Welcome to the April 2022 BEI newsletter. Following the Easter break, we are now moving into the summer term. With much of our teaching being delivered in person, and the May graduations the first to be delivered face to face since the pandemic began, it does feel as though we are past the worst. However, it is important to retain a degree of caution as there are still high numbers of cases, causing people to become ill. We continue to live with a level of uncertainty, and it remains to be seen as to what direction the pandemic will move in the future. Let’s hope, however, that things continue to improve.

This edition of BEI Digest updates you on a range of activities that have taken place over the past few months. It is extremely pleasing to see a number of successes in terms of research grants. Emeritus Professor Alex Poulovassilis and Professor George Roussos in Computer Science have received a significant grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council for their project ESPRESSO, which will explore personal data management. Additional grant successes have come from colleagues in Economics, Mathematics and Statistics (Dr Steven Noble) and Organizational Psychology (Professor Julie Gore and Dr Lukas Wallrich). When BEI developed a research strategy in 2021, increasing grant income was a key element. These successes are testament to the work of colleagues that have supported this process.

As new projects start, others come to an end. We have seen the publication of the final report of the EU-funded TRIGGER project on gender inequality in academia that focused on the under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM). The majority of the research for this project took place from 2014-17, but there have been clear outcomes within Birkbeck’s institutional structures, including the development of a mentorship scheme for women in STEMM across all departments and the renewal of the College’s Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2017 and 2020. I want to congratulate our lead authors of this report, Professor Helen Lawton Smith (Management) and Dr Viviana Meschitti (Huddersfield Business School).

As we know, the impact of research beyond academic outputs is critical and March saw the launch of our first cohort of the government-funded Help to Grow: Management scheme, which helps SME leaders grow and develop their businesses as we move out of the pandemic. The first cohort brings together individuals from a diverse range of organisations. The workshops are coordinated by the Centre for Professional Development within BEI and delivered by colleagues from across the school, supported by a facilitator and a group of mentors. This is an important step in our move towards increasing engagement with businesses and delivering
short courses that respond to the needs of organisations.

The skills required to work in a range of organisations is the underlying principle behind the revamp of our educational portfolio for 2023-24. We must ensure that what we teach is relevant for students and provides them with the skills needed to go out and work in the future. We are at a point now where we can redesign our portfolio for launching in Autumn 2023 — our 200th anniversary year — that positions BEI and our offering at the forefront of providing the skills needed to address organisational and societal challenges. This has started early with the launch of a new MSc Business Analytics for Autumn 2022. Many colleagues through their research are addressing important topics such as the future of work, the role of green finance in combatting climate change, food sustainability and security, diversity in entrepreneurship, and harnessing the benefits of digital technologies. We need to be equally adept at redefining our postgraduate portfolio to be underpinned by our research, by an understanding of the challenges that organisations face and what it is that employers need.

There will be numerous events taking place over the summer period, including BEI week in July where colleagues will present on the very topical issue of ‘Resilience in an Uncertain World’. These events will give us the opportunity to see colleagues more regularly than we have been able to over the past two years. I hope that you all have an enjoyable, healthy and productive summer period.

Professor Geoff Walters
Executive Dean, BEI School

**SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

**BEI WELCOMES INAUGURAL COHORT ON THE HELP TO GROW MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

On 24 March, we were delighted to welcome seventeen small business leaders to begin the twelve-week Help to Grow Management Programme at Birkbeck. The government-funded programme involves a mixture of taught sessions and workshops, peer-to-peer learning and one-to-one
mentoring, all designed to support senior leaders to accelerate their business growth. BEI’s inaugural cohort will take modules in Strategy and Innovation, Digital Adoption and Finance to help take their businesses to the next level.

RESEARCHERS IN COMPUTER SCIENCE RECEIVE £353,354 GRANT TO ADDRESS DATA SECURITY CHALLENGES

Professor Alex Poulovassilis and Professor George Roussos (CSIS) have been awarded a £353,354 grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council for a project exploring personal data management.

The ESPRESSO Project – Efficient Search over Personal Repositories: Secure and Sovereign – will address the complexities that have arisen around personal online data stores (pods), which give individuals complete control over which applications can access their personal data and for what purpose. The findings of the project will help to address key policy challenges relating to data sovereignty and privacy and will inform future research in this area.

Poulovassilis and Roussos said: “We are delighted to receive support from the EPSRC for the ESPRESSO project, which is at the cutting edge of Web research. We are excited to collaborate with the University of Southampton, the NExT++ centre, and the SOLID and HAT project teams to investigate innovative techniques for accessing and combining data that is stored in personal datastores under the owners’ control. A core ingredient of our new work is that service providers need to obtain user consent every time they wish to access their data, in contrast to current practice that enables providers to accumulate vast data silos of personal information.”

TRIGGER PROJECT EXPLORING GENDER EQUALITY IN STEMM PUBLISHES FINAL REPORT

The final report of the Transforming Institutions by Gendering contents and Gaining Equality in Research (TRIGGER) Project has been published. Led by Professor Helen Lawton Smith (Management) and Dr Viviana Meschitti (Huddersfield Business School), the project aimed to understand the under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) in academia and the institutional changes needed.

Among TRIGGER’s key achievements are the adoption of a mentorship scheme for women in STEMM across all Birkbeck departments and the renewal of the College’s Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2017 and 2020, expanded to all areas across the College and all staff groups.

Read the full report.
**BEI LAUNCHES MASTERS PROGRAMME IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS**

In response to increasing employer demand for data analysis and evidence-based decision-making skills, the Department of Management has launched the MSc Business Analytics. This innovative programme provides a blend of technical modules in data analytics alongside applied business modules to develop decision-making and communication skills.

Students will have the opportunity to apply their learning in practical exercises and simulation activities using available datasets and web analytics services.

Find out more.

**BIRKBECK OFFERS PRE-SESSIONAL ENGLISH CLASSES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Following on from the success of last year, Birkbeck is offering two optional pre-sessional English course pathways for international students. The four-week and eight-week courses will begin in July 2022.

Each pathway has been designed to assist students who have not met Birkbeck’s standard English language entry requirement (an IELTS 6.0 overall or equivalent).

If you are aware of any international applicant who may benefit from this course, please spread the word. Further qualifying information and details of upcoming information sessions can be found on the [College website](#).

**COACHING PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT PRESENTS RESEARCH AT CONFERENCE**

Victoria Burns, MSc Coaching Psychology, presented her Master’s research at the Oxford Brookes Coaching and Mentoring Research Conference in January 2022. Victoria’s research asked, ‘can coaching be emancipatory?’

**PROFESSOR SARAH HART CELEBRATES THE MATHEMATICS OF ART IN GRESHAM COLLEGE LECTURES**

As Gresham Professor of Geometry, Professor Sarah Hart gives six annual public lectures on the theme of Mathematics, Culture and Creativity. The lectures can be attended in-person or watched online. Sarah’s most recent lecture in the 2021-22 series, Geometry: The Mathematics of Art, explored the beauty of geometrical curves. The next lecture on the surprising uses of conic sections will take place on Monday 25 April.

[Book your place](#).
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Colleagues in the Department of Organizational Psychology presented research at the Qualitative Research Symposium hosted by the University of Bath in February 2022. Helen Cooper, Janet Sheath and Rebecca Whiting presented a paper entitled ‘Emotional vulnerability: Counselling supervision services and ethical practice in qualitative research’. Dr Lilith Whiley and Dr Rhea Ashley Hoskin (University of Waterloo) presented the paper ‘Femme Praxis: Using Femme Theory to foster vulnerability within research design and institutions.’

- The Centre for Innovation Management Research hosted a series of debates and workshops in Public Policy:
  - ‘Digital Technology and the Social Value of Major Infrastructure Projects’
  - ‘Passion in Entrepreneurship’
  - ‘Building Research Visibility through Social Media’
  - ‘Regional Economies and Digital Transformation’

- Professor Alexandra Beauregard (OP) presented ‘Organisational responses to the pandemic: Working parents’ lived experiences’ at a Surrey Business School, Department of People and Organisations research seminar on February 2, 2022.

- Dr Walter Beckert (EMS) was shortlisted for the Mercer’s School Memorial Professorship of Business at Gresham College. His proposal of a lecture series on ‘Looking Beyond the Cloud: Competition Policy in the Digital Age’ responds to the opportunities and challenges generated by the digital revolution. The proposal builds on Dr Beckert’s expertise in competition economics and analysis acquired through his work with various competition and regulatory authorities over the last two decades. The series is likely to be offered in the Department of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics in the future.

- An article by Dr Anthony Brooms (EMS) in the March 2020 Edition of The Actuary Magazine was cited by former editor Dan Georgescu in the inaugural Institute and Faculty of Actuaries Podcast. Listen between 6:00 and 6:50 mins.

- Dr Benedetta Crisafulli (MGMT) was invited to present published research on the strategies to launch social innovations in B2B markets at the University of Seeburg (Austria).

- Dr Rashi Dhensa-Kahlon (OP) featured on The Workplace Podcast discussing workplace trauma and recovery.


- A new book by Dr Pedro Gomes (EMS), Friday is the New Saturday, has been translated into Portuguese and received coverage on CNN Portugal, RTP, RTP2, TSF, Radio Observador Contra-Corrente, Publico newspaper and O Novo newspaper.

- Professor Sarah Hart (EMS) was a guest on Steven Levitt’s podcast People I (Mostly) Admire. Steven is an economist best known for his popular book Freakonomics.

- Professor Kevin Ibeh (MGMT) chaired the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Panel on ‘Economic
Development and Climate Change’, organised as part of the Collaborate and Connect Event, at the QEII Conference Centre, London, 25 February 2022. Kevin was also invited to speak at a number of events:

- **Keynote for a Society for the Advancement of Management Studies-funded workshop series on developing research writing culture among early career African scholars, organised by Sokome University of Agriculture, Tanzania, in conjunction with Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa, November 2021.**
- **Invited panellist at a webinar on Scaling Business in Africa organized by the University of Edinburgh Business School, Edinburgh, June 2021.**
- **Keynote remarks on ‘Our world’s many pandemics: how well are businesses stepping up?’ Arden Business School Conversations,, London, April 2021.**

- **Professor Sue Konzelmann (MGMT)** gave an invited talk on ‘The Return of the State: Restructuring Britain for the Common Good’ at a panel organised by the Cambridge Society for Economic Pluralism and the Cambridge University Labour Club, University of Cambridge, 24 February 2022. Sue also spoke on ‘Paying for Coronavirus and the Recovery: The Return of the State’ at SOAS University of London, 6 October 2021.

- **Professor Ron Smith (EMS)** delivered the annual lecture on defence economics to the Advanced Staff and Command Course at the Defence Academy. Ron was also academic reviewer for two Ministry of Defence studies.

- **Professor George Magoulas (CSIS)** hosted the Birkbeck Knowledge Lab Seminar ‘Conversations with computers – how chatbots can impact users, service provision and society’ on 23 March 2022. The seminar featured guest speaker Dr Asbjørn Falstad, chief research scientist at SINTEF, a Norwegian technology research institute.

- **Dr Halley Pontes (OP)** shared tips for managers on recognising and preventing burnout in their teams on the Birkbeck blog.

- **Dr Federica Rossi (MGMT)** and colleagues produced a report for the National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange on HEIs’ Engagement with the Arts and Cultural Sector: Evidence from the Knowledge Exchange Framework 2021 Narratives.

- **Dr Kevin Teoh (OP)** spoke to the Premier League about the use of psychometrics in the workplace on 24 February 2022. Kevin was also an invited guest on a series of podcasts:
  - ‘What you weren’t told about working as a junior doctor’ - BMJ Student Podcast.
  - ‘Job Crafting – Empowering Employees to Make Change’ - Tap’d Solutions Podcast.
  - ‘Promoting readiness for psych health and safety’ - Psych Health and Safety Podcast.

- **Professor Stephen Wright (EMS) and Robin Mason (Birmingham) were commissioned to provide advice to Ofwat** as part of their consultation on their approach to risk and return for the next price review of water companies in England and Wales.
AWARDS, HONOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

- **Professor Julie Gore (OP)** has been invited to join the board of the Naturalistic Decision Making Association. The field of Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM) is concerned with the study of how people make decisions in complex, high-stakes settings.

- **Professor Kevin Ibeh (MGMT)** was appointed UK Representative to the Board of the European International Business Academy; non-Executive Director of Oaklands College Corporation, St Albans, September 2021; Lead Commissioner for Marketing, Communications and Brand by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, July 2021; and Doctoral External Examiner, University of Ghana, Legon, November 2021. Kevin was also selected for the Accelerate Programme 2021-22 by the National Leadership Centre, Cabinet Office UK, October 2021.

- **Andy Ross FAcSS (EMS)** has been elected Chair of the Academy of Social Science Practitioner Fellows Search Committee. The Academy is the national academy of academics, practitioners and learned societies in social science. If you know of any UK practitioner, that is someone who has made outstanding contributions to advancing social science but would not qualify as an academic Fellow of the Academy (FAcSS), then Andy would be pleased to hear from you on a.ross@bbk.ac.uk.

- **Dr Federica Rossi (MGMT)** has been appointed Advisory Editor for Research Policy journal, January 2022.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

BEI WELCOMES UNIVERSITY OF CATALONIA DELEGATES

On the week of 1 March, BEI was delighted to host a visiting delegation of prospective partnership students from Spain. Birkbeck’s close relationship with the International University of Catalonia (UIC) brought six visiting students to Bloomsbury, with Andrea Williams and Will Richards on hand to greet them. Joining them was Nicoletta Occhiocupo and Marta Segura Vacarisas of the university’s faculty. Visitors attended sample lectures on Financial Economics by Dr Ken Hori and Marketing by Dr Nick Pronger and were given a campus tour. Although an emphasis was placed on the academic opportunities at Birkbeck, there was an opportunity for students to enjoy some classic Friday fish and chips and even a cream tea at the British Museum!

Birkbeck’s partnership with the International University of Catalonia allows UIC students to achieve a dual degree, with an academic year spent in London. In October 2022, we look forward to welcoming our second - and largest-ever - cohort of UIC partnership students.
CSIS BIDS FAREWELL TO SYSTEMS GROUP MANAGER

Phil Gregg retired as Systems Group Manager on 4 February 2022. Professor Mark Levene bids him farewell:

“As Head of Department, I had the pleasure of working closely with Phil for quite a few years. The systems group is central to the smooth operation of a computer science department, delivering support to both staff and students and maintaining state of the art computing systems. We are judged both internally and externally by the quality the systems group provides, and Phil was always aware of and up for this challenge.

Phil was always there to help everyone who needed support and as such was very generous with his time. He was committed to his work and was one of the early birds in the department on a daily basis. Working with Phil was very easy as he was very organised, understood what the department needed, and delivered on all fronts. He was respected by all as someone that would get the job done and make sure that all systems would function as they should. Phil was very pragmatic on the operational side and always looked for the most efficient solution both in terms of cost and performance. Phil built strong relationships within the department and also with his counterparts in ITS, which was crucial to our interaction with the school and the college. We are all sorry that Phil is leaving and will miss him. However, we all wish him a most enjoyable retirement and hope to keep in touch with him.”

LATEST PHD GRADUATES FROM BEI

Congratulations to the following PhD candidates who have successfully defended their theses:

- **Linda Etchart (MGMT), Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Global Governance of the Environment: Case Study Indigenous Peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon**
- **Seongil Han (CSIS), Explainable Credit Scoring through Generative Adversarial Networks**
- **Zeynep Kurter (EMS), Essays on the Macroeconomic Determinants of Sovereign and Systemic Risk**

NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS

A warm welcome to the following new staff members:

**Computer Science and Information Systems**
- Dr Irene Muzi, Lecturer in Computer Science

**Management**
- Dr Chunjia Han, Senior Lecturer in Business Innovation

STAFF LEAVERS

We say goodbye to the following staff members and wish them all the best in the future.

**Management**
- Dr Ian Harrison
What’s your #BBKStory?
I’ve always been interested in Psychology; it was my chosen subject at undergraduate and Master’s level at the London School of Economics and I’ve always been curious about what makes people tick. Between my Master’s and PhD, I worked as a consultant and trained as a Chartered Psychologist. I soon realised that I would be better placed to help working people if I had more of an understanding of organizational psychology. When a role came up at Birkbeck, I jumped at the chance to apply and was so honoured to be accepted – I feel like I am even closer to doing what I am passionate about here than I’ve had the opportunity to do in the past. My research draws on clinical and social areas, asking how people recover from trauma, whether that’s mistreatment at work or collective trauma like the COVID-19 pandemic.

What are you currently working on?
I’m currently finalising two papers looking at collective trauma. The first explores a range of traumatic contexts, including terrorist attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic, and asks to what extent the support we receive from others when we experience collective trauma helps or hinders. The second piece of research, which was funded by the Birkbeck Wellcome Trust ISSF Fund, is a longitudinal analysis exploring the impact of lockdowns on people’s mental health. The findings show that lockdowns were particularly challenging for certain groups of people, for example women and young and older adults.

On the teaching side, I’m interim Programme Director for the evening MSc Organizational Psychology and I taught on the Life Career Development module last term. Birkbeck students make your job very fulfilling: they’re very challenging, they want to know the theory but also how research impacts the world of work. It was one of the most enjoyable but toughest experiences of my teaching career so far – you’re constantly kept on your toes! I’m also supervising a lot of professional doctorate students and will be teaching on the Evidence-Based HRM programme next term.

What do you like to do in your free time?
I have two children under the age of seven who keep me very busy. We do a lot of fun activities together like walking and baking. Being so interested in wellbeing, trauma and health, over the years I’ve taught myself to take care of those parts of my life. I practise mindfulness and keep fit with running and bootcamp military training – there’s nothing like being out in all weathers and shouted at for the best part of an hour!
UPCOMING EVENTS

THE WORLD NEEDS BETTER DECISION MAKERS

25 April, 10am – 2pm EST

This online event explores the world of Naturalistic Decision-Making.

Find out more and book your place.

BEI WEEK: RESILIENCE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

11-15 July 2022

We invite staff, students, alumni and friends to join us for a week of free interactive workshops and thought-provoking talks taking place online and on our Bloomsbury campus.

Find out more and book your place.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

JOURNAL ARTICLES


• **Martinez, C. V.**, Antonetti, P. and **Crisafulli, B.** ‘Emotions and consumers’ adoption of innovations: an integrative review and research agenda’, Technological Forecasting and Social Change (forthcoming).


• **Dr Halley Pontes** and **Professor Almuth McDowall** co-authored a brief discussion article in the Addiction journal discussing stigma in gaming research.

• **Dr Halley Pontes** published in the ABS four-star journal Social Science and Medicine a study including over 120,000 gamers from different countries to explore how much gaming is too much.


• Vasconcelos, A.G., Lima, E.P., **Teoh, K.**, Nascimento, E., MacLennan S., & Cox,

BOOKS, CHAPTERS, REPORTS


CONFERENCE OUTPUT

- Dr Benedetta Crisafulli has had papers accepted at the American Marketing Association (AMA) 2022 Winter conference and Frontiers in Services conference 2022.

BEI DIGEST

School of Business, Economics and Informatics

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