



London Connection

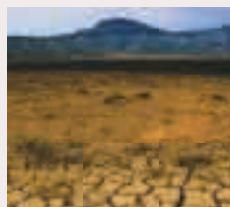
Climate change: is the future really in *our* hands?

University of London staff
and alumni have their say

This issue > features



Page 4
Alumni profile:
Cameron Paige



Page 6
Cover story:
Climate change



Page 10
University of London
External System
Graduation 2010



Page 12
Interview with
Professor Rob Briner



Page 14
Events round-up



Page 16
Professor David Shultz



Page 19
Interview with ULU
president: Nizam Uddin

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London Connection is the newsletter for Alumni and friends of the University of London External System. It is published twice a year by the Alumni Relations office.

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From the Dean

As I travel the globe, I continue to find many of our graduates in important and influential positions – government, industry, commerce, health, the financial sector and so the list continues. I am confident that many of our students who recently attended the 2010 London Graduation Ceremony at the Barbican Centre will also go on to do great things in their chosen field..

One of our Nobel Prize-winning alumni, Dr Rolph Payet, is one of several experts who contribute to the cover story for this edition of London Connection, highlighting an issue which affects us all: climate change.

In February, University of London staff and alumni joined forces to help Habitat for Humanity on a one-day build in Paiyagala, Sri Lanka. This was the first ever University of London External System Alumni Volunteer Build, working hand in hand with University of London staff, and I hope that it will be the first of many such projects. I would like to express my thanks to all those of you that volunteered.

So far this year I have had the pleasure of meeting many of our alumni at events in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Singapore and Malaysia. In March, I also attended the inaugural Graduation Ceremony held by the External Undergraduate Laws Programme in Bangladesh, at which over 120 graduands and 300 guests attended. I look forward to meeting many more of you at future alumni events, including those to be held this June in Trinidad and Jamaica.



Thank you for your continued support for, and enthusiasm towards, our ever growing worldwide Alumni Association.

Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dean, University of London External System

Contact us >

We would welcome your feedback on the issue and your letters/comments for future publication. Please contact us on Tel: +44 (0)20 7664 4826 or email: lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk

This issue (and back issues) of the newsletter are available to download in the 'Alumni' area of our website:
www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni

We're changing our name

From 1 August 2010, the External System is changing its name to the **University of London International Programmes**. This is in response to feedback that told us we need a clear, simple and inclusive name that describes what the University of London offers to almost 50,000 students and 19,000 active alumni in over 180 countries.

We are very proud of what the External System stands for and has achieved, but we also know that the name has become dated. So, while our name will change this August, we will still have exactly the same commitment to offering worldwide access to a life-changing education of an international standard – as we have done for 152 years.

To save costs and minimise waste, we're making a gradual change from our old name to the new one through our normal cycle of updating materials. So, you will see both names around for a while. For further information about the name change please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/renaming

Hear from other alumni on YouTube

The University of London External System has recently relaunched its YouTube channel to include alumni videos from around the world. Graduates share their experiences of studying with the External System and also speak about how their degrees have helped them fulfil their career goals. You can see our alumni videos at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybkka5u>

Our relaunched channel also includes content from academics from the University's constituent Colleges speaking about a range of topical issues related to our degree programmes. The channel also showcases videos that current students have created themselves.

If you would like to keep up to date with new videos from the University of London External System, please subscribe to our channel at www.youtube.com/unioflondon

If you would be interested in being included in our alumni filming programme please contact Alice Mallick: alice.mallick@london.ac.uk to find out more information.



A first for Bangladesh



Photos: Tanvir Murad Topu and Debasis Shom

On Saturday 6 March 2010, the External Undergraduate Laws Programme hosted its first ever Graduation Ceremony in Bangladesh at the British Council. Over 120 graduands and 300 guests attended the ceremony which was presided over by the Dean of the External System, Professor Jonathan Kydd. Presentations were made to students by the Director

of the Undergraduate Laws Programme, Professor Jenny Hamilton, and the Deputy Director, Simon Askey. Also in attendance were representatives of the British Council and other members of the University of London External System. Following the ceremony, alumni, their families and university staff enjoyed a reception hosted by the Alumni Office.

New group launched for External Alumni

This March, the University of London External System launched its new official LinkedIn group for its alumni. This new group can be found at http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2887810&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

Our LinkedIn group will be used exclusively for alumni to network with each other. In addition, alumni will also be able to post any job opportunities they wish to promote within the group and set up and respond to group discussions.

We encourage all alumni to join this group and take advantage fellow graduates around the world.

Application deadlines

Planning postgraduate study? Don't forget the application deadlines:

MBA in International Management: 31 July
www.londonexternal.ac.uk/mba

Postgraduate Laws: 31 July
www.london.ac.uk/llmexternal

Diplomas for Graduates in management; finance; international development and other subjects:

17 September 2010 non EU/17 October EU
www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/undergraduate/lse

Postgraduate health programmes: 30 June
www.londonexternal.ac.uk/health

Cameron Paige

At a certain point in one's life, we look back and wonder 'how did we get here?' Cameron Paige will surely have a smile on her face at the moment. While living in Mozambique, Cameron spent her weekends passing her time at The British Council, making use of the books and other media available to her. One day she came across a shelf with books on studying in the UK. The University of London External System was mentioned in one of these guides and somehow this stayed with her. **Lisa Pierre** talks to Cameron Paige about the education choice that changed her life.

Cameron came to study with the External System in a roundabout way. Sparing us the details of a long, complicated story, she does tell us that love led her to London. Following her heart, she was soon living in the capital after cancelling a trip to India. Still determined to complete her education and get a 'decent degree', the External System was the only programme prestigious enough and cost-effective enough to make that possible.

So did the External System tick all the boxes of a decent degree while fulfilling her educational needs? "The best thing about the External System was the combination of its affordability, flexibility, and reputation. While I was searching for a way of completing a degree while staying in full-time employment, I came across a number of colleges offering distance courses at accessible prices,

One of the many challenges she faced in London was not just the nights out or the shopping, but jokes that 'The Loveable Englishman' was very time consuming. Cameron's heart was causing her a little distraction, and she talks of the lack of real spare time in London. The long hours commuting to and from work soon offered her a chance to catch up on her studies, taking her notes with her everywhere she went. Working close to the British Library offered another opportunity to study and gain access to every book she could lay her hands on. So what else did London have to offer apart from love and education? "I've been a city girl all my life, so moving here didn't come as a serious shock to the system. There are things I've come to expect from my environment since I was a child, and London is one of the best places for living my idea of an easy life. There's

an External to an internal student would prove exciting and interesting. How did she adapt to this change?

"It was a mixed bag. The teaching was excellent, but that only meant I craved more of it, and suddenly a couple of hours a week seemed scarce. The campus felt cramped, and, used to the ease of access at the British Library, I found it difficult to adjust to the idiosyncrasies of the LSE system. Finally, student life, especially at graduate level, was mostly non-existent. I was the only person in my year involved

'The best thing about the External System was the combination of its affordability, flexibility, and reputation.'

but none of them seemed to be of an acceptable standard. Course descriptions for the External System, on the other hand, had the focus, quality, and structure I was expecting from a university degree. Add to this the freedom to study in one's own time and a price tag that I could still afford on a minimum wage, and I had no doubt that the External System was the best alternative."

This best alternative played out for the first year in Cambridge. 'The Loveable Englishman' (as she refers to him) had changed her plans for he was studying there. When he got a job, London beckoned and Cameron finished her University of London degree in London.

always food and entertainment available nearby, and one can get hold of absolutely anything under the sun anytime, day or night. Yup, I'm spoilt rotten. This city does that to a person."

In 2008, all the trips to the British Library paid off when Cameron graduated with a First Class Honours BA in Sociology. So what was next? Well, a Masters at LSE followed. She recalls the moment she got accepted onto the MSc Sociology (Research) as "one of most exciting moments of my academic life." Like many before her, making the crossover from being



in societies, but perhaps that could be chalked up to the fact that everybody else had done their undergraduate degrees internally, so already got over the need to be wildly sociable. Having spent years in the External System, all I knew was work and study, so when I came to LSE I decided to make sure I also had fun." And did you? "I did. Oodles of it."

Apart from the new activities that the LSE bought, what were the main differences between the External and Internal students world? "Customarily, External students berate the lack of guidance and time to study. The biggest surprise when I started studying full time was that internal students voiced exactly the same complaints. What did change was my attitude towards learning. While I was an External student, reading was an escape. Once I found myself on the 'inside', studying inadvertently became a chore. It didn't help that most of my classmates shared this sentiment, and that suddenly there were easy distractions available, from society events to West End shows."

So, study done with, Cameron set about finding a job. Luckily, she got a great research post straight out of University – something she says she couldn't have done without her qualifications. Was a good job the ultimate goal behind her quest for education or was there more to attaining her degrees? "Intellectually, I understand that there are a lot of wonderful, accomplished people out there who have never bothered with higher education. That evidence aside, I could not consider myself a finished person until I held in my hand a piece of paper bearing the University crest. I like being patted on the back, and this was probably the most difficult to accomplish and therefore the most rewarding of pats. It contributed to my sense of personal fulfilment immensely and, given half a chance, I'd do it again."

Having left academia behind, Cameron now puts her skills to everyday use in her job as a Clinical Research Associate for the NHS Blood and Transplant service, where she is conducting a year-long research project. She stresses that the job title has little to do with her 'actual' job. "Clinical merely stands for the department I work in. I do not run clinical trials, I do not perform surgeries. I do do Research." So what will this year-long project entail? "I'm making somebody else's brainchild happen. From actually clarifying the



'I like the clarity and finality of deadlines, and working under pressure. More than anything, I like being my own boss.'

research question and designing the study, through securing ethical clearance, organising the design and printing of questionnaires, running the pilot and the actual study, data entering and analysis, to the eventual writing of reports and journal articles. And, if I'm lucky enough and good enough, presenting at conferences. And all this within a single year." Something tells me she will be good enough.

Once she's seen this project through, Cameron's career plans are – she admits – a bit vague. "I do love research, but so far the experience of red tape, scarce funding and inappropriately assembled review boards makes me wish I'd never left the comforting bubble of academia, or that I'd chosen market research instead. If I choose to stick it out, I think I might enjoy doing freelance project work. I like the clarity and finality of deadlines, and working under pressure. More than anything, I like being my own boss. If, however, I feel like running away screaming when this year is over, I would really like to do a PhD, and maybe one day become a lecturer." So, if everything goes to plan, in five years Cameron hopes to have established a strong research reputation for herself. "I'm determined to keep burning the candle at both ends, and to enjoy every moment of it", she adds.

She confesses that she finds it hard to relax, but when she does, she likes to hike or sail and finds great pleasure cycling to and from work. And what else



does she do in those rare moments of relaxation?" I'm terribly opinionated, so running a number of blogs has proven a great outlet, though occasionally

I find myself engrossed in writing something at two in the morning on a school night, and require an extra cup of coffee to get going the next day. I also enjoy simply working with my hands, making things, be it painting, crocheting, cooking elaborate dinners or fine-tuning my bike. For some inexplicable reason, things like the smell of chilli con carne cooked to perfection or the sound of gears shifting smoothly make me feel profoundly content. I'd also like to finish writing the novel I've been ineffectually working on for the last seven years."

It seems that a chance glance at a book with information on the External System has led Cameron Paige to her dream life in London. And what of the 'Loveable Englishman' that bought her here? She marries him in June in Cambridge, where it all began.

Clockwise: Cameron as part of the University's Brazilian Society; enjoying one of her favourite pastimes – sailing; and with the 'Loveable Englishman' at her graduation, May 2009

Climate change: is the future really in *our* hands?

Global warming, rising sea levels, melting polar ice caps – we all know about climate change but what can we, as individuals, do about it? After the failure of the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, new approaches are urgently required. As one of our Nobel Prize-winning alumni, Dr Rolph Payet, notes: 'We need to transform our planet using sustainable forms of energy; we do have the resources and capacity to do it – sadly what seems to be always lacking is clear, proactive and discerning leadership.'

Alumni Relations Manager **Lisa Pierre** finds out what six people in different countries, in different fields associated with climate change had to say about this pressing issue.

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE FACTS

- The last 10 years have been the warmest on record.
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in the atmosphere have gone up 38% since 1750 – the year the industrial revolution started. Rising levels of greenhouse gases are directly linked to human activity like burning fossil fuels and clearing forests. There is a clear link between more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and global warming.
- Arctic sea ice is melting, the extent the ice reaches has shrunk by about 10% every 10 years since the late 70s.
- An overwhelming majority of climate scientists agree that human induced climate change poses a huge threat to the world.
- This international scientific panel says we need to stop the world getting more than 2 degrees warmer if we want to avoid dangerous climate change. After that it becomes harder to produce food, competition for water increases, sea levels rise, and the loss of species gets much worse.
- Global sea levels have already risen by 10cms in the last 50 years thanks to melting ice and warmer oceans. This is now threatening low-lying countries, such as Bangladesh. By 2080, millions more people are expected to be flooded every year. Latest predictions suggest the sea in Europe could rise by 1m this century alone, this could affect over 20 million people.
- Even if all greenhouse gas emissions stopped tomorrow, since 1750 we've been locked into a global temperature rise of at least 1.4°C because of the delayed impact between emissions and temperature.

Source: www.dft.gov.uk/pggr/sustainable/actonco2



The Nobel Laureate:

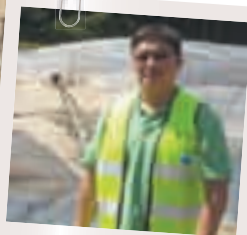
University of London alumnus Dr Rolph Payet was joint winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007; he is Special Advisor to the President of the Republic of Seychelles on environmental matters.

The implications of the Copenhagen summit on climate change is becoming evident, especially after the first negotiating meeting for this year, recently held in Bonn, Germany. Whilst Copenhagen offered 'a rich man's deal', as stated by President Michel of the Seychelles, the ongoing negotiations threaten to entrench the climate change issue for many years to come. Indeed, the majority of small island states and developing countries are opting for stronger, binding measures but the major emitters wish to pursue a non-binding, almost voluntary approach.

Ironically, both negotiating positions have their benefits, but to whom? Whilst the skeptics and 'oil lobbies' continue to discredit scientific data on climate change and its effects, some governments prefer to back-pedal any decision to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The consequences are already being observed – accelerated melting of polar ice or glaciers, increased extreme events around the planet, recurrence of coral bleaching in the Indian Ocean due to warming of the ocean, and the recent terrifying evidence of ocean acidification. We can imagine a world without cars and lobby for the status quo, but we cannot understand that nature will defend itself against the laxness of human decision-making. Indeed, acid rain in northern Europe and toxic algal blooms in the Mediterranean are just two examples of the human ability to take precautionary action. The Copenhagen Climate Conference was significant in establishing the agenda for real and serious reductions in emissions.

Fortunately, all is not doom and gloom. The private sector has woken up and the number of initiatives around the world has increased despite the global recession. Opportunities arising from climate change are inevitably the driver for innovation and investment by the private sector. New renewable energy projects are being developed and those that have taken the lead will indeed become more competitive in the future. It is evident that we need to transform our planet using sustainable forms of energy; we do have the resources and capacity to do it – sadly what seems to be always lacking is clear, proactive and discerning leadership.

'The University of London is at the leading edge for its programmes in environmental studies and sustainable development.'



The practitioner:

University of London alumnus William I.Y. Byun is Managing Director of Asia Renewables.

Currently, the central system for addressing climate change in emerging markets is through

the UN's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Rather than simple regulatory limits or a tax on carbon emissions, CDM is a bold market-based initiative to foster private sector investments into development projects which also reduce carbon emissions.

As a result, over the past several years there has been a growing 'climate change industry' which encompasses a steadily expanding myriad of not only NGOs, government officials, scientists and niche players, but also mainstream lawyers, accountants, HR and PR firms, insurers, and other companies.

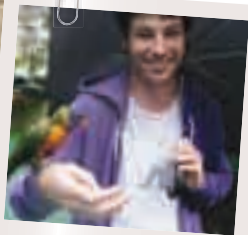
Our company, Asia Renewables, sits in that intersection of renewable energy and climate change. From a business perspective, we look at our potential revenue streams as not only being from generating electricity but also from generating 'carbon credits' which can be counted, packaged and sold like any other commodity. 'Climate change' is a bona fide business sector.

Like any new industry, there are the usual growing pains. But it also means that climate change issues have a broader societal base – because it affects more and more people in their pocketbooks, there is a better chance it won't just go away.

On the ground, the climate change business in Asia practically means trying to implement and finance a lot of smaller sized development projects such as for renewable energy like run-of-the-river hydro projects, capturing methane gas from landfills, even swine and chicken farms to see how waste is processed. Mostly, such projects are in rural and remote areas where the challenge is not only technical but also having to take local considerations on board. Definitely a change from my previous work as a corporate attorney in a nameless office tower.

When we recruit staff, pretty much no one knows our sector as it is not taught in traditional academic programs. The University of London is at the leading edge for its programmes in environmental studies and sustainable development. The External System allows professionals to migrate laterally and get up to speed much faster, while not losing their present professional working skillsets. In our office team, four out of the six of us are External System participants, so we clearly know value when we see it too!





The student:

Edward Shean is a student studying for a MSc degree in Renewable Energy.

Escaping the topic of climate change is almost impossible as we are constantly made aware of this subject from the products we

use, the conversations we have and what seems to be a daily conveyor belt of information from the media.

From a neutral perspective this information can become very confusing with conflicting views and opinions from governments, to international organisations illustrating a perfect example of agreeing to disagree.

As a student enrolled on a MSc degree in Renewable Energy: Technology and Sustainability, my belief is that unless we reduce our ecological footprint we can expect to exceed our current available resources, resulting with our population and environment becoming derogated. The greatest impacts and losses shall predominantly occur within our developing nations which have not led the energy wasting lifestyles of our developed countries.

The reduction of CO₂ emissions is one of the biggest factors to address, and is becoming ever more important as no new targets were set at Copenhagen summit and the Kyoto protocol is the only global agreements of the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations, which ends in 2012.

For the future, I believe that the UK should continue its development in renewable technologies, especially wind, as it possesses some of the largest potential sources for this technology. This should in turn help reduce our overdependence upon gas imports and CO₂ emissions.

Overall, I believe all this attention and awareness of climate change illustrates an important step which shall help to encourage people to reduce and alter their energy wasting and demanding lifestyles. However we the western world and especially the governments need to do much more than just changing our light bulbs and driving less. If anything these minimal changes force ourselves into a false sense of security allowing us to feel that we have done our bit for climate change. Now is time for us to help pay our ecological debt and invest heavily in renewable and sustainable technologies.

'We need to act ourselves. Individually we should recognise the fundamental ethical imperative for change.'



The Professor:

Andrew Dorward is Professor of Development Economics and Head of the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy at SOAS.

Climate change is one of the major issues facing the world. It

potentially aggravates other major global issues (poverty, human rights, food security, water and other resource scarcity), affects everyone on the planet (directly and / or by policies and other responses to it), and all of us who read this contribute to it, to a greater or lesser extent.

Paradoxically, climate change is both the easiest and most difficult global issue to address. It is the easiest because climate change science and action have an essentially simple message: increased atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (ghgs) lead to rising global average temperatures which pose fundamental climate threats, so we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is the most difficult because emitting ghgs is an integral part of our lives and aspirations, but we do not see its impacts: ghg emissions and its consequences spread out across the world and over time, and those of us most responsible (rich people today) are not those most affected (poor people and future generations who may be impoverished by it). We and our governments also fear that costly action to cut ghg emissions will not benefit us unless the rest of the world (especially our economic competition) takes the same action – but getting trusted global agreements on this is very difficult. Decisions on the best ways to reduce emissions are also often complex, context specific and contested.

These challenges lock us into inaction – changing our high ghg lifestyles is costly because technologies and systems giving us our higher incomes and consumption involve high fossil fuel energy use. Companies profit from established high ghg technologies and get the best returns on existing investments by promoting those technologies through marketing to consumers and lobbying to governments. Governments face lobbying from business and voters to continue with business as usual – and do not promote the taxes, regulations and investments needed for change.

Political and policy actions are critical for effective change – but relying on them will be too little too late. We need to act ourselves. Individually we should recognise the fundamental ethical imperative for change: it is wrong to live in ways that collectively lead to suffering and loss of life for billions of poor and marginalised people. Individually, each of us can progressively make healthy and fulfilled lifestyle choices to significantly reduce ghg emissions, whilst lobbying for effective policy change. This can unlock the vicious circle linking consumers, business and government.





The Lecturer:

Graham Woodgate is Senior Lecturer in Environmental Sociology in the Institute for Study of the Americas, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Global climate change is set to be one of the defining issues of the 21st century, a century that will also see significant shifts in geopolitical power. The USA and Europe are responsible for at least 60% of the cumulative emissions of CO₂ between 1850 and 2002 and the North continues to be responsible for some 75% of annual global emissions.

The UK, together with other large island nations such as New Zealand and Japan, is likely to fair somewhat better than many continental nations as the world warms up in the 21st century. In the Americas, however, from Alaska to Argentina, the impacts of climate change are already apparent. In the North, Arctic sea ice is disappearing. In Central America, the frequency and intensity of tropical storms are increasing, as is the incidence of diseases such as dengue fever. In Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, glaciers in the high Andes are melting, threatening the water supplies of millions. In the north east of the Amazon basin, the tropical rainforest is gradually drying out and is forecast by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to give way to savannah type ecosystems.

The Amazon rainforest alone stores more carbon than the atmospheric total and deforestation continues apace. Global land use cover change (primarily deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics) contributes between 15 and 20% of total annual CO₂ emissions: more than that produced by the combined global transport sector. But why should countries such as the rainforest nations of Latin America curb their legitimate development aspirations, when significant proportions of their populations continue to languish in poverty? If greater justice is to be achieved along the road to a more sustainable future, it will be necessary to construct and act on a discourse of the 'overdeveloped North' and the ecological debt it owes to the Global South.

Our various journeys into the future will clearly begin in very different places and we will be travelling in very different directions. For some, the itinerary will indicate economic dematerialization, a contraction of their carbon and wider ecological footprints and the ceding of geopolitical power. For others, the signposts will point towards the opening up of environmental space and improved ecological opportunities for socio-self-realisation. Whatever directions our journeys take us in, as the climate warms and the pace of change quickens, the politics of moving towards a globally coherent yet locally diverse ecosociety will undoubtedly heat up!



CASE STUDY: Pachamama Forest Ltd

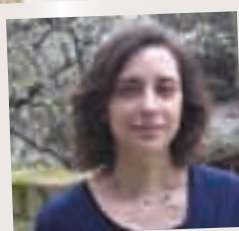
The role of forests in mitigating climate change has gained importance as it is now known that forest loss can represent as much as 12 to 15 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions globally. This new notoriety can be explained largely by recent scientific improvements over how to measure and monitor the amount of carbon stored in trees, as well as by growing political awareness about the need to reduce emissions as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

While stopping deforestation is fundamental to mitigate climate change, there is also a need for planting or replanting trees on a large scale. One mechanism to promote reforestation of lands is the carbon markets. Carbon credits from plantation forestry projects are issued as the carbon is captured by the trees. These credits can be bought by anyone wanting or needing to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. Although carbon credits from forestry projects were the very first ones to be transacted, they soon became marginal as credits from other types of projects emerged. The United Nations Kyoto Protocol under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) allows for the issuance of credits from certain type of reforestation projects in developing countries.

At Pachamama Forest Ltd we are developing a CDM project in the tropical savannas of Colombia – establishing a commercial plantation of various tree species in a large plot of land heavily degraded by past extensive ranching. Plantations in developing countries are often not attractive from a business perspective as they typically do not generate income for many years until the trees are mature. In addition, plantations are often overlooked in regions with large amounts of primary forests available for exploitation, legally or illegally. Carbon credits to partially fund the early years of a plantation are therefore crucial.

The CDM model is not just about capturing carbon but also about bringing sustainable development to the communities.

Most importantly, we hope to demonstrate that commercial plantations can be run in a sustainable way and can offer an alternative to traditional uses of the savannas such as cattle ranching and palm oil plantation.



Rocío Perez Ochoa is Climate Change Manager at Pachamama Forest Ltd

www.pachamamaforest.com

Further study

The Centre for Development, Environment and Policy (CeDEP) is part of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), one of the University of London's constituent Colleges. Through the External System, CeDEP offers postgraduate distance learning programmes in Agricultural Economics, Applied Environmental Economics, Environmental Management, Managing Rural Development; Poverty Reduction: Policy and Practice, and Sustainable Development.

CeDEP's mission is to contribute to human well-being worldwide by promoting poverty reduction, sustainable development, and improved natural resource management. For more information on these distance learning programmes please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/pg



'For those of you graduating today with a University of London degree, like your many predecessors, that degree is the key to new and exciting career opportunities.'

**Professor Geoffrey Crossick
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
University of London**

Graduates from all over the world attended the University of London External System's 2010 Graduation Ceremony on Monday 15 March 2010. More than 700 graduates from over 70 different countries were presented to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, Professor Geoffrey Crossick, on stage at the Barbican Centre in central London. Sharing their success at the ceremony were 1,200 friends and family, as well as staff from international teaching institutions, and academics from the University of London's Lead Colleges.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke at the ceremony, along with the Dean of

the External System, Professor Jonathan Kydd. Feedback from graduates was extremely positive, with one student from Bangladesh saying after the ceremony: "I'm very proud to be here, it's a wonderful day I'll never forget."

For the first time ever, the Graduation Ceremony was broadcast live on the internet. About 7,500 people watched the webcast live and, in the weeks since the ceremony, it has been accessed more than 101,000 times (and counting) as video-on-demand. The webcast is available to view at: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/graduationwebcast

Key facts:

- The University of London External System is the world's oldest provider of degrees through distance and flexible learning.
- Today, we have 45,000 students worldwide studying on 100+ degrees, diplomas and certificates.
- Former students and alumni include seven Nobel Prize winners, leaders of Commonwealth countries, government ministers, renowned authors, academics, judges and business leaders.
- The External System's reputation internationally continues to ensure our graduates are to be found in leading positions around the world.

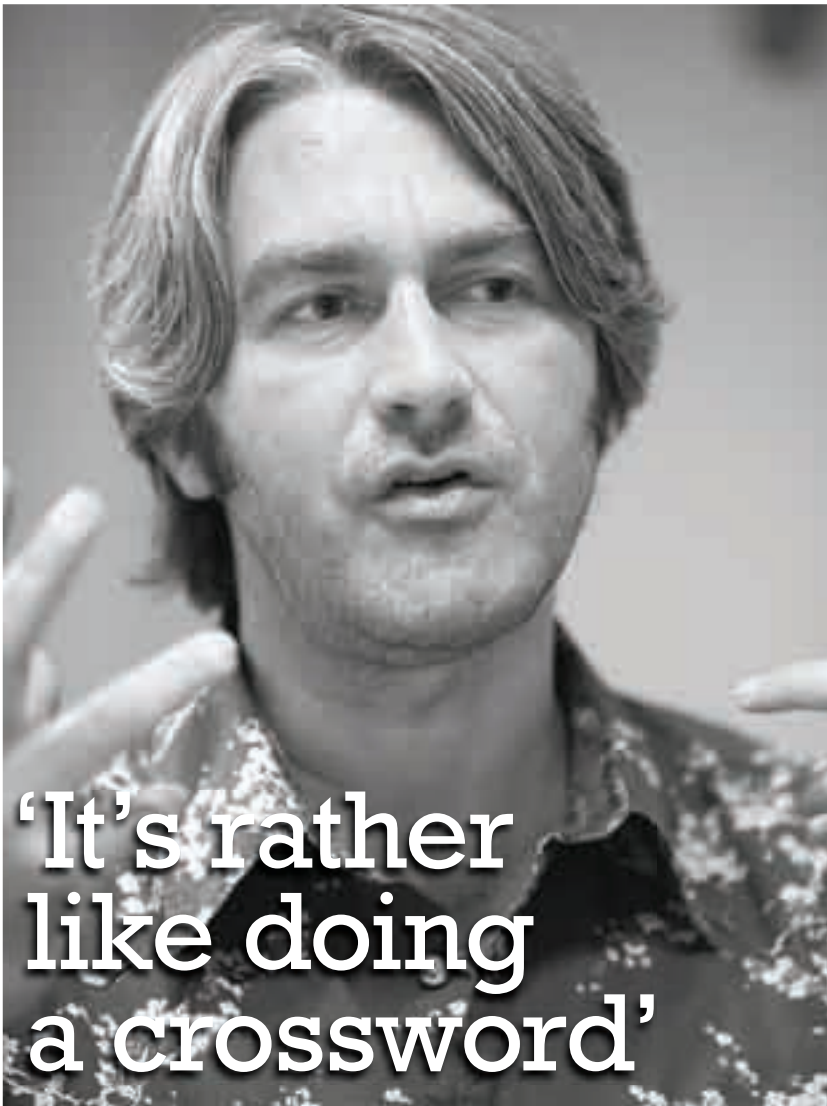
Professor Geoffrey Crossick, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, presided over the External System's 2010 graduation ceremony. More than 700 graduates from around the world received their University of London award.

***Your success
is our success***



All photos : The University of London External System Graduation Ceremony 2010, Barbican Centre, London, UK.
Photography by Colin Edwards, Picture Partnership Ltd.





'It's rather like doing a crossword'

University of London academic Professor Rob Briner talks to **Peter Quinn** about study plans, asking the right questions and eureka moments.

Is it actually possible to achieve the right balance between work and study, or is it some kind of mythical ideal?

I think, yes, it's a bit of a mythical ideal. If you give people the idea that there is this thing called balance, then if they're not getting that – whatever *that* is – then they feel they're failing. The fact is that if you demand quite a lot of yourself, as a parent, a worker, or student, if you demand more than you're inevitably going to feel that you have to make compromises. You can't do everything you want. The balance idea is unhelpful. Unless you really minimise what you do, you are going to experience imbalance.

You have over 15 years' experience teaching part-time students at Birkbeck. What advice do you give them regarding planning their study?

I've been at Birkbeck for about 18 years now and have worked with part-time

students for a long time, so I've thought quite a lot about this over the years. In terms of planning, you need to be thinking in terms of long-term goals and being able to set aside the blocks of time that you need. Students inevitably sometimes cram stuff in and end up rushing assignments and essays, and doing things at the last minute just isn't enjoyable.

The second thing students are worried about is assessment: really getting a clear angle and understanding of what the criteria are that the examiners are using. Even though I give sessions about writing essays and the criteria we use to assess things, I'm constantly amazed that students can have written an essay, submitted it and got a mark back and still don't know what the criteria are we use.

In a sense they're really shooting in the dark by just writing an essay and hoping it's what we're looking for. I even suggest to students that they stick these criteria

on the wall where they work, or have them as a PDF on their desktop, so that they're always to hand. It seems crazy to me to work hard on a piece of work and not really understand how it's going to be assessed. You could do a great piece of work, but it might fail. It's not so much what students think is good, it's what the people assessing them think is good."

The third piece of advice is that, generally speaking, academic journal articles – and even academic books – are often incredibly difficult to read. They're not fun, they're not entertaining, they're not *Harry Potter*. They're not meant to be fun. I think this comes as a huge shock for a lot of students moving from undergraduate to postgraduate, when they're used to reading everything in nice little boxes and everything's over-simplified.

When you get to high-level postgraduate courses such as the ones offered through the External System, you are being let into the world of research, in a sense. Journal articles are technical documents for communication between researchers. They're not designed to be easy to read things for a student. But it's really important that you look at those because that's where you'll find – depending on the discipline – the best available evidence, theory and empirical work.

And have you gained any insights from your students?

Oh yes. What I've learnt from them is absolutely invaluable, in different ways. One is that, generally, mature students are very good at letting you know when what you're saying just doesn't make sense. They're not scared of saying look, I just don't get this, what do you mean? And nine times out of ten they're right. In applied areas, they might say why are you criticising this particular practice or technique – it doesn't happen in business, or it only happens in these sectors, or in these countries. So it's a very good check on whether you really know what the modern world of work is like.

It's great hearing from people in the health service, government, business and multinational corporations. They can tell you about what's going on. Again, not just in terms of teaching but for research as well, that's very useful. Certainly I've had many ideas for research projects from students. And in terms of supervising projects, people often do these in their own organisations and

‘For part-time students, family and friends almost become part of the studying process. I think it’s about keeping them informed of what you need to do, when you need to do it, and explaining the nature of the demands.’

you get absolutely unparalleled access to often brilliant and fascinating data. As a researcher, if you knock on the door and say can we do some interviews or questionnaires, yes, you’ll get access – you’ll get so far – but when the people are actually in the organisation itself then often they have superb access to great data and really interesting stuff.

Studying while simultaneously holding down a job and trying to maintain some kind of domestic life can be stressful. Do friends and family have an important role to play?

For part-time students, family and friends almost become part of the studying process. I think it’s about keeping them informed of what you need to do, when you need to do it, and explaining the nature of the demands. It’s very hard being a part-time student when the people around you don’t know what you’re doing and don’t appreciate it. If you don’t tell them, all they see is this person they want to be with and spend time with stuck in a room or library somewhere. It’s important to get those people around you on board.

You’ve talked elsewhere about work and study in relation to people’s identity. Could you explain what this relationship entails?

Yes, it’s interesting. One of the times when people feel out of kilter and like their life isn’t balanced is when they’re trying to take on too many identities: I want to be a great parent, a great worker, a great student, a great friend, whatever it is. That’s one of the things that can cause a sense of conflict: they want to be all these different things because that’s part of who they are.

I do think that if you’re taking on studying and haven’t done it for a while, and you’re working, you have to maybe diminish – not lose – but diminish some of those other identities and say for a few years I’m not going to be a great whatever it is. I’ll maybe do it a bit and it’s still part of my identity, but it

won’t be as strong a part of my identity because I just can’t do everything.

Regarding study time, is there a ‘best practice’ in terms of what produces the best results?

One of the things that students find really difficult is the quantity of reading they have to do. A classic thing I often see regarding people spending their study time is you look at the papers they’ve got in front of them from subject guides or resource packs and they’ve actually highlighted 80 per cent of the document. You always need to have a set of questions in mind such as what is the author trying to say? What does it mean? What’s wrong with what they’re saying? How does it help me answer my question?

The analogy I often give is that it’s like giving someone a train timetable and saying could you just read that. You can, but you have to approach these things with a question. People can waste a lot of time trying to read this stuff and construct a narrative. They’re trying to get a nice story out of it, and it won’t be there in most cases.

And is there a secret to coaxing out those rare ‘eureka moments’ which all students hope for?

I think it’s rather like doing a crossword, where you put it down because you get stuck. Then you look at it again, and put it down. And then you’re doing something else like the washing up, and suddenly it comes to you. That only happens because you keep dipping in and out to try and make sense of it, and you’re not forcing it. You’ve thought about it and put it down. And that’s when you get these eureka moments.

Another thing to bear in mind is that some of these eureka moments can happen years and years after you’ve finished the course. What I always say to students is this course is just a sort of taster to get you thinking. Yes, there are



exams; yes, there’s a dissertation; yes, it’s great you’ve got a Masters. But if you stop thinking about this stuff then we haven’t done our job. The things that you’ve thought about during the course should carry on helping you learn about your job and things that are going on at work.”

Finally, what makes a successful student successful?

My sense is that that they get to grips really quickly with what the course requirements are. In other words, they are the students in the group other students go to, to ask them about the programme. They’ve read the stuff, internalised it, they’ve looked at the exam criteria, the essay criteria, they understand what modules you do when. They are successful because they really understand what’s required.

To view a short film of Rob on our YouTube channel, talking about why feelings at work are important, please visit: <http://bit.ly/cR2psP>

Top study tips

- Set aside blocks of time to enable you to think in terms of long-term goals.
- Get a clear understanding of what the exam criteria are.
- Look at journal articles for the most up-to-date evidence.
- Keep family and friends informed about your study commitments and deadlines.
- Always have a set of questions in mind when reading through your study materials.

Photos courtesy of Rob Briner

Rob Briner is Professor of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London. He is the author of the subject guide and resource pack for ‘Work and well-being’, a module from the Human Resource Management and Organizational Psychology postgraduate programmes offered through the University of London External System. For details please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/ophrm

Events round-up



Pictured: External System staff, alumni, and residents of Paiyagala get their hands dirty on the building site.

Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day: Sri Lanka

28 February 2010 saw 2 significant 'firsts' take place. For Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka, the University of London External System Alumni Volunteer Build was the first build for 2010. For the University of London External System Alumni, it was the first Volunteer Build worldwide across a network of some 19,000 registered alumni across the world.

Volunteers consisting of staff from the University of London External System and its alumni piled into a 40-seater bus and sang their way to Paiyagala, Beruwala – South Coast of Sri Lanka. In the sweltering 32 degree heat in an area surrounded by rock quarries, volunteers worked alongside the home owners whose homes had been

swept away in the tsunami of 2004.

The University of London External System Staff and Alumni made two donations of over £350. The funds will go towards 1) developing the livelihoods of the two families and 2) an educational fund for the children of the families involved in the build.

The volunteers, many of whom were first time builders, worked with inspirational dedication as, bit by bit, the toilet pit was dug out and rocks were carried and passed along the chain. They hauled bags of cement, mixed the correct composition of cement to sand and water and assisted the local labourers.

"For me, there were three equally important elements of this experience. First of all, it created bonds and provided a networking opportunity, therefore it was something of real value for Alumni. Secondly, it provided an opportune time and space for University of London staff and alumni to work together on a

project to promote stronger friendships as opposed to a pure faculty-alumni formal relationship. This experience created and inspired some real and long lasting bonds. Finally it was great to be able to give something back to those in need and our motherland. This was the whole purpose and one which we achieved together!"

Lakshan Madurasinghe
University of London External System Alumni Chapter Sri Lanka

We hope this will be the first of many volunteer projects around the world undertaken by our alumni, working hand in hand with University of London staff.

Thanks to all the staff of the External System and Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka, the alumni who worked on the build, and to those who kindly made a donation to the project.

If you think you could help us work on a volunteer project in your country, please email: lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk

Photos: Angelo Samarawickrema





Sri Lanka: February

On a warm evening, offset by a wonderful sunset in Colombo over 100 alumni and University of London staff joined the Dean of the External System, Professor Jonathan Kydd and Guest of Honour His Excellency Judge Christopher Weeramantry at a drinks reception at the Galle Face Hotel

Bangladesh: March

On a hot March afternoon in Dhaka, the External Undergraduate Laws Programme hosted its first ever Graduation Ceremony in Bangladesh at the British Council. Over 120 graduands and 300 guests attended the ceremony which was presided over by the Dean of the External System, Professor Jonathan Kydd. Presentations were made to students by the Director of the Undergraduate Laws Programme, Professor Jenny Hamilton, and the Deputy Director, Simon Askey. Also in attendance were representatives of the British Council and other members of the University of London External System.

Following the ceremony, alumni, their families and university staff enjoyed a reception hosted by the Alumni Office.



Above: Alumni at the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Left: Graduands celebrating at the External System Laws Graduation, Bangladesh.



Singapore: April

After the storm passed the beautiful setting of The Jewel Box, Mount Faber played host for over 100 alumni and University of London staff at a dinner reception attended by the Vice-Chancellor Sir Graeme Davies and Dean of the External System, Professor Jonathan Kydd.

Malaysia: April

On a dusky evening in Kuala Lumpur, Alumni and University of London staff enjoyed a drinks reception at the Luna bar and enjoyed the panorama of the Malaysian skyline and its world famous Petronas Twin Towers.

Future Events

Trinidad 26 June, Hyatt Hotel
Jamaica 30 June, Terra Nova Hotel

To receive a booking form, or for further information on these events, please email: lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk

Above: Alumni at The Jewel Box, – Mount Faber, Singapore.

Right: Alumni at Luna Bar, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



To view the full gallery of photos from past University of London Alumni Association events visit: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/past_events.shtml

Professor David Schultz

Some people have such an unerring knack of juggling a variety of roles that they give the impression of living a number of different lives simultaneously. With a busy teaching career, a prodigious output of articles, conference papers, review essays and books, and a whole clutch of degrees to his name, University of London External System alumnus Professor David Schultz is one such person. By **Peter Quinn**.

While you might have thought that wearing two very different academic 'hats' would be slightly daunting, David Schultz appears to relish the varied workload.

Working mainly with doctoral and masters-level students in public administration at Hamline University, USA, while teaching election law at the University of Minnesota Law School – a mere 10km away from Hamline – means he is 'kept very busy between the two schools, but very much enjoy teaching a variety of courses. I often joke and tell people I am either very well-rounded in my interests or I cannot decide what I want to do when I grow up!'. Remarkably, David finds the time to act as one of the External System's Student Ambassadors, having graduated with an LLM in 2002.

With over 20 years' experience teaching graduate and undergraduate students, David is quite forthright about what he feels is the most important aspect of his role as an academic.

'There is no question that interacting with students and mentoring them is the most important task. Over the years, to see students go on and become successful as leaders is perhaps the greatest satisfaction I have experienced. Having said that, I really do enjoy the research and writing aspect of being a professor. I think my teaching and my research interests reinforce one another.'

Regarding his own academic study – a PhD in political science, MAs galore, a BA in political science and philosophy – what, I wondered, was his secret in terms of producing the best results?

'In my own studies I have followed three rules. First, do the required readings for the classes and think about them. Second, do outside readings as they supplement the required readings. Finally, take notes on all that you have read. I literally have boxes of notes on all of books I read in my studies. The notes are rich in references to

what the authors said and my reflections on them. This process has ensured me that I will reflect on my studies.'

Considering all of his other commitments, it must have been tough to complete the PhD?

'Actually I did the PhD as a full-time student. I returned to school full time after working for several years. But it was still hard work in the sense that moving from working full time to being a student

through the University of London External System for two reasons. 'First, I wanted to know more about the law of the European Union and the UK in particular. Second, the University of London had an excellent external programme with a sterling reputation. The programme exactly fit my needs and schedule.'

What, if any, were the particular challenges you faced when studying for the LLM?

'In my own studies I have followed three rules. First, do the required readings for the classes and think about them. Second, do outside readings as they supplement the required readings. Finally, take notes on all that you have read.'

full time was a change in status and income (at least for a period of time). Also, after working your frame of reference changes and you see the world differently when you return to school. I think this maturity helped in my studies and it gave me important perspectives that many younger students did not have.'

Of his five masters-level awards, one in particular stands out: a Masters in Astronomy from James Cook University in Queensland, Australia. What prompted his decision to pursue this?

'I began college as a physicist and wanted to be an astronomer. At age 18, though, my interests changed and I also realized that I was not as proficient in math as I needed to be to be a physicist. But later in life I decided to pursue a degree in astronomy, not because of career interests, but out of love for the subject and without the pressure of grades and worry that being second-rate in math would hurt me. Thus, securing the astronomy degree was a dream of my life realized.'

David chose to study for an LLM

'The biggest challenge, of course, was balancing the LLM studies with my career. The trick was to remain disciplined and to do one's studies every week. This was one challenge. The second was that it is sometimes difficult to work alone. When I did my studies there was little contact with students or professors. At times I wished for the opportunity to talk to others about my studies. The conversational aspect of education is something I craved and I had to find alternative ways to address that. In my final term of studies I did find that the University of London had started a student connection with others around the world. It was a terrific way to engage with other students.'

And has the LLM helped you in your career?

'Yes, most definitely. Because of the LLM from London, I have had many opportunities to teach in Europe. I have been to Armenia and Hungary on Fulbrights and have also taught in the Baltics, Russia, Slovakia, and Finland. Because of my comparative knowledge

‘Because of my comparative knowledge of US, EU, and UK law, I am asked to teach classes or give talks that draw linkages across them. There is no question that the University of London degree has opened these opportunities.’

of US, EU, and UK law, I am asked to teach classes or give talks that draw linkages across them. There is no question that the University of London degree has opened these opportunities. I hope that more doors will continue to open and that I will have additional chances to teach in Europe. Maybe someday I will even get an invitation from the University of London to teach or give some lectures. I would really welcome that opportunity.’

If you could distil your vast experience of part-time study into three ‘top tips’, what would they be?

‘Three tips? OK. Rule one, be self-disciplined and keep up on the readings. Try not to get behind but work at the steady pace to stay current with your studies. Second, take time to think about what you are studying. Reflection is critical to success. Finally, take time to enjoy what you do. Learning is fun and never forget that aspect of why you are studying with the University of London.’

Key facts: Education

- **Ph.D.** University of Minnesota, political science (thesis title: ‘Private Property and Public Use in American Constitutional Law’)
- **LLM** University of London European Union Law, Criminal Justice (With Merit)
- **J.D.** University of Minnesota Law School (With Honors)
- **M.A.** State University of New York at Binghamton, philosophy
- **M.A.** Rutgers University, political science
- **M. Astronomy** James Cook University
- **B.A.** State University of New York at Binghamton, political science and philosophy

Professor Schultz’s forthcoming books include the *Encyclopedia of American Law and Criminal Justice* (Facts on File, Inc. 2010), and a two-volume constitutional law/civil rights liberties textbook (Oxford University Press, 2010).



Profile on: Tangjie Ward



Over the years, the External System would not have achieved its outstanding reputation and success without the people who, behind closed doors, keep it ticking over. These people – from the Information Centre to the post room – have helped our graduates progress and become part of our unique global alumni community. Tangjie Ward is one of those people. She has worked for the External System for six years and is the Head of Institutions and Global Development. Interview by **Lisa Pierre**.

What has been the most significant change you have seen in the External System?

From the institution and market development point of view, there have been three major developments since I joined the External System six years ago. Firstly, in 2004 the External System began actively approaching new markets to raise its profile. It also began identifying institutions with good potential, especially in countries outside the Commonwealth, and helping them to develop tuition programmes.

Secondly, the appointment the Dean in 2006 has enabled the External System to build stronger relationships with our academic Lead Colleges and with independent institutions.

Thirdly, the introduction of the Institutions Policy Framework in 2009 has enabled our students to make better decisions when they choose local support.

Tell us about a typical day for you in the office?

An average day is spent answering emails and receiving visits from organizations all over the world. I explain to these organizations about the University of London External System, how we work with independent teaching institutions and how to set up tuition programmes.

But most days are not average! For example, an email alerts us that an overseas government is going to make changes in its educational policy. I will need to respond very quickly to find out if this potential change will have any impact on our existing and future operations, and whether it will affect our independent teaching institutions and our students. I will then summarize the situation, report to the senior management team and our Lead Colleges and propose appropriate actions.

How has your role developed?

My section has now taken on the role of maintaining and supporting our existing independent institutions in our mature markets.

Your role requires a lot of travel. Tell us what the main purpose of this is?

When I visit a country, I try to understand the economic, social, cultural, educational and technological environment and how they might impact on our operation. I try to identify gaps in their educational needs that the External System can help to fill. I visit government bodies, British Council offices, and professional associations to make them aware of and understand the way the External System operates and to obtain their goodwill.

How do you balance travel with family life?

My husband works from home and this helps greatly. For me the difficulty is how to balance travel with a busy office life. It is a struggle to keep business as usual when I have the additional work of arranging visits, writing meeting reports and following up the meetings.

How has the relationship between the External System and Institutions developed over the years?

For many years we only had an arm's length relationship with institutions. But the relationship is now closer, more formal and substantive.

From the student perspective, what do you think is the main benefit of the new Institutions Policy Framework?

The main benefit is that students will be able to make better decisions when they decide to seek tuition at a local independent institution.

What has kept the External System alive and successful for so many years?

My colleagues within the External System and at our Lead Colleges are passionate about providing opportunities to students worldwide to study for a University of London degree without having to leave their family or work. We are a public body but self-funded, which means that we have to work hard to be market-led and customer-focused. Finally, we have a good business model: by working closely with our independent institutions and exam centres, our students, while studying an internationally recognized programme, can also receive local face-to-face support.

What is the one thing you are most proud of in terms of your own contribution to the External System?

I am proud of the Institutions and Global Development Team and the work we do, which is essential for the long term and sustainable growth of the External System. The three permanent and one temporary member of staff provide support to our existing 100 independent institutions and develop over 10 new institutions each year.

The Institutions Policy Framework

The University of London External System has introduced an 'Institutions Policy Framework' to govern the way it works with independent institutions that provide study support for its students. One of the aims is to identify institutions which offer a quality experience for External students.

These institutions are now known as 'recognised centres'. All recognised centres will participate in annual monitoring and in more in-depth reviews every 3-7 years to monitor the quality of the teaching support they offer.

Recognised centres are now listed on the External System website (www.londonexternal.ac.uk/online/search/institutions) and in prospectuses.

Presidential duties

Nizam Uddin is the current President of the University of London Union. During a visit to Singapore and Malaysia, Alumni Relations Manager **Lisa Pierre** took the opportunity to discuss External students and why he backs alumni activities.



The University of London Union (ULU) represents over 120,000 internal students of the University of London, working with the respective students' unions of each of the Colleges to further the student experience of our members during their time at university. His day-to-day activities are never the same, which he relishes. "There is no one day which is exactly the same in my role as President. Some days you are dealing with fellow SU Presidents and discussing the finer points of a Quality Assurance Agency audit, while on other days you find yourself on the same stage as the Prime Minister providing testimony for one of your flagship campaigns.

In March this year Nizam attended the External System Graduation Ceremony at the Barbican for the first time. He reflects that it opened his eyes to the power of the degree, and the depth and diversity of our External System students. What stood out the most? "The one aspect of the experience which I loved was how quickly the Barbican became a melting pot of people and cultures from all over the world. The vibrancy of colour from some of the outfits worn to the exotic languages being spoken all around the Barbican Centre was a testimony to the reach of the University of London External System."

How does he hope to help External students in the future? "Having spoken to a number of students who study through the External System, it is fair to say many do not really feel a strong sense of belonging with the institution. This needs to change. For me, the University of London degree goes beyond just the academic award and includes the overall student experience. While this is a lot more difficult for students studying independently at home, or in a country with varying political and social landscapes, the opportunity to interact and develop outside of the classroom can never be understated. Giving students more of a centralised voice will ensure their experience (in whatever manner this may be defined)



From left to right: Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dean, External System; Nizam Uddin, President of ULU; Lisa Pierre, Alumni Relations Manager; and Sir Graeme Davies, VC, University of London

'There is definitely great value for a lifelong relationship between alumni and their university.'

improves and as such they will have more of a sense of affinity with the University of London and become global ambassadors in the process. Speaking from personal experience, a great student experience is requisite to a strong affinity with one's alma mater."

Having attended alumni events in both Singapore and Malaysia, how important did he think they were in helping to bring together this unique global community? "Sometimes it is important to meet your peers to realise the journey is and has been completed by many like you. Alumni events are the greatest conduit to facilitating this dialogue and interaction, and provide an opportunity to make new friends in the region with whom you already have a great affinity."

Does he see value in universities fostering lifelong relationships with their alumni, and do alumni see the benefits? "There is definitely great value

for a lifelong relationship between alumni and their university. A university plays such a significant role in the formative (be it in life or career) years of so many students, that the relationships created during this journey should be maintained. Creating these networks and events will allow alumni to keep in touch with an important part of their personal history and development."

So, in three months time after three years of being called Mr President it will be time to step down. What of his legacy at ULU? "A strong direction for ULU would be my biggest priority, closely followed by extending a student voice to the 45,000 External System students who can then hopefully feel a greater sense of belonging to the University of London." And where does he see himself in the future? He coyly suggests diplomatic services and something involving global travel. "I see myself as a global citizen, coupled with leading a strong family-oriented life. I think happiness and satisfaction are paramount to success, which is why I don't wish to pre-empt any particular careers." I pre-empt President of ULU will be the first of many titles for Nizam Uddin.

For more information about the University of London union visit: www.ulul.co.uk

Five-minute interview

Programme Director for the External System Computing programmes at Goldsmiths, **Dr David Brownrigg** talks to us about suicidal birds, cocktails and his life's loves.

What was the last country you visited?

Trinidad and Tobago.

How many frequent flyer miles do you think you have earned in the last year?

Lots, but I use them for seat upgrades as soon as possible to alleviate a back problem!

What do you think is the best thing about travel?

Some of the people I meet.

And the worst thing?

'Interesting' events such as a bird hitting the plane.

Describe yourself in 10 words.

Tenacious on important tasks, diverse interests, inquisitive for new ideas.

What three things would you take with you on a desert island?

Large astronomical telescope, violin, writing materials.

Name three guests past or present you would like to have dinner with and why.

Aristophanes, to see what made him a great comedy playwright. Leonardo, to see what made a 'Renaissance man'. Omid Djalili – what is life without comedy and laughter?

What is your favourite cocktail?

Depends on climate, e.g. for cooler, *Rusty Nail* (Drambuie, Scotch – Talisker or Laphroaig for me); for warmer,

Green Demon (Midori, Vodka, Rum – Jamaica Appleton for me).

What is your favourite city and why?

London for diversity of nationalities and range of entertainment/culture.

Name one thing you want to have done in the next year.

Launched the Computing with Law programme.

What is your favourite book of all time?

So many, but *Pride and Prejudice* is a good one.

Name something or someone that can always make you smile?

Rationales for procrastination, including my own!

What do you do to relax?

Long walks.

What has been your biggest extravagance?

A good keyboard for me and my son (when he was six). Both children subsequently studying music has cost several hundred times as much!

What is your philosophy of life?

Never live and let live, if you can help it.

Lastly, tell us something you are really proud of?

One of my research publications; my family.



For more information about computing programmes available through the External System, please visit:

www.londonexternal.ac.uk/comp