

RESEARCH MATTERS

Celebrating research success and opportunities at the University of Wolverhampton

ISSUE 4

Professor's expertise offers insight into terrorism

Professor of Security Studies George Kassimeris has seen his expertise increasingly called upon in the wake of terror attacks over the last year.

His opinion pieces have featured in various national media outlets and his research is more relevant than ever, with few academics having such insight and experience related to the changing face of terrorism.

Professor Kassimeris has been researching and writing on terrorism and political violence for more than 20 years, and is now planning to look into the

female figures among extremist groups and how their roles are changing.

While a lot of work has been done on male terrorism, there has been little insight into the role of women and he plans to focus his future research on this area.

Professor Kassimeris is looking to understand the motives of women in terrorism and their rise in leadership



positions. His latest research will look at the changing role of female terrorists in Greece and how they have gained increased power.

"While it is still quite a taboo subject, there have always been women involved in terrorism," he says. "What is new is that more women have now taken leadership roles within terrorist organisations and I want to understand why this is and why these women have felt more polarised."

Professor Kassimeris has also examined the causes and processes of terrorism engagement, and why people leave organisations, another under-researched area. "To be that extreme, these people are so passionate about their cause, so to exit from a group is a very dramatic departure.

"I have been given access to reformed and imprisoned terrorists to find out what made them join and then ultimately exit their organisation. This has given me insight into the complex processes of disengagement among former militants and their motivations."



EDITOR'S WELCOME



Welcome to the fourth issue of Research Matters. As 2017 draws to a close, we want to celebrate our research achievements and look ahead to what is to come.

In an increasingly competitive funding environment, we won several high profile bids including three AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) grants worth over £800k, three new H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships, and a £5 million project on citizen voices in forest governance. In close collaboration with the University's Project Support Office, we submitted a £4.6 million bid titled OPERRA to H2020 for an

Professor to help overhaul Kenyan insolvency law



Professor Peter Walton, Professor of Insolvency Law at the University's Wolverhampton Law School, is working with the Kenyan government to overhaul insolvency legislation in the country.

Professor Walton has been nominated by the World Bank to work as a consultant, reviewing and updating laws to assist businesses in Kenya and support future economic investment.

Working directly with the Attorney General's office, he is looking at different insolvency and rescue procedures and making recommendations. The year-long project started in September 2017.



innovative doctoral training programme to address social and economic regeneration of medium-sized cities such as Wolverhampton.

2017 also saw the start of the latest Research Investment Fund round, RIF3, which focuses on developing research in strategically important areas. To date, that has involved the setting up of an Institute for Community Research and Development (ICRD) led by Professor Laura Caulfield, an Education Observatory led by Professor Michael Jopling, and leadership positions in Cybersecurity (Professor Prashant Pillai), English (Dr Sebastian Groes), and International Development (Dr Rachel Slater). Investments into anti-microbial research, brownfield, information and language processing, and our joint work with the Royal Wolverhampton Trust through the Academic Institute for Medicine, are also in progress.

Our research has continued to receive international accolades. The statistical cybermetrics research group led by Professor Mike Thelwall was ranked 1st in the Shanghai Global rankings for average impact of Library and Information Science research, ahead of institutions such as LSE, Harvard and Stanford. Professor Mike Fullen won the Caiyun Award of Yunnan Province, bestowed upon foreign experts with the greatest impact. Professor Dieter Steinert's work on child forced labour has been recognised through an AHRC impact case study and his work with the United Nations is ongoing.

Dr Iza Radecka's and Professor Marek Kowalczyk's groundbreaking work on plastic waste conversion was featured by the BBC and Professor John Howl and Dr Sarah Jones' work on sperm motility was reported the media in the US, China, Australia and Germany.

Our range of events and programmes to support research has also grown. Last year, we launched the Wolverhampton Lecture series and the first five lectures in the programme attracted over 340 attendees and an additional 273 views of the live streaming/recording. We ran over 40 workshops for doctoral students, and our newly created Research Almanac featured over 250 events. The new edition of the almanac for 2017/18 is out and again we look forward to an exciting range of events. Our 2017 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results were the best ever and four subject areas substantially exceeded their sector benchmarking group.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our academic staff, research students and colleagues in central service departments who support research. I would like to thank everybody for their invaluable contributions and look forward to another successful year.

Professor Silke Machold
Editor and Dean of Research,
University of Wolverhampton

Prestigious honour for influential historian



Historian Dr Spencer Jones has received a prestigious national accolade for his work on the First World War.

Dr Jones has been made a Haig Fellow for 2018 by the Douglas

Haig Fellowship, an educational charity established more than 20 years ago.

The charity promotes the study of the life of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig,

the British Army's Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front during the Great War. It encourages scholarship and debate on him and the forces he commanded.

Each year the Fellowship nominates a Haig Fellow, a prestigious title bestowed to an individual whose writing and scholarship has made a significant contribution to the field of First World War studies. Dr Jones was nominated for his extensive research work, which has cast important new light on the events of 1914 and 1915.

Dr Jones, a noted expert on the British Army in the First World War, with a particular interest in the development and implementation of battle tactics, said: "I was delighted to be made a Haig Fellow and will be presenting my research to the Fellowship next year."

He will present a paper to the Fellowship's annual lunch at the Cavalry & Guards Club, Piccadilly, London, in June 2018. The event will be hosted by the Fellowship's chairman, Lord Astor of Hever, the Field Marshal's grandson.

DIRECTOR OF CAEL FEATURES IN LEADING AFRICAN POLICY PUBLICATION



Congratulations to Dr Paschal Anosike, Director of the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL), who has had a special report published in Africa Policy Review – the leading source of news and analysis on Africa's development agenda.

"In this special report, I share my belief that entrepreneurialism, good governance and accountable leadership remain key to unlocking all of Africa's potentialities in the coming decades," said Dr Anosike. "African youths are central to achieving these imperatives. Governments must embrace and empower their vibrancy and enthusiasm for change and innovation."

His thoughts are published alongside other leading African figures including Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, Dr Carlos Lopes, development economist, author and educator, and Dr Morena 'Makhoana, Chief Executive Officer of The Biovac Institute.

Dr Anosike's article is available to read online at <http://africapolicyreview.com/transforming-africas-socio-economic-landscape-through-entrepreneurialism/>



REF2021: WHAT'S NEXT?

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 is on the horizon and HEFCE have just published a set of decisions to give clear guidelines relating to submissions.

There will be submission from all staff with significant responsibility for research. Core eligibility criterion is 'academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) or greater, on the payroll on the census date, whose primary function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Where this does not identify staff with significant responsibility for research, we need to implement processes to determine this, and evidence this in a Code of Practice. Where staff are on the minimum 0.2 contract, we also need to demonstrate a substantive connection with the university. The staff census date is the 31 July 2020.

In terms of outputs, the number will be determined by FTE of submitted staff, with an average output of 2.5 per FTE. There will be a minimum of one output and maximum of five for each member of staff, except in exceptional circumstances or where there are co-authored works that are attributed to another member of staff.

Transition arrangements for output portability will be in place, where outputs are submitted by institution that employs the member of staff

on the census date as well as by the originating institution where the output was demonstrably generated by the member of staff (date at which output was first made publicly available). The funding bodies have also confirmed the Open Access requirements that were previously published.

Impact case studies (ICs) have increased in weighting from 20-25% and each Unit of Assessment (UoA) must return one plus one further per up to 15 staff. That means a minimum of two ICs per UoA. The funding bodies had not yet mandated the use of ORCID identifiers for staff, but are strongly encouraging institutions to use these. Register for an ID via <https://orcid.org/>.

The funding bodies will be holding a series of 'town hall' meetings across the UK in January to present the outcomes of the consultation on REF 2021 and we have booked our places for the Birmingham meeting.

The call for nominations for candidates for REF2021 sub-panel membership is open until 12pm on Wednesday 20 December. Our internal preparations are progressing well thanks to the hard work of the UoA coordinators and staff across the faculties and Research Institutes. Look out for updates in future issues of Research Matters and see www.ref.ac.uk.

Find out more about our research at: wlv.ac.uk/research

LECTURER SCOOPS AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTION TO SIKH STUDIES

Congratulations to Dr Opinderjit Kaur Takhar, Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies from the Faculty of Arts, who was recently presented with the 'Outstanding Contribution to Sikh Studies Award' at the Pride of India Awards.

Lord Swraj Paul, Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, presented Opinderjit with the award on behalf of the Non Resident Indian (NRI) Institute, who organised the event at the prestigious House of Lords in London.

Dr Kaur Takhar said: "I am absolutely delighted that the NRI Institute has recognised my extensive research work in Sikh Studies by presenting me with the Pride of India Award. It was an honour to take part in such a great celebration.

"The event also provided an ideal opportunity for two students to

attend with me and to network with professionals across a number of areas, including media and medicine."

Dr Takhar has worked for the University for eight years; as well as teaching, she undertakes a variety of research, specialising in subject matter that relates to the Sikh community as well as topics including caste and gender balance.

Engaging with local, regional, national and international community groups and governing bodies, Dr Takhar has raised awareness of issues that affect the Sikh community in the UK and abroad.



Dr Opinderjit Kaur Takhar

ACADEMICS RECEIVE TOP RECOGNITION FROM HEA

Two academics from the University of Wolverhampton have received prestigious accolades from the Higher Education Academy (HEA), one of the sector's leading organisations committed to world-class teaching in higher education.

Dr Megan Lawton, Senior Advisor in Academic Practice, College of Learning and Teaching, has been awarded a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) and Diana Bannister MBE, Assistant Director for Pedagogic Partnerships and Head of Postgraduate Taught Provision within the Institute of Education, has achieved Principal Fellow status.

Dr Lawton has worked at the University for 26 years, and is one of 55 new National Teaching Fellows announced. The award recognises Megan's commitment to

supporting all students to reach their potential, through creativity, innovation and technology-supported learning.

Dr Lawton said: "I am incredibly proud to have been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship, as it is assessed by your peers and very competitive. My role involves working with colleagues across the University to look at how we can improve our teaching practice to enable students to learn better.

"I love working at the University of Wolverhampton because it is so diverse, we have people from many different backgrounds. The University allows people like me to be creative and try different approaches and I really value that."

As Head of Postgraduate Taught provision, Diana Bannister leads across MA Education and Postgraduate qualifications in Education. Principal Fellow status from the HEA recognises the University's commitment to delivering the highest standards of teaching and improving the student experience.

Diana said: "I feel incredibly proud to have been recognised as Principal



KEITH CONTRIBUTES TO MOD CULTURE BOOK

Professor Keith Gildart, Professor of Labour and Social History, Department of History, Politics and War Studies, has contributed a chapter to a new book published this month by Palgrave Macmillan entitled 'Quadrophonia and Mod(ern) Culture'; part of the Palgrave Studies in the History of Subcultures and Popular Music series.

Keith is a founder member of the Subcultures Network, and edits the series.

Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. It brings together 16 years of work here at the University of Wolverhampton but also working with so many people both nationally and internationally in my area of expertise.

"I work with teachers and school leaders, to inform teaching excellence in the use of learning technologies in the classroom. But what I'm particularly interested in is bridging the gap in higher education between policy and practice, to make complex ideas more accessible to everyone."



Dr Megan Lawton



Diana Bannister MBE

Find out more about our research at: wlv.ac.uk/research