



# News & Views

## Teaching awards special

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BY JANET HARTLEY, PRO-DIRECTOR, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching quality is a high priority for the School. Last year, the Academic Board approved some 40 recommendations from the Teaching Task Force and this year we are working hard to implement those recommendations.

We are taking measures to ensure more direct contact between permanent staff and students, but

we also aim to encourage and reward dedicated and innovative teachers.

We want to develop exciting and distinct programmes and teaching methods across the School. Of particular importance this year was the Board's approval of a new course to be available for all undergraduates from 2011 which will look at big issues in the social sciences and

will also incorporate new teaching methods and forms of assessment.

We have also set up a new committee – unimaginatively but appropriately called the Teaching Committee – which is looking at ways of encouraging and disseminating innovative and good teaching practice across the School.



LIZ BARNETT, DIRECTOR, TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE

Congratulations to this year's prize winners. As ever, they demonstrate that excellent teaching is important, and that it gives them huge amounts of personal satisfaction. All of them also see their students as special – given the right incentives and learning environment, LSE students are thirsty for learning and great to teach!

It is good to see that there is an increasing expectation in many departments that new staff be encouraged to invest time in their teaching in order to then be put forward for Major Review teaching prizes.

There are a number of departments that now have an impressive



track record on achieving these awards. It is also heartening to see that the SU LSE Teaching Excellence Awards often confirm that excellence, identifying staff who have previously received either Major Review awards or the departmental class teaching prizes.

From my somewhat biased TLC perspective, I note the number of class teacher awards going to people who are also participating in the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) offered by TLC. I would not go so far as to assume cause and effect, but it is good to see that excellent teachers in many cases invest

in their personal development as teachers. This September TLC will be implementing one of the Teaching Task Force objectives of making part of the PGCertHE a requirement for new inexperienced faculty, who we hope will reap the benefits of participating in the programme.

TLC is currently working with departments on two other TTF recommendations: it is providing funding and support to departments to run their own in-department teaching development activities and providing funding for pilot development projects.

This year, two relatively large scale projects have been funded in Accounting and Statistics. A recent call for further bids has thrown up a number of ideas which we hope to give backing to in the coming academic year. Contact us for further information.

## Major Review Teaching Prize winners

**This year, five members of staff were awarded teaching prizes at the same time as going through the School's Major Review Process. Major Review prizes consider individual performance from start of contract to Major Review. Cases are considered for evidence of quality of teaching, based on feedback from students and colleagues, teaching innovation, and development in teaching (of and by the individual).**

**Our congratulations to the prize winners.**

PETER RAMSAY

Peter calls himself a 'late starter' in academic life. After a career in Public Relations and Marketing, he changed careers and studied law. He joined LSE's Department of Law in 2006 and teaches criminal law. He completed his PhD on the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) at King's College London earlier this year.

Peter says it is difficult to put his finger on what it is he enjoys so much about teaching but believes it is the challenge of helping students discover something new and learn how to do this themselves.

He says his favourite student feedback has been " 'You are not ashamed to make mistakes in his class', because this is exactly the kind of classroom he aims to create: a space in which students can learn and discover freely, and get excited about the arguments.

More than using specific activities and methods, Peter wants to demystify the act of learning and says that in important respects academic learning is comparable with physical training. Students should not be frightened of difficulty but come to see that learning is about finding your way through it.

Like other teaching prize winners, Peter says that the most satisfying aspect of teaching at LSE is that students are not only prepared and willing to engage, but that they often enjoy themselves in class. They have no hesitation about putting him under pressure especially where his own research is concerned, and thus he talks about the buzz he gets from being put on the spot, and, using a musical term, 'riffing off each other' live.



experience of public accounts committees and involving his students actively in small projects. He says that getting out and applying their knowledge makes politics and public policy less abstract for students and shows them that their learning has relevance. So Joachim's students are sent to Westminster to attend sessions and work on small budget analysis projects. Closer to home he introduced more group work to get students more engaged.

Joachim feels that he had an excellent teaching year and great student feedback, which he partly credits to the excellent support he received from the Teaching and Learning Centre but also to the students who he finds lively and engaged, and who continue to challenge and teach him a lot.

OLIVER VOLCKART

Oliver came to the School in 2007 and teaches financial history in the Economic History Department. Prior to this, he was a fellow at the Max-Planck-Institute for Research into Economic Systems and taught at the Humboldt University Berlin and the University of Jena, where he gained his Habilitation.

Oliver was surprised, and certainly very pleased, to receive a teaching award as he had not been aware of its existence. He recognises the expectations that LSE and his department have for excellent teaching and he enjoys pushing himself to accomplish these goals for his students.

Oliver aims to get students excited about history, showing them how varied and colourful economic history can be. He may not explicitly draw on novel teaching technologies or methodologies but he does seek to engage with students directly, drawing them into a dialogue. He aims to convey his own enthusiasm for the subject and often draws on his own research or engages students with what is currently going on in the subject, both in terms of content and methodology. The most important thing, he says, is to take students seriously and engage them as part of the scholarly community.

Oliver credits his students for his teaching success. He finds the learning environment at LSE extremely enjoyable and very different from Germany as students come more prepared to class here, are more motivated and more interested in the subject.



and cares about most. Without a doubt, the fact that LSE students show such great interest in their subject and involvement in their studies contributes to an exciting learning – and teaching – experience.

Nancy says that it is important to her to make students work but also to support them in learning well. Materials are essential in this and with extensive experience in preparing visual presentations, she takes great care to ensure that the materials she provides for students are clear and well-designed.

In her teaching, Nancy draws heavily on group work which she carefully supports and monitors. She considers this as an essential tool to support both native and non-native English speakers and believes that it is not necessarily language ability that differentiates students, but language confidence. Breaking larger groups into smaller ones for activities and exercises helps less confident students get involved and to feel more comfortable in speaking up in the plenary group.

As an urban planner, it is easy for Nancy to connect her research with her teaching as she uses real life examples. For example, one activity involves students researching and exploring areas of London on foot.

CHRISTIAN HILBER

Christian completed his first degree and PhD in Switzerland and worked for Fannie Mae in Washington, DC, before doing post-doctoral research at Wharton Real Estate Center, University of Pennsylvania. Christian joined the Geography & Environment Department in 2003 where he acts as the director of the MSc in Real Estate Economics and Finance.

Christian is delighted to have been awarded the teaching prize. Having previously read about it in *News & Views* he thinks it demonstrates that LSE appreciates and recognises teaching. He does not consider himself a 'born presenter' and says that he works hard to be the kind of teacher his students deserve. Taking part in the New Academic Induction Programme (NAIP) helped him to understand better how students learn. He says that while much of this may be tacit knowledge, learning about it in a structured way gave him the confidence to experiment and change his teaching in subtle ways. As an example, after hearing that attention spans are on average 20 minutes long, Christian now allows for regular short breaks in his lectures during which students are encouraged to be active in other ways.

Interestingly, Christian talks to his students about teaching and what he has learned at the beginning of the year. In this way he works with his students to create a learning community that works for all.

Like other teaching prize winners, Christian talks enthusiastically about the opportunity to directly connect his own research with his teaching. He states that it is very rewarding as a researcher to teach LSE students who are not only active in their own learning but readily challenge his arguments.



JOACHIM WEHNER



Joachim completed his studies in Germany and South Africa. Before joining LSE in 2005 as a lecturer in public policy in the Government Department, he worked for five years as a policy analyst and researcher in South Africa as well as a consultant for a number of international organisations. Joachim had read about the teaching award in *News & Views* and seen other colleagues win teaching awards, so he was keen to try and join them.

Joachim's research focuses on budgets and public finance, and he admits that teaching about public accounts may not be the most lively or accessible subject for students at first glance. However, he aims to make the subject come alive by drawing on his broad, first hand

NANCY HOLMAN



Nancy completed her PhD in Urban Policy at Portsmouth and worked as a town planner before joining the University of the West of England as lecturer. She came to LSE in 2003, first in the Social Policy Department and since August 2008, in the Geography & Environment Department where she lectures in urban planning.


Although Nancy was at first unsure about what the prize involved, she says that LSE teaching prizes have noticeably changed attitudes towards teaching at the School. She clearly loves teaching; it is what she enjoys

# LSE Teaching Excellence Award winners

The LSE Teaching Excellence Award, now in its third year, is managed by the Students’ Union, who invites students to nominate those teachers who have inspired their learning most in the past year.

Each nomination has to be supported by a minimum of seven students, and each of them is asked to give examples of how the individual has: stimulated their interest and enthusiasm; increased

**JUSTIN KUEH**  
Justin is a PhD student in the Economics Department where he teaches Microeconomic Principles II to undergraduates. This is what his students said: ‘He is the best and most dedicated teacher I have ever met. He makes me work hard for the subject because he is very motivating’; ‘He is genuinely enthusiastic during class and extends the class material by relating it to current research’; ‘He knows everyone’s names after the first class, and thereby ensures everyone is included’; ‘I enjoy attending his classes because he has the gift of presenting answers in the most simple and intuitive way’; ‘He doesn’t just explain how to solve a particular question... he is focussed on teaching us a way of thinking.’


**CLAIRE MOON**  
 Claire Moon is a lecturer in the sociology of human rights in the Sociology Department and the Centre for the Study of Human Rights. She teaches war and genocide to undergraduates and approaches to human rights and political reconciliation to postgraduates. This is Claire’s second LSE teaching prize, she was previously awarded the Major Review Teaching Award in 2007. Students value Claire’s enthusiasm, inclusiveness of diverse experiences and viewpoints: ‘It was her constant questioning of my ideas that forced me to examine my beliefs, which in turn opened up new areas of intellectual curiosity’; ‘She was so full of enthusiasm it was contagious... I actually couldn’t wait for the next class!’; ‘She greatly expanded my understanding through her thorough and well thought out lectures, inclusive teaching style and her talent for synthesizing the

their ability to be independent; critical learners; organised the course materials effectively; provided useful feedback; demonstrated their command of the subject and developing thinking in the field of study and responded appropriately to the diversity of students in their courses.

This year, there were 14 nominations from a broad range of teaching and learning support areas of the school. These historical and the contemporary’; ‘Prior to taking her class I had never once considered pursuing a PhD... now this is my primary goal.’

**JUDITH SHAPIRO**  
Judith is the undergraduate tutor for the Economics Department, providing pastoral support and support to a variety of student and departmental projects, such as the voluntary research skills workshop. With 750 students to support in both crisis and general issues, she provides two daily drop-in sessions, helping with career issues and future plans, reading personal statements or simply giving advice on procrastination. Her students say: ‘Every time we had a discussion, even informal ones, I was sure I would be able to learn a lot from her’; ‘She is very sensitive about cultural difference and offered me much needed support when I first arrived; ‘Her contribution to the Department has been phenomenal... her guidance was a crucial factor in my academic life at LSE.’



**ULRIKE THEUERKAUF**  
 Ulrike is a PhD student in the Government Department, where she has received a number of teaching awards, including this year’s Departmental Teaching Award (see below). Her students say: ‘Definitely one of the best teachers I’ve had at LSE, and I’ve had some very good ones’; ‘Our class consists of very different nationalities and from a number of

nominations describe LSE teaching at its best – enthusiastic, hugely stimulating, well prepared, relevant and responding flexibly to students’ lives and realities, and offered in ways that engage, promote interaction, ensure everyone is included, and above all, promote real learning. Our congratulations go to all the nominees, and particularly to the final five selected for the award.

different disciplines. Uli has used this to the class’ advantage, drawing on life experiences, cultural understanding and interdisciplinary learning’; ‘I have really benefited from Uli encouraging us to be rigorous, analytical thinkers by stressing how points link up to previous material covered and asking us to think of these links ourselves. She also encourages us to give full answers that reach the end of a point logically’; ‘She created fantastic class material.’

**ANGUS WRENN**  
Angus Wrenn is a co-ordinating language teacher (EAP) in the LSE Language Centre. He teaches literature options, which are open to all students and aims to create a learning community for literature enthusiasts among social scientists. As one nominating student said: ‘Even economists like to read sometimes.’ Angus says that he learns a lot from his students as they bring their own disciplinary knowledge to the study of the literature’s social context. This is what students say about him: ‘Talking to Angus is similar to engaging in a highly stimulating think tank, he encourages us to critically evaluate each and everything we read/discuss, and form viable opinions on every topic covered’; ‘If an idea is put forward in class, no matter how contentious, he is willing to entertain it’; ‘LN525 is a class that exemplifies diversity: in terms of age, ethnicity, and nationality. Angus uses this to his advantage.’



## Departmental Class Teaching Prize winners

Departmental class teachers combine PhD research with teaching and learning about teaching. Prize winners most of all credit their students for a rewarding experience, however, they also highlight how much they have benefitted from TLC’s support and the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education. Most class teachers use a mixture of discussion, group work and smaller activities but it is clear from student feedback that while student-centred activities are helpful and make learning interesting, students value their teacher’s enthusiasm, the effort they put into helping students, for example through flexible office hours, providing extra study material, or developing study skills.

Each year departments reward their best class teachers. The following is a list of winners whose names have been received so far. Further prize winners will be announced later in the year through the TLC Teaching Matters publication and website.	
Alan Brady	Law
Annette Quayle	Accounting
David Easte	International History
Frederik Lesage	Media and Communication
Horen Voskeritsian	EROB
James Abdey	Statistics
Joanne Kalogeras	Gender Institute
Katarina Keresztesova	Social Psychology
Maria Koumenta	EROB
Matthew Hinds	International History
Milt Mavrakakis	Statistics
Morten Skovdal	Social Psychology
Nayat Horozoglu	Operational Research Group
Panagiotis Kapotas	Law
Sue Onslow	DESTIN

**PANAGIOTIS KAPOTAS**  
Panos is in his final year of a PhD on affirmative action, a multidisciplinary research project, in the Law Department and has been teaching European law at LSE since 2005. His joy for teaching means that a link between his research and teaching has evolved as his PhD shows a much greater European dimension than envisaged.



He clearly enjoys teaching and he says that this year has been transformative. This he credits in large parts to the PGCHE where both factual information and the process of reflection have offered him a new perspective on teaching. What defines Panos’ classes are his passion and enthusiasm for the subject and legal phenomena in general, while group quizzes and a chocolate reward help to create a learning community. Indeed, Panos says that it is important to him to create an atmosphere that allows everyone to learn freely. So at the start of the year he makes it clear to his students they are a group that learns and improves together.

**ALAN BRADY**  
Alan teaches criminal law at LSE and UCL while completing a PhD in human rights at LSE’s Law Department. Alan loves teaching – indeed he says that he probably wanted to teach more than he wanted to do the PhD. After his PhD, he plans to return to Ireland and not only practise criminal law but also hopes to be able to continue teaching as a practitioner. Alan emphasises how important it is to get students enthusiastic about law in his first year class and aims to develop students’ legal and study skills. He seeks to make these skills explicit so that students become better learners and better lawyers. Completing the PGCHE has helped Alan to achieve this. He uses quizzes and group work to involve all students and he makes sure to always provide feedback that helps students develop further.



**ULRIKE THEUERKAUF**  
Ulrike is an experienced and clearly much-loved teacher – in addition to the Departmental Teaching Award, she has won four departmental awards in the last three years, as well as the Teaching Excellence Award this year (see above)! Ulrike taught at the University of Munich before coming to LSE’s Government Department to complete her PhD in political institutions and their effects on ethnic violence. She emphasises how helpful the advice of the Teaching and Learning Centre, especially the PGCHE, has been for her own development as a teacher. Ulrike says that as a teacher, one has to be willing to learn yourself – one can never know how a class or discussion will go. Seeing and accepting the originality of students’ answers and questions is important to create a class that is a learning community which everyone can enjoy. To make sure that such a creative and highly productive atmosphere can be achieved, Ulrike mixes student presentations and group work with exercises and powerpoint slides to help them structure their learning and understanding.

**ANNETTE QUAYLE**  
Annette, who is writing a PhD on accounting methods and climate change policy at the University of Warwick, has been teaching in the LSE’s Department of Accounting for four years. She loves teaching and emphasises how important the PGCHE has been in helping her to improve her teaching, giving her the confidence to do things differently and support students to develop as critical thinkers. Annette says that it is far too easy for students to simply ‘apply’ accounting methods and practices without considering the broader context within which these are situated. Instead, she tries to encourage students to extend their thinking, to be critical and question numbers. To achieve this, she has turned away from teacher-centred problem-solving classes to group work which encourages students to discuss questions, answers and issues with each other. Most importantly, Annette wants students to question quantitative models and understand broader accounting principles. To do this, she even reads to students from books such as Roger Lowenstein’s *When Genius Failed: the rise and fall of long-term capital management* to show how mathematical models may be technically correct yet flawed.



### New pilot scheme LSE-Columbia University Funded Exchange of Teaching Faculty

In May 2009, LSE and Columbia University launched a new teaching exchange scheme. These short-term exchanges will occur between teaching staff in complementary departments at the respective institutions. Faculty participating in an exchange are expected to undertake a teaching commitment that enables substantial engagement with undergraduate and/or graduate students at the host institution, and that meets a need in the host department. Visits will normally be for a full term at the host institution. LSE staff visiting Columbia will be funded by LSE up to a level of £5,000 to support travel, accommodation and other essential extra expenses in New York. Neither institution will fund relief cover for teaching staff absent under this scheme. The deadline for applications for the 2009/10 session is: 15 July 2009. For further information on LSE-Columbia collaborative activities, please see: [www2.lse.ac.uk/ERD/academicPartnerships/pdf/pilotTeachingExchange.pdf](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/ERD/academicPartnerships/pdf/pilotTeachingExchange.pdf)