2008 has been a demanding year for the higher education sector and for Keele but the University continues to adapt and change in order to ensure that it is able to successfully meet current and future challenges. There have been some notable achievements at Keele during 2008 and I would like to use this opportunity to elaborate on these further and to celebrate the successes of staff and students.

As a research intensive University the results of the latest Research Assessment Exercise were most rewarding in key areas of Keele’s strength, while the results of the National Student Survey underlined our commitment to teaching and the broader student experience.

RAE2008 confirmed the excellence of Keele’s research with 85% of the University’s research submitted for assessment now classified as world leading and of international importance. This represents a step-up in Keele’s performance from the very good results the University achieved in the last RAE in 2001 when 6% of submitted research achieved the top grade. Now, some 11% is judged to be 4* or ‘world leading’.

These excellent results show that Keele has top rated research in all of its three Faculties: Health, Humanities and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, and reveal the University’s world-class research activities across a wide spectrum of subject areas. It confirms the value of Keele’s policy of selectivity in research, where funds and University support are concentrated on disciplines and topics where Keele has real strength.

Teaching excellence is equally important and I was delighted that the National Student Survey rated Keele amongst the best in the country for student satisfaction with an overall satisfaction score of 88%, significantly exceeding the national satisfaction rate of 82%.

It was also pleasing that teaching satisfaction was rated particularly highly by students at 87% and Keele was also well above average in Personal Development, Academic Support and Organisation and Management.

The University also performed well in two prominent national league tables – moving 10 places up the Independent University League table for 2009 and 13 places up the table in the Times Good University Guide.

This is due to a combination of good honours grades among our students, which in turn leads to impressive graduate performance in the marketplace and is underpinned by the work of staff across the University to ensure that students at Keele are able to reach their full potential. Keele graduates have always been very employable and the University has introduced various initiatives recently to further enhance graduate employment prospects in challenging economic times.

Our teaching quality was underlined with individual awards to Dr Peter Knight and Dr Stephen Bostock in the prestigious National Teaching Fellowship Scheme for England and Northern Ireland. The awards celebrate individuals who have made an outstanding impact in raising the quality of student learning, raising the profile of learning and teaching, both in their own institution and more widely.

There have been significant developments on campus. The former Chancellor, Lord Moser, returned to the University to officially open the £3.5 million building which bears his name. Located at the heart of the campus, the Claus Moser Research Centre will provide a central ‘hub’ for Keele’s internationally recognised research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The University became home to the Arthritis Research Campaign National Primary Care Centre, which was officially opened by Professor Lord Darzi of Denham, KBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Health. The Centre will have a direct benefit on the thousands of people in the UK who suffer from painful joint and muscle problems.

Keele’s work to broaden access and raise aspirations among under-represented groups in higher education has seen hundreds of youngsters coming onto campus to get a taste of university life through special events and residential visits.

Our work in this area was recognised nationally with Keelelink, the University’s Schools and College Partnership Programme, being shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award for Widening Participation Initiative of the Year. The Parent Ambassador project run by the Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Division won a top accolade, the Aimhigher Excellence in Practice Award, at the annual National Aimhigher Awards.

Our commitment to the environment was underlined with the adoption of an ambitious Environmental Policy covering areas such as greening the curriculum, waste reduction, sustainable development and transport. Building on Keele’s longstanding environmental commitment, the policy includes a series of challenging targets, including a strategy to become a carbon neutral campus.

As a result of the policy, the University is exploring a range of exciting options for alternative energy sources, building on its existing successes in effective energy management. Directly related to the University’s teaching and research expertise, these technologies would contribute to an innovative research hub for the study and development of sustainable forms of energy.

It was another successful year for our conference team which won gold awards in the Best Value for Money Conference Venue and Best Conference and Banqueting Staff categories at the annual Meetings and Incentive Travel Awards, against tough competition. The team also won silver in the Best Academic Venue category.
Accreditation and assessment have been at the forefront during the year. Our new undergraduate programmes in medicine and pharmacy have both received favourable reviews from the General Medical Council (GMC) and Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS). Additional postgraduate programmes have been introduced, including a new MSc (Health) and a revised MRes to support continuing professional and academic development of doctors, nurses and AHPs. Results of the RAE2008 showed 90% of outputs in our key research areas of primary care and biomedical engineering being assessed as international quality.

The number of Medical School undergraduate students continues to grow and new postgraduate programmes were developed. GMC accreditation is in its third year and the feedback was again very positive, indicating the new MBChB curriculum is on track. Evaluation of year one was highly commended by the GMC. The School is expanding into Shropshire, with Royal Shrewsbury Hospital formally assigned as a teaching hospital and additional community placements being secured. Dr Kay Mohanna was appointed Director of Postgraduate Programmes and is having a significant impact on clinical training.

School of Pharmacy student numbers continue to grow and there was another strong intake into the four-year Masters course. Two accreditation visits by the RPS to assess years 1-3 proved satisfactory. Postgraduate courses continue to flourish, with the short CPD modules and independent prescribing courses being recognised across the UK. The Medicines Management group was again commissioned by the National Audit Office to benchmark prescribing in primary care. A joint project with Leeds to benchmark Pathology services gives scope to effect service improvement in respect of diagnosis and drug treatment across the NHS. The Virtual Patient development was highly successful reflecting the quality of musculoskeletal and chronic pain research.

Nursing and Midwifery enjoyed success in QA and enhancement, being awarded earned-autonomy status after the annual Nursing and Midwifery Council monitoring inspection. The School underwent internal audit by Keele and quality monitoring by the regional Strategic Health Authority (SHA), receiving many commendations of good practice. Recruitment to the pre-registration programmes has been highly successful reflecting the quality of training and effectiveness of our marketing programme. Appointment of a new Director of Learning Beyond Registration has enabled the School to revamp its post registration portfolio to reflect contemporary health care practice and policy. A number of link fellowships have been established with PCHS to build clinical research capacity and capability.

Health and Rehabilitation had a challenging year following a 25% reduction in the number of physiotherapy places commissioned by the SHA across the West Midlands. However, this reduction in income has been offset by a successful bid to develop a new Curriculum Framework across bands 1-9, which will enable the School to position itself at the forefront of Physiotherapy Education in the UK. Postgraduate recruitment continues an upward trend reflecting introduction of innovative new programmes. The Osteopathy degree is in its third year and the School’s Physiotherapy Practice has demonstrated a steady increase in business.

The Research Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine enjoyed a 20% growth in annual research awards from external peer-reviewed grants as income exceeded £3 million for the first time. Of note, 40% of funding was from Research Councils, with applications to BBSRC showing a 57% success rate, compared with the national average of 25%. Notable awards were from MRC to Professor Jon Dobson to continue his work on magnetic nano-particle-based gene transfection, from Welhame to Professor Paul Eggleston and colleagues to study genetic engineering of refractory mosquito vectors in sub-Saharan Africa and from the World Cancer Fund to Professor Bill Farrell and colleagues to investigate the effect of maternal folate intake on foetal growth regulatory gene expression. The first cohort of young research students linked to a new Doctoral Training Centre in bioengineering between Keele, Loughborough and Nottingham, started their four-year PhD programme. The Institute hosted various events and postgraduate short courses during the year, including a meeting on bioreactors, funded by BBSRC and the EU Network of Excellence.

Primary Care Sciences’ year began with a visit from an international panel to judge the Institute’s bid to become a Centre of Excellence in musculoskeletal and chronic pain research. Success against strong competition culminated in Professor Lord Darzi opening this new initiative, designated the Arthritis Research Campaign National Primary Care Centre. The Centre’s bid emphasised applied health research and its aim to reduce chronic pain and disability in people who suffer from common conditions such as back pain and arthritis. The Centre was also successful in winning two major NIHR research programmes to test new methods of treating back pain and osteoarthritis. Studies into the cause and natural history of osteoarthritis received a further boost with the award of an ARC programme grant to Dr George Peat. Dr Danielle van der Windt was promoted to Professor of Primary Care Epidemiology. Total grant income in the year was £9.62 million.
Health Minister opens National Primary Care Centre

Professor Lord Darzi of Denham, KBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Health, officially opened a major new centre at Keele promoting research in primary care, which was created with funding of £2.5m over five years from the Arthritis Research Campaign.

The Arthritis Research Campaign National Primary Care Centre will have a direct benefit on the thousands of people in the UK who suffer from painful joint and muscle problems.

Lord Darzi said: “The ‘High Quality Care for All’ report placed improving quality at the heart of our plans for the future of the NHS. The academic primary care centre at Keele University will integrate cutting edge research and innovation in arthritis care provision and is an excellent example of this in practice.”

Professor Peter Croft, Director of the new centre, said: “Lord Darzi’s report on the National Health Service highlighted the need for the NHS to value results that are important to patients – less pain, improved sense of wellbeing and being satisfied with the care they have received. These are precisely the outcomes which the Arthritis Research Campaign wants the new centre to study and our research programme is geared to finding out how to achieve these for patients with conditions such as back pain and osteoarthritis.”

The new centre will not only investigate the most effective treatments for people with musculoskeletal conditions but also test new ways of delivering these treatments in everyday clinical practice, so making a real difference to the lives of patients.

Quality Enhancement in Nursing, Midwifery and Operating Department Practitioner Education

The School of Nursing and Midwifery had an extremely successful year in terms of quality assurance and enhancement. The School was awarded earned-autonomy status by the Nursing and Midwifery Council following the annual monitoring event, scoring at least good in every dimension of the NMC standards. Also, the School underwent internal audit by the University and received a very positive report with many commendations of good practice in learning and teaching and with the School of Health and Rehabilitation received a very positive outcome from the quality monitoring process undertaken by the Strategic Health Authority. The School again achieved the lowest attrition rates from its pre-registration programmes of all the HEIs in the West Midlands.

The appointment of a new Director of Learning Beyond Registration (Mel Humphreys) has enabled the School to move forward with a complete revamp of its post registration portfolio, reflecting contemporary health care practice and policy.

The School was delighted to welcome a new Lead Midwife for Education (Carolyn Roth) who is leading the midwifery team in both undergraduate and postgraduate developments. Recruitment to the pre-registration programmes was highly successful reflecting the effectiveness of the marketing programme. In collaboration with the IPCHS a number of link fellowships were awarded to further promote research capacity and capability building. The School increased its enterprise activity and was successful in securing several competitive funding streams for projects, including Preventing Death by Indifference, an innovative project to improve the standard of care and access to health services by people with learning disabilities. International activity resulted in useful exchange visits between academic staff and Ankara University, Turkey and student placements in Australia. The Head of School (Rebecca Jester) was awarded a personal chair in Orthopaedic Nursing (the first in the UK).

The Fellowship is for a project entitled “The course of symptoms over time and the influence of the family on patterns of chronic pain”.

Award winning KUBE Radio has new purpose-built studios in the Students’ Union officially opened by James Walshe, Assistant Programme Controller at Kerrang Radio.

Professor Martin Wasik, Professor of Criminal Justice in the School of Law, is awarded the CBE in the New Year Honours List, for services to the Criminal Justice System.

Dr Kate Dunn, Research Institute for Primary Care and Health Sciences, is awarded a Wellcome Trust Research Career Development Fellowship for five years, worth £586,110.

The Chancellor, Professor Sir David Weatherall, speaks about genes and the future development of medicine and healthcare in a lecture entitled “Personalised Medicine: Fact or Fantasy”, in Keele’s Public Sector Series.
It has been another busy year in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences with yet more new developments. While change and reorganisation has become fairly routine in higher education, these activities nevertheless take time and energy and can also cause anxiety; I would therefore like to thank those colleagues who have shown forbearance and even cheerfulness in the face of change as well as those who have worked so hard to bring the changes about.

Much time has been taken up this year with the development of the new degree structure, which is intended to increase flexibility across undergraduate programmes to enable students to choose whether and how much to specialise and to encourage them to take skills-based modules and electives outside their dual or single honours programmes. Special thanks are due to the Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Dr Bill Dixon, and the Faculty’s Director of Quality Enhancement, Dr Matthew Wyman, and Carol Hough, the Faculty Business Manager, as well as to all members of the Faculty’s Learning and Teaching Committee and Programme Directors for all their hard work. Most of the work for year 1 is complete; the planning for years 2 and 3 is in progress and the new structure will be rolled out from September 2009.

Undergraduate recruitment was considerably improved for 2008/09 and as this was due to an improved conversion rate rather than to increased applications, it must, at least in part, be testament to the hard work and enthusiasm of colleagues at Open and Visit Days. The University has launched a new strategy for postgraduate taught programmes and Graeme Easdown was appointed as Faculty PGT Director, in order to implement the strategy. A review of current provision has been undertaken and a number of new PGT programmes are being planned in a range of areas, including public policy, climate change and urban futures.

September saw the launch of two new academic structures: The School of Sociology and Criminology, headed by Professor Graham Allan, and the School of Public Policy and Professional Practice, headed by Professor Charlotte Williams. These replaced the School of Criminology, Education, Sociology and Social Work and Centre for Health Planning and Management in order to enable both the development of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes in core social sciences on the one hand and professional MA’s and continuing professional development, especially in Education, Social Work and Public Policy on the other.

In November Senate approved the new and reconfigured programmes in Management and this was followed in December by Council approving the business plan for the new School, which is being developed as a result of the restructuring of the School of Economic and Management Studies. The new School will be called Keele Management School (KMS), a new Head of School will soon be appointed and KMS will be launched in September 2009.

December saw the announcement of the results of the Research Assessment Exercise. Staff in the Faculty were submitted to eight units of assessment: Social Policy; Politics and International Relations; Management; Law; English; History; Music and Russian. These submissions included 73% of eligible academic staff across the Faculty, which represents a high level of high quality research. The results were at least as good as in 2001, with especially pleasing outcomes in Social Policy, Music and History. Research activity has continued apace since the cut-off for the RAE submission with a number of grants awarded. The Faculty is hosting another ESRC Seminar Series (the 7th in the last four years), co-ordinated by Lydia Martens in Life Course Studies, on Motherhoods, Markets and Consumption. Philip Catney in the Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice has an ESRC award to explore Multi-Level Governance and Steve Cropper in the Research Institute for Public Policy and Management, has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government for research into the Sustainable Heath Action Programme. In the Humanities, Charles Townshend was elected a Fellow of the British Academy and the cross Faculty LePlay Archive Project has appointed an Archivist with a grant from the Sociological Review.

This is my last Annual Report as I am about to leave Keele to take up a new post as Pro Vice-Chancellor at Glasgow Caledonian University. I have had a very interesting and enjoyable, if at times challenging, four years at Keele. I have been particularly impressed by the commitment of both staff and students to Keele as a special place and by the strength of interdisciplinary work across the Faculty. I wish the University and especially the Faculty and my successor much success in the future.
Cataloguing has begun on the Foundations of Sociology (LePlay) Archive held in Keele’s Special Collections and Archives. The archive dates from 1880 to 1955 and is a collection of papers from the Sociological Society, LePlay House, the Institute of Sociology and several smaller subsidiary groups, all part of the early sociology movement in Britain.

The archive also contains a large amount of survey material gathered on study tours and field meetings run by the societies, mainly relating to the British Isles and Europe, as well as the papers of prominent members of the societies, Victor and Sybella Branford and Alexander and Dorothea Farquharson.

Members of the societies founded the Sociological Review, contributed to early university teaching of Sociology and published many books and papers. The collection contains a wide variety of material including correspondence, newspaper cuttings, draft speeches, meeting minutes, published plans, survey reports, lantern slides and presentation posters.

The scope for research using the collection is diverse, including social history themes such as the responsibilities of the state and the citizen, the position of women, local government reform, regionalism, rural society and the family. It also contains material on the origins of modern British sociology and related social sciences such as social psychology, town planning and demography.

At present the collection is largely unexploited and the cataloguing project aims to address this by making the material more accessible. The catalogue is due to be completed by early 2010 and will be made available to search online.

Sixties generation is heading for conventional old age

Dr Rebecca Leach, School of Sociology and Criminology, hit the national and international headlines when research into Britain’s post-war baby boomers generation was published. The research, supported by the Economic and Social Research Council and Arts and Humanities Research Council, shows that most members of the baby boom generation – often regarded as the first teenagers of a more affluent consumer society – have modest ideas for their retirement.

Findings from the study, says Dr Leach, "provide only limited evidence that first wave boomers are developing new third age lifestyles’. Most have fairly modest aspirations, hoping at best to maintain current lifestyles and activities provided health and finances permit them to do so.

The first wave baby boom generation, born between 1945 and 1954, represents 17 per cent of the UK population. Born at a time of austerity, this group later experienced relative prosperity and the emergence of a mass consumer society.

The research project, by Dr Leach and Professor Chris Phillipson at Keele and Professor Simon Biggs, at King’s College, London, looked in particular at the role of consumption in approaches to adult ageing. It examined the extent to which baby boomers see themselves as part of a distinctive generational group and how this might affect consumption patterns.

Professor Andrew Dobson, School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy and a member of the Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice, is elected as an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Keele Conferences win gold awards in the Best Value for Money Conference Venue and Best Conference and Banqueting Staff categories at the annual Meetings and Incentive Travel Awards. The team also wins silver in the Best Academic Venue category.

Degrees and diplomas are awarded to 357 postgraduate, undergraduate and nursing students at graduation ceremonies in the University Chapel. Staffordshire businessman, Mo Chaudry, is awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his outstanding contribution to community relations and entrepreneurship.

Keele is awarded Fairtrade university status. Keele has achieved Fairtrade status by meeting all five goals of the Fairtrade Foundation.
Faculty of Natural Sciences

Report of the Dean

In a vibrant University, every year feels like it’s been full of changes, successes and new initiatives – certainly 2008 has had plenty of excitement in Natural Sciences. On the teaching side, the computing programmes have been completely revamped for the 2009 intake, and we’ve won major teaching awards at University and national level; in research, major grants have been secured across the whole range of science disciplines, and RAE2008 has seen a massive improvement in our ‘science rating’, with more than 80% of the research from about 70 staff being assessed as world-class.

Our strong research performance from the Research Institute for the Environment, Physical Sciences and Applied Mathematics groupings includes two multi-centre EU grants that Keele leads (value £7m, in Mathematics and Life Sciences) which have both now started. The Faculty has also seen our outreach and schools’ liaison activities really burgeoning and Natural Sciences is playing a major role in Keele’s sustainability agenda.

The School of Computing and Mathematics has been a hive of activity, with two especially important successes. Firstly, ‘Applied Mathematics’, which performed so well in RAE2001, has again demonstrated its strength, with 95% of the research rated ‘world-class’. Secondly, the undergraduate computing programmes have been completely redesigned, and a new degree in Actuarial Science has been launched – applications for 2009 entry are already up 57% on last year. Other highlights include Jonathan Healey’s fluid dynamics grant with EPSRC, and the start of the €4m LIMOUSINE Marie-Curie project headed by Maria Heckl.

In Life Sciences, a major revision of the undergraduate programmes includes a new Human Biology degree for the 2009 intake, and is reflected in even more applications to Life Sciences than for the 2008 intake (itself a record). But numbers are of limited value without quality, and Glenn Hussey’s Teaching Innovation Award to fund a new personal tutoring system, Rhayza Maingon’s invitation to speak at the ‘teaching of bio-ethics’ conference at Cambridge and Adela Nacer’s development of new technology to help visually impaired neuroscience students are all examples of teaching excellence. In research, there were many successful grant bids, the major ones being in the area of malaria research (£800k; Paul Eggleston, Hilary Hurd and Frederic Tripet); £200k for Trevor Greenhough and Annette Shrive on structural biology; £350k for Mary Palmer (new researcher grant); £190k for Gwyn Williams and Mirna Mourtada-Maarabouni for leukaemia research; and the start of Dave Holme’s £3m Marie-Curie consortium ‘NEMO’ project on fish immunity.

Physical and Geographical Sciences (PGS) is a very diverse School and recent successes in all areas have led to further new appointments in 2008 – Steve Allin to the Chair in Organic Chemistry, and lectureships to Stuart Clarke and Brian O’Driscoll (geosciences), Deirdre McKay (geography), and Katherine Haxton and Richard Darton (chemical sciences).

Measures of its teaching excellence come from its ranking of 6th nationally in physical and geosciences for overall student satisfaction in the National Student Survey, whilst Zoe Robinson won a ‘Keele Teaching Excellence Award’ for her innovative teaching developments in geography and environmental science, and Peter Knight has been awarded one of the prestigious Natural Teaching Fellowships for his contribution to geography education. It’s noteworthy that PGS has secured 11 Teaching Innovation Awards over the last year, and is also launching a new interdisciplinary BSc in ‘Environment and Sustainability’ in 2009. With 33 staff from the School submitted to RAE2008, it is great to see more than 80% of the research being rated ‘world-class’; particular highlights are major grants to Peter Adey, Falko Drijfhout, Steve Allin, Mark Ormerod, and the continued success of the Astrophysics group with planet discovery by the WASP team (10 further new planets in 2008; £1.3m grant led by Coel Hellier), continuation of the STFC rolling grant (£2.74m, including funding for three PDRAs and substantial staff time), and a Marie-Curie Fellowship to Raphael Hirsch.

It has been a year of major curriculum developments in the School of Psychology, with the approval of a new undergraduate programme in Applied Psychology and a new taught MSc programme in Applied Psychological Research. Alongside new courses, the peer e-mentoring scheme for first years has been led by Claire Fox and Gaby Jacobs – one of several initiatives to help students develop a wider range of learning skills. The ‘applied’, ‘cognitive’ and ‘social’ research groupings continue to be very active, with grants including topics as diverse as disease management (Nicky Edelstyn), trust (Ken Rotenberg), group attitudes (Mark Tarrant) and play (Maggie Robson). Keele hosted two major conferences in 2008 (Nell Bridges on Counselling, and Michael Murray on Health), and were involved in 62 conference presentations and 28 publications.

Other important Faculty developments included funding of £700k for a major refurbishment of the University Observatory, and its extension to provide an environmental wing, and the successful bid of the Science Learning Centre to continue its role of supporting and developing science teachers in the region (£320k for 2008-2011).
Exciting new initiatives currently being developed at Keele will place the University at the forefront of green technology. The aim is for Keele to be ‘the Ultimate Campus University for the 21st Century’, with an ongoing programme of transformation into an exceptional site for environmental sustainability.

Keele is in a unique position since it has a large campus with access to several sustainable energy sources. In addition, the University has national and international expertise in environmental technology and has key research strengths in the following areas:

- Fuel cells
- Wind energy
- Eco-coal
- Geothermal energy
- Green IT
- Photovoltaic materials
- Environmental biology
- Political, social and legal policy issues

Keele is in the process of developing a new 70-acre site which will contain academic buildings, student accommodation, and buildings for technology companies. Renewable energy sources will be integrated into these new buildings. These developments continue Keele’s ethos of embedding, physically and educationally, business and industry into the University’s academic profile. Major research collaborations with companies involved in green IT, wind power, solar power, fuel cells and geothermal energy are all ways in which the University is looking to build links with industry.

The main focus of the initiatives on the new site will be a specialist Sustainability Hub building – a centre for excellence in sustainability and environmental technologies. This building will provide the opportunity to share knowledge of these new technologies with the public, industry and other interested groups.

The Keele Hub for Sustainability will use renewable and low carbon energy sources on campus, combined with research and courses on environmental issues. The University’s rural site of over 600 acres offers unparalleled opportunities as a ‘campus laboratory’, and as a showcase for sustainable living.

Complementary to these major developments are the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes run by Keele on environmental sustainability. Increasing environmental threats, which are posing severe scientific, social and economic challenges to the human race, require a new generation of innovative young people trained not only in specialised skills but also with an interdisciplinary awareness that would assist in the development of a sustainable environment. The interdisciplinary nature of the programmes on the environment and sustainability at Keele provide a broad understanding of environmental problems relevant to sustainability, whilst embedding the appropriate specialist scientific, managerial and generic skills for a career in the environmental sustainability sector. The programmes incorporate internationally recognised expertise in research and teaching on environmental issues.

Courses range from undergraduate programmes in Applied Environmental Science, and an interdisciplinary degree on Environment and Sustainability, through to postgraduate degrees in Environmental Politics and a new MSc in Environmental Sustainability and Green Technology. Shorter courses are also available for undergraduates, while partnerships with companies on the Science Park are leading to the development of specialist environmental courses on business and management.

The University has an award-winning, nationally leading reputation for its work in promoting public awareness and engagement in sustainability, including the areas of renewable and clean technology, sustainable living, climate change and wider environmental issues. These activities have attracted significant external funding and recognition, and link directly to Keele’s research expertise and renowned teaching excellence.

Keele plans to become an innovative ‘campus-laboratory’, a showcase for the implementation and study of renewable energy resources on a multi-use site, within a sustainable environment.
Research and Enterprise Services (RES) was restructured in 2008 to provide more effective engagement with both the academic community and external partners.

RES continues to focus on helping to improve Keele’s research income, increasing the number of postgraduate research students registered at Keele and supporting enterprise activities across the University.

A key development for our technology transfer activities was Keele’s subscription to the Mercia Technology Seed Fund. Keele, together with other regional universities, is now a co-investor in Mercia’s Fund 2, which is aimed at supporting new high-technology, high-growth businesses in the West Midlands.

A major initiative implemented in 2008 was SEA-change, aimed at Senior Enterprise Academics. Our first SEA-change Fellow is Professor Peter Styles, who will lead on developing major collaborative research bids in the fields of environment and sustainability. Further SEA-change fellows will be appointed in the fields of Active Ageing and Social and Economic Regeneration.

World-leading Research

The high quality of Keele’s research was recognised in the national Research Assessment Exercise (RAE2008) where 85% of the University’s research was classified as world-leading and of international importance.

The University also achieved high levels of research grant applications, resulting in £8.9m research income during 2008/09, and a continuation of its success in securing funding from the prestigious Research Councils.

Research Successes

A study to improve access to physiotherapy was awarded £1.06 million by the Medical Research Council. The project, led by Dr Nadine Foster, Research Institute for Primary Care and Health Sciences, and Professor Chris Salisbury will investigate the effectiveness of ‘PhysioDirect’, a telephone assessment and advice service for physiotherapy, based on computerised algorithms.

A team of researchers, led by Dr George Peat, ARC National Primary Care Centre, is hoping to improve the care and treatment of painful osteoarthritis offered by GPs in a major project involving almost 2,000 local patients. The study is being funded by a five-year grant of more than £788,000 from the Arthritis Research Campaign.

A multidisciplinary team in the Research Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine, led by Professor Bill Farrell, was awarded a grant of £148,000 for a three-year study from the World Cancer Research Fund. The project will examine the effects of supplementation with the vitamin folic acid during pregnancy on foetal DNA.

Dr Susana Teixeira, Research Institute for the Environment, Physical Sciences and Applied Mathematics, together with Professor Trevor Forsyth and Professor Neil Isaacs, was awarded £378,000 by The Science and Technology Facilities Council for a project titled ‘Structural Studies on the interaction between membrane proteins and lipids’.

The Wellcome Trust awarded Professor Paul Eggleston, Professor Hilary Hurd and Dr Frederic Triplet, Research Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine, a grant of £803,794 for a three-year programme entitled ‘Genetic engineering of refractory mosquito vectors for the control of malaria transmission’.

The image shows two genetically modified Anopheles gambiae larvae. The DNA introduced into these mosquitoes includes a gene that causes blue fluorescence under UV light.

Enterprise Activities

It was another successful year for Enterprise at Keele. For the financial year 2007/8 over £900k was generated through consultancy activities, with 18% of the contracts coming from within the West Midlands and a third being with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Licensing income was £678k and Keele spin-outs created a turnover in excess of £430k and secured investment of over £420k.

RES supported five new Medici fellows across all faculties and helped establish Keele’s first Knowledge Transfer Partnership project. RES also supported, via the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), five InnovationKeele (iK) seed-corn funded projects totalling £94k. External partnerships included developing a formal relationship with the Mercia Technology Seed Fund and contracting with InnovationXChange (IXC-UK) to enhance our licensing activities.

Significant studentships were awarded to Dr Chris Exley for research on the renal handling of silicon in health and disease supported by Danone; to Professor Rolland Munro for research on Cultures Build Brands: ‘Issues around the Convergence of Employee and Consumer Identities’, supported by Britannia; and to Professor Peter Styles for research in 3D structural and geological modelling of shallow ground conditions for waste disposal supported by NDA/UKAEA.

March 2008

Dame Mary Marsh, Chief Executive of the NSPCC, speaks in the Public Sector Series on how we can help prevent child abuse in a lecture entitled ‘Safeguarding Children is Everyone’s Responsibility’.

The School of Medicine, in association with the Royal Society of Medicine, hosts a Medicine Careers Day for young people looking to discover more about becoming a doctor. The event, ‘So You Want To Be A Doctor’, is attended by 250 school students, aged 15 and 16, who want to find out about a career in medicine.

Keele University Students’ Union is awarded a prestigious environmental award for the second year running. The Sound Impact Awards is an accreditation scheme to help Students’ Unions do their bit for the environment – KUSU comfortably met the twenty-one essential criteria to gain the bronze award.
Lord Stafford Awards

nanoTherics Ltd, a Keele spin-out, won the prestigious Lord Stafford Awards ‘Impact Through Innovation’ award. nanoTherics supplies scientific devices and associated products to research laboratories in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, as well as to academic research laboratories. The company’s products apply a patented technology, using nanoparticles and magnetic fields, to facilitate improved delivery of biomolecules, such as DNA, into living cells, which could lead to a more effective non-viral gene therapy to treat diseases such as cystic fibrosis.

Student Enterprise

Four undergraduates ended their placement on the SPEED (Student Enterprise Education) programme and are trading profitably. Rebecca Mulhearn (Glowworm T-Shirts), Scott Bordoni (Button Up Records), Nicola Smith (NRS O&Ms) and Matthew Forde (Blinds-Now) successfully competed for places on the scheme, which involved collaboration between thirteen partner universities across the UK.

Four more students have been offered places on the 2008/09 SPEED programme. They have business ideas which range from waste disposal on construction sites to the development of a ‘green’ device for vehicles. They will join enterprise students from other Midlands universities on this £5.16 million collaborative regional programme, which is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

New Dean

Professor Sian Maslin-Prothero took up post as Dean of the Graduate School in 2008. She is Professor of Nursing in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and is a member of the Research Institute for Life Course Studies. She was formerly a Senior Lecturer at the University of Southampton and had previously held academic and nursing posts in the UK and Australia.

Professor Maslin-Prothero commented: “I look forward to taking up this post and to building on the expertise and practices of colleagues by working in partnership across the University and beyond. The Graduate School will continue to identify and disseminate best practice in order to enhance the postgraduate experience for both students and supervisors.”

Body Shape Identifier wins BIZCOM 2008

Ed de Quincey, a PhD student and part-time lecturer, together with Dr Theocharis Kyriacou and Stephanie Dale, all from the School of Computing and Mathematics, won the Keele BIZCOM 2008 Business Ideas Competition with their ‘Body Shape Identifier’ (BSI) concept. The idea used innovative BSI algorithms to develop a web tool for retail clothing customers and the medical sector.

Graduate Research Symposium

The Graduate School organised a successful symposium for research degree students, which provided the opportunity for students to present a short paper to their peers in a multidisciplinary setting. Fifty papers were presented and twenty posters from across the University were judged, with the winning entry being from Eunju Shin, ISTM.

Ian Pearson, MP, Minister of State for Science and Innovation, unveils a sculpture to mark the official opening of MEDIC3 and MEDIC4 on the Keele Science Park.

The Independent Good University Guide sees Keele shoot ten places up the University League Table for 2009. Keele moves into 40th place in the table and fourth in the West Midlands.

More than 100 students from Shropshire, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent schools enjoy two days of fun-filled chemistry at the Salters’ Festival of Chemistry. The Salters’ Festivals of Chemistry aim is to promote the appreciation of chemistry and related sciences among the young.
The Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Division enjoyed double success with the flagship Aimhigher project, ‘Parent Ambassadors’, winning the Aimhigher Excellence in Practice Award and the school and college partnership programme Keelelink having its widening participation element nominated for the Times Higher Education Widening Participation Initiative of the Year Award.

In addition to the accolades received, successful projects have received extensions and expansions in funding. The TDA funded Student Associate Scheme, which places undergraduate students in schools for 15 days to support achievement and classroom support in STEM subject areas, received a 30% increase in funding and an extension until 2011. Aimhigher projects have been extended until 2011, also with additional funding, for an expansion to the project to include a student ambassador scheme and a student mentoring scheme.

Keelelink

With a national award nomination and more opportunities being added to the partnership offering, membership has grown to 45 schools and colleges. New offerings in 2008 included supporting enterprise activities in schools, a restructured campus-based events programme, local homework clubs and e-mentoring. ‘Into the Dragons’ Den’, a school-based activity delivered by a new partner, the All Together Company, gives students the opportunity to explore product development and innovation and present their ideas to a panel of dragons (business professionals). The restructured events programme has seen events linked to the national curriculum and is offering a wider range of campus based experience for young people than ever before. Local homework clubs give students in the Stoke-on-Trent area the opportunity to come together on a weekly basis, engage with undergraduate students, focus on their homework and learn a new skill, such as football or dancing. Finally, after a successful pilot with 20 year 11 students the Keelelink e-mentoring programme has been rolled out to year 10 and 11 students with over 200 pupils now engaging in an electronic dialogue with undergraduate students.

Stepping Stones: Inspire Their Future

Building on the reputation in developing new media solutions for the widening participation sector, the division developed the final product in its newly branded UpGrade suite. Stepping Stones: Inspire their future, is targeted at KS3-5 teachers and aims to provide teachers with resources and the knowledge to confidently advise their pupils on widening participation and other issues relating to progression into HE. This resource provides teachers with more than 100 lesson plans on finance, student life, progression, careers and courses. Teachers can also navigate a progression route map to help them advise their students on alternative routes into HE and understand the range of qualifications at each level, including the new 14-19 Diploma. The knowledge they gain from the material, which includes inspirational video footage of students talking about how teachers inspired them to study at HE, can be tested via interactive quizzes.

Developing Further Partnerships

New partnerships have been formed with organisations such as the Gifted and Talented Excellence Hub, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, the All Together Company and local 14-19 development groups. The University became a member of The West Midlands Excellence Hub, a consortium of 11 Higher Education Institutions that provides a range of educational events such as residential and non-residential summer schools, guest lectures and masterclasses and online learning opportunities for gifted and talented students. Also, by engaging with 14-19 development groups, Keele is taking an active part in the development of the new 14-19 Diploma qualifications being delivered in the local area and ensuring our guidance and progression opportunities are clear for future students on these programmes.

Lifelong Learning Network

Keele has remained one of the principal institutions managing the network, including leading the network’s operational groups concerned with IAG and Student Support, and Cross-Cutting Themes (Leadership and Management, Entrepreneurship, and IT). Keele is also involved in the network’s other operational groups concerned with Health and Social Care, Creative and Media, Technology, Public Sector/Services and Data.

The network is providing Keele with opportunities for new curriculum developments, from the creation of transferable modules through to full qualifications, as well as progression agreements and involvement with 14-19 Diplomas.

It has also been a catalyst for strengthening relationships with local FE colleges and employer organisations, as well as the formation of new relationships within the sub-region. In particular, development work is under way with regard to a Keele-based course equivalent to an A level, to be run for students at Stoke-on-Trent 6th Form College from September 2009.
Under the Prime Minister Initiative (PMI2), the Government is encouraging UK universities to look at how British students might spend time abroad in more unusual destinations under the International Student Mobility strand. The Centre for International Exchange and Development at Keele successfully bid for three projects.

A group of undergraduate Music and Music Technology students travelled to Singapore, where for a month they attended courses which included Recording and Mixing. They also had a tour of the Mediacorp Broadcast station; a tour of the Esplanade and attended three Asian music workshops: Malay Kompang, Indian Instrument and the Gamelan. They visited a school, where one of Keele’s Music alumni is now teaching, and demonstrated how studying Music Technology at Keele is different from the Singapore approach.

The second group of students, studying on the MA in Human Rights and Global Justice, spent four weeks in Mumbai at the Tata Institute for Social Science (TISS). Instead of following their module at Keele they followed courses at TISS on topics such as India’s International Human Rights Commitments with regard to Economic and Gender Rights; Juvenile Justice Act and Issues of street children/child labour; Impact of policies of International bodies like WTO, World Bank, IMF, TRIPS on Indian Economy and visited the Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes, as well as field visits and lectures on topics related to Rural India held at the TISS Rural Campus.

The third project was to set up a strategic partnership with Lingnan University in Hong Kong. Dr Annette Kratz, Head of the Centre for International Exchange and Development, visited Lingnan to sign a Memorandum of Understanding as well as a more detailed student exchange agreement. The first student from Lingnan arrived at Keele in January 2009.

Erasmus Administrative Exchanges

The Erasmus student and teaching staff scheme was extended to cover the exchange of administrative staff during the year and Keele staff were keen to take up the opportunity to see how their job is done in another country. Patrick Greenhalgh, from the Careers Service, visited Göteborg University in Sweden; Kath Pye, an undergraduate administrator in the School of Sociology and Criminology, visited her counterparts at the Université de Liège in Belgium; and Rosemarie Bradshaw, Accommodation Services Manager, compared student housing at the universities of Luleå and Umeå in northern Sweden.

BUTEX

Dr Erica Arthur, the Study Abroad Manager, was elected Chair of BUTEX (British Transatlantic Exchange Committee), which will involve running workshops on student mobility with North America, discussions with HEFCE in relation to student mobility and funding and statistical reporting.

CUSAC

The CUSAC (Commonwealth Study Abroad Consortium) Conference and Business Meeting was held at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. The theme of the conference was Quality and Equivalence and the session on ‘Creating a Landscape for Partnerships’ was chaired by Annette Kratz, who is the European representative for CUSAC.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janet Finch, is awarded a DBE, Dame Commander of the British Empire, in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List, for services to Social Science and to Higher Education.

Keele moves up 13 places in the prestigious Times Good University Guide. The University is now in 41st place in the Guide for 2009.

The former Chancellor, Lord Moser officially opens the £3.5 million building which bears his name, the Claus Moser Research Centre, which provides a central ‘hub’ for Keele’s internationally recognised research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Poet Laureate Andrew Motion gives the final reading in the Poetry Live! 2007/08 series at Keele.

Keele achieves two individual awards in the 2008 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme. Keele is successful with awards to Dr Peter Knight and Dr Stephen Bostock.
Degrees are awarded to nearly 2,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students at 13 degree ceremonies held in the University Chapel over three days. Honorary degrees are conferred on Nick Partridge, OBE; Professor Richard Sennett; Lord Turnberg of Cheadle and Fiona Woolf, CBE.

Katherine Birch, an e-learning Fellow who has been a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Health Planning and Management, has a keen interest in the use of technology to support teaching and learning. She has been involved with an innovative programme for NHS Trusts and has also been working with healthcare organisations to explore ways in which technology can support Continuing Professional Development.

Tony Curtis, is a Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies (Pharmaceutical Science) in the School of Pharmacy, a role that enables him to teach a diverse range of topics at the interface between the Physical and Life Sciences, from Metabolism and Microbiology to Organic Synthesis and Drug Discovery. The multidisciplinary nature of his teaching enables Tony to contextualise material better, thus enabling students to see beyond the lecture theatre or laboratory and ground their studies in real-world situations. Tony is also interested in the development of students’ problem-solving skills through group work on task-based projects and in the way learning styles translate from the classroom to the online environment.

Zoe Robinson is a Lecturer in Physical Geography and the Course Director for Applied Environmental Science. Zoe’s teaching and learning interests relate particularly to the embedding of subject-specific employability skills within the Geography/Environmental Science curriculum, and the area of Education for Sustainable Development, particularly sustainability as an employability skill, and public understanding work with schools, school teachers and the general public on climate change and sustainable living.

Dr Peter Knight, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Physical and Geographical Sciences, has established an outstanding reputation for his teaching and scholarship within the Faculty of Natural Sciences. He has won a number of University awards for the quality of his teaching and has contributed both to the development and delivery of innovative course programmes in Geography and to the application and monitoring of quality assurance processes across the University. He has also established an international reputation for undergraduate handbooks in his specialist area of glaciology, as well as developing teaching materials and resources in this field.

Dr Stephen Bostock, Head of the Learning Development Unit, has been an outstanding leader within and beyond the University, with highly innovative work in staff development and the application of technology to student learning. Stephen was a recipient in 2004 of the University Learning Support Staff Award for Learning and Teaching Excellence. He was one of the first to recognise the educational benefits of using the internet to support and enhance active learning for students on and off campus, teaching web-based and IT postgraduate courses in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Mauritius.

The prestigious Neil and Gina Smith Student of the Year Award was presented to Rachel Wiggott.

Rachel achieved a first-class degree in Sociology and French and in addition to her strong academic performance contributed both to Keele and to the wider community in her extracurricular activities.

During her gap year, Rachel worked at a charity caring for children with special needs. While at Keele she was active in SPEAK, a chapel-based Christian social justice group campaigning on a number of issues, and worked as a volunteer in a NACRO youth inclusion project in Stoke-on-Trent, facilitating group sessions for teenagers deemed by police and/or social services to be at risk of offending.

Professor Charles Townshend, Professor of International History, School of Humanities (History), pictured right, is elected a Fellow of the British Academy, in recognition of the excellence of his academic achievements.
Key Appointment

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Rama Thirunamachandran, formerly Director for Research, Innovation and Skills at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was appointed as the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

He was Director at HEFCE from 2002 with overall responsibility for the strategic direction of HEFCE’s research, knowledge transfer, and employer engagement and skills policies with budgetary responsibility for some £1.5 billion per annum. His responsibilities included oversight of the operation of the Research Assessment Exercise and the development of the Research Excellence Framework.

A Cambridge graduate in Geography and Natural Sciences, Rama was a senior officer at HEFCE for nine years, variously taking responsibility for the South East region, for overseeing the whole funding operations of the Council, including the distribution of student numbers, the strategic development fund and HEFCE’s regional and international policies.

Before joining HEFCE he was Head of Research and Enterprise at Royal Holloway (University of London) and Director of Royal Holloway Enterprise Ltd. He has also held posts at the University of Bristol and King’s College London.

Honorary Degrees Awarded in 2008

Staffordshire businessman, Mo Chaudry, was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his outstanding contribution to community relations and entrepreneurship.

Nick Partridge, OBE, Chief Executive of the Terrence Higgins Trust and Keele graduate, was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the public understanding of HIV and AIDS.

Professor Richard Sennett, internationally renowned sociologist, was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Sociology.

Lord Turnberg of Cheadle, one of the UK’s leading clinical academics, was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Medicine.

Fiona Woolf, CBE, an Alderman in the City of London, immediate past President of the Law Society of England and Wales and Keele graduate, was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Law.

Professor Peter Styles, Director of the Research Institute for the Environment, Physical Sciences and Applied Mathematics and Professor of Applied and Environmental Geophysics in the Applied and Environmental Geophysics Research Group, School of Physical and Geographical Sciences, pictured left, is invited to join the Geosphere Characterisation Panel of the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency.

Angus Dawson (PEAK, School of Law/Ri Law Politics & Justice) is invited to join the World Health Organisation’s new ‘Task Force on Addressing Ethical Issues in Tuberculosis Control Programmes’, because of his expertise in the area of public health ethics.
CFM has focused on improving the experience of students at Keele, both in terms of communication and the environment. There are also many initiatives to deliver the University’s aspiration to achieve Deep Green status. Alongside this, the directorate continues to focus on delivering both outstanding services and income, both of which play a crucial role in supporting the University’s core activity. Last year CFM delivered a profit of £3.9m to the University.

**Fairtrade for Keele**

During the year Keele was awarded Fairtrade status. Fairtrade is a trading model which guarantees a fair price to farmers in local co-operatives in the developing world. This premium can then be invested in local community projects such as electric lighting, schools and health programmes for workers. It ensures that these producers are not unfairly exploited by market forces and uses those very same market forces to create a market for ethical produce.

Keele achieved Fairtrade status by meeting all five goals of the Fairtrade Foundation. In addition CFM sold almost £50,000 worth of Fairtrade goods in 2006/7. All coffee and black tea served at University meetings and in retail outlets across the campus is Fairtrade, and there are over 50 different Fairtrade products being used and sold across the campus.

**Building a Campus with a Sustainable Future**

In a year when the *Times Education Guide* described Keele as “A breathtaking setting with a lake and stately home” and “set in a 617-acre wooded campus, regarded as one of the most beautiful in the UK”, CFM Estates have worked to continue with the refurbishment of the central core of the University; develop the new site at the main entrance to the University and work to further the desires of the ‘Deep Green’ agenda.

A number of the projects on site are working towards BREEAM Excellent standard (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). The main example of this is the new wet laboratory area adjoining the Lennard Jones building.

The infrastructure works to the new development site were completed during the summer. The project consisted of earthworks, roads, footpaths, cycle ways, drainage, services, lighting, hard and soft landscaping, street furniture and the construction of a plaza area and central water corridor.

**Developing our Staff and Standards**

As an IIP and ISO accredited organisation, CFM continues to invest significantly in the training and development of its staff. 2008 saw the launch of the Step-up programme to harness the talents and energy of individuals from across the directorate in bringing to life some exciting projects put forward by staff. Through action learning sets, staff worked on ‘enhancing the student experience’, ‘aspiring to be the best’, ‘making CFM a great place to work’ and ‘becoming a healthy, happy campus’. Recommendations from each of the groups are being implemented and further developed. For example, the group that looked at the student experience have introduced a welcome newsletter setting out all the important information that students need to know when they first embark on campus life.

Keele is rated amongst the best in the country for student satisfaction. The University has an overall satisfaction score of 88% in the National Student Survey. Teaching satisfaction is rated particularly highly by students at 87% and Keele is also well above average in Personal Development, Academic Support and Organisation and Management.

Keelelink, Keele University’s Schools and College Partnership Programme, receives national recognition by being shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award. The widening participation hub of the partnership programme is shortlisted for Widening Participation Initiative of the Year.
Student Accommodation

One of the challenges faced today is the changing demands from students. Expectations are higher and living in a community and sharing facilities can be problematic. In addition to a new approach to refurbishing student bedrooms, CFM felt that in dealing with student issues, face-to-face contact would be more effective. Since the appointment of four Residential Managers in 2007 there has been a significant impact in the student environment in dealing with welfare and disciplinary issues. They have also encouraged a closer community culture with a happier lifestyle for all resident students.

Keele Conferences

Keele Conferences struck gold in the Best Value for Money Conference Venue and Best Conference and Banqueting Staff categories at the annual Meetings and Incentive Travel Awards against tough competition that included Hilton Hotels, Cambridge University and Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre in Glasgow. The team also won silver in the Best Academic Venue category.

The awards are voted for by Keele’s customers and meetings and events organisers. The winners were announced at a Gala Presentation Dinner in London, attended by HRH The Princess Royal and more than 600 industry professionals.

Whilst the core products of Keele’s commercial portfolio remain strong, the team has developed two complementary services.

Conference Management allows event organisers to channel all delegate bookings through Keele’s conference team. This takes away one of the main causes of stress for many organisers. Bookings are processed on line and information produced related to delegates, seminars and finance.

Piranha AV takes the skills of our audio visual team off site. A key area is installations for new builds and refurbishment projects. The local NHS authorities are key clients. Another area is event production where the team builds conference sets; sets up the lighting rig and sound set and then co-ordinate the event from a technical perspective. This year saw them work on their largest event to date for 2,000 delegates in Blackpool. An articulated lorry was needed to transport the 80 sections of staging, the 17ft screens and a wide variety of AV pieces.

Electronic Networking

Keele was one of the first universities to use social-networking sites to engage with prospective students and other stakeholders. The ‘Keele 2009’ page on Facebook has grown from 66 members in the summer of 2008 to 303 users in January 2009. The page enables students considering enrolment at Keele to share information and chat with staff and current students in advance. The LinkedIn social networking site for professionals in a wide range of business sectors has 375 members from an initial base of 42 in the summer. LinkedIn contacts are important as they may be able to offer help and advice to current students and to support the University in various ways. A Facebook alumni group now has 1,375 members.

Health and Safety Risk Management Performance

The University’s Safety Policy Statement recognises that the provision of suitable and sufficient health and safety arrangements will ensure the protection of all its stakeholders. This is a shrewd stratagem, which is likely to pay financial dividends now and in the future.

The University undertakes continuous monitoring of health and safety performance and by this means any lapses in these arrangements are detected at the earliest stage, to enable remedial action to be put into place.

The Department of Occupational Health and Safety, DOHS, collates these data to inform the Health and Safety Standing Committee and to bring together an Annual Health and Safety Performance Report. The style and content of these Reports were commended by the HSE following their formal inspection of the University in the summer of 2008.

The University also continues to perform favourably when benchmarked with health and safety data from around 116 other UK Universities.

The University is aware of the Government’s very positive response to the recent Review of the Health of Britain’s Working Age Population by Dame Carol Black. The UCEA and the University make note of the likely wide impact of the Review, which heralds a future of greater emphasis on health, mental and psychological well-being of staff. A Health and Well-being at Work Group, chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor, already exists to explore such aspects of work.

Christopher Brazel, an associate professor of chemical and biological engineering at The University of Alabama (USA) becomes the first Fulbright scholar to be placed at Keele. Keele University’s victorious University Challenge team from 1968 crash to a shock defeat against a team of current students in a charity match to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Keele’s win, chaired by original quizmaster Bamber Gascoigne, left.

Professor Fiona Cownie takes up the Presidency of the Society of Legal Scholars in its centenary year. She is one of only five women appointed to the post.

VE @ Keele is based within the Students’ Union, and supports students to volunteer in the local community, develop essential transferable skills, enhance the student experience at Keele and enrich relations with the local community through partnership working.

Working with around 300 students and 150 voluntary organisations, 2008 was a busy and exciting year for VE @ Keele. New partnerships were created and additional placement providers sourced from a wide variety of voluntary sector and not for profit organisations, ensuring students have a plethora of opportunities to choose from that meet their own specific needs and interests. Whether it is to gain relevant work experience, complement degree studies or simply to give something back to a worthwhile cause or charity, there is something for everyone at VE @ Keele.

Volunteers are encouraged to complete a VE Award which requires completion of a workbook and a minimum number of volunteering hours. VE Awards demonstrate personal learning and development, an understanding of voluntary organisations and the volunteer role. Offered at levels bronze, silver, gold and platinum, VE Awards are a great addition to a student’s CV in today’s competitive graduate jobs market.

Whatever reasons they may have for volunteering through VE @ Keele, by giving up their time, student volunteers are also positively representing Keele in the wider community.

Volunteering Highlights in 2008

VE @ Keele events during National Student Volunteering Week, which included an afternoon tea for local residents, proved to be very popular, helping to build a positive student profile in the local community and enabling students to get involved in one-off and longer-term volunteering opportunities. Some of these events have now been introduced as a regular feature during this special week.

At an Annual Celebration event, 25 student volunteers were presented with a VE or Positive Contribution to the Community Award in recognition of their volunteering experiences, and fifteen students were awarded the prestigious Student Volunteering Gold Award for their volunteering achievements. A new VE Award for the Best Volunteer Placement Provider, as voted for by the volunteers, was also introduced, and went to the Oxfam shop in Newcastle.

A new and exciting partnership project, Overseas Challenge 2009, was set up with Manchester Metropolitan University student volunteer project and Volunteers for Educational Support and Learning (VESL). The aim is to deliver a four-week summer school experience for primary school age children in the northern rural province of Chiang Rai in Thailand in August 2009. Overseas Challenge 2009 aims to be educational and sustainable, empowering host teachers to deliver sessions after Overseas Challenge volunteers have returned home, to run the project annually and to offer a cultural exchange experience for students to further enhance their Keele experience. Students undertaking Overseas Challenge 2009 will complete a diary of their experiences and have pledged to return to Keele to share their experience with others.
ActiVE in the Community

2008 saw the reformation of ActiVE, a student-led society that works closely with VE @ Keele to support students to create volunteer projects and develop charitable ideas through fundraising. Working together with ActiVE ensures that students have a direct link to VE @ Keele and a focus on volunteering in the local community.

Inspired by feedback from the National Student Volunteering Week, VE @ Keele worked together with ActiVE to establish a new community coffee morning project for the benefit of local residents. Held once every two weeks in the village hall, it is with grateful thanks to Keele Parish Council and Keele University Key Fund that the coffee morning project has gone from being an idea to a reality.

CSP Modules

Student Volunteering CSP modules have continued to be popular with over 60 students signing up to take part. These modules not only enable first year students to positively represent Keele in the community but can also complement studies and encourage students to continue volunteering throughout their studies at Keele and beyond.

The Benefits of Volunteering

On registering with VE @ Keele, volunteers are offered an introduction to volunteering and invited to attend additional weekly training sessions. In 2008 training included Teamwork Skills, Organising an Event, Communication and Presentation Skills, Child Protection and Assertiveness Skills.

Volunteering through VE @ Keele is a fantastic way for students to experience a variety of opportunities both on and off campus, develop essential, transferrable employability skills, try something new, and get involved with a charity or organisation that helps people, communities or the environment.

The following quotes demonstrate some of the benefits students have found when volunteering through VE @ Keele:

“Volunteering this year has been one of the best parts of my degree. I’ve looked forward to going every week, made some great friends and really enjoyed myself. It has improved my confidence and I’ve loved the feeling that I’m making a difference.”

“VE has helped me with my course outside of the lectures, while giving me the opportunity to get life experience and to help people in the community.”

“It is challenging, interesting, rewarding and exciting.”

Local charities and organisations can really benefit from volunteers who are willing to offer the precious resource of time, recognising that even a small commitment can have a positive impact for an organisation and the people or area it represents, as well as the advantages volunteers with a diverse range of knowledge and skills can bring.

As we enter 2009, we anticipate another busy year as VE @ Keele continues to be a popular choice for students looking to develop their skills, have fun and really make a difference in the local community, whilst gaining key transferrable skills that will help to put them ahead of the game in the employment market.

Team: Keele

Varsity was increased in size in 2008 to involve 15 teams. It was held at Keele for the first time, which was a momentous occasion! Fourteen competed during the day with the grande finale, Men’s Football, at Newcastle Town FC. The 15 teams were: Men’s Badminton, Women’s Badminton, Men’s Basketball, Women’s Basketball, Men’s Fencing, Women’s Fencing, Men’s Football, Women’s Football, Men’s Hockey, Women’s Hockey, Men’s Lacrosse, Mixed Lacrosse, Netball, Men’s Rugby Union and Women’s Rugby – a Union side who converted to League rules. Keele beat Staffordshire University nine matches to six! The large trophy has sat gloriously in the Keele trophy cabinet for the year.

The 2007-2008 season was a good one for Keele with a huge number of teams going through to the knockout rounds of the leagues. Men’s Basketball finished top of their league following a clean sheet of scores from the season. Men’s Rugby 1st travelled to Birmingham for the first stage of their knockout adventure and came back victorious. The next stage was against Durham, which was played on Varsity day. It was an exciting match with Keele winning until the dying moments of the game when Durham suddenly came through. Cricket also made it through to knockouts, in one of their most successful seasons. Women’s Fencing, and Women’s Volleyball were drawn to take the long drive to Scotland. Unfortunately the drive seemed to weigh heavily on the teams which were beaten by Aberdeen. Men’s Badminton 1st went to Glasgow, while the 2nds went to London. Men’s Fencing traversed the country to York. Women’s Badminton were excited to come up against such a strong sporting university as Loughborough but were unfortunately knocked out of the cup.

Regional Minister Ian Austin, MP, visits Keele as part of a trip to Staffordshire to see how the county is looking to the future and encouraging its young people to play a key role in boosting the West Midlands economy.

Professor Lord Darzi of Denham, KBE, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Health, unveils a plaque to mark the official opening of The Arthritis Research Campaign National Primary Care Centre at Keele.

Keele’s position as a university whose research is of world leading and international importance.

Professor Charlotte Williams, Head of the School of Public Policy and Professional Practice, is appointed to the Bevan Commission by the Welsh Assembly Government.