming and outgoing students – as well as distributing grants and bursaries.

The Global Opportunity Centre (GOC) was officially opened by former MEP and Member of the House of Lords, Baroness Eluned and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Colin Riordan.

Languages for All

From September all students enrolled on a degree course can learn a language or improve their existing skills, for free.

The Languages for All programme offers a range of flexible courses in languages and cultural awareness allowing students to learn in a way that suits them, in their own time.

Students can study accredited courses in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese Mandarin and Japanese, which are designed to fit around their studies.

Dr Catherine Chabert, Acting Director of Languages for All, said: “This is an extremely important step forward for Cardiff University, which has been a well-known examination centre for international language qualifications for more than a decade.

“The Languages for All programme will no doubt provide a platform for students to become part of a unique international environment at the University as well as gaining invaluable skills for life.”

Languages for All will continue to develop and expand the number of languages and courses available to students over the next few years.

More information on Languages for All is available at: www.cardiff.ac.uk/languagesforall/.

Cardiff News is available in large print format. To request a copy please email: newsletter@cardiff.ac.uk

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