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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1994 Group launch HE Briefing series

The 1994 Group has launched a new HE Briefing series that aims to provide an insight into current higher education policy issues.

The first HE Briefing published today, "[Maintaining the UK's Science, Engineering and Technology sector: the case for high-cost subjects support](#)", will be part of a series related to the upcoming spending review.

This Briefing stems from concerns that the Government's student support budget is likely to overspend. This will result in cuts to the teaching budget as well as the likely additional cuts to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills budget in the spending review.

The briefing highlights the pos-

sible unintended consequences resulting from cuts to the high-cost subjects support, especially for those smaller institutions that specialise in these subjects.

Science, engineering and technology (SET) make a significant contribution to the UK economy. But educating SET students is expensive and even with current subsidies most SET courses run at a loss.

If there was a cut to the support for high-cost subjects some larger multi-disciplinary institutions might be able to cross-subsidise from other areas to cover the costs. But this wouldn't be possible in medium-sized institutions that have a high concentration of high-cost courses.

The 1994 Group argues that the vital funding for high-cost courses should remain. If this support is lost we will risk destabilising institutions that specialise in these subjects and put at risk world-leading research and the training of scientists and engineers of the future. This could have serious consequences for the UK's technological base and, in turn, on the future economic growth of the country.

A second HE Briefing, on part-time students, is due to be published in March.

Alex Bols
[Read the HE Briefing on maintaining high-cost subject support in full.](#) ■

1994 GROUP IN THE MEDIA

Rise in transnational education

Executive Director of the 1994 Group, Alex Bols, spoke to [The Guardian](#) about the rise in UK transnational education provision. He discussed the benefits of this kind of provision and the dangers if quality assurance procedures are not in place.

Alex said that transnational education arrangements are "a way of deve-

loping a strong physical presence in other countries and attracting students to the UK".

However, Alex warned that "there are also major reputational risks if it goes wrong—both for the institution involved and for the sector more generally." It will be important to ensure a comparable student experience and maintain high quality provision.

[Read coverage in the The Guardian, Gulf News,](#)

[Dawn.com, and República.](#)

Group appoint new Director of Research

The Group is delighted to have appointed Robert Kaye as our new Director of Research.

Dr Kaye expressed his enthusiasm in joining the 1994 Group in the pages of [Research Fortnight](#).

Dr Kaye studied PPE at Oxford where he also completed a Doctorate in Politics. He has spent five years as a member of

the academic faculty of the LSE. Since 2007, Robert has held roles in the Conservative Party, including most recently, as Chief of Staff to the Party Chairmen.

Robert said: "I look forward to working with [the members] and continuing to build on the strong voice they already have in the higher education sector."

[Read coverage in Research Fortnight \(subscribers only\).](#) ■

1994 GROUP INTERVIEW

Q&A: Jeff Selingo on the campus experience

In this issue *HE Insight* spoke to Jeff Selingo, Editor at Large of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Jeff is a leading authority on international higher education and a noted commentator on the future of HE. His book, *College (Un)Bound: The Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students*, will be published in the USA on May 7, 2013.

Recently, Jeff wrote an [interesting article about the future of the campus experience](#). The 1994 Group spoke with him further:

What is it about the residential campus experience of higher education that will enable it to survive long into the future?

“There are several pieces of the current residential experience that can’t be replicated online or in digital formats, at least not easily right now. The three more important ones are mentorships, research, and experiential learning. Sure, you can have mentors on line, but the most succes-

ful mentorships are face-to-face experiences developed over several years. Experiential learning doesn’t need a physical campus to happen, since it mostly occurs off campus anyway, but the campus infrastructure facilitates those interactions.”

How does the residential campus experience differ from other forms of higher education?

“The biggest difference for me is the serendipity of the campus experience. When students study online they are very deliberate about what they do there and why they do it. On a residential campus, they are more likely to explore, come in contact with people who have different opinions, and most important, learn how to fail.”

Does the size of the institution make a difference to the experience?

“I don’t think so except perhaps at the outer ends of the spectrum – too small of a place can’t scale good ideas and too large of a place loses the

personal nature of face-to-face contact. There’s really no difference between a 400-person face-to-face course and an online course with a 100,000 students.”

You have written primarily about the US – how do you think this translates to UK universities?

“From what I know of the UK system, I think many of the same issues facing residential campuses here are bearing down on campuses there. One difference might be is that the UK system doesn’t seem to have moved away from the classic liberal arts as much as the US system has. Many “colleges” are vocational schools now, with majors that teach students how to do a specific job. In a dynamic economy, I think that’s a bad idea.”

You can follow Jeff on Twitter.

Next time HE Insight will interview Prof. Claire Callender, Professor of Higher Education Policy at Birkbeck and the Institute of Education. ■

OUR UNIVERSITIES IN THE MEDIA

Sussex scientists measure extreme weather

University of Sussex geographers have been involved in a short film about an academic project to observe one of the most extreme climates on Earth.

The film, *Into the Cauldron: A meteorological adventure*, covers scientific observations of the cloud and dust layers in the central Saharan desert in the summers of 2011 and 2012.

A group of specialists set up an array of instruments to monitor the winds, temperatures and dust in this empty, fiercely hot and inhospitable region.

The academics are all part of the [Fennec project consortium](#), in which the

University of Sussex is a partner.

The results will help to improve the models that are used to predict weather and climate in the region.

The film was co-ordinated and scripted by Dr Carolina Cavazos-Guerra in the Sussex Geography department.

Professors suggest radical new Curriculum

Educators and policy-makers should create a new aims-based National Curriculum say two leading academics from the Institute of Education, University of London.

[In a book published last week](#), Professor Michael Reiss and Emeritus Professor John White write that the Government should be drafting a Natio-

nal Curriculum where education aims are prioritised over traditional subjects.

Reiss and White state that: “By starting from first principles as to the aims of education and trusting teachers to work out more of the specifics for all their students, we can have curricula that are more suitable for all learners.”

Goldsmiths showcase impact

Last week Goldsmiths, University of London, hosted a conference showcasing how its research and teaching contributed to public life. The conference, “Goldsmiths: Making a Difference”, featured talks on Goldsmiths’ research and teaching, panel discussions and debates on university impact, and frin-

ge events—all alongside a week-long exhibition.

The conference highlighted the contribution that Goldsmiths’ staff and students made to questions of social justice, conflict resolution, health and well-being, policy and technology. In the last issue of *HE Insight*, we noted that Goldsmiths’ Centre for Research Architecture was working with the UN to shape laws on drone warfare.

Pat Loughrey, Warden of Goldsmiths, said, “By bringing members of our academic community together with our partners we hope to spark a rich discussion which will contribute to evolving the ecosystem within which we work collectively to effect positive change in the world.” ■

HE AGENDA

25/02/13–07/03/13 - QAA event: 'UK quality code for higher education: Discussion events'
 27/02/13 - **Guardian Future of Higher Education Summit**
 27/02/13 - HEA event: 'The impact of regionalisation and 'employment during study' on graduate aspirations and employability'
 04/03/13 - Commons debate: 'Education—topical questions'
 05/03/13 - UUK Immigration workshop: 'Retaining highly trusted status'
 07/03/13 - UUK Immigration workshop: 'Preparing for dealing with Tier 4 audits'
 08/03/13 - HEA event: 'Student engagement, flexible learning and attendance'
 12/03/13 - UUK event: 'Evidence Based Access Agreements'
 12/03/13 - HEA event: 'Internationalisation in HE: Making connections'
 14/03/13 - HEA event: 'Changing the learning landscape—Where are we now with digital literacies?'
 21/03/13 - UUK Immigration workshop: 'Sponsoring international students'
 21/03/13 - Westminster HE forum: 'The internationalisation of Higher Education'
 22/03/13 - UUK event: 'Collaborating in the new environment' ■