

## CELEBRATION OF SELS

### Thoughts from Dr Nigel Freestone, Subject Lead

The 2019/20 academic year is just around the corner and it's safe to say it's been a busy summer. New labs, new degrees, new experiences, graduation, new faculty. With all that comes the relaunch of our department blog - welcome to **Science at Waterside**.

This summer, the Sport, Exercise, and Life Sciences Department joined forces with Environmental Science and Geography to form our new department, 'Science', within the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology.

It's an exciting time here at Waterside, with new collaborations and research ideas, and student opportunities spinning around in the heads of our staff. Before we look to the future however, Science at Waterside wanted to celebrate some of the summer achievements of our staff and students within the now archived Sport, Exercise, and Life Sciences department.

## Students deliver talks at the National BASES Conference.



The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences

On Tuesday 15 April, four third-year undergraduate students (Alex Tero, Ewen Bufton, India Sait and Tyler Anderson-Graham) embarked to Dundee, making them the first students to represent the University of Northampton at the BASES Student Conference. Upon arrival, the students enjoyed the sights and sounds of 'Scotland's Best Place to Live 2019' (The Times), before retiring to bed in preparation for an exciting first day of the conference.

It was an early start for the students on day one, with India Sait presenting her poster on the validity of a Taekwondo-specific anaerobic



fitness test; alongside Tyler Anderson-Graham, who shared findings on the effect of a warm-roller based intervention to reduce exercise-induced muscle damage, and Ewen Bufton, who examined the effects of delayed hot water immersion following eccentrically-induced muscle damage.

Day two saw Alex Tero round off the University of Northampton representation by presenting his work on the effects of plyometric training in repeated sprint bouts in amateur male footballers.

Lecturer Brett Baxter accompanied Alex, Ewen, India and Tyler to the conference and had this to say about the weekend:



"All of our students did a fantastic job of presenting their dissertations at the BASES Student Conference. Very few undergraduates have the opportunity to present their research at a national conference, but Alex, Ewan, India and Tyler grabbed the opportunity with both hands and should be proud of their achievements.

This was our first cohort to visit the BASES Student Conference and after their success, we will be looking to take our second cohort in 2020."

# The Class of 2019!

Congratulations! The last week of July 2019 saw our Class of 2019 celebrate their graduation day in front of families and friends, who lined the streets of Northampton. This was the first graduation since the move to Waterside and the scenes were picturesque as the sun shone over the Nene Way.

It was a chance for friends to reunite and celebrate, after finishing their studies earlier this year, and reflect on their great times at the University of Northampton.

Science at Waterside caught up with the festivities throughout the week.

Aryam Daniel took home the Graduation 2019 Dissertation Poster Award for Health Studies Joint Honours. This award is given every year to the best poster presentation for each subject (sport, exercise and life sciences) at the student conference. Her dissertation explored why BME communities delay accessing mental health services in the UK. Dr Nigel Freestone, Subject Lead, stated that the standard of this year's academic work across the department was "exceptional". Reena Suman (Health Studies graduate) is looking forward to starting postgraduate study at UON in September, reflecting that, "Studying Health Studies has significantly broadened my insight into the many determinants that interlink and impact health.



Some of the Health Studies graduates, L-R: Aryam Daniel, Reena Suman, Mandy Lunt, Ceris Aidoo, Rebecca Jackson



**"What I liked most about the University of Northampton was the lecturing staff, they were always there whenever we needed them."**

**Georgina, Sport & Exercise Science graduate**

The Health Studies lecturers have supported me in developing the essential skills required for postgraduate study and the world of graduate employment."

"Thank you" poured in throughout the day, as the graduates had one more chance to see their lecturers after the ceremonies. "Looking back to when [I was] first introduced to the foundation Human Bioscience course four years ago, I was very nervous and unconfident and was unsure whether I'd made the right decision. Now, I have completed all my exams and a dissertation - I never thought I would make it this far. I have grown so much, not only academically, but also as a person and I just want to thank you for all the support [the academic] members of the faculty have given me!" Kitty Luck, Human Bioscience Graduate.

In a tradition as old as time, groups of students gathered at the steps of the Guildhall to toss their hats



to cap off a fantastic three years at the University of Northampton. We look forward to seeing some of them return in September for the start of their Master's qualification and wish the rest the best of luck with their future careers.

## New opportunities to study with us in Northampton

Recent graduates will have more choice than ever to continue their studies at the University of Northampton as Sport and Exercise Science and Bioscience began advertising six new postgraduate qualifications:

- **MSc Strength and Conditioning**
- **MA Sport Management**
- **MSc Sport Science**
- **MSc Sport Media & Digital Marketing**
- **MSc Genetics & Genomics**
- **MSc Molecular Medicine**

In addition to our new postgraduate programmes, was the creation of three new undergraduate courses: BSc Sport Rehabilitation and Conditioning, BSc Health Sciences, and BA Sport Business and Leadership - the latter two due to start in September 2020. Applications are coming in fast, so be sure to get your position secured soon to be part of these fantastic new courses.

# Our degrees receive accreditation from national bodies.

The Sport Rehabilitation and Conditioning BSc (Hons) degree became accredited, for the next five years, by the British Association of Sport Rehabilitators and Trainers (BASRaT) in June and the programme now proudly features on the BASRaT website: [basrat.org/student/wheretostudy](http://basrat.org/student/wheretostudy)



The University of Northampton is now one of just sixteen universities in the country to have a BASRaT accredited Sport Rehabilitation degree.

# Sport & Exercise Science joins up with local partners to offer work placement bursaries

In an effort to give our students a step-up on the employment ladder, the staff at Sport and Exercise Science have been working hard to establish work placement partnerships with local businesses.

As part of their studies, students will have the opportunity of a work placement, which is relevant to their degree.

The University of Northampton is offering match-funded work placements with Northamptonshire County Cricket Club and Northamptonshire Sport.



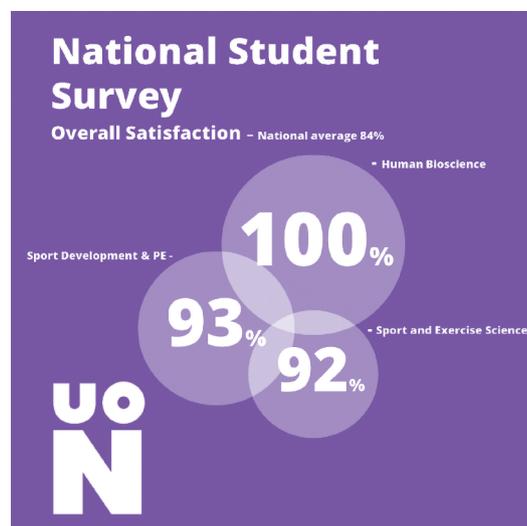
Students will have the opportunity to formally apply for these bursaries and, if successful, assist NCCC and NSport with the delivery and evaluation of their current programmes.

A great boost for the CV!

# Students couldn't be happier with our Sport and Bioscience courses

If you're thinking of studying at the University of Northampton, don't just take our word for how great the courses are - listen to our recent graduates!

Within Overall Satisfaction, our Human Bioscience, Sport Development and PE, and Sport and Exercise Science courses were rated head and shoulders above the national average in the latest National Student Survey.



# Wellcome Trust student projects.

Five second-year undergraduate SELS students received confirmation in June 2019 that they had successfully won £2,768 each to conduct an eight-week research project alongside the support of the SELS lecturing team. These projects were funded by the Wellcome Trust Student Summer Vacation Grant, a scheme specifically set up to provide undergraduate students with research experience, which they may not otherwise receive outside of their dissertation projects.

**Mary-Jane Okpala**, one of the successful students, gave an insight into her research: "My research has looked into blood glucose levels and blood pressure in older people and how these alter when people undertake light activities and when they sit for intervals inbetween. We've just finished data collection and are now crunching the numbers to see what conclusions can be drawn."

**Stepan Tkadlec** had this to add on reflection of his experiences: "I was already working closely with lecturers at the University with their research and I really enjoyed that part of my course, but the Wellcome Trust's scholarship has been invaluable as I'm now considering whether sports research is something I should seriously pursue as a profession."

**Janea Bernabe**, an Occupational Therapy student, is working with Dr Tony Baross and is currently recruiting participants for the project: "I'll be looking into how isometric resistance training – activities that involve muscles being contracted – can help lower people's blood pressure. This will be carried out for eight weeks from September 2019, but the exercises I'm using will be light, so no one should be concerned!"

If you're between 18–35 years and don't consider yourself 'physically active,' email Dr Tony Baross at [tony.baross@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:tony.baross@northampton.ac.uk) to participate in the project.



L-R Janea Bernabe, Mary-Jane Okpala, Gemma Dawson, Stean Tkadlec

**Ben Folland**, working alongside Prof Tony Kay, is currently recruiting older adults for his project and said: "My research will examine the effects of a six-week eccentric exercise programme, performed at the ankle in older adults, on fall risk characteristics. I want to see whether we can reverse functional losses in balance and strength to improve the health of older adults."

If you know someone who is over 60 years of age and may be interested in participating, please email Prof Tony Kay at [tony.kay@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:tony.kay@northampton.ac.uk)

**Gemma Dawson** has been investigating the presence of a variant of the protein 'dystrophin' in people with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, saying: "The hope is that our findings will provide a better understanding of the role of this type of dystrophin and will also lead to better DMD treatments."

The Science lecturing team will once again be looking for students to apply for various Summer Vacation Grants. If you're a second-year undergraduate who is interested in gaining research experience, speak to one of your lecturers today!