

Sussex news in brief



Sussex welcomes new Chancellor

Writer and actor Sanjeev Bhaskar OBE has been appointed as the University's new Chancellor.

Mr Bhaskar, who was one of the team in the ground-breaking TV comedy, 'Goodness Gracious Me', and who wrote and starred in the multi award-winning 'The Kumars at No. 42', with his wife Meera Syal, was formally installed at the University's summer graduation ceremony in July 2009.

Speaking about his honorary appointment, Mr Bhaskar said: 'I am passionate about the opportunity to contribute to change and development for individuals and society and I am extremely proud to be associated with a radical, transformational university such as Sussex.' He has now officiated at both the summer and winter graduation ceremonies, and has already been a great hit with celebrating graduands and their families.



Renamed, refurbished Gardner Centre will reopen

In a great boost to arts at Sussex, the Gardner Centre will reopen in time for the University's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2011-12, renamed as the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. The renaming, a tribute to Lord Attenborough and his family's involvement with both the University and the arts, will mark an exciting new beginning for the Centre. A total refurbishment will provide a flexible auditorium with a mixture of up to three stages and up to 500 seats, an exhibition gallery, a café, and three studios of different sizes. Sally Jane Norman has been appointed as the Centre's first director, joining us from Newcastle University's Culture Lab. Ms Norman has previously led research activities at institutions including the International Institute of Puppetry (Charleville-Mézières), Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (Karlsruhe), IRCAM (Paris) and the Studio for Electro-Instrumental Music (Amsterdam). Prior to her Newcastle appointment, she was Director-General of the Ecole européenne supérieure de l'image in France, where she created a pioneering practice-led PhD programme in Digital Arts.

Above left: The University's new Chancellor testing out his first graduation speech

Above right: The Gardner Centre, soon to reopen as the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts



Heavy snowfall in December and January gave students a chance to improve their snowman engineering skills

Sussex continues to climb the university rankings

Following an outstanding performance in many of last year's rankings and league tables, Sussex has continued to build on its success:

In the 2009 National Student Survey (NSS), Sussex has climbed the rankings for the second year running. The new scores place Sussex in the top 20 (19th place) for student satisfaction among the elite universities of the Russell Group (which includes Oxford and Cambridge) and 1994 Group (including Durham and York). According to the NSS results, 86 per cent of Sussex students expressed satisfaction with their learning experience.

The *Times Higher Education* Student Experience Survey ranked Sussex sixth in the UK for teaching and learning. The new national survey, of more than 11,000 students at 104 UK universities (14 January 2010), measured the quality of staff and lectures; how helpful and interested staff are; whether courses are well-structured; personal relationships with teaching staff; tuition group size; and fairness of workload.

Sussex has also been ranked among the top universities in Europe for excellence in politics, economics and psychology, in the CHE Excellence Ranking 2009. We were placed among the top 11 out of 34 featured UK institutions, alongside Oxford, Manchester and Warwick. The rankings are produced by the German-based independent education think tank CHE (Centre for Higher Education Development).

In *The Sunday Times University Guide* 2009, Sussex was ranked 22nd for the second year running, following a significant rise from 2007. Sussex saw most improvement in the categories relating to student retention (improved drop-out rates) and improved student satisfaction (through its markedly improved performance in the National Student Survey in 2008).

Sussex is ranked among the top 20 universities in the UK in the *Guardian's* University Guide (12 May 2009). We were ranked 18th overall, up 15 places from last year. Top-ranked subjects include Chemistry (1st), Sociology (5th), American Studies (7th) and Biosciences (7th).