

Welcome

The School of the Built Environment is a busy place with lots going on... from students receiving awards, entering national competitions, trips to Zambia not to mention all the events coming up... so we thought it was time to bring you *BE News*. In this first edition you will find interesting stories as well as useful information and dates.

We are keen to hear from students with interesting stories they would like to share, so please feel free to drop me an email: ailsa.riddell@northumbria.ac.uk or pop in to the school office for a chat. Hope you enjoy the read!

Thank you to final year students

The School Management Team would like to say a big thank you to all the final year students who completed the National Student Survey. It is really important to us as a school to know what you, our students, feel about matters such as academic support, learning resources, assessment and feedback, organisation and management as well as general overall satisfaction so that we can facilitate best practice and enhance the student learning experience.

We are also pleased to announce that for every person who completed the survey, the University will be donating £1 to the University Student Rag Charities.



Success for Kimia in national competition

Kimia Benam has made it through to the next round of the prestigious National Student Awards, competing against other second year, female students studying in the Built Environment.

Now in its fourth year, the National Student Awards was established by The Association of Women in Property to raise the profile of the wealth of talent and enthusiasm coming from UK universities to industry, and to nurture and encourage excellence in the property professions.

Kimia, a second year BA (Hons) Architecture student was put forward for the prize by Senior Lecturer, Kelly MacKinnon. She was then invited to an interview in Leeds where she faced a panel of six judges, for a 45 minute interview where she discussed a number of topics relating to her course, as well as delivering a presentation on her latest university project. She was relieved to be told that she had been shortlisted for the regional awards.

Now Kimia, must wait until the end of May when she will head back to Leeds for the regional competition. The winner of the regional competition will then go down to London for the final and the chance to win the £300 prize, a summer placement, a year-long mentor and countless opportunities to network at the many property related events to attend.

Speaking after the first round, Kelly said "Kimia has done extremely well making it through to the finals of the regional WIP awards. She is a real credit to the programme; working hard in the studio on her academic studies whilst taking on additional roles such as volunteering for University Open Days and meeting with potential students of the Built Environment. She is a motivated and enthusiastic student and we would like to wish her the best of luck with the rest of the competition."

Even at this stage of the competition, Kimia has contributed to the continued success of the Built Environment's female students who have participated in this award. Last year, BSc Estate Management student, Shona McLean and Foundation Building Surveying graduate, Sue Cambell both reached the top ten stage.



'Famous Four' narrowly miss out on being placed at the CIOB Challenge Final

After successfully battling through the regional heats of the CIOB Student Challenge, the team from the Built Environment made it to the final.

The team representing Northumbria University was made up of Sarah Hudson (final year Quantity Surveying), Rebecca Cowan (Year 2 Architectural Technology), Craig McKenzie (Year 2 Project Management) and Liam Taylor (Year 2 Building Project Management). They were accompanied to the final by Senior Lecturer in Construction Barry Gledson and team organiser and CIOB Regional Student Representative Natacha Redon (Year 2 Project Management).



Craig, Sarah, Rebecca, Liam (left to right)

After beating off stiff competition in the regional heats to secure their place in the final, the team worked really hard under gruelling conditions in the final and finished a very respectable 4th out of 12 competing teams. The Northumbria team was singled out by the judges with very high praise for having adhered to the brief the closest out of all the competition and answered each part of the brief.

The final was held on 25th March at the CIOB headquarters in Ascot. The team enjoyed an informal dinner held the night before for all the competitors. The next day, the pressure was on

as all the teams were given the brief and then split into separate rooms to work through the project. The teams were given two hours to complete the project putting their problem solving and team working skills to the test. The brief, set by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), who also judged the competition, was to prepare and submit a report and then deliver a presentation on the topic of retrofit and sustainability.

Speaking after the competition, Sarah Hudson said: 'The competition was tough and although the brief was interesting, the challenge was very

intense given the time scale. We all worked together as a team and to meet the requirements of the brief, we used the different skills and knowledge that we have acquired through our courses and experience outside of Northumbria University.'

Barry Gledson, Senior Lecturer in Construction reflected on the teams performance, 'there was some very tough competition at the event but the Northumbria team did an excellent job in both of the tasks. The students represented the university exceptionally well and put in great effort.'

New Student Support Team



Luke, Chris, Joanne, Kathleen, Helen, Ailsa (left to right)

A new team has been created in the School Office. The Student Support Team has been formed to provide support to students for:

- Late approvals
- PEC submissions
- Coursework receipting and feedback
- Attendance monitoring
- Placements
- Organising and promoting events for students
- Updating the website with news and events
- Induction and enrolment for new students.

The team is managed by Kathleen Donald (Principal Administrator for Programme and Student Support) with Joanne Forster as Team Leader (Student Support Senior Administrator). They are joined by Ailsa Riddell (Student Support Administrator), Helen Foley (Marketing Executive), Luke Bryant (Employment Engagement Administrator) and Chris Shepherd (Student Support Assistant Administrator). The team are also here to listen to your feedback and any concerns or issues you may have. You can email the team at be.sst@northumbria.ac.uk or just pop in to the School Office (B201).

Timetables

Students can access their timetables from 24 July for Semester One 2010/2011. To access it, go to My Northumbria. www.northumbria.ac.uk/mynorthumbria

Student Volunteers

If you fancy earning some money why not help out at the University Open Day on Friday 18 June? If you are interested, contact Helen Foley, helen.foley@northumbria.ac.uk

Addresses

Please remember to update your home and term address if you move. You can do this through My Northumbria or by calling into the School Office.

Coursework Return

The coursework return office (located at the back of the Hub) is open between 10.30am – 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

Important Dates

3 May – 28 May: Exam period

29 June: Final year students' exam results

6 July: Continuing students' exam results

16 July: Academic Congregation, 10.30am

For further information, please go to www.northumbria.ac.uk/congregation

Placement Profile

Where are you currently doing your work placement?

I am currently undertaking my work placement with EC Harris in the United Arab Emirates. My time is split between Abu Dhabi and Dubai head offices but has previously included site based work.

How did you go about applying for your work placement?

Given the economic climate I knew I would have to put a lot of effort in to attaining a placement, particularly if I expected a company to invest in relocating me!

The first thing I did was to speak to my placement tutor about my CV, covering letter and how to approach potential employers. I scoured the internet and spoke to everyone I knew who could offer advice or at least point me in the direction of someone who could.

After several interviews, the acceptance and subsequent rescinding of a job offer in Canada, and continually hassling senior managers of construction companies worldwide; I was offered a position with EC Harris in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

My advice is to keep on going even if you feel like you are not getting anywhere, the important thing is just to knock on as many doors as you can!

What do you enjoy most about your placement?

The thing I enjoy the most about my role is how varied and diverse it is. Today I am suited and booted in head office developing a Project Execution Plan for a recently won project in a neighbouring Emirate, whereas last week I was in hard hat and boots accompanying the architect on initial inspections of cladding mock ups on one of my projects.

Another element of my placement I have particularly enjoyed is the level of responsibility I have been given. Although always checked by a more senior member of staff; I have instructed works, chaired progress meetings, written reports to clients, and contributed to project procedures manuals that are now being implemented region wide.

Have you been involved in any major projects? What has been your greatest achievement so far?

The first project I was involved with was the Abu Dhabi Central Market Project. This is a £1bn+ project which includes three skyscrapers, a modern Souk, a retail emporium and 5* hotels amongst other features. It is also one of the most culturally sensitive projects in the region as it is the site of the original Abu Dhabi central market, the nucleus of this country's capital city.

My current project has not yet been released into the public domain and therefore cannot be named, it will include however a 150m diameter self supporting dome and 4 x 150m towers. This project is also quite unique in that the client is the Department of Presidents Affairs, therefore this project is being built for Sheikh Kalifah, the ruler of the UAE.

The other project I have been involved with so far is the retail fit out of the only Bloomingdales store outside of the USA.

I feel my greatest achievement so far has been becoming a functional part of the team here; I am earning the company fees and genuinely contributing. Better than making the tea I reckon!

In terms of specifics I am proud of being allowed to chair progress meetings attended by senior members of high profile companies such as Foster+ Partners.

Would you recommend a work placement year to other students studying your course?

I would undoubtedly recommend undertaking a placement year to all built environment students. Although the theory we are taught provides a great platform to learn from, actually doing the job allows you to get to grips with how construction as a whole actually functions.

Plus getting some cash in and (if you want to) the opportunity to travel can't be too bad either!

What would you like to do once you graduate?

Three months backpacking would be nice! Then hopefully I will be offered a graduate role with EC Harris in London. I would like to gain experience working in London as it is a more mature market than Dubai. The other consideration is to get into a development Management role, again preferably in London. After London who knows...

Do you think your placement will help you to achieve your career aspirations?

Definitely. Interesting projects, complicated working environments and the contacts I've made have to do me some good! And if not at least I've got a tan!

Elliot Clarkson

BSc Building Project Management



Students set to build sports facilities in Zambia

This summer, three construction students from the School will be jetting off to Zambia as part of Northumbria University's commitment to the Wallace Group's involvement with IDEALS (International Development through Excellence and Leadership in Sport).

The Wallace Group is a consortium of six universities (Bath, Durham, Loughborough, Stirling, University of Wales Institute and Northumbria).

Three second year project management students have been selected to build new sport facilities for one of the destitute schools in the town of Lusaka, Zambia. Tom Grant, Lee Jegou and Natacha Redon have been assigned to the second wave (there are three waves to the project) going to Zambia, from the 14th July to the 21st August. Over the six weeks, the students will put their construction skills into practice working towards the goal to refurbish the tennis court, fence and eventually restrooms at Matero's High School for Boys in Lusaka. The three Northumbria students are the only students on the project to be involved in the construction part of the project. The others are either studying sports or media and will be involved in coaching the pupils in various sports and making films. All the students on the project will be involved in educating the children through various activities on issues such as AIDS and hygiene.

To prepare for the trip, all the students and staff involved in the project gathered for a three day training event held at Durham University. They were given a presentation by the organisers which outlined the aims of the project but the main activity during the



Students on the 'Second Wave'

training session was... games! Puzzle games, hurdle, ball and skipping games were played that could be passed on to the Zambian children. The highlight of the training was the four Zambian guests who made their audience greet, sing, dance, clap and play Zambian style during the whole time!

The result of the three days training was about 40 volunteers forming a close community impatient to go and make a difference!

A number of fundraising activities will be taking place over the next couple of months such as cake selling, car washing and the production of a School recipe book. Look out for more information on how to buy the book.

60 Seconds with... Barry Gledson

Barry is one of our newest members of academic staff. He teaches on the construction related programmes.



What did you do before you became a lecturer?

I worked for a few major contractors, as a site based project planner. As well as working in the North East I was fortunate enough to work in London for five years and in Washington DC for a year and have been involved in the construction of quite a few large scale projects over the years. One of the projects that I am particularly proud to have worked on is the UCL cancer research laboratory in Tottenham Court Road, London.

What do you most enjoy about lecturing?

The main thing is the interaction with students in class. Students contribute so much to a session, when they are engaging with the topic and often pose very interesting questions or comments often requiring you to think on your feet. I am also currently enjoying the preparation of each session, as well as the delivery. It can be a good feeling to deliver a successful session that you have prepared well for.

Finally I also enjoy it, if I have been able to help someone or give advice in the classroom or more informally in the hub or around campus.

...what do you least like?

There's nothing really that I dislike, however I do find coming up with seminar exercises that will appeal to the entire group slightly challenging, so I tend to spend a good bit of time and effort on that aspect. So far the feedback has been good.

What was your first day like? Any embarrassing stories?

My first day was a bit of a blur – where everyone was speaking in academic code! For the first few days I thought that 840 and 831 were lesson start times rather than modules codes. I must say that from the very start everyone was, and has continued to be, very helpful and team orientated.

How would you describe your teaching style?

Hopefully it's fairly relaxed and informal. Depending upon the setting, participation is usually encouraged, as long as it's not disruptive to the group. My students might tell you differently though.

What do you do when you're not teaching?

I'm fairly outdoorsy so I like to be active on my mountain or road bike. The weather has been a bit shoddy this year so I'm looking forward to a few longer summer rides. I'm also a keen snowboarder although I haven't had the chance to get away this season so I'm currently having winter sports withdrawal symptoms.

What is your favourite sandwich filling?

Ploughmans – it has to have apple in it to be a real ploughmans though.

Project Management students learn in France

A number of Project Management students studying the dual award programme enjoyed a one-day conference held in Aix-en-Provence, France on the 24th March. The conference was organised by the Project Management Team and was hosted by the partners at L'Ecole d'Ingenierie du CESI.



Students and speakers

The theme of the conference was Project Partnering, Collaborative Ventures and Integrated Working. It enabled students, academics and industrialists to explore Organisational, Regulatory, Interpersonal, Contractual, Insurance and Technological challenges. The conference brought together around 30 students on the Dual Award Masters from Northumbria studying in the UK, CESI (France), Chalmers (Sweden) and Via (Denmark) plus 30 French students studying on two different Masters programmes in France.

The conference allowed students to engage with senior executives from a variety of industries representing aerospace, automotive and construction. There were a number of presentations and workshops throughout the day including a keynote speech from Professor David Greenwood on the Scope and Limitations of Partnering. Keith Hogg and Ian Murdoch also spoke on Evolution of Project Management and Supply Chain Behaviour in the UK Construction Sector.

Ian Murdoch, Programme Leader MSc Project Management and convener of the conference said, "The conference is about

bringing together our dual award partners in one place to share their perspectives on current issues. This programme is a family of teachers, students and collaborating industrialists who recognise the value in sharing knowledge and experience. It is only by coming together and establishing the latest thinking that we are able to take that back to our programmes, ensuring that we deliver the best teaching to our students."

The conference was a tremendous success and was enjoyed by both students and academics.

Sian Rankin, part-time Construction Project Management Student said, "the conference was really interesting, it provided us with the opportunity to mix with students from the partner institutions as well as the high profile representatives from various industries. The highlight of the conference was the debate which took place between the key speakers. Students put forward questions to be discussed and so it was interesting to hear the different views on the topics that are most relevant to us. The bridge building exercise was also fun, it appeared to be a simple task but it really made you think."



Professor David Greenwood



Students tackling the bridge building exercise

Graduating this year and not sure what to do next? Why not stay with the Built Environment and enhance your career prospects with one of our Masters programmes?

We offer a range of Masters programmes through full-time, part-time and distance learning study, including:

MSc Real Estate Management/MSc International Real Estate Management

MSc Sustainable Development

MSc Project Management/MSc Construction Project Management

MSc Surveying/Construction/Housing (distance learning)

MA Housing Policy and Management

For further details on these courses, and to view more visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/be. Alternatively contact Admissions on 0191 243 7420 or email et.admissions@northumbria.ac.uk

Upcoming Events

Graduation Ball

29 May at the Assembly Rooms

Tickets are priced at £25 and include a welcome drink, a 4 course meal and entertainment.

The ball is open to ALL students not just final year and friends and partners are welcome. Don't forget to email Natacha Redon if you want to sit with friends... tables are in groups of 10.
natacha.redon@northumbria.ac.uk

Buy your tickets now from Maureen in the Hub!

Building Services Engineering Degree Show

Thursday 27 May 2010

Students work will be displayed in the Great Hall in Sutherland Building. The Degree Show will take place in the evening and will be a chance for Building Services Engineering students to showcase their work to key people in industry.

Architecture Degree Show

17 – 25 June 2010

Come and see the final year Architecture students work displayed in the studio. The degree show takes place on the evening of Thursday 17 and will provide a chance for students to showcase their work to key people in the industry.

CIOB 'Art of Building' Photo Competition

Free to enter with a cash prize of £500 for the overall winner!

Closing date: 31 May 2010

For more information and to enter, go to www.artofbuilding.org

Biz-architecture

Picture taken by John Holmes shows the old fort on the creek at Dubai. Any ideas of what or who it looks like? Email answers to be.sst@northumbria.ac.uk

If you see any strange buildings that look like people or are just bizarre, why not take a photo and send them to the above email address.



REMEMBER

Email us with any feedback/issues/concerns at be.sst@northumbria.ac.uk
If you have a story or event, email ailsa.riddell@northumbria.ac.uk