

Welcome to the June ebulletin with the latest news and items of interest to staff and students across the *Universitas 21* network!

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U21 AGM & Symposium

Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and senior staff and faculty from around the network have recently returned from Korea University, where U21's Annual Network Meeting, AGM and Symposium took place at the end of May. The meetings were highly successful and led to a number of key decisions being made, which will shape the future of the network (see below!). Twenty U21 universities were represented and with over 50 delegates present, it enabled some in-depth discussions to be held and important relationships to be formed and nurtured. The fourth U21 Symposium took place on Thursday 21 May and focused on the role universities play in shaping and influencing public policy and the key note speeches and ensuring discussions were highly stimulating and thought-provoking.

The hospitality shown by Korea University was outstanding and colleagues around the network now look forward to building on the relationships built at this intensive three-day series of meetings.

An in-depth report will appear in the forthcoming U21 Newsletter.

Joint PhD Memorandum of Understanding

At the U21 Annual Network Meeting in Korea last month, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents from fourteen U21 signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a joint PhD programme which enables doctoral students to embark on joint degrees and considerably enhances their research and employment opportunities on an international scale.

Unlike a number of other joint programmes, this MoU gives an over-arching framework for universities to create tailor-made programmes of study for each student, taking individual research needs into account and enabling collaboration with another of the network's universities. Speaking on the launch of the programme, Professor John Casteen, President of the University of Virginia and Chair of the *Universitas 21* network, said *"The signing of this MoU today marks a key development in the way in which U21 universities are approaching study and research. Not only does this distinguish us from the other programmes already in existence, by being focused clearly on the needs of the individual students, but it sets a new benchmark for international collaboration at PhD level and a trend which I believe is one which should be followed by other major networks and consortia."*

The programme grew out of discussions among Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) within the *Universitas 21* network, and was led by Professor Mary Bownes at the University of Edinburgh.

Further information about the DDoGS group, including joint PhDs can be found at <http://www.universitas21.com/DDOGS.html>

U21 Sustainability Declaration & Summer Institute on Sustainability

U21 Presidents and Vice-Chancellors also signed a second important document at the Annual Network Meeting – the U21 Declaration on Sustainability. This emphasises the important role that universities can and do play in addressing the decline of biodiversity, of energy, food and water security, of climate change, of economic sustainability and of human health.

Through the Statement, which is one strand of the network's activities in support of its Year of Sustainability, the *Universitas 21* member universities commit themselves to ensuring a sustainable future:

- through research, teaching, community partnerships and demonstrable actions, to advance timely solutions to ecological, societal and economic problems,
- through engagement with civil society, industry and government, to accelerate these solutions beyond the campus, and
- by working together collaboratively and cooperatively, to achieve more than is possible by working alone.

Each university will:

- develop, publish and monitor targets;
- share the results with each other;
- engage in research towards a sustainable future;
- establish the university campus as a living laboratory for a sustainable future;
- emphasise citizenship & engagement to promote faculty, staff, and student volunteerism, and
- build capacity through cross-network collaboration and work.

The network as a whole recognises the importance of this commitment and sees it as a necessary step in addressing the increasingly relevant issue of sustainability and ways in which universities can progress it both internally and externally.

Linked to this, The University of British Columbia is hosting a Summer Institute on Sustainability from 20 to 24 July. The Summer Institute is an intensive professional development programme targeted at administrators in corporations, local and provincial governments, and universities and colleges who are working to integrate sustainability as a core value in their organization and offers a excellent opportunity to partake in an intensive and intimate educational experience that will leave participants better prepared to take sustainability to a whole new level in their organisations.

Members of U21 institutions receive a 10% discount on registration fees!

Details can be found at <http://www.universitas21.com/events.html>

Graduate Research Conference details online

Plans for the second U21 Graduate Research Conference are well under way. This year's topic is "Sustainable Cities for the Future" which will cover many disciplines, looking at the Built Environment; Energy; Water; Health; Society and Governance and the Environment. In addition to a small number of keynote lectures by experts across these fields, all graduate participants will present a short talk and a poster. There will be a variety of additional activities and visits to increase students' understanding of the issues, to stimulate creativity and develop general skills. The two venues (Melbourne and Brisbane) will provide excellent examples of some of the key issues for cities of the future.

Details of the 2009 GRC and the papers from the 2008 GRC can all be found at <http://www.universitas21.com/GradResearch.htm>

FINE growing strongly

The third FINE (Forum for International Networking in Education) event took place in late April and has reported a growth in strength and purpose over the past year. There is now a management team which is co-ordinating the work of the group, enabling students across the network to work together to exchange ideas, experiences and research opportunities. Originally an initiative of the Deans of Education group, FINE is run

by graduate students for graduate students and provides some excellent networking opportunities for researchers starting out in their careers.

The first FINE newsletter was published in May and the group's webpage has recently been updated with more information about their activities. <http://www.universitas21.com/Education/FINE.html>

2nd U21 Teaching & Learning Conference

Registrations will soon be opening for the second U21 Teaching & Learning Conference, taking place at the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China. The conference, entitled *Teaching & Learning for Employability in a Global Economy*, builds on the conference held at the University of Glasgow in February 2008 and will focus on

- bringing together the institutional leaders from across the U21 network;
- discussing issues of common interest in teaching and learning;
- highlighting opportunities for collaboration in teaching and learning;
- encouraging the development of peer networks providing engagement opportunities relating to teaching and learning and careers.

The conference will be a mix of keynote lectures, conference papers and workshops.

The conference fee will be US\$160, to include accommodation, and details will soon be available on the U21 website. Watch this space!

Innovation in Mind – Lund University seminar

Lund University, Region Skåne and partners will be hosting an international conference entitled *Innovation in Mind* from 15 to 17 September and U21 members are warmly invited to attend. By taking new approaches to innovation, the conference aims to illustrate important innovation issues from a global perspective; to create interchanges among different areas of knowledge, and to contribute to a better innovation climate.

Key areas which are to be discussed include

- User Driven Innovation: How can users' experiences be effectively implemented in new products and services?
- Open Innovation: Is the R&D department an antiquated concept? How do companies gain access to the right competence at the right point in the innovation process?
- Social and Financial Innovation: How can we secure the financial resources necessary for innovation, and how can we bring about necessary innovations when we lack the financial resources?

Further details can be found at <http://www.innovationinmind.se>

Any more news?

Issue 15 of the *Universitas 21* newsletter will be published later this month. If you have any news, stories, fellowship/scholarship travel reports or photos from events around the network which may be of interest to other U21 colleagues, please send them to Clare Noakes at the U21 Secretariat (c.e.noakes@bham.ac.uk). The deadline for any submissions is Wednesday 10 June. Previous editions of the newsletter can be found at <http://www.universitas21.com/newsletters.html>