



Message from the Dean

It gives me great pleasure as the Dean and Director of Studies for Science and MCT to welcome you to the fifth edition of the MCT Faculty newsletter. We are now in a period of rapid change for the whole University. We are experiencing considerable political and financial pressures that need to be addressed and the new man at the helm is implementing a strategy to put students first and to set us up for a successful and sustainable future. Peter Horrocks was asked “if you were an interviewer on the Radio 4 Today Programme and you were interviewing Peter Horrocks, VC of the Open University, what is the killer question you would ask him and what, as Peter Horrocks, would you reply?”. The question—Can the OU survive? The answer - yes, but it needs to change.



As 2015 draws to a close I believe we are all feeling the effects of these changes and I urge you to use your various support networks to help you manage the challenges we face. I wish you a restful and peaceful Christmas break and all the very best for what is going to be a busy 2016.

Professor Hazel Rymer

Faculty Reconfiguration

After a careful process of consultation over the name of our new Faculty we will be recommending to Senate for consideration at their meeting on 27th January that Science and MCT will join together to become the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or STEM for short. If agreed this name would take effect from 1st August 2016.

Between now and then we have considerable work to do and we have begun to build a strong team that will manage, support and implement the process of developing the new Faculty.

Renée Lobban joined us earlier this month as the Project Manager for Faculty Reconfiguration in STEM and she will support Jake Yeo Director of Strategy, Planning and Resources for STEM. Jake meets regularly with his counterparts in the other three Faculties to share good practice and ensure there is uniformity to the process across the University and economies of effort are made where possible.

Information on progress of the project, news items and details of project members can all be found on the [STEM interim intranet](#).

Locations Analysis

At the meeting of Council on 24th November members considered the Locations Analysis proposal and the recommendations were approved. This means that the University is moving ahead with plans to close 7 out of 9 of its regional offices in England.



HR consultation meetings with those at risk are already taking place.

This is a hugely challenging and difficult time for our regional staff and many concerns have been raised.

Keith Zimmerman's [recent announcement on OU Life](#) suggests that the implementation schedule is being considered and may possibly be shortened. The implementation team is to be led by David Matthewman (Chief Operating Officer) and more information about implementation planning will be available early in the New Year.

Key Staff

Interim Executive Dean

[Professor Anne De Roeck](#)

Dean and Director of Studies

[Professor Hazel Rymer](#)

Director of Strategy, Planning & Resources

[Mr Jake Yeo](#)

Senior Faculty Administrator

[Mrs Jane Picton](#)

Head of Curriculum Management

[Mrs Louise Haydock](#)

Associate Deans

Curriculum & Qualifications:

[Dr Lucia Rapanotti](#)

Learning and Teaching:

[Ms Maggie King](#)

Quality: [Dr Kevin Waugh](#)

Regions & Nations: [Dr Steve Walker](#)

Research, Scholarship & Enterprise:

[Professor Helen Sharp](#)

Heads of Department

Computing and Communications

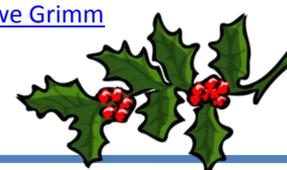
[Dr Mark Woodroffe](#)

Engineering and Innovation

[Professor David Sharp](#)

Mathematics and Statistics

[Professor Uwe Grimm](#)



Starters and Leavers

Since 1st September we have had two new Faculty Officer appointments. Kevin Waugh took over from James Warren as Associate Dean, Quality on 1st October and Lucia Rapanotti is our new Associate Dean, Curriculum & Qualifications taking over from Alison Bettley who finishes on 31st December.

We have recruited six new Research Associates, Jeferson Araujo de Oliveira, Vera Hale, Catherine Rolph, Belinda Wu, Binyan He, and Alexander Borda-Rodrigues who all join us in E&I. Mathew Barker joins us as a Research Assistant in C&C and Samuel Ransbeck takes on an intern role on the MK Smart project based in C&C.

New lecturers joining us are

Dr Charlotte Webb—Lecturer in Maths Education (M&S)

Ms Angela McConnell—Lecturer in Maths Education (M&S)

Dr Charlotte Cross—Lecturer in International Development and Inclusive innovation (E&I)

Ms Asma Chowdhry—Lecturer in Design (E&I)

Dr Julius Mugwagwa who transfers from a Research Associate to a Lecturer (E&I)



The Deanery has a number of new recruits/people in new roles

Keiron Lock—Curriculum Manager

Chris Grundy—Curriculum Assistant

Lynda Waugh-Jones—Curriculum Manager

Natalie Leggett—Deanery Assistant

Alison Nash—Curriculum Manager

Cathy Gowling—Curriculum Manager

Roberta Davies—Curriculum Assistant

Catherine Bland—Curriculum Manager

Millie Hearne—Production and presentation assistant

Felicity Williams—Technician

There have been a number of changes within the Research and Business Office and we welcome the following new faces to the office

Karen Lynes—Manager: Business Scholarship and Research

Rebecca (Becky) Loake—Research and Business coordinator

Helen Elves—RBO specialist support for EU projects

Heidi McCafferty—Manager: Research and Communications for the Strategic Research Area

Katrina Bray—Manager: Research & Enterprise.

We welcome back Jane Kots after her career break to the post of MCT Staffing Manager. We also welcome Renée Lobbaan who joins us as Project Manager, overseeing the Faculty Reconfiguration activity for STEM.

Those who have left or are leaving us for retirement are Dennis Pim, Mary McMahon, Roger Spear, Keith Martin, Matthew Esplen, David Butts, Jim Moffatt, Raissa Roy, Tony Molloy, Maggie Holland, Dave Phillips, Brendan Aengenheister, Fraser Roberston, Diane Brewster, Carolyn Baxter, Roger Dobson, Roger Frith, Shirley Northover, Denise Swann and Rob Griffiths and we wish them all the best.

We say goodbye to David Rodrigues, Andrew Watkins, Hochul Shin, Fadlalla Elfadaly and Hannah Marston as they come to the end of their fixed term contracts.

Finally we have said goodbye to Alison Betts, Ivana Lickova, Alessandra Marino, Jan Osborne, Anne Green, Mo James, Stefan Foell, Xinfang Zhang and Germain Van-Bever.

Faculty Committee

November’s meeting of Faculty Committee saw an update from Anne De Roeck and Jake Yeo on Faculty Reconfiguration, an update on the Locations Analysis project and a presentation on student numbers. We welcomed two new student representatives, Claire Wallace and David Milliken who both made valuable contributions to the discussion around changes facing the Faculty.

The next meeting of Faculty Committee was due to take place on Thursday 3rd March at 10.30 am in the Hub Theatre, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. This is under review as a joint meeting with Science may be more appropriate and details will follow as soon as possible in the New Year.

MCT in the News

MCT academics who have had articles published since the summer include Andrew Smith (Senior Lecturer in Networking C&C) whose [article](#) "Can Christmas tree lights really play havoc with your wi-fi?" first appeared on [The Conversation](#), was subsequently picked up by [gizmodo.com](#) and resulted in him being interviewed on BBC Radio Ulster's breakfast show about Ofcom's warning that Christmas tree lights can affect the speed of WIFI.



Andrew also had an [article](#) "Hackers have finally breached Apple's security but your iPhone's probably safe (for now)" published on the Conversation.

Professor of Applied Statistics Kevin McConway has been quoted in a number of publications including the Daily Mail, the Sun and the ITV News website about the statistical claims that eating processed red meat can significantly increase the risk of bowel cancer. He was also interviewed on the subject on [BBC Radio 4](#) and on the BBC World Service Radio.

He is quoted in the Daily Mail in an [article](#) about the benefits of eating spicy food in prolonging a healthy life. He concludes that "lower death rates in those who eat spicy food were only in those who didn't drink alcohol".

Other topics that Professor McConway has been quoted on in the press include a [study](#) from Cornell University on whether junk food is the main factor behind obesity problems, (Daily Mail web 5th November). In the Times on the 2nd December he commented on a new report which claims that babies delivered by caesarean section are more likely to develop asthma and die as children.

Paul Piwek (Senior Lecturer in C&C) was quoted in [computerweekly.com](#) in an [article](#) on the use of natural language generation software in financial, legal and medical analysis.

IT in the New Year

Office 365 - the pilot project is underway and issues are being addressed ready for a full University roll-out.

Early 2016 will see current copiers replaced by multi-functional devices (MFDs). Staff will use a swipe card to release their printing in any location. The MFDs are full colour and print A3. Existing printers will be unaffected.

Research & Funding Successes

We celebrate the launch of the University's new Strategic Research Areas (SRAs) of which there are three. The SRA for International Development and Inclusive Innovation is led from MCT and the one on Space is led from Science.



- Dr Jon James, Senior Research Fellow in E&I has secured £36,000 from the Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) for research in to the Design and Manufacture of Spallation.
- Professor Helen Sharp has secured an additional £20,000 for the Agile Research Network from the DSDM Consortium. The OU has an important collaboration with the DSDM Consortium to address practitioner challenges in the context of agile software development projects. As part of the same project, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the OU and a local Community Interest Company Agile:MK, to facilitate knowledge sharing activities.

Preparation for the next Research Excellence Framework: are you ready for the 1st April 2016?

The [HEFCE Policy for Open Access](#) for the next Research Excellence Framework was published last year. This requires the bibliographic details and full-text of journal articles and published conference proceedings (with an International Standard Serial Number) accepted on or after the 1st April 2016 to be deposited in an institutional or subject repository within 3 months of the date of acceptance. Acceptance refers to the author's receipt of confirmation of acceptance from publisher. The [Open University's Open Access Publishing Policy](#), approved in March 2015, aligns with the HEFCE Policy for Open Access by requiring researchers to deposit the full-text of journal articles and published conference proceedings into Open Research Online (ORO, <http://oro.open.ac.uk>) within 3 months of acceptance.

In preparation for the HEFCE policy coming into effect, an 'acceptance date' and 'date of first availability' have been added to journal articles and conference items in ORO.

Both the OU's and HEFCE's policies require, as a minimum, the author's final peer-reviewed manuscript to be submitted to ORO. This version must be made available to download at the point of publication or following an embargo period set by the publisher. As part of the ORO verification process, the ORO team check and apply the publisher's embargo to the full-text.

If you require any more information please contact lib-oro-team@open.ac.uk.

Celebrating Success

- Congratulations go to **Rachael Luck**, Senior Research Fellow and Research Director for E&I. From January 2016 Rachael is appointed in a new role as Deputy Editor for the journal "Design Studies". This is the leading international journal in the field of design studies published by Elsevier.
- Congratulations also go to **Mairi Walker**, Research Student in M&S, who won first prize in the [Heilbronn Institute](#) Poster Competition in August at the Young Researchers in Mathematics Conference. The title of her poster was "Gaussian integer continued fractions."
- **Michel Wermelinger** wrote an OpenLearn 'hour-of-code' introduction to Python using an online Python environment called Trinkets, and the company [tweeted](#) about it. They now support version 3 of Python because Michel suggested it to them. Michel says "It's not every day an academic can say that his advice had a direct influence on a product". The introduction to programming was on the front page of OpenLearn last week, which was the worldwide Hour of Code week. Michel was asked to write a short article about Trinkets for the Computing At Schools newsletter, distributed to teachers.
- **Ray Ison**, Professor in Systems in E&I experienced considerable success with three related events he organised in Germany over the summer. All were undertaken under his auspices as President of ISSS (International Society for Systems Sciences) for 2014-15. The first was a designed systemic inquiry into "Governing the Anthropocene: Cyber-systemic Possibilities" which was co-developed and delivered with Kevin Collins (MCT). Participants came from 32 countries and it is thought it was the first ever joint meeting of scholars from cybersystemic and institutional economics backgrounds. The second was the most successful annual ISSS Conference of the last decade with 240 participants and the third, which was also supported by Chris Blackmore (MCT) was a purpose designed systemic inquiry for 27 PhD students from a diverse range of backgrounds, nationalities and areas of study. The main insights that emerged from these events are [published](#) and have been made available to policy-makers and research funders.



Profile on...Anne De Roeck

Anne De Roeck joined the Open University in 2001 as a Professor in the Department of Computing. She was appointed as Interim Executive Dean for the combined Faculty of Science and MCT earlier this year and before that held the post of Dean and Director of Studies for MCT. She has also served as Associate Dean (Research) for MCT and as Head of Department for Computing.



Anne has 31 years of experience in teaching, curriculum development and research. Her specialist area is in Natural Language Processing and she has written and contributed to over 100 publications.

Her first degree is in Germanic Philology from the University of Leuven, and her interest in Natural Language Processing started in 1977 as a result of seminars by two pioneers: Wojtjeck Skalmowski, on Mathematical Linguistics, and Paul Engels on Corpus Linguistics. These prompted Anne to take up programming, and embarking on research in Machine Translation. Her current interest is in ambiguity and the management of ambiguity.

Prior to joining the Open University she held appointments at the University of Essex and the University of Geneva. She was Chair of the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing between 2007 and 2009. She is a Fellow of the BCS - the Chartered Institute for IT - and served as a member of the BCS Policy and Public Affairs Board.



Anne was born in Belgium. She was an example of a Widening Participation student - the first of her family to attend University. She is married to Fraser Woodburn, and between them they have four children and two grandchildren. She likes reading, swimming, walking and talking to people.

Anne says, "my job at the OU has been the best job ever. Joining the University meant a real step-change for me. I very strongly identify with the mission, and when I joined, it seemed like a whole new world was opening up. Not only did I find an ambitious international agenda, the university was, and is, harnessing technology in exciting ways to reach further and wider, and provide a better service to students. There have been challenges, and a lot of change, but the creation of a new Faculty focused on STEM is the right thing to do. Though there is a lot of work still ahead, Hazel and I, and our joint management teams are determined to make the transition go as smoothly as possible, and to keep our focus on our students and our research impact throughout".

If you have any comments or a news item to share in this newsletter please e-mail Julie.h.davies@open.ac.uk