

Academician appointed first Chief Social Researcher

Sue Duncan AcSS is the UK's first Chief Social Research Officer. The appointment is a fitting recognition of her professional contribution, while the new post is a welcome acknowledgement of the importance of the social sciences for the policy process. The Academy extends its congratulations.

The Next RAE: 2008-or later?

In a meeting with Gareth Roberts, who is heading the HEFCE review of the RAE, Academy members Dominic Abrams, Ian Forbes, Susanne MacGregor, Carol Riddington and John Scott discussed the future of the RAE. Some sort of mechanism for the allocation of research monies will exist and the dual funding system will continue. That much is certain. Ideally, the next exercise should involve a lighter touch, while maintaining rigour. How that is done is still open to question.

Two models were discussed. The first is an improved peer review system and the creation of a 5** rating. Model two would allocate a percentage of resources on the basis of a set of metrics (external income, weighted publication counts, postgraduate students) and the remainder on the basis of university bids for Centre of Excellence funding.

Model two makes a clearer distinction between reward and incentive structures, but holds the danger that vice-chancellors will be more inclined to bid for large Centres of Excellence, and thereby favour science-based proposals at the expense of more bijou groupings that are typical of social science excellence.

Gareth Roberts provided a wealth of detail about possible technical improvements to the eventual review process, and is keen to have further input. One of the more interesting ideas is drastically to reduce the number of units of assessment, which led the Academy team to suggest that researchers could

be disaggregated from their disciplines, and entered on the basis of the type of research output. He left us with five things to consider in respect of both models:

- The ideal size of units of assessment
- The most appropriate peer review process
- The behaviour (individual and institutional) that should be encouraged and/or discouraged
- The assessment of practice-based research
- Identifying 'Cinderella' areas needing special support

The Academy argued strongly for a longer review period, given that much social science research output is in book form. This could amount to between seven and ten years. It is Howard Newby's policy that the nature of the next review exercise should be decided before the review period commenced. This explains why there will not be a review until 2008 at the earliest. The Academy sought and seemed to get an assurance that there would be no 'gap years', when publications went uncounted.

The date for submitting your views on these and other issues to HEFC is November 29. The Academy will be making a formal submission. Should you wish your views included, please email us at admin@the-academy.org.uk.

Janet Lewis AcSS is also interested in hearing your views on the RAE. She is leading a 'mini-commission' that will take a searching look at the impact of research assessment on the social sciences, not just in universities, but in the UK as a whole (Janet@jdlewis.freemove.co.uk)

First Academician for ESRC

The appointment of Founding Academician Professor Ian Diamond as the Chief Executive of the ESRC is a very pleasing development. Ian has long been an active contributor to the Academy, and will bring both energy and a keen strategic sense to his new post. We wish him well.

An Academy Journal

Council has commissioned a team led by Patrick Dunleavy AcSS to develop a proposal for an innovative new journal.

His team will present its proposal in March 2003, which should form the basis for Council to invite tenders from publishers, with the first issue in 2006.

2nd Consultancy Completed

Ian Forbes AcSS and Dominic Abrams AcSS submitted a 'Road Map of International Research Opportunities in the Social Sciences' to the ESRC in October. The findings detail the diversity of international research that takes place across the disciplines, and shows that the UK is at the most important junction, mediating between the US (the world leader) and Europe. UK social science emerges as a strong second in terms of quality, innovation and range of research, and well ahead of the candidates for third place.

Academy Director: Another First

The Academy has appointed its first Director, to deal with the Academy's growing administrative and organisational workload. He will extend our capacity to meet the needs of members and increase our lobbying activities. Michael Warren, who takes up the post at the beginning of December, has worked for the Consumers' Association, the Central Office of Information and the Market Research Association. He is currently a freelance researcher and writer.

Michael has had links with the social sciences over a number of years. He has concentrated on public sector research throughout his career, and served for four years on the ESRC's Research Resources Committee. He was a founder member of the Social Research Association and has written and lectured on survey research methodology and management

both in the UK and abroad. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Surrey, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Chair of Council, Ian Forbes, said: 'We are delighted to be joined by such an experienced and able person. We are very confident that Michael will make a great contribution to the rapid development of the Academy'.

Welcome, too, to Fiona House, who is doing excellent work as our book keeper and database manager.

NZ-UK Research Link

The NZ-UK Link Foundation and the Academy are delighted to announce a new grant to encourage links between social research in the two countries. The aim is to support comparative social and policy research, and thus strengthen the relationship between the two countries. A grant of up to £10,000 is available to fund travel and living expenses for work in New Zealand.

The Scheme was launched at the Welcome Lunch for New Academicians at the House of Lords on November 15, by Mrs Anna Yallop, a Trustee of the NZ-UK Link Foundation, who pointed out the several advantages of New Zealand as a site of social scientific interest. Full details of the grant are on the Academy web site. Application deadline: January 1, 2003.

The FP6 Priority 7 Network

The Academy is a member of this new network, organised by the ESRC. The aims are to contribute to the development of the work programmes, and encourage and assist researchers to apply. The First Call is December 17, with two deadlines, 19 March 2003 and 15 December 2003. The total budget is almost €100million.

The Academy continues to press for the mainstreaming of social science in all the priority areas. Current intelligence is that the Commission's requirements will lead to significant funding opportunities in research areas traditionally

dominated by the physical sciences. The contact for the P7 Network is Ian Forbes.

Committee News

Miriam David AcSS has become the new **Chair of the Committee of Academicians, for which congratulations and thanks are due.** Miriam is also chairing a group composed of Alison Assiter, Avtar Brah, Ian Gough and Doreen Massey. They are charged with preparing the Academy's response to the Higher Education White Paper. She would be grateful for your input at eda35@educ.keele.ac.uk.

Committee Dates

- Committee of Learned Societies: January 13
- Committee of Academicians: January 13
- Academy Council: January 20
- Nominations Committee: February 3

Other News

Bob Blackburn AcSS has agreed to led the **Immigration and Asylum Network.** He can be contacted at r.blackburn@kingston.ac.uk.

Deans of Social Science will be invited to **join a new network.** The aim is to develop a Dean's Group, to increase contact between social scientists at this strategic level in universities, and to provide new avenues for communication with the Academy.

New Survey of Academicians

A new survey will soon be winging its way **to all Academicians.** This survey, developed by Dominic Abrams, Jean Martin and Miriam David, seeks to ensure that our records are accurate and gathers information that will assist the Academy to serve the membership more effectively. Council is grateful to those members who responded to the last survey, which was not too long ago. With your help, we will be able to feed back some very interesting

findings and information, and provide the basis for innovations and networks.

Relations with the ESRC

Dianne Berry AcSS has been developing **contacts with the ESRC, as part of her work on Council.** This led to a very constructive meeting with Chris Caswill and Jeremy Neathy recently. Biannual bilateral meetings have been agreed, and Dianne, along with Dominic Abrams and Ian Forbes, will be visiting Swindon to meet with the senior members of the ESRC to explain the Academy's aims and activities. This is a welcome restoration of close links with the ESRC.

Meeting the Commission

David Rhind and Huw Beynon of the **Commission on the Social Sciences met with Ian Forbes, Dominic Abrams, Susanne MacGregor, Carol Riddington and John Scott to discuss the report, which is due at the end of the year.** Academy representatives responded to a range of Commission concerns, such as:

- means of facilitating multi-disciplinary research
- communicating with policy-makers and the public
- the relative quality of UK social science research
- iconic examples of the impact of social science
- who should speak for the social sciences?

Some of these items prompted a useful debate, but the Academy team was clear that there was strong evidence about the high quality of UK social science research. They were also able to provide examples where social science made a real difference (most notably, the development of UK AIDS policy to avert an epidemic against which science and medicine were at that stage powerless).

The Academy was equally clear about who should speak for the social sciences. Key criteria for responses from organisations were: 1) recognised expertise across all the disciplines 2) representational legitimacy and 3) the capacity to address scholarly and practitioner concerns.

That description only happens to fit the Academy, of course, but it is no mistake that the Academy is in the form that it is, and is able to make a credible claim to speak for the social sciences.

Welcome Lunch for New Academicians

Thirty-five New Academicians enjoyed a Lunch at the House of Lords on November 15, hosted by Lord Parekh. Many others wrote to say that other commitments prevented their attendance. There will be a further opportunity to meet Academicians and representatives of learned societies at the President's Dinner early in 2003. Our new Director, Michael Warren, will be in touch before the end of the year with details.

New Academicians 2002

A warm welcome to all New Academicians from the President and the members of the Council.

Prof Dominic Abrams, University of Kent at Canterbury
Prof Jane Aldgate, Open University
Prof Floya Anthias, University of Greenwich
Prof Jane Askham, Kings College London
Prof John Bachtler, University of Strathclyde
Prof Robert Benewick, University of Sussex
Prof John Benyon, University of Leicester
Prof Rob Blackburn, University of Kingston
Prof Mary Boyle, University of East London
Dr Avtar Brah, University of London
Prof Glynis Breakwell, University of Bath
Prof Stephen Broadberry, University of Warwick
Prof Alice Brown, University of Edinburgh
Mr David Budge, The Times Educational Supplement
Prof Joan Busfield, University of Essex
Prof Michael Byram, University of Durham
Prof David Byrne, University of Durham
Ms Jane Campbell, Surbiton
Prof David Canter, University of Liverpool
Prof Ronald Carter, University of Nottingham
Prof Simon Clarke, University of Warwick
Prof John Clarke, Open University
Prof Matthew Colton, University of Wales Swansea

Prof Gary Craig, University of Hull
Dr Gillian Dalley, Centre for Policy on Ageing
Prof Richard Daugherty, University of Wales Aberystwyth
Prof Graham Davey, University of Sussex
Prof Robert Dingwall, University of Nottingham
Dr David Dyker, University of Sussex
Prof John Eldridge, University of Glasgow
Prof Nigel Fielding, University of Surrey
Prof Ian Forbes, University of Nottingham
Prof Janet Ford, University of York
Dr Norah Frederickson, University College London
Prof Anthony Gale, Southampton
Prof Andrew Gamble, University of Sheffield
Prof Andrew Gillespie, University of Newcastle
Prof Peter Golding, University of Loughborough
Prof Ian Gordon, London School of Economics
Prof Ian Gough, University of Bath
Prof Sarah Hampson, University of Surrey
Prof Irene Hardill, Nottingham Trent University
Prof Stephen Harrison, University of Manchester
Prof Mike Hepworth, University of Aberdeen
Prof Roger Hood, University of Oxford
Prof Dorota Iwaniec, University of York
Prof Stevi Jackson, University of York
Prof Robert Jessop, Lancaster University
Prof Ray Jones, Social Care Institute for Excellence
Prof Martin Knapp, London School of Economics
Prof Stephen Lea, Washington Singer Laboratories
Prof Roger Lee, University of London
Prof Karen Legge, University of Warwick
Prof Richard Little, University of Bristol
Prof David Livingstone, Queens University
Prof Robert Logie, University of Aberdeen
Prof Paul Longley, University College London
Dr Thomas MacKay, University of Warwick
Prof John Mawson, University of Warwick
Prof Susan McRae, Oxford Brookes University
Dr Roger Middleton, University of Bristol
Prof Mary Morgan, London School of Economics
Prof Robert Morris, University of Edinburgh
Dr Susan Owens, University of Cambridge
Prof Edward Page, London School of Economics
Prof David Phillips, University of Oxford
Dr David Pitfield, Loughborough University
Prof Jennifer Platt, University of Sussex
Prof Andrew Pollard, University of Cambridge
Prof Ken Prandy, Cardiff University
Prof Michael Preston-Shoot, Liverpool John Moores University
Prof Richard Pring, University of Oxford
Prof Roderick Rhodes, University of Newcastle

Prof Jean Rudduck, University of Cambridge
Prof Mike Rustin, University of East London
Prof Richard Sakwa, University of Kent at Canterbury
Prof Kevin Schürer, University of Essex
Prof John Scott, University of Essex
Prof James Stevenson, University of Southampton
Prof June Thoburn, University of East Anglia
Prof Brian Tomlinson, University of London
Dr Peter Tyler, University of Cambridge
Prof Janet Walker, University of Newcastle
Mr Oliver M Westall, Lancaster University
Prof Margaret Wetherell, Open University
Prof Sarah Whatmore, Open University
Prof Geoff Whitty, University of London
Prof Allan Williams, University of Exeter
Prof Fiona Williams, University of Leeds
Prof Charles Withers, University of Edinburgh
Prof Robert Wright, University of Stirling