

Impact

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NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY NEWS

Cherry juice gives a good night's sleep

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Professor appointed to lead new art institute

The creation of the new Institute of Contemporary Art in Newcastle has moved a step closer with the appointment of a BALTIC Northumbria University Professor.

Professor Christine Borland is an artist with an established international reputation who was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1997. Her practice explores art, ethics, medical humanities and bio-politics. She has worked in close collaboration with medical educationalists, leading medical humanities modules to investigate the way medical students' engagement with contemporary arts practice could create understanding and potential collaboration between arts and medicine.

The Institute of Contemporary Art is the result of a collaborative – and what is believed to be entirely unique – partnership between BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the University.

Professor Borland studied at The Glasgow School of Art and University of Ulster in Belfast. She was an Academic Researcher at The Glasgow School of Art and a Nesta Creative Fellow from 2006-2009. She has collaborated with the Medical Research Council's Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, the Medical School at Glasgow University and the Peninsula College of Medicine & Dentistry in Cornwall where she is a visiting Professor of Art.

Her work has been shown internationally in numerous museums and large-scale exhibitions, most recently at Glasgow Sculpture Studios and Camden Arts Centre, London. She is currently developing a new collaborative project, which explores simulation and role-play in the anatomy dissection theatre. This is supported through Creative Scotland's Vital Spark funding scheme, which encourages experimentation, radical new work and innovative approaches to engaging with audiences.

In her new role as BALTIC Professor, Christine will play a key role in leading and developing research in contemporary visual art, as well as contributing strategically to the University's research vision.

Professor Andrew Wathey, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: "Under her leadership, the new Institute will provide world-class learning and mentorship in contemporary art PhD research.

"I believe it will be enormously attractive to students on an international level by bringing together research excellence and leading artistic practice."

As a result of the creation of the new Institute, students will have access to a unique fusion of art and artists of the highest calibre as well as the highest quality teaching and BALTIC's notable library, its archive and curatorial teams.

It is hoped Northumbria's appeal as the university

of choice for undergraduate, Masters and PhD study and research in art will be greatly enhanced.

At the same time, Christine's appointment as BALTIC Professor will enable the Centre itself to extend its educational programme so it can guide and encourage participation in visual art from pre-school all the way to advanced study.

Godfrey Worsdale, Director, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, added: "Given the very recent development of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art's partnership with Northumbria University, it is a tremendous achievement to have secured an artist as highly regarded as Christine Borland to be BALTIC Professor.

"Over 20 years, Christine has demonstrated a range and depth of practice, which indicates that she will be an immeasurable asset not only to the partnership but to the objectives of both organisations."

“The new Institute will provide world-class learning and mentorship in contemporary art PhD research.”

Cherry juice gives a good night's sleep

Drinking cherry juice significantly improves both the quality and duration of sleep, according to new findings from Northumbria University.

Researchers from the School of Life Sciences have found that Montmorency cherry juice significantly increases the levels of melatonin in the body, the hormone which regulates sleep, and could benefit those who have difficulty sleeping due to insomnia, shift work or jet lag.

Their findings, which have been published in the online edition of the *European Journal of Nutrition*, reveal that people who have consumed cherry juice not only sleep for longer, but they also have improved quality of sleep, or 'sleep efficiency.'

In the study, led by Dr Glyn Howatson, 20 healthy volunteers drank a 30ml serving of either tart cherry juice or a placebo juice twice a day for seven days.

Urine samples were collected from all participants before and during the investigation to determine levels of melatonin, a naturally occurring compound that heavily influences the human sleep-wake cycle.

During the study the participants wore an actigraphy watch sensor which monitored their sleep and wake cycles and kept a daily diary on their sleeping patterns.

The researchers found that when participants drank cherry juice for a week there was a significant increase in their urinary melatonin (15-16%) than the control condition and placebo drink samples.

The actigraphy measurements of participants who consumed the cherry juice saw an increase of around 15 minutes to the time spent in bed, 25 minutes in their total sleep time and a 5-6% increase in their 'sleep efficiency', a global measure of sleep quality.

Cherry juice drinkers reported less daytime napping time compared to their normal sleeping

habits before the study and the napping times of the placebo group.

According to Dr Howatson, this is the first study to show direct evidence that supplementing your diet with a tart Montmorency cherry juice concentrate leads to an increase in circulating melatonin and provides improvements in sleep amongst healthy adults.

Dr Howatson, an exercise physiologist, said: "We were initially interested in the application of tart cherries in recovery from strenuous exercise. Sleep forms a critical component in that recovery process, which is often forgotten. These results show that tart cherry juice can be used to facilitate sleep in healthy adults and, excitingly, has the potential to be applied as a natural intervention, not only to athletes, but to other populations with insomnia and general disturbed sleep from shift work or jet lag."

The study's co-authors are fellow Northumbria University academics Dr Jason Ellis, director of the Centre for Sleep Research, School of Life Sciences PhD students Jamie Tallent and Phillip Bell; Benita Middleton of the Centre for Chronobiology at University of Surrey; and Malachy McHugh of the Nicholas Institute of Sports Medicine and Athletic Trauma in Lenox Hill Hospital, New York.

Dr Ellis said: "Although melatonin is available over the counter in other countries, it is not freely available in the UK. What makes these findings exciting is that the melatonin contained in tart cherry juice is sufficient to elicit a healthy sleep response.

"What's more, these results provide us with more evidence surrounding the relationship between how we sleep and what we consume."

“These results provide us with more evidence surrounding the relationship between how we sleep and what we consume.”

Dr Glyn Howatson

Bringing homelessness into view

Students from Northumbria's School of Design joined forces with leading homelessness charity The Cyrenians in an innovative project to highlight the plight of those without shelter.



Students Laura Caughey, Charlotte Ashcroft, Laura Blain and Angela Burnell

The second year students were given a brief to raise the profile of the charity and promote the fact that homelessness is an all-year round problem.

The "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" campaign put forward by Charlotte Ashcroft, Laura Blain, Angela Burnell, Laura Caughey and US student Bridget Hapner, caught the charity's eye and is now being rolled out across the city.

As part of the campaign a flash mob saw dozens of people sit down on Northumberland Street – Newcastle's iconic shopping area – to highlight the plight of the homeless. Their innovative campaign is also featured on advertising, leaflets and posters on buses and Metro trains and stations across the city.

Angela Burnell, one of the winning team, said:

"We discovered that The Cyrenians support 1,200 people on a daily basis and offer a bed to 200 homeless people every night. That got us thinking about what Newcastle would be like if those spaces weren't available and how that would impact on the lives of homeless people.

"By asking homeless people to take part in the flash mob on Newcastle's most iconic street, we wanted to show that while homelessness is often out of sight, it is an issue that is always with us." Mike Pinkney, Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design, added: "The flash mob was an exciting way of visually illustrating the numbers of homeless people The Cyrenians look after every day of the year, who would otherwise be living 'on the streets' of the North East.

"The students have benefited enormously from

working with such a dynamic and innovative charity as The Cyrenians on this live project."

Ollie Batchelor, Executive Director of The Cyrenians added: "At The Cyrenians we work 365 days a year helping some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the North East. Just because people are out of sight shouldn't mean they are out of mind.

"The students at Northumbria have done an excellent job in helping us to bring this message to the attention of more people."

The Cyrenians is one of the country's leading social inclusion charities committed to delivering a diverse range of services including residential, resettlement, day centre provision and outreach to an often neglected and hidden part of the community.





“ You cannot separate business and education – we each play a vital part in the other’s success and development. ”

Lucy Winskell, Pro Vice-Chancellor

Partnership working

As the economic recession continues to bite, Northumbria’s partnership working is becoming increasingly important for business. *Impact* takes a look at Northumbria’s new region, engagement and partnerships strategy – a core element of the University’s Corporate Strategy – which adds value both to the University and the communities it serves.

As a research-engaged, business-focused institution, Northumbria University has a culture of collaboration that recognises and embeds the importance of relationships with business, public, private, cultural and voluntary sectors and the public.

While much of this collaborative working is about stimulating the economic, cultural, social and intellectual development of the region, it is driven, to large degree, by the establishment of meaningful partnerships that help develop employable, distinctive graduates.

Northumbria seeks to develop strong partnerships with local authorities, health, regional, civic, cultural, sporting and public sector organisations to build their capacity and performance while, at the same time, fulfilling its own commitment to corporate social responsibility and public engagement.

Much of this work has been ongoing for some time, but a new plan has been unveiled which will see the University build on this activity. The plan sets out the University’s aspiration to develop partnerships within the region and share expertise across the employer engagement spectrum to enable a more effective and efficient response to external enquiries. This will be facilitated by the establishment of a client relationship management system.

The University will consolidate and further develop activity across the employer engagement spectrum, including continuing professional

development, workforce development, flexible work-based learning, consultancy, knowledge and innovation exchange.

Key to this agenda is the support and creation of distinctive, employable graduates. This will be achieved through the promotion of activities such as placements, internships, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and volunteering and consulting with key stakeholders to develop the curriculum.

In addition, the student experience will be enriched by offering enhanced support for their volunteering projects and work in the community. Northumbria already has the highest number of employed graduates (82.2%) within the region which is more than seven per cent higher than the sector average.

Lucy Winskell, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Region, Engagement and Partnerships, who is also Vice-President of the North East Chamber of Commerce, said: “You cannot separate business and education – we each play a vital part in the other’s success and development.

“Historically, Northumbria has always placed a high value on partnership working and has developed strong links with many organisations both in the region and at a national and international level.

“We seek to build on those collaborations, delivering our expertise, enriching the student experience and also learning from the insight of the communities with whom we work.”

“ Northumbria already has the highest number of employed graduates (82.2%) within the region which is more than seven per cent higher than the sector average. ”



L-R: Fraser McLeay, Dave Allen, David Hart, with (front) Caroline Wilson and Daniella Colquhoun

Graduates make a case to expand luggage company

The transfer of knowledge from universities to the wider community is a key component of Northumbria's Corporate Strategy. *Impact* takes a look at one Knowledge Transfer Partnership which is paying dividends for a North East company.

A North East luggage business is developing its brand and expanding sales thanks to a collaboration with Northumbria University.

Daniella Colquhoun, a Northumbria University Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Associate, is working with North Shields-based Modrec International Ltd to share her expertise in marketing and design.

The KTP with Newcastle Business School, partially funded by the government and Modrec, has been arranged to aid the company's further brand development and international expansion.

Daniella, who graduated with a first class degree in Marketing Management from Newcastle Business School and a Distinction in the Multidisciplinary Design Innovation MA, run by the School of Design, was brought on board to help with developing the brand, expanding product ranges and strengthening Modrec's sales and marketing capacity.

She is working alongside fellow graduate, Caroline Wilson, who was employed by Modrec following a successful work placement while a student. Caroline, who graduated with a first class degree in Advertising Management, impressed the company bosses while on placement so she was kept on part-time during her final year of study and given a permanent job as a Marketing Assistant upon graduation.

Daniella said: "Through effective utilisation of various primary research activities, I have been able to provide Modrec with some interesting insights into the main decision-making factors consumers consider when purchasing holiday luggage and laptop case products. This will assist the Modrec design team longer term when developing new ranges for the future.

"Another key part of my KTP project is to identify new markets for entry, such as the public sector and expansion overseas. Modrec is experiencing fantastic success in both Germany and North America, and the KTP is helping them to understand why this is happening to provide them with a focused and strategic marketing plan to ensure future growth in other countries."

Dave Allen, Modrec's Commercial Director, said that Newcastle Business School's involvement enabled Modrec to explore and experiment with different approaches whilst continuing to successfully manage day-to-day business operations.

He said: "As an SME striving to be innovative in the current economic climate, having a Knowledge Transfer Associate like Daniella on board is a fantastic opportunity for us.

"With Daniella working alongside Caroline, we now have a fully functioning marketing team committed to the successful positioning and longevity of Modrec International, its brands and its products for the future."

Forging links with the US

Northumbria is committed to extending its global reach and influence. In this edition, *Impact* looks at how links with one prestigious US university are developing into multi-layered partnerships.

The University of Minnesota (UMN) is one of the largest public universities in the United States. It enjoys an international reputation for research and lies just outside the top 50 in the *Times Higher Education* world rankings.

Northumbria has had a relationship with the University for several years and is now recognised, along with Lancaster, Glasgow and Queen Mary, University of London as one of its UK partners.

As a partner, UMN offers its students the opportunity to study one semester at Northumbria, giving them the opportunity to sample a range of different subject areas while benefiting from an international learning experience.

But Northumbria is keen to build on this partnership with a move towards faculty-led programmes. The months ahead will see students from UMN's graphic design programme being taught on campus at Northumbria by the University's staff in what is hoped will be the start of many more such collaborations.

Rob Carthy, International Partnerships Manager at Northumbria, said: "Faculty-led programmes are very popular in the US at the moment as they provide an extra dimension to the teaching on offer. "We know already that international students gain both personally and professionally by studying in the UK. The expertise of academics from Northumbria's internationally renowned School of Design adds yet another advantage to students from Minnesota."

This will be followed by staff exchanges for both academic and support staff which is a core element of Northumbria's internationalisation strategy. A short-term work shadowing by a member of UMN's International Office is planned for January 2013.

"These exchanges will facilitate the learning and sharing of best practice and will hopefully pave the way for more of this type of activity," added Rob.

“The expertise of academics from Northumbria's internationally renowned School of Design adds yet another advantage to students from Minnesota.”



Minneapolis, Minnesota



Wendy Batch

Adding depth to study

UMN student Wendy Batch is currently at Northumbria as part of a study abroad option.

Although only required to spend two weeks abroad as part of her degree in Marketing, she is staying for a semester in a bid to widen both her cultural and academic knowledge.

"I'm taking marketing classes here to increase the depth of my learning which will help me improve my final grade back in the US," she said.

"It absolutely makes a difference to employers in the States if you have an international dimension to your studies. That's particularly relevant with a business-focused degree as business is becoming increasingly global in nature."

Wendy, 19, added: "I wanted to stay here to immerse myself in the culture and enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime experience. So far I'm really enjoying my time here. The people are awesome, Northumbria is a great university and Newcastle is a wonderful place to be a student."



“ Dr Bass’ innovative project will provide vital clues about the maspin molecule that could help the development of new drugs to stop the disease in its tracks. ”

Halting the spread of breast cancer

Northumbria University is committed to carrying out research that makes a real difference to people’s lives. *Impact* looks at one project which is working towards understanding how breast cancer spreads.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK and accounts for nearly one in three of all cancers in women. Around 48,000 new cases are diagnosed each year.

Currently when cancer spreads from the breast to other parts of the body it can be treated but not cured. However, researchers have discovered that breast cancer cells which spread do not produce a protein called maspin.

Now scientists at Northumbria University are working towards understanding how breast cancer spreads, thanks to a research grant worth almost £20,000 from Breast Cancer Campaign.

Dr Rosemary Bass, who works in Northumbria’s School of Life Sciences, aims to understand this more fully.

“I believe that maspin usually prevents breast cells undergoing a process called EMT during which

their makeup changes and they become able to invade other tissues and evade destruction by the body; key steps in becoming cancerous and spreading,” she said.

“In the laboratory we will collect and analyse molecules made by breast cancer cells which do produce maspin, and those that do not. This will allow us to identify which of the key molecules involved in EMT fails to be produced when maspin is present. We can then confirm what effect each of these molecules has on breast cancer cells’ ability to move and spread into other tissues.”

Dr Lisa Wilde, Director of Research, Breast Cancer Campaign, said: “Too many people still die from breast cancer, mainly as a result of it spreading to other parts of the body. Dr Bass’ innovative project will provide vital clues about the maspin molecule that could help the development of new drugs to stop the disease in its tracks.”



Kevin Kerrigan

New Dean for Northumbria's School of Law

Northumbria's School of Law has a new man at the helm. *Impact* caught up with him to find out his ambitions for the School.

Kevin Kerrigan has been appointed the new Dean of Northumbria's School of Law.

The School has an outstanding reputation for its commitment to professional skills development and learning through experience, but Kevin is seeking to build on that foundation with a renewed focus on other areas such as research and internationalisation.

In the research arena he is aiming to build capacity in areas as diverse as environmental law, human rights, evidence and procedure with a clear focus on the next Research Excellence Framework in 2014.

"I want to build a culture of research and scholarship that recognises the diversity of legal research strengths in the School," he said.

Internationally, he sees the School of Law moving into new markets. The School is currently seeking recognition from the Bar Council of India which would allow it to offer franchised programmes. There is scope for more international working in countries such as Nigeria, USA and the Caribbean.

Kevin, who was formerly Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Clinical Programmes in the School, has long been at the centre of the School's development and growth, in particular for developing the Student Law Office, which is recognised as one of the leading law clinics in the world. Students, under supervision of qualified lawyers, provide access to justice for members of the public across a wide range of legal areas. The Student Law Office recently won the Excellence in Community Investment category at the prestigious Law Society Excellence awards in London.

This is another area that Kevin is keen to expand on and recently the School launched a ground-

breaking initiative with national pro bono charity LawWorks. The LawWorks North East Pro Bono Hub will build a regional network of law firms to facilitate and celebrate the provision of free legal advice and representation to members of the public and community groups in the North East.

In addition, the Student Law Office is now widening its remit to include commercial law to reach out to small businesses and voluntary organisations in the region.

At the heart of the planned developments for the School there lies a deep-seated commitment to its students. One area the new Dean is keen to enhance is the law student community. Better inductions, student mentoring and more volunteering opportunities for law students are all initiatives he wants to take forward to enhance both the student experience and employability.

"I want to develop the law student community so that it feels connected to the legal profession as well as to the School and its staff. I want to ensure our students have plenty of activities to engage in that will enhance their curricular activities."

With students again firmly in focus, he is keen to develop the School's e-learning capabilities.

"I want to make us the leading provider in online legal education in the country," he said.

"We are developing a suite of multi-platform webcast materials to enable students to learn in a way that fits with their needs. This move towards greater technological integration will allow all students to work more easily at their own pace and in a way that suits them."

Kevin was awarded a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy last year for his work in professional legal education.

“ This move towards greater technological integration will allow all students to work more easily at their own pace and in a way that suits them. ”

Sustainability in the spotlight

Northumbria recently launched its Carbon Management Plan which aims to lower the level of harmful emissions and curb wasteful energy. *Impact* takes a look at how the University plans to do this and considers why it's so important.



Wind turbine on Ellison Building for research into renewable sustainable energies

The University is on a mission to cut emissions by 11,000 tonnes by 2020. For one of the largest universities in the country that prides itself on customer service and offers students 24/7 access to library facilities as well as extended opening hours for many of its other facilities, this is no mean feat.

However, the efforts are essential, not only to comply with Government legislation and a new sector-wide policy initiated by HEFCE, but also because of changing attitudes towards climate change.

As part of the Carbon Management Plan a £7.5 million sustainability investment is being made to improve and reduce carbon emissions through much of the University's infrastructure.

One scheme which will result in the saving of 3,500 tonnes of CO₂ is to implement a range of sustainability features to existing buildings. This will include replacing old boilers with high efficiency models, upgrading lighting with efficient fittings and occupancy controls, improving the effectiveness of air handling units and upgrading pipe insulation.

A further 1,150 tonnes of emissions will be saved by a new voltage optimisation system which will enable all electrical equipment to operate with reduced electrical power consumption.

The University is also to adopt the BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) to establish best sustainability practice for all new and refurbished building projects. This is expected to save a further 900 tonnes of CO₂.

In addition, a number of information technology reductions will be promoted – including power management settings on PCs, encouraging the sharing of printers and the procurement of carbon neutral hardware which offsets the lifetime carbon footprint of the device.

A second wave of initiatives are also being considered for roll-out across the University between 2015 and 2020. These include replacing all lighting with LED systems, placing sun pipes on top floors of University buildings, a campus-wide double glazing and insulation programme as well as solar panels and wind turbine generation. These could save as much as 5,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Trevor Thurlow, Director of Campus Services, said: "The threat to global climate change from increasing CO₂ emissions cannot be understated.

"The Carbon Management Plan offers a realistic yet challenging way forward to reduce Northumbria's carbon footprint."

He added: "While the scientific evidence points to this work being imperative, we are also finding that students and stakeholders are increasingly aware of green credentials when choosing where to study and who to work with."

“As part of the Carbon Management Plan a £7.5 million sustainability investment is being made to improve and reduce carbon emissions through much of the University's infrastructure.”



Solar thermal pipes fitted onto the roof of Winn Studios, together with a landscaped roof to encourage wildlife habitats.

Dean new figurehead for Royal College of Nursing

The Dean of Northumbria's School of Health, Community and Education Studies, is taking on a vital and high-profile figurehead role as Chair of the Royal College of Nursing's ruling council.

Professor Kath McCourt, FRCN, who is known nationally and internationally as a leading authority on the direction of the nursing profession, now represents nurses and healthcare assistants across the UK in her new capacity, in addition to overseeing the education of 9,000 students at the University's largest School.

As Chair of the RCN, Professor McCourt provides leadership and guidance as well as encouraging the Council's strategic planning, overseeing organisational priorities and governance concerns. She plays a major part in ensuring effective collaborative working and also chairs the RCN's international committee.

Professor McCourt said: "The implications of the Health and Social Care Bill, its effect on services and the consultation of RCN members on whether they wish to accept the Government's proposed changes to NHS pension entitlements, are just some of the challenges nursing is facing today.

"However, there are also significant opportunities for the nursing profession including the positive

sharing of knowledge and experience, driving forward agendas for change and setting professional standards and I am delighted to be playing a key role in this arena."

Glenn Turp, Regional Director of the RCN Northern Region, added: "Having worked closely with Professor McCourt for many years, I know that she will ensure that the true voice of nursing is heard loud and clear at the top of the RCN, as the profession faces many difficult challenges in the coming months.

"She is both an outstanding academic and professional nurse and has been a positive influence on the direction of high quality NHS nursing care, both nationally and internationally, for many years."

Professor McCourt began her esteemed career as a registered nurse and midwife and worked in cardiothoracic, adult and paediatric intensive care units before moving into higher education.

Professor McCourt has been Deputy Chair of the

Northern Region of the RCN for four years, and has been instrumental in designing an innovative Continuing Professional Development framework for nurses and health professionals.

In recent years, Professor McCourt has worked in partnership with the Egyptian government on health and population issues for nurse education and nurse teachers. She has been involved in strategic planning for the future of nurse education in South Africa, has worked with the Commonwealth Nurses Association and has also been a Visiting Professor of MAHSA University College, Malaysia since 2010.

Professor McCourt was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing in 2008 which is the highest honour that the RCN can bestow.

Professor McCourt's immediate official duties include addressing the Army's Second Medical Brigade's conference, which has the largest number of Army Nurses grouped together under a single chain of command, and oversees the deployment of all nurses into Army operations.

“...there are significant opportunities for the nursing profession, including the positive sharing of knowledge and experience, driving forward agendas for change and setting professional standards...”

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