



Universities Human Resources

Autumn 09 Newsletter

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Welcome to the latest edition of the UHR Newsletter. Each issue brings you news and commentary from the HE Sector, and reports about past and forthcoming events.

If you want to see the UHR Newsletter in your browser please click [here](#).

For more information about UHR or any of the topics covered in this newsletter, please visit the website www.uhr.ac.uk or contact Helen Scott, the UHR Executive Officer via exec@uhr.ac.uk or tel. 01273 557425.

To add colleagues to the mailbase, the HR Director in a member institution needs to contact Paul Marshall via P.A.Marshall@hull.ac.uk.

Opening word from Mike Moore, UHR Chair

Mike Moore addresses the challenges facing HR Departments in Universities in the coming year

The key challenge for UHR in the year ahead will be for us to help our institutions successfully lead and manage staff through a very difficult public sector funding environment. We need to ensure that they have the entrepreneurial skills and agility to take advantage of potential sources for new income and in so doing reduce still further their dependency on government funding. The 2009-10 Business Objectives of the UHR Executive respond to this challenge by focusing on key projects such as the HEFCE-funded 'Sustainable high performance through a resilient, engaged workforce', led by Matthew Knight, UHR Vice-Chair and HRD at Leeds University, and by Guy Gregory, HRD at Bristol University and UHR South West Regional Chair. HR teams, at every level, need the appropriate skills to help managers deliver their organisation's objectives and UHR has a major commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through its programmes for HR Directors, Business Partners and regional pilot schemes for newly-qualified HR Advisers, as well as Development Days for all HR staff on related themes. Much of



our activity is locally-driven and we're very grateful to our regional Chairs for moving the CPD agenda forward. Vervan Johnston, HRD at Newcastle, is our CPD lead and is working closely with Ruth Altman (HRD at Cranfield), UHR Conference Organiser, to ensure our Annual Conference at Leicester in May 2010 has closely-related and topical themes.

Inevitably our institutions will need high quality, evidence-based information to assess their HR progress, and our HEFCE-funded People Management Framework project, led by Nick Rogers (HRD at Kingston University), will provide a flexible, user-friendly tool to do that in a way that can be tailor-made to respond to the different mission and priorities of each HEI. Jane Embley (Vice-Chair and HRD at Northumbria) and I are leading on Intersect-HE, a HEFCE-funded scoping project to research and create a business plan to set up a new national service for everyone in HE to offer them short-term secondments, placements and job shadowing opportunities in both HE and other sectors.

We are keen to share information about these initiatives and projects with UHR members and the sector and we look forward to getting involved in new projects or developments on behalf of UHR. These are just some of our activities in the year ahead and I would like to thank all our UHR colleagues for their hard work and commitment, not least Helen Scott, UHR Executive Officer, who does such great work in co-ordinating our activities.

Award photography © Euro RSCG Riley / Nick Wiltshire 2009

New HR Development Programme

New HR Development Programme successfully launched: Enhancing Business Capabilities for senior HR Staff

This exciting new programme aims to equip senior HR Managers/Business Partners with the competencies, practical approaches and political awareness required to operate as an effective HR professional, capable of adding real value to the delivery of the institutional mission during challenging times. It is underpinned by CIPD professional standards.



The first programme was held in September and was a real success.

As consequence there has been unprecedented demand and all programmes for the 2009/2010 academic year are now fully subscribed.

UHR is working in partnership with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) on the development of the programme. The original architects of the scheme were Dr John Ramsden, a Key Associate with LFHE, and Gwen Wileman, (until recently) HR Director at De Montfort University and previous CPD Lead for UHR, and it benefits considerably from their extensive experience.

The programme includes a rich mixture of learning methods and topics including case studies, expert input, learning groups, practical problem-solving activities and presentations. The value of the networking opportunities with colleagues across the sector is extremely useful and very highly valued by the participants. Overall, feedback from the first cohort was extremely positive; as one delegate said, 'it was an excellent course with opportunities to increase my knowledge, broaden my skills and evaluate how I work effectively within my organisation'. Another described it as a, 'mixture of academic and practical thinking with easy transference to the workplace'.

We will be reporting back on future programmes, and there is no doubt that 'Enhancing Business Capabilities for senior HR Staff' is fast becoming a vital development programme for senior HR managers and their teams as they set out to tackle the current challenges facing HEIs.

*Click [here](#) to download **Senior HR Staff Programme**. Details about the programme format are available on the **UHR website**, although reserve bookings only for 2009/10 are available. Further programmes are now being planned for 2010/11 and will be publicised in the new year.*

People Management Framework

The People Management Framework is progressing well, with PricewaterhouseCoopers finalising the design and preparing for the pilot, which will be held in six HEIs across the UK.

Director of HR at Kingston University, Nick Rogers, who was co-opted onto the UHR Executive committee to lead this project, says:

“The new People Management Framework will enable all higher education institutions – whatever their size, mission or aspirations – to assess the effectiveness of their people management practices; benchmark themselves against others in order to deliver continuous improvement and, most importantly, demonstrate how those practices contribute to university-wide strategic priorities. This will be a first for the sector and has the potential to put institutions at the leading edge of HR practice.” We look forward to reporting back from the pilot.

Click here to download the **People Management Framework brief** or for more details, please contact Nick Rogers via nick.rogers@kingston.ac.uk

HR Excellence Awards

The winners of the UHR annual awards for excellence in HR in higher education were announced at the gala dinner in Belfast, at our 2009 annual conference. Individuals and teams of HR staff in our member institutions were singled out for praise for their innovative and business-related initiatives, making a real difference to their organisation's 'bottom line'. The judging panel was Will Hutton, CEO, The Work Foundation; Linda Holbeche, Director of Policy & Research at the CIPD; Bill Wakeham, formerly Chair of the UCEA Board and Vice Chancellor of the University of Southampton; and Mike Moore, the UHR's Chair and Director of HR Services at the University of East London.

The overall winner of the HR Excellence Awards was the **University of Sheffield** for its work on improving the relationship with atypical workers. Other winners were Sheila Thompson, Director of the Researcher Development Programme at the University of Edinburgh, for her work on career development for research staff; Northumbria University, for its approach to apprenticeships; the University of York, for the HR department's IT initiative; and the University of Derby for its work on staff engagement.



Click here to download the special edition UHR newsletter that celebrates the winners of the 2009 HR Excellence Awards for higher education.

Award photography © Euro RSCG Riley / Nick Wiltshire 2009

UHR participates in CUPA-HR Conference October 2009, 'Where Now Meets Next'

Sheila Gupta, former UHR Chair and HR Director at the University of Edinburgh, and Gwen Wileman, (until recently) HR Director at De Montfort University, attended the CUPA-HR Conference on behalf of UHR in October this year, they ran a concurrent session and presented a paper on HR Leadership and High Performance in UK Universities.

Colleges and University Professional Association - Human Resources (CUPA-HR) is UHR's sister organisation in the USA, and two representatives are invited to attend their annual conference and Expo as part of reciprocal arrangements. Jack Giarusso, current CUPA-HR Chair, and Kirk Beyer, former CUPA-HR Chair, attended the UHR Conference in Belfast this year and some of you may have met them there.

The Conference theme 'Where Now Meets Next' was extremely relevant to us. It considered what was happening 'now' in colleges and universities, and in the light of what is happening in the economy and politics, the need to

prepare for what is 'next' in HR in the HE Sector workplace. There was a marked similarity in the issues being faced by our US colleagues with ours.

Sheila and Gwen were made extremely welcome by the conference committee in Las Vegas and attended a wide range of really interesting key notes and concurrent sessions.

[Click here](#) to download the paper Sheila and Gwen delivered.

[Click here](#) to download the presentation.

www.cupahr.org

UHR Development Day

Sustainable high performance through a resilient engaged workforce

2 October 2009, London

The recent UHR Development Day, 'Sustainable high performance through a resilient engaged workforce', was a great success. One delegate summed up the feeling of many of the participants when she called it, 'a day of thought-provoking content'. Organised by Kim Shutler-Jones, who manages the national Hefce funded project on engagement, wellbeing and performance, the day was designed to focus on the challenges that many institutions are facing, as they seek to deliver more in new ways and with fewer resources. Increasingly, these problems are being compounded by the short and long term impact of low motivation amongst some staff, presenteeism (the problems faced when employees come to work in spite of illness), ill-health and absenteeism.



The day was structured in a way that focused on the often heard statement "Our people are our greatest asset". It was an opportunity for the delegates to discuss the challenge of how to engage our people to deliver resilience, sustained discretionary effort and ultimately higher performance. As one delegate commented, the day was 'a good refocus on engagement', and there was considerable positive feedback. The overwhelming majority of delegates felt that the day had given them ideas to take back to their institution and that it was time well spent.

The conference programme focused on practical networking and interactive discussion, with presentations from Guy Gregory (Personnel Director, University of Bristol), Jennifer Mitchell (Assistant National Officer for Health and safety at UNISON), Professor Ivan Robertson (Chair in Work and Organisational Psychology at Leeds University Business School (25%), Emeritus Professor at the University of Manchester and Managing Director of Robertson Cooper Ltd), John McGurk (CIPD Adviser on Learning, and Talent Development) and Jill Miller (researcher on the Shaping the Future research and engagement programme).

Guy Gregory delivered a presentation entitled 'Wellbeing at the centre of HR Strategy' which looked at the importance of wellbeing and engagement during challenging times. His talk examined the infrastructure needed to create an engaged workforce, who produce a sustained high performance.

Professor Ivan Robertson's presentation 'Engagement, resilience and well-being: Benefits for individuals and organisations', looked at what employee engagement is, and its impact on the psychological well-being of staff. He examined what drives the behaviour of employees, from a sense of purpose to work-life balance, and how to improve full engagement.

Overall the day proved informative, with the delegates coming away with many ideas to take back to their institutions. As one commented, it 'gave me time to reflect, a sign post to evidence, and challenged my rather unsubtle view on the subject'.

If you are interested in follow up events or getting involved with the national project, please contact Kim Shutler-Jones via K.Shutler-Jones@leeds.ac.uk

In order to access materials from the UHR Development Day you will need to be logged into the members area. If you are not yet registered as a member, please contact Helen Scott via exec@uhr.ac.uk. If you are already logged in, Kim, Ivan and Guy's presentations can be found on the [Documents page](#).

www.wellbeing.ac.uk

UHR Employment Law Update Sessions

9 December 2009, London

Attendance is free of charge to HR staff from UHR member institutions.

For the first time, due to huge demand, the UHR Employment Law Update session will be held in two locations: London and Leeds. The day will focus on the ever-popular topic of employment law, covering recent and forthcoming developments and, in particular, how they relate to higher education. The first day took place on 18 November in Leeds.

The session is once again led by Philip Lott, Senior Solicitor with the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, and will prove useful to both experienced HR practitioners who wish to hone the finer points of their employment law knowledge or pursue tricky queries which have been vexing them; and also to less experienced colleagues or those new to the sector who need an overview of employment law as it affects HE.

Also back by popular request, is the 'Employment Law Challenge', which will see two HR teams (already identified) respond to questions and challenges arising from Philip Lott's presentation. Will Marion Hammersley Field and her Hertfordshire team retain their winners' title in the south?!

If you have any queries or wish to book a place for the London session, please contact Helen Scott, the UHR Executive Officer, via exec@uhr.ac.uk or 01273 557425.

*[Click here](#) to download the **UHR Employment Law Update** flyer*

UHR Conference 2010

11 - 14 May 2010, Leicester Marriott Hotel

Theme: Fit for purpose; Fit for the Future

Chair: Ruth Altman

The 2010 UHR Conference theme has been announced. It will be 'Fit for Purpose; Fit for the Future'. The conference theme reflects fitness with regards to both Well-being and Commercial/Structural change. The conference will explore the issue of how institutions can become more efficient and better equipped to fulfil their mission in these challenging times – it will consider questions of agility, physical and mental health, resilience and sustainability.

The UHR Conference 2010 is now open for booking. Book before 31 December 2009 to save 3% on Full Delegate bookings. You can book or find out more at www.uhr.ac.uk/conferences. Any enquiries can be made to uhr@eurorscg-riley.co.uk or by calling 020 8661 8483

More details will be released nearer the date, keep checking the [UHR Website](#).

Changes on the UHR Executive

The UHR Executive sees some new faces after the summer, and we say a fond farewell to others.

Mike Moore takes over as UHR Chair

Mike Moore, Director of HR Services at the University of East London (UEL), has taken over from Sheila Gupta as UHR Chair. He is supported by Matthew Knight, HR Director at the University of Leeds, and Jane Embley, HR Director at Northumbria University, as Vice Chairs.

Mike has been Director of HR Services at UEL for over six years, and for the last 18 months he has been UHR's Vice Chair with Matthew Knight.

Prior to his time at UEL, Mike was Director of Personnel at Birkbeck and in a local authority, and has also worked in HR management roles at King's College London and at St George's, University of London. Mike also worked in Saudi Arabia for a company which ran a group of schools, in general administration.

He is enjoying to his new role within UHR: "Universities play a vital role in transforming people's lives and recruiting, retaining and developing well-motivated, talented staff is at the heart of that.

"I'm delighted to have the chance to work with my UHR colleagues, to play a role in helping our sector to continue to move forward with that agenda, in what will be a highly challenging time."

Recent Press:

THE Appointments [Link](#)

People Management [Link](#)

Sheila Gupta reflects upon 20 months as UHR Chair

After serving as UHR Chair for 20 months, Sheila Gupta has handed over to Mike Moore. During Sheila's time as Chair there were many high points, including the launch of the new name and website, as UHR has adapted to represent the very different role that HR now plays as a partner in the business. Here, Sheila reflects upon the highlights of her time as UHR Chair:



I was privileged enough to be Chair for two UHR annual conferences, in Durham and Belfast, exploring how HR contributes to sustaining successful high performance cultures. The very positive feedback and the record number of delegates who attended the conference in Belfast, was greatly encouraging, and indicative of the continued success of UHR - despite tight financial times, UHR membership is the largest it has ever been and is continuing to grow.

The Health and Wellbeing project, led by Leeds University and Kim Shutler-Jones and funded through HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management funds, has had a supremely successful first phase and recently secured a further £350k for its second phase. This project represents the most significant strategic project that UHR has been involved with and will mean that the sector will have its own tailored interventions, toolkits and other resources to support the successful implementation of employee engagement initiatives across the UK.

The People Management Framework, led by Nick Rogers at Kingston, was also successful in securing HEFCE funding to develop a people management framework that will strengthen our governance and leadership arrangements for embedding effective people management strategies at all levels within our institutions.

The Intersect Project, led by Mike Moore at UEL and now Chair of UHR and Jane Embley UHR Vice-Chair and HR Director at Northumbria, represents a collaboration with the Association of University Administrators (AUA) and is actively supported by the Leadership Foundation with a grant from HEFCE, to provide a web-based resource and office to facilitate short-term secondments, project management and other development opportunities for all staff in HE to broaden their experience both within and beyond the HE sector.

It has also been great to see the strengthening of relations between UHR and CIPD through the joint publication, 'Leading HR for high performance in higher education', with Linda Holbeche, who was Director of Policy and Research at the CIPD at that time and through our involvement with the Shaping the Future research project.

Our CPD provision for all HR staff in HE, is now supported by a new framework that offers development opportunities for staff at all levels and stages of their careers. Led by Gwen Wileman, former HR Director at De Montfort University, the new flagship programme for HR Business Partners, Enhancing Business Capabilities for senior HR Staff, has had an overwhelming number of applications.

Our international links continue to strengthen with our US sister organisation, CUPA-HR. Gwen Wileman and I gave a presentation based on a paper we wrote on the theme of sustaining high performance in HEIs at their national conference this year in Las Vegas. A number of us have also been invited to speak at the Heads of University Management and Administration Network in Europe (HUMANE) Conference, strengthening our links with Europe.

Finally, I wish Mike Moore, as the new incoming Chair, and the Executive team on-going success to achieve UHR's ambitions and enhance further UHR's contribution to the success of the sector.

UHR Vice Chairs

Jane Embley has joined Matthew Knight as UHR Vice Chair

Jane is delighted to have been elected as Vice Chair. "I am passionate about HR and the role of the HR function in Universities. I am really looking forward to the challenges of the Vice Chair role and to making a contribution to UHR activities in the period ahead. I am keen that we build further on our strengths as a voice representing HR professionals in Higher Education. As a function I believe that there has never been a better time to demonstrate the value and results that good people management can achieve."

Jane will be working with the AUA and UHR Chair, Mike Moore, on the Intersect-HE scoping project.



We welcome Naomi Holloway onto the UHR Executive

Naomi Holloway is currently the HR Director at the University of Hertfordshire and prior to this was HR Director at Queen Mary, part of the University of London.

She joined the sector in 2002 having spent 9 years in central roles in the Post Office and prior to that a year on a graduate scheme with Tesco. Naomi is looking forward to using her experience of pre- and post-92 institutions within the UHR executive, to represent a wide range of institutions – both of her institutions have also been 1994 group and University Alliance members respectively. She also brings more commercial knowledge from her time at the Post Office. In addition, Naomi attended the inaugural Roffey Park World Class Human Resource Management Leadership Development for Senior HR Practitioners course in 2005, and has since facilitated a learning SET of delegates from a subsequent course.

Naomi states, "I am a strong believer in leadership and in challenging the way we do things, both challenging the Sector and challenging ourselves as HR leaders in the sector."



Veryan Johnston returns to the UHR Executive

Veryan Johnston was formerly Chair of the North East Group, and having been in the UHR Executive before, she is delighted to be back. Veryan would like to praise the work Gwen Wileman and Clare Curran have done on strengthening the CPD programme, and she looks forward to maintaining the high standards they set, whilst delivering an exciting agenda for UHR members



Comings & Goings within the sector

Chris Thrush (pictured) has been appointed as **Director of Human Resources at Lancaster University**. Chris has wide experience of leading HR functions in major organisations in the private sector, most recently as Group Director of HR for Corporate Express NV in the Netherlands.

Chris joins Lancaster University following the reorganisation of the University's Central Services earlier this year. Lancaster is a 1994 Group university, rated highly for research and highly ranked in national and global league tables.

Shirley Campbell has been appointed to the role of **Director of People and Organisational Development at Heriot Watt University**, Edinburgh. This role was created following the development of the University's ambitious 'Focus on the Future' strategy which aims, amongst other things to double the academic base by 50% over the next few years. The People strategy developed through to 2014 will ensure that the People and Organisation Development function becomes renowned for providing effective and relevant People and Organisation Development solutions across the Universities campuses in Edinburgh, the Scottish borders, Orkney and Dubai.



In the last few weeks the function has also become accountable for the educational development for all academic and research staff, having appointed a Professor of Computing into her team to enhance the credibility of the function further.

For Shirley, attracted by the ambitious strategy and the International appeal of the University, this is her first role in the Education sector. Her last few roles have been in FTSE top 100 Financial Services organisations where she was UK Organisational Development Director for Aviva and UK Human Resources Director for Royal and Sun Alliances. Her appointment coincided with the arrival of Professor Steve Chapman as Principal and the publication of the first staff survey run at the University for 6 years. This provides both the sponsorship for and catalyst for the change programmes Shirley plans to make as she implements the People strategy in conjunction with her team.

Obituary: Fran Tandy, Deputy HRD at Portsmouth

Fran Tandy held the post of Deputy Director of Human Resources at the University of Portsmouth, where she began her career in January 1979, when it was still a Polytechnic.

After studying German in the School of Languages and Area Studies, Fran joined the Careers Service in January 1979. She then moved to what was then Personnel Services in 1985 and she became Deputy Director in 2000. Fran established herself as the cornerstone of the department and for many University staff, Fran was Personnel.

Fran was a woman with style, who had her own way of doing things. She was very particular about grammar. If shown a draft document there was a distinct feeling of having one's work marked. Fran worked very hard to make some colleagues understand the correct use of the apostrophe!



It was a pleasure working with Fran. She displayed a great sense of fun, always in the right place ...at least most of the time! She was an excellent mimic - no doubt part of her skill as a careful listener.

Fran was well known within the Southsea community where she lived proudly with her husband Brian and her many cats! She had friends throughout the University HR network and attended UPA / UHR events regionally and nationally. She enjoyed the 2007 conference at Cambridge which she attended with John Boam with whom she worked closely for many years.

Fran was a loyal and caring colleague who made an enormous contribution to the development of the HR Service. Fran helped her colleagues and many others with her unselfish support, she will be greatly missed and the memories of her will be greatly prized.

Fran died on 10th August 2009, aged 54. A memorial service was held at Portsmouth Cathedral on 25th September, to which a great number of Fran's friends and colleagues from the local community and the HE sector attended to pay tribute.

Written by Peter Brook, Director of Human Resources at Portsmouth University.

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