

White Paper: The Academy responds

Miriam David was on hand to collect the very first copy of the White Paper on Higher Education when it was published at the end of January. This meant that the Academy was able to make an immediate initial response in the form of a letter to the Education and Skills Secretary Charles Clarke. This response was also made available as a press release. It appears in full on the Guardian Higher web pages, and resulted in an appearance on Radio 4's *The Learning Curve* by Miriam David to discuss the relationship between teaching and research.

The Academy's consultation process on the White Paper continues. We have organised a special half-day Conference, dealing with social science perspectives on the prospects for research, and teaching and learning, in universities and higher education.

The conference is from 2pm on Wednesday April 9, at the PSI (near Mornington Crescent tube station).

Details from our Director:

Michael.C.Warren@bitinternet.com

Focus on Roberts & the RAE, and meet the Chief Execs

The Academy and the Standing Conference on Arts and the Social Sciences (SCASS) are holding a joint conference on *Research Futures and Visions*. The day will begin with coffee, followed by Working Groups to draft a 'One Voice' document drawn from submissions about the future of the RAE to Roberts from the arts and social sciences. After lunch there will be presentations from Professor Ian Diamond AcSS, the new CE of the ESRC, and Professor Geoffrey Grossick, CE of the AHRB. The main conference outcome will be an agreed 'one voice' document for use in responding to Roberts.

For a booking form, please contact Michael Warren. The conference will take place at the British Academy on Thursday March 6th, 2003, from 10.30 to 3.45.

Vienna: The ISSC Declares

Ian Forbes presented findings on cutting edge and international research in social science at the opening plenary of the first conference of UNESCO-funded International Social Sciences Council (ISSC).

The conference focused on the social sciences and public policy, and at the end of proceedings issued the Vienna Declaration on Social Sciences. There are three main elements of the Declaration, to which all the participants contributed and agreed. The first calls for UNESCO, the ISSC and all national and international social science bodies to ensure that social sciences are used to address a series of major global challenges, such as inequalities, abuse of human rights, inter-group conflict, growth, competition for resources, and health – especially HIV/AIDS. The second concerns the need collaboratively to build social science research infrastructure and capacity in less-developed regions, while the third presses for recognition of the importance of evidence-based policy and the appropriate use of research findings by policy makers.

The Academy has become an institutional member of the ISSC. This will ensure – for the first time since the inception of the committee nearly fifty years ago – that all of UK social science is represented in this forum.

Nominate Academicians now

It is time to nominate outstanding scholars and practitioners in the social sciences - who have demonstrated a commitment to the aims of the Academy - for consideration as Academicians. Each Academician may nominate one individual per year, while learned societies are encouraged to nominate at least six (2 of whom should be practitioners). At present, we do not proceed with nominations if the nominee is not ordinarily resident in the UK, or if the nominee is serving as an elected member of a national parliament or assembly.

Deadline for nominations: 31 May. Please send them to our Director, who will keep you informed of progress.

The 2004 Spending Review

Ian Diamond has just written to members of various ESRC Boards and Colleges and Centre and Programme Directors to ask for ideas for the next review. He wants 'an initial slate of attractive new ideas'. For the early meetings, ESRC wants to get some impressive things on the table, thereby indicating the serious and substantive nature of full proposals to come.

What is needed are large scale, imaginative, forward-looking ideas in two categories:

- A: those firmly located with the social sciences
- B: those which will engage the social sciences with leading edge research elsewhere – in the natural sciences, engineering and medicine, or the arts and humanities.

Ideal length of a proposal is no more than half a page in length, and should address scientific interest, policy significance and outcomes. As ever, the time scale is short – we have until February 28 to make submissions.

New Training Programmes

Want high quality training for PhD supervision developed specifically for social scientists? The Academy has agreed to a proposal by Sara Delamont AcSS to provide such specialist training in variety of venues across the UK, with preferential arrangements for Academicians who assist her to set up training sessions. The plans also include training in relation CASE studentships, and the Research Councils' Concordat. Further details will follow.

AcSS Honours

Congratulations to Professor Teresa Rees AcSS, who has been made a Commander of the British Empire for her services to education and to equal opportunities, and to

Professor Sonia Jackson AcSS, who became an Officer of the British Empire for her services to young people in public care in the New Year Honours List.

Evaluating Social Science

UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) programme has agreed to organise an international workshop on evaluation in the social sciences. This is in response to the concerns expressed by social scientists from 46 countries at the recent ISSC conference in Vienna about performance evaluation and the reliance on models derived from the natural sciences, and the transmission of social science knowledge in local/global and policy contexts. Ian Forbes has been invited to participate in the workshop. He will be talking about the nature of social science in the UK, as well as its comparative standing. He will also be representing the Academy, and will be able to take forward suggestions from colleagues about any other aspects of evaluation that you think need to be raised in this forum. He would be delighted to hear from you: ian.forbes@nottingham.ac.uk. The workshop is planned for June 26-27.

Committee Dates

- Committee of Learned Societies: March 10
- Academy Council: March 10
- Academy AGM: May 19

Correction

Apologies to Professor Dorota Iwaniec AcSS, for incorrectly listing her affiliation in the last Bulletin. She is, of course, Director of Child Care Research and Professor of Social Work at Queen's University, Belfast.

New Fellowship Scheme

The ESRC will shortly announce a new award for 'acknowledged scholarly leaders' in the social sciences. Funding for up to three years, plus resources for support, will be available. There will be no pre-determined area or methodology. The Academy welcomes this development.