The view from The Bridge

A word from the Director

This is the second edition of our newsletter, bringing you the latest on developments in The Bridge. The past nine months have been packed with activities ranging from major public events through to some decisive steps on future direction and operation.

I’ve been spending a lot of time with many of our research community to better understand their work and its relevance beyond academia, as well as with colleagues from other institutions, and partners in Cambridge and beyond. We’ve had meetings with Cambridge Enterprise to explore the commercial potential of some very novel research, and they have been keen to understand our multi-disciplinary approach as they venture into the opportunities afforded by the world of the humanities and social sciences. We have talked to the Judge Business School about ideas for social entrepreneurship in healthcare, and we have an ongoing dialogue with the Innovation Forum, an international group bringing the biomedical sector closer to academia.

A main thrust of our work has been to decide the priorities for the college in its translation activities. We will address issues in the areas of Global Health and Well-Being; in Education; and in Sustainability – which here focuses on Climate Change, Energy and Environment. In these we will look for clear links to the ambitions of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. We are also linking this aspect of our work with wider Cambridge through the Centre for Global Equality and the Cambridge Global Challenges Strategic Research Initiative. We will also look at the potential for new work in Artificial Intelligence and Data, which will be discussed in more detail at the annual Senior Members’ Research Symposium in May. We have built a successful partnership with the Centre for Science and Policy, which has already provided a number of our senior members with the opportunity to discuss their work with public policy officials and identify new ways of adding value to their research. We have opened up new channels for working with the Department for Education, and have engaged with the World Health Organisation on potential new global health projects.

I hope you will find the mix of items interesting, and we would be delighted to hear from anyone who has ideas for working with us, or if you simply want to know more about our work.

Global health

A Global Health for All seminar, led by Hughes Hall Life Fellow, Professor Nabeel Affara, took place on 30th April to explore different aspects of Global Health and its translation into practice.

From left: Dr Arthur Hibble, Dr Nidhi Singal, Dr Vanessa Wong, Dr Ricardo Sabates, Dr James Smith

Topics included: what is meant by global health? (Dr Arthur Hibble); poor educational access arising from health inequalities (Dr Nidhi Singal and Dr Ricardo Sabates); climate change and global health (Dr James Smith); and the global challenges of infectious disease (Dr Vanessa Wong). The event was well attended, stimulating a great deal of interest in the subjects discussed. The Bridge theme group will now develop a programme to explore a range of sub-themes with a direct bearing on global health.
A new strategic approach

Our researchers, and those with wider external experience, represent the body of knowledge available here in Hughes Hall that is ripe for effective translation, and therefore we must support their capacity to establish effective partnerships and make a real difference – in policy, practice, and commercial contexts. Through a mix of one-to-one conversations and a series of dinner discussions hosted by the President and Mrs Powers-Freeling, we examined the challenges and best ways of addressing them. This led to the conclusion that we should organise around major themes and support them with a well-resourced Bridge office.

Themes and leadership

The Bridge will therefore be structured around three themes: Global Health and Well-being, Education and Sustainability. A possible fourth theme on Artificial Intelligence and Data is also being explored, as a critical mix of technologies underpinning the others. These themes are a natural extension of our current Bridge Centres and partnerships, and align well with the interests and expertise of our senior members. The College has active research interests in Africa, and other low and middle income countries, and this will remain a strong feature of Bridge activities.

A range of disciplines and experience will be united within each theme to tackle challenges at a national and global level. Indeed, we have already received collaborative project ideas, with a number of researchers identifying potential external applications for their work. But one aspect is key, and that is the individuals who will lead each theme, and pull together the teams needed to generate new ideas and run projects that create the impact we seek. We are delighted to now have these critical people in place.

In Global Health and Well-Being, Nabeel Affara (former head of the Pathology Department) and Aliko Ahmed (Director, East of England, Public Health England) have agreed to jointly lead this diverse and challenging area. This theme will also incorporate the planned 100 Healthy Years Centre. A good mix of researchers has already met on three occasions to develop ideas for new collaborative projects – and some of these were explored at the open session on 30th April.

“...The wealth of knowledge in global health and wellbeing at Hughes has never been so relevant, timely or necessary. Through our new Bridge theme we ensure our research and expertise are impactful and collaborative. Hughes Hall academics are being increasingly supported in making a very real difference at a global level."

Professor Nabeel Affara

Rupert Wegerif (Faculty of Education), in partnership with City Fellow Mark Anderson will lead the Education theme. Hughes Hall has, of course, a long and proud heritage in this field deriving from its foundation as a training college for women teachers in 1885. We have many education researchers, with a wide range of expertise, and Mark and Rupert will be working with their colleagues to devise innovative ways to develop their research and make real changes, both in practice and in policy, at the highest levels.

We will be producing an education focussed newsletter shortly to share the activity in this area in more detail.
For our **Sustainability** theme, we’re very pleased that Ian Hodge (former head, Land Economy Department) and City Fellow Tim Pilkington (CEO, World Vision UK) have agreed to lead and shape this broad area, and capture the skills and experience of our researchers in order to create new ways of addressing major global challenges.

We should also remember the excellent ongoing work of our Bridge Centres: **Oracy Cambridge**, **Cambridge Digital Innovation**, and the rapidly-developing **Centre for Climate Change Engagement**. These three will be key components of the broader main themes, and we are working hard to ensure they are supported and promoted in ways that help deliver our wider impact ambitions.

**Bridge events**

September saw our well attended Annual Alumni Weekend take place and included a panel discussion on research translation hosted by Stephen Axford. The six panellists came from the Cambridge and national translation landscape and represented the various stages in research translation, from primary research, through intermediary bodies, up to end users of knowledge in industry and public policy. Key links were forged between stakeholders and discussions inspired new ways of working to best meet the needs, priorities and timescales of all involved.

The College offers its thanks to those who attended and, especially, to those on the panel who made the event so worthwhile.

Many Bridge-themed evening seminars have taken place to promote ideas around research translation to our community, including, in November, City Fellow Tim Pilkington’s **Radical New Partnerships** on making a difference for those who need it most by delivering sustainability goals. **Education and Technology – Meeting the Challenge** in January asked what are the big challenges being faced in education, how these challenges are being addressed and how technology can help? Mark Anderson presided over a lively, interactive session with an emphasis on linking current commercial developments with experience located in Hughes Hall. In February, **Translation Squared – Exploring Translation Across Contexts** examined the interdisciplinary elements of translation, where work is translated between languages and cultures, and from academia to practice, particularly within the field of education research.

March saw two key events: a **History, Culture and Global Health Sustainability Seminar** in which Dr Nils Fietje examined how the WHO Cultural Contexts of Health and WHO Global Health Histories projects have helped the World Health Organization in its global mission and Dr John Manton, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, explored how historical processes and cultural responses can both haunt and enrich our sense of what needs sustenance in global health today.

**Challenges and ethical considerations of translating health discovery to rural Africa** with Dr Dora Pereira explored the journey of translation of an innovative iron supplement from laboratories in Cambridge to clinical trials in rural Gambia.

We welcome your ideas for seminars, lectures or informal events designed to catalyse collaboration and inspire work within the Bridge themes.
**Coming up**

Hughes Hall senior members will gather on 16th May for the annual **Hughes Hall Research Symposium**, which this year includes a short tour of the work of our Bridge Centres and partner organisations. The main focus of the event will be a range of presentations on AI and Data issues, and surveying the opportunities for Hughes Hall to develop innovative approaches in this area – and so build a valuable cross-cutting theme within the Bridge.

Professor Neil Mercer, Director of the Bridge Oracy Centre, is running a one-day event, **The Age of Oracy**, on 3rd July 2019. Young people’s life chances can be profoundly affected by their ability to use spoken language. Fortunately, effective ways of teaching talking skills are now available to help students learn, across the curriculum.

This conference is open to all – teachers, school leaders, trainers, researchers – and will share the results of latest work and lead discussions about its practical implications. The registration fee is £75 (up to 31st May) or £90 (31st May onwards). For tickets click here or go to: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-age-of-oracy-a-conference-on-talk-and-learning-in-school-tickets-55645865281.

**The team**

We’re pleased that we are gradually building up the resources needed to run the Bridge. Over the past year we have benefitted from the support of Jimmy Chan, one of our By-Fellows, who provides considerable insight from his former career with a global investment firm. Jimmy will continue to advise on strategic implementation issues during the next phase of Bridge development.

We’re delighted to announce that in March we were joined by Sarah Langford (author of this edition of **The view from The Bridge**) on a part-time basis. Formerly a Director of Communications with a multi-stakeholder charitable organisation, Sarah is used to working in technical, business and international environments. She has a master’s degree and English Literature undergraduate degree from the University of Sussex, and is returning to work having been a full-time parent during recent years.

We have also been joined, on a short-term basis, by Aldabra Stoddart, to help with the analysis of the recent survey of senior members, looking at levels of interest and experience in the application of research in the fields of policy, commerce and practice.

**Get in touch**

Our theme leaders would be pleased to hear from members of the college, or anyone keen to work with us, to discuss their plans (contact details are top of pages 2 and 3). We particularly welcome students whose research projects may have relevance to our work, or who wish to widen their perspective through the themes.

The Bridge Director, Stephen Axford, is always happy to discuss theme membership or ideas for potential multi-disciplinary projects. Please contact Stephen at: bridge.director@hughes.cam.ac.uk.

Content: Sarah Langford