

# STUDENTS

Education is at the heart of the student experience, but university life should also offer outstanding opportunities for social, vocational, intellectual and personal development. The University is proud of its students and works tirelessly to provide an environment, a set of support structures and a range of opportunities that will enable students to excel in every aspect of their lives at Bristol and to make their university career a genuinely transformative experience.

## The University's priorities in this area are to:

- ensure a fair and transparent system of student representation that provides students with the opportunity to shape their educational and extra-curricular experience;
- support a vibrant, active and democratic Students' Union;
- ensure the provision of learning and skills opportunities that enhance students' future employability;
- offer a rewarding extra-curricular experience that provides for students' health, well-being and personal development;
- provide advice and support for students' personal welfare and ensure effective integration into the University and local community.

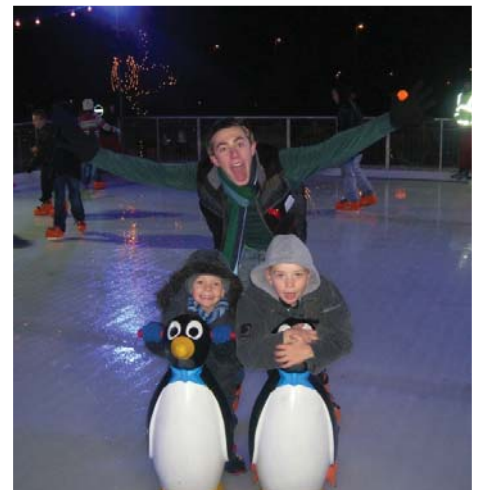
## Student Community Action and RAG

Student Community Action (SCA), a volunteering organisation in the Students' Union with over 1,000 members, provides opportunities and training for student volunteers working in support of community projects. A Volunteer Development Co-ordinator, initially funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England through its Teaching Quality and Enhancement Fund, organises and oversees training and development programmes for the students involved.

SCA ran 33 projects between August 2008 and July 2009. Each project is run by one or two student volunteer co-ordinators; regular volunteer numbers vary but 2008/09 saw a total of 2,365 volunteers working on SCA projects. The 29 training programmes for volunteers were attended by some 1,080 people.

SCA projects include:

- Greenforce, a conservation group that has recently begun working with bodies such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Avon Wildlife Trust (via its School Grounds Project), and was involved in a project to build a green space for the Totterdown community in Bristol;
- Door to Store, a free service offering transport to supermarkets for elderly people that has teamed up with the Bristol charity Dial-A-Ride to reduce costs and organisational load, also enabling volunteers to gain experience in Dial-A-Ride's offices;
- Panda Club, in which volunteers take five- to 11-year-olds from disadvantaged areas on outings and trips;



Above: A Panda Club outing to a local ice rink

- The Big Give, which organises collections of left-over food and objects from halls of residence and student houses at the end of the academic year and donates them to local homeless shelters and charities (see p26);
- Breast Cancer Awareness, which provides workshops and presentations for students and members of the local community about breast health.

RAG activities in 2008/09 encountered an uncertain economic climate but still raised a total of £94,000. Over 5,000 student volunteers were involved in RAG fundraising events and activities, including regular street collections, an art exhibition, a 'Massage-a-thon' (in which the Massage Society provided ten volunteers to give massages for donations), a Soccathon (involving 15 football teams), a 10km race, and the annual RAG Ball, which raised over £8,000.

## STUDENTS CONTINUED

### STUDENT AWARDS AND PRIZES

#### Bristol students win SET Awards

Two Bristol students were winners of the prestigious 2008 Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) Student of the Year Awards, organised by the World Leadership Forum. Philip Ewels from the Department of Biochemistry won the AstraZeneca Award for the Best Biology or Biotechnology Student, and Niall Oswald from the Department of Electronic Engineering won the e2v Award for the Best Electronic Engineering Student.

#### Medical student wins Penguin Prize

Sethina Adjarewa, a British-Ghanaian fourth-year student in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, was one of the winners of the 2008 decibel Penguin Prize, awarded by Penguin and Arts Council England for accounts by writers with a mixed-heritage background of their experiences. Her piece is published by Penguin in *The Map of Me*, the third annual anthology of decibel winners.

#### Chemistry student shines

Liam Ball, a final-year MSci undergraduate in the School of Chemistry, was awarded a 2009 Graduate Prize – one of only five – by the Salters' Institute, which supports chemistry teaching, encourages young people to pursue careers in the UK chemical industries and promotes chemical education.

#### Bristol student wins 2009 GHS Essay Prize

Three postgraduate students in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology took top honours in the 2009 Garden History Society (GHS) Essay Prize. Judith Preston won the prize for her essay 'Thomas Wright: A polymath in Arcadia', while Janet Davidson Carter and Helen Lawrence were highly commended for their essays on Birkenhead Park and Thomas Archer respectively.

#### Bristol engineers ride high as role models

Five engineering students were selected by the Royal Academy of Engineering as 'inspirational role models to the next generation of engineers'. Graham Hinchly (Mechanical Engineering), Peter Levi and Tom Mynors (Civil Engineering), Edward Thompson (Aeronautical Engineering) and Richard van Arkel (Engineering Mathematics) competed against 150 students from other UK universities to win the national Royal Academy of Engineering Leadership Advanced Awards. These awards allow engineering undergraduates with aspirations to leadership roles to undertake an accelerated personal development programme.

#### Fulbright Award for Chemistry postgrad

Mike Shaw, a PhD student in the School of Chemistry, gained a prestigious Fulbright Commission Distinguished Scholarship Award in June to pursue his work on the synthesis of anti-cancer agents at the Scripps Research Institute in California, the world's largest independent, non-profit biomedical research facility. It is hoped that his work, which attempts to synthesise a rare molecule found only in Japanese Sea Squirts, will lead to the development of powerful new clinical medicines to fight cancer.

#### Sport

##### Medics score victories in fencing and powerlifting

Three members of the University's High Performance Squad won events at national level in the latter part of 2008.

Francesco Egro from the School of Medicine and Naomi Taylor from the Dental School represented England in the 5 Nations fencing tournament. Egro won both foil and sabre events, and Taylor won the épée event.



Top: Georgie Twigg (left) and Philippa Newton with their AYOF gold medals

Bottom: Niall Oswald (left) receives his SET award from Keith Attwood, CEO of e2v



Josh Hill from the School of Medicine won in the British Junior (Under 23) Powerlifting championships – and also broke the British record (Under 100 kg category), lifting a total weight of 835 kg.

#### Future Olympians win gold

Undergraduates Georgie Twigg and Philippa Newton were part of the Great Britain Women's Hockey Team that won gold medals in the 2009 Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF), while neuroscience student Emily Cousins won the Gold Medal for Equestrian Dressage.

#### Engineering entrepreneur takes flight

George Mills, a student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, was one of only 11 students in the UK to be awarded a place on the prestigious Flying Start Global Entrepreneurs programme. The scheme, made possible by a collaboration between the UK's National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in the US, includes mentoring from some of America's leading entrepreneurs. Mills spent the first six months of his fellowship developing his technology-based business idea within Research and Enterprise Development (RED) at Bristol, followed by six months in the US as a Kauffman Global Scholar at leading universities such as Harvard, MIT and Stanford.

#### Bristol's genetic engineers beat the world's best

An interdisciplinary team of Bristol students triumphed over 83 other teams, including some from the best universities in the world, in a prestigious competition to genetically engineer a machine. The Bristol Centre for Complexity Sciences team comprised nine students from departments including Biology, Biochemistry and Engineering Mathematics, working together on their entry for the competition at MIT, in which teams were given a set of 'bio-bricks' (or DNA parts) with which to engineer biological systems and test them in living cells.

The Bristol team designed microscopic 'Bacto-builders' that could perform tasks such as removing toxins from drinking water, and investigated the possibility of combining large numbers of *E.coli* bacteria to push particles around – a feat considered virtually impossible until recent developments in complexity sciences. Having created a mathematical model and simulation software, they tested it on Blue Crystal, the University's new supercomputer. It was for this that they won the Best Model prize.

#### Rare publishing achievement for Earth Sciences undergraduate

A fourth-year student in the Department of Earth Sciences achieved the rare distinction of having his work accepted for publication in a major scientific journal while still an undergraduate. Felix Marx's paper, 'Marine mammals through time – when less is more in studying palaeodiversity', was published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society*. His paper offers new insights into the fossil record of whales, seals and sea cows.



Top: The Bristol Centre for Complexity Sciences team  
Bottom: Earth Sciences student Felix Marx