

Postgraduate Researcher Initiatives 2007-08

Grants for activities in 2007-08 were awarded to:

Crispin Cooper CPLAN and Mark Hall COMSC for a 'Cardiff University Geographic Information Science Postgraduate Research Forum'.

Roberta Magnani ENCAP and Lee Gonzalaz OPTOM: to establish a network and associated events relating to the theme of 'Material Culture'.

Joseph Sterrett ENCAP and Kathryn Wilkinson ARCHI: for a reading group on the theme of 'Sacred Text - Sacred Space'.

Helen Blakely SOCSI and Amanda Ehrenstein SOCSI: for a workshop on 'The Re-Scaling of Space' organised by the Postgraduate Global Political Economy Research Group.

Peter Roberts ENCAP and Elizabeth Ford ENCAP: for a discussion group focussing on the early modern period entitled 'The Cardiff Renaissance Seminar'.

Comments from 2007/08 Project Leaders:

Cardiff University Geographic Information Science Postgraduate Research Forum

The goal of the Cardiff University Geographic Information Science Postgraduate Research Forum (GISForum) was to bring together postgraduate researchers from across Cardiff University whose research either focussed on Geographic Information Science (GISc) or who used GISc methods and tools in their research.

If it were possible to bring these diverse GISc researchers together then there would be a chance that the exchange of knowledge and methods would lead to synergies enabling higher quality research that can be delivered faster and it was this idea that led to the GISForum.

In summary it can be said that the idea behind the GISForum is sound and worth pursuing... There has also been interest from RACD in using the GISForum as a foundation for bringing together academics across the University with an interest in GIS.

Sacred Text, Sacred Space

Many thanks again for making such an opportunity available. It has been a very rewarding experience and one I hope as many postgraduates as possible can benefit from in the future.

As a training event for me and for my fellow postgraduate organizers I would also emphasize its significant value in gaining a wider perspective on the field of academic research, the handling of and approaches to research questions, as well as an invaluable networking opportunity.

I believe this programme to be one of the most valuable I have seen in postgraduate training.

Rescaling of Space in Global Political Economy

We aimed to explore links between different disciplines to discuss a topic...this was achieved by inviting academics from different disciplines (Geography, Critical Psychology, Industrial Relations). The academics' previous work was discussed at meetings prior to the workshop which enabled us to detect similarities of approach and research questions within the different disciplines. This also facilitated a lively debate between the attendants and the speakers throughout the workshop.

Participants confirmed that the mix of speakers with different theoretical and methodological approaches to the question of space and place opened up avenues of thinking and research questions. It thus managed to promote the general thinking we had envisaged when planning the workshop.

"An excellent event--probably the best one-day workshop I have attended--and thanks for putting it together."

"This was an extremely well-thought through and carefully planned event that produced what was for me a very stimulating and productive discussion. Indeed, [we] are aiming to use it as a model for similar events at [university]."

Material Culture

The funds enabled us to organise a colloquium, three [pedagogical] workshops and a final networking event.

We achieved all our principle objectives:

- 1) We facilitated interdisciplinary collaborations within Cardiff University. Postgraduate students as well as members of staff helped the steering committee to organise the events and contributed to the stimulating discussions and debates. Now we have around 40 members within Cardiff University from Schols ranging from ENGIN to SOCSI, JOMEK, PSYCH, OPTOM, HISAR, ARCHI and ENCAP.
- 2) We promoted an interdisciplinary discussion on the nature of 'Material Culture' and its relevance as a mode of analysis to specific fields... Our collaboration with SCOLAR, with the opportunity to peruse their extensive archival collection covering multiple disciplines, was particularly successful and beneficial to researchers involved in our project.
- 3) We opened up our interdisciplinary debate to institutions outside our university. This allowed us to establish solid foundations for future collaborations. We believe that our group's work on community engagement was one of the most durable and valuable outcomes of the 'Material Culture' project.

Our training as postgraduate students has been enhanced by the opportunity to discuss research methods in an interdisciplinary context, as well as by the valuable administrative experience we have gained when applying for funding, advertising our events, dealing with financial matters and budgets, and working effectively in a team.

The project has inspired a number of very engaging ideas and sustainable plans for the future.

Cardiff Renaissance Seminar

I was pleased with attendance at the seminars: this was generally at least 20 people, and in some cases... closer to 50 or 60... More importantly than numbers, perhaps, was how informed and enthusiastic the auditors were... I genuinely felt that we had attracted a cross-school constituency of interested people, at a staff, research student and undergraduate level.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the above projects should email GraduateSchools@cf.ac.uk