NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ELEARNING TEAM

The Department’s elearning development and delivery unit has won a national award for its work in the field of learning technology.

Online course development, video and audio production are challenging and essential components of 21st century learning. The Department is fortunate to have a talented in-house team devoted to elearning: the Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning (TALL) unit.

In October the Association for Learning Technology (ALT), the leading UK organisation in learning technology, awarded TALL the 2010 Learning Technologist of the Year team award.

TALL has been at the forefront of the development of online distance learning since its formation in 1996. They’ve developed over 60 courses including our portfolio of highly successful online short courses, and produce video and audio in support of classes and iTunes U. This year they will take a lead role in developing the online elements of two of the Department’s biggest outreach efforts: the East Oxford Community Archaeology project and Simonyi Professor Marcus du Sautoy’s Maths in the City project. Read more here: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/ALT_win. Learn more about TALL here: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/overviewtall.php

MODERNISM DESIGN DAY

‘Perspectives on mid-century Modernism’ a one-day conference on 12 November, brings together scholars and the wider public to celebrate Modernist design history.

A panel of noted speakers will explore aspects of modernism from the 1920s to the 1960s, presenting new research. British Pop art, 1960s church architecture and the design of the domestic radio (think Bakelite!) are just a few of the topics covered. The day is presented by the Department and Kellogg College, Oxford Brookes University and the Design History Society, which is funding the event.

The event is free and open to all, but places are limited and must be reserved by Wednesday 10 November. More about the schedule and the speakers may be seen online here: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about/events/e-items/11102010103856. Learn about the Department’s MSt in the History of Design here: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/details.php?id=182

GLOBAL NUMBER 1: THE NATURE OF ARGUMENTS

Philosophy Lecturer Marianne Talbot’s new podcast The Nature of Arguments was the iTunes U global number one download in October.

This new podcast follows in the footsteps of her phenomenally successful podcast A Romp Through the History of Philosophy, which has been downloaded half a million times – a hefty percentage of the University’s six million total downloads.

In September Marianne gave a talk, ‘A Global Success’, at a national conference on podcasting at Norway’s Oslo University.

PUT FAITH IN MUTUALS

A new report calls for the promotion of mutuals to aid economic stability.

Department Director Professor Jonathan Michie has authored a report which argues that a stronger mutual sector would promote effective competition and mitigate against systemic risk.

The report produces a raft of recommendations to help the government to support its Coalition Agreement commitment to foster diversity in financial services and promote mutuals.

Professor Michie said: ‘The government must not allow the UK’s financial services sector to return to the “business as usual” model that has proved so costly to the economy and to public finances.’ Read the full story at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2010/100917.html
A DECADE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Philip Healy, Director of Public Programmes, retired in August after a decade in post. We asked Philip to reflect on his ten years here in the Department, and the road ahead for continuing education.

'I have been influenced throughout my career by Newman's high vision of the University – that it is a place where we learn to think. I've always tried to keep Newman's vision in mind as an administrator and have tried to create the environment in which this type of education could take place.

'Often my contribution has been at some distance from the classroom: meeting requirements set by government bodies, finding ways to extend educational opportunity, and finding a balance between dwindling government funding and course fees. All of this 'administration' was in the cause of learning for its own sake and to develop the power to think in students.

'Universities are very special places, and I believe that they have a role in society which is broader than the education of young undergraduates and being places where research is undertaken. I see them as having a vital role in keeping democracy up to the mark.

'Political, social, economic, cultural, scientific, ethical, philosophical, theological issues confront each of us daily. Universities exist to examine these issues; I believe that the citizen is entitled to look to the university to help in his or her own intellectual journey through life. Departments for continuing education are particularly well suited to providing the best means for adults to be able to do this.

'The loss of core public funding for much of continuing education in the past ten years has been the most striking (and alarming) change I have seen. Many universities have simply walked away from continuing education or restricted it to vocational and professional development programmes. I hope Oxford will keep faith with the mission of liberal adult education, particularly as it was a pioneer in its early development. One real danger is that university continuing education will be priced out of the reach of many who should have access to it.

'One encouraging development over the past decade has been the role of IT in extending the geographical reach of OUDCE, through the offering of online classes. I believe the demand for liberal adult education will not disappear; with an ageing society it may very well increase. The challenge is to fund the provision.

'I was delighted when Professor Michie asked me to continue as Chairman of the Friends of Oxford Lifelong Learning in my retirement. The Friends support the work of the Department – morally as well as financially. Friends' subscriptions and donations enable us to provide student bursaries and gifts to the Library every year. I intend to keep in touch with the life and work of the Department through the Friends' wonderful social and academic programme, and through enjoying our weekly classes programme as a student!'
NEW FACES FOR EAST OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Jane Harrison and Paula Levick have joined the Department as our new community archaeology project officers on the East Oxford Community Archaeology project. Funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund award, both posts will bring a heightened level of community involvement to this exciting, ongoing project.

Jane has been involved for some years with the East Oxford project on a consultancy basis. She is Excavation Director for the Birsay- Skail Landscape Archaeology Project and works with volunteers and local people on excavations. She teaches archaeology courses in OUDCE and is working towards a part-time DPhil at Kellogg.

Paula, who completed our Advanced Diploma in Archaeological Practice, has worked for several years on Oxford University’s Vale and Ridgeway project as an excavation supervisor. She is also in the process of completing a DPhil in landscape archaeology.

The archaeology of East Oxford includes traces of Iron Age, Roman and Viking settlements, a medieval leper hospital still with its original chapel and Civil War siege works, in addition to its more modern industrial heritage. A new, three-year phase of the East Oxford Community Archaeology project was launched in October. Read more here: http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2010/101910_2.html

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MUNIKA CHUDASAMA

Munira Chudasama, 74, is a woman on a mission: to explore educational opportunities at the very best universities around the world.

This past summer Munira attended Oxford University’s Summer School for Adults (OUSSA), taking three week-long classes in Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Buddhism. Two years ago she went to Harvard for a four-week summer school to explore the intersection of sociology, gender and work. In each experience she cherishes the opportunity to explore and discuss the hard issues. ‘The more challenging it is, the more I love it!’, she says.

Munira is a native of Mumbai with Master’s degrees in commerce and sociology. She set herself up in business in 1969, opening a boutique as a designer and purveyor of French-style fashion with local embroidery – while raising two children and participating fully in both her traditional Indian family life and the Mumbai political scene.

She’s currently president of the Ladies Wing of the Indian Merchant Chamber, where she focuses on the promotion of rural women leaders. ‘Marginalised women who filled a gap and brought about change in their community – we wanted to bring them into focus and help them further’, she says. In 2007 she decided to publish their stories in book form, Grass Roots Divas.

Read Munira’s full story: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/students/alumni/spotlights/summerschools.php and learn more about OUSSA here: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/summerschools/oussa/
CREATIVE WRITING NEWS

Student and Alumni activity: MSt alumnus Jeremy Hughes is publishing a novel, Dovetail, due out in May. (http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0956012531).

Current student Catherine Higgins has a play – Just Two People – at the Burton Taylor studio, running 9-13 November. (http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com/btsstudent/).

Australian Jennifer Thorp, last year’s Clarendon Scholar, won the London Festival Fringe short story award in July.

The Parallel Universe poetry competition launched by the Radcliffe Science Library and Kellogg College Creative Writing Centre to mark 350 years of the Royal Society, has announced its winners – and six out of the total ten were MSt in Creative Writing graduates: Sarah Darby, Ciorsdan Glass, Lucy Rutter, Patrick Toland, John White and Roy Woolley.

The ten winning poems are exhibited at the Radcliffe Science Library and online. http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/science/services/poetry

Dr Clare Morgan spoke at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management on the subject of her research into poetry and business (What Poetry Brings to Business, University of Michigan Press 2010). http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0472050869

Dr John Ballam, Course Director of the Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing, participated in conferences and gatherings in Turin and Stresa in September, joining top names in literature, publishing, film, TV production, psychology and academia with a view to establishing a new European forum for creative writing and business.

MATHS? ECOLOGY? HELP US DECIDE

The Department is conducting two surveys and we’d love your opinion.

Maths: we’re considering offering a course covering some aspects of undergraduate mathematics for those who have not had a chance to study mathematics at this level or who simply want to update their skills. The course would cover a spectrum of key topics without going into great depth. Is there need for such a course, and what would be the preferred course format and content? http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/xKQFC3B

A new postgraduate Certificate in Ecological Survey Techniques would be a one year, part-time modular course of postgraduate education and training, mostly taught online. We are gauging support for the proposal. http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PGCert_EST_Proposal

IN BRIEF

Recently retired Director of Studies in Archaeology Dr Gary Lock has a new monograph out: A Valley in La Rioja: The Najerilla Project http://amazon.com/1905905157. Fieldwork and excavations examine the varied landscapes of northern Spain’s La Rioja province. Full reports are given of the structures, material culture and economy of the settlements, together with a wide-ranging overview of the archaeology and history of this hitherto little known area.

Iding Haidir, a student on the Department’s Postgraduate Diploma in International Wildlife Conservation Practice, was interviewed on BBC Radio Oxford. Haidir, who monitors tiger and wildcat populations in Sumatra, speaks of the new knowledge and understanding he’ll take home. Listen: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/

The Set Aside a Week for Study in Oxford Next Summer

The Oxford University Summer School for Adults (OUSSA) offers credit-bearing six-day seminars held in Rewley House. Enrolment opens mid November.

The Oxford Experience offers friendly study-group seminars of five days in the imposing surroundings of Christ Church. Enrolment open now.

Courses fill rapidly, see: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/summerschools/