

# Universe

Autumn 2009

## Technology boost for students and business

Work is progressing well on an £11 million project at The University of Northampton, designed to provide a technological boost for both students and businesses across the county.

The Grade II listed Kingsley Park building adjacent to the University's Avenue Campus is being refurbished and developed into a technology and research centre to provide an extended home for the University's School of Applied Sciences.

Kingsley Park will also house the University's new 'Nvision' centre - a state-of-the-art facility providing specialist services to help businesses develop and promote their products using the latest 3D modelling and visualisation capabilities, and to enrich students' learning experience.

The venture is expected to be fully operational by April 2010. It is supported by the British Institute of Non Destructive Testing and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council, Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd, the East Midlands Development Agency, and the European Regional Development Fund, with the backing of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.



Kingsley Park building

Students celebrate success at the 2009 Summer Graduations



## Celebrating success

Over 2,000 students successfully graduated from The University of Northampton, celebrating with proud family and friends during a week of ceremonies in July.

Special prizes, many sponsored by business and industry, were also awarded in individual subject areas to outstanding students. This year award winners included a BA Graphic Communication student who scooped a prestigious 'Best New Blood' award at the influential national Design & Art

Direction exhibition in London.

Trevor Baylis OBE, world famous inventor of the revolutionary clockwork radio, and former Junior Health Minister Baroness Julia Cumberlege, were among the VIPs to receive an Honorary Doctorate from the University.

## NBS shortlisted for award

The University's Northampton Business School (NBS) has been shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Awards for its work around widening participation, delivering enterprise in schools and prisons.

## Volunteering victory

Students were honoured for their voluntary work at the University's Centre for Community Volunteering annual Awards Ceremony in the summer. This year a special Award was presented to a group of students who set up community language interpretation project 'Lost in Translation', to translate information leaflets and documents for schools, prisons, women's refuges and country parks across Northamptonshire.

## Darwin festival on campus

To celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of 'On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection', the University held a one-day festival of lectures. Darwin had several links with Northamptonshire including as a member of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, which is now one of the oldest surviving societies of its kind.

## Geography road trip

Geography students recently spent two weeks in the deserts of Arizona, Nevada and Utah in the US to discover more about tourism and the environment of the three states. They had the opportunity to experience six national parks, including the Grand Canyon and Zion, Hoover Dam and the Navajo Indian reservation.

## Students in the House

Four Northampton Politics students are currently on three-month internships in the offices of MPs, with three of them working at the Houses of Parliament. They have a rare opportunity to study the political system from the inside, bringing alive the theories and concepts studied in their degree module 'Democracy in Action'.

## Business of the future

The University of Northampton is holding 'Be. In Business' on Wednesday 11 November 2009; an experience day for Year 12 students and equivalent interested in Business and related courses.

The day will feature subject-based workshops, along with careers and admissions advice, focused on:

- Accounting and Finance
- Business and Management
- Travel and Tourism
- Marketing
- Business IT

For more information and to reserve a place, please contact us on **01604 893268** or email [schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk)

## Winning designs on runway

Budding fashion designers from regional schools were recognised for their talents in a nationwide competition for students from Years 10-13 across the UK, run by The University of Northampton.

Joint first prize of the University's annual fashion design competition was awarded to Jade Willis of Cedars Upper School, Leighton Buzzard, and Shelley Dwight of Aylesbury High School. They took inspiration from the brief which was to create a special occasion garment using 'up-cycled' materials; sustainable and ethical fabric and manufacturing which results in a high-end product.

Congratulations also went to Laura McLean of Northampton High School and Louise Harrison from Oxford, who were runners-up in the competition.

The students were presented with certificates of achievement on the runway in front of an audience at the University's Graduate Fashion Show at the Royal & Derngate theatre in Northampton.

Look out for details of a new fashion design competition in the new year.



'Design a Dress' winners with their friends and family at the 2009 Fashion Show

Students enjoy chatting to a Student Ambassador at a Be. event in 2009



## Be. on campus

For the third year running The University of Northampton will be holding a programme of on-campus experience events for students in Year 12 or equivalent, and this year there are more to choose from.

The experience days aim to give students a taste of what is on offer at university with a focus on a particular subject area. 'Be.' events feature workshops and seminars with advice such as presentation skills and preparing a portfolio, as well as information on admissions and careers.

A full list of 'Be.' events is on the back page of this issue of Universe. Please contact Melanie Fowler, Recruitment and Liaison Manager, on **01604 893299** or email [schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk) if you are interested in bringing your students along to campus or if you would like further information.

## Music biz tips

Year 12 students from across Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Oxfordshire picked up top tips about how to make it in the music industry during an event run by the University's Northampton Business School and Business Link Northamptonshire.

The 95 students were joined at 'Create Your Own Future' by special guest Rob Harris, lead guitarist of Jamiroquai, who spoke about the music industry as a business, as well as taking part in a useful Q&A session.

Students took part in a variety of workshops such as designing new products for the music industry, to boost their confidence and encourage them to think about their own futures.

# HE update

Some of the recent HE headlines hitting the press...

### Help with finance next year

Financial support including Maintenance Grants, Maintenance Loans and income thresholds for students entering higher education in 2010/11 will remain at 2009/10 levels, but there will be a slight increase in fees (and therefore also Tuition Fee Loans) to £3,290.

### Rise in non-traditional students to HE

Figures released by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) show more people from lower socio-economic groups are going into higher education, with the proportion increasing three percentage points since 2002. Overall there are 300,000 more students in higher education than there were in 1997.

### Grades at all time high

A record-breaking number of A grades at A-level were awarded this year with the overall pass rate rising to 97.5% - an improvement in grades for the 27th year in a row - putting pressure on university places. There were over 60,000 more applicants for university places in the UK than this time last year. The increase is reported as being due to more 18-year-olds in the population this year as well as the effects of the recession.

Earlier this year the Government put a 10,000 cap on the expansion of places for this autumn because of budget restraints, but later offered funding for 13,000 more places as numbers of applicants surged.

### Universities face clearing pressure

Pressure on places means fewer students found a course through Clearing this year. Around 22,000 places were available in August; about half the number allocated through Clearing last year. Hits on the UCAS website were 50% up on A-level results day last year, with a reported 1.7m searches for courses on its clearing website. Calls to its helpline were close to 15,000 by the end of the first day.

Sources: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [www.dius.gov.uk](http://www.dius.gov.uk); UCAS [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk); BBC News online [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)



## You've got mail

The first edition of 'Be.mail' popped into the inboxes of 50 registered sixth form and college students in August. The monthly e-newsletter is produced by The University of Northampton's Recruitment and Liaison team and contains hints and tips on the next stages, applying for university and making decisions.

To sign up to receive Be.mail, please visit [www.be4university.com](http://www.be4university.com)

## From Northampton to Sydney

A team of BA Acting students from the University toured Northamptonshire schools with the forum theatre performance 'HE for me...?' in July.

'HE for me...?' was devised and developed by the students working in collaboration with the Roy Leighton Partnership. The project was co-ordinated by the Northamptonshire Raising Standards Partnership Trust and The University of Northampton.

The performance provided sixth-formers with helpful information and insights into life at university, covering a range of relevant topics such as deciding to apply for university, first day nerves, work/play balance and living on a budget.

The initiative moved on to feature at the International Drama in Education Research Institute Conference in Sydney, Australia.

## Diary dates

Useful dates over 2009/10 to help you plan your academic year.

### 6 October, 4.15pm – Higher Education Alliance (HEA) meeting

An opportunity for teachers and advisers to find out more about the courses and activities on offer at the University, with a focus on Applied Sciences and Business

### 7 October – Business Day

For Year 12 and equivalent students interested in Business and related courses

### 17 October – Open Day

A chance to take a look around the University and find out about courses

### 7 November – Open Day

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### 11 November – Be. in Business

For Year 12 and equivalent students interested in Business

### 18 November – Create Your Future

An opportunity for Year 12 and equivalent students to explore their creative and enterprising potential

### 21 January, 4.15pm – HEA meeting

With a focus on Arts and Social Sciences

### 10 February – Be. Creative

Arts experience day for Year 12 and equivalent students

### 17 March – Be. Switched On

Computing experience day for Year 12 and equivalent students

### 25 March – Be. An Inspiration

Experience day for Year 12 and equivalent students interested in Primary Teaching, Early Years Teaching and related courses

### 30/31 March – Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Higher Education Convention

UK university information stands

### 9 June, 4.15pm – HEA meeting

With a focus on Education and Health

### 13 June – Open Day

A chance to take a look around the University and find out about courses

### 16 June – Graduate Fashion Show

Showcase of student fashion collections with reduced ticket rates for schools and colleges

### 22 June – Be. Biological

For Year 12 and equivalent students interested in Human Biology/Biosciences

### 30 June – Create your future

An opportunity for Year 12 and equivalent students to explore their creative and enterprising potential

Open Day visitors in 2009



For more information about how we can help you, contact Melanie Fowler, Recruitment and Liaison Manager, on 01604 893299 or email [schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:schools.liaison@northampton.ac.uk)

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