

Climate Change

Sir – Further to Tim Horder’s editorial on climate change (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 360, Second Week), I wonder if the Green Impact Scheme is known throughout the University? This is a nationwide campaign to get all universities doing more green things as standard and the points system is being used in the Business Development office at Egrove Park to encourage staff to turn lights, monitors, printers, etc, off when not needed and to use paper responsibly.

It would be great if every section of the University was doing this, so perhaps that could be a way to get everyone more aware of how we can stop climate change and encourage recycling to do ‘our bit’ for the world? It is administered by the University’s Environmental Sustainability Team and I would encourage all departments to email them at sustainability@admin.ox.ac.uk to find out how to get involved.

Yours sincerely

JOANNE EVANS

Said Business School

Sir – Shortly before his eightieth birthday that greatest and wisest of Oxford’s earth scientists, Professor Stephen Moorbath, published an article in *Oxford Magazine*, No. 298 which Allan Chapman (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 360) would do well to re-read and learn why what Dr. Chapman calls “the spinning rocky ball we call home” is indeed under measurable threat. Dr Chapman’s usual discernment should have prevented him from reducing the complex and crucial matter of fossil fuel divestment to what he sees as some sort of pantomime got up by “the latest sociological and political agendas ... driven by middle-class student protest”. To be generous about such ill-founded misrepresentation, it could be supposed that Dr Chapman is applying an exercise in falsification, an echo late at night from Stephen Moorbath’s cousin, Karl Popper. Then morning comes.

On the reduction of carbon emissions, Daniel Scharf with characteristic lucidity (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 361) spells out the “the urgency of, and, and individual responsibility for, purposeful action” by Oxford climate researchers who, in *Oxford Magazine* editor Tim Horder’s judgement, (Oxford’s Duty?: No. 360) are failing to make their case(s) on behalf of “Oxford citizens beyond the University” or, indeed, “globally”, so all of us. “In and out of time warp, I am that rock/In the black hole of the sky.” (the closing lines of Wole Soyinka’s ‘No!’ he said – for Nelson Mandela).

Yours sincerely

BRUCE ROSS-SMITH

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TO THE EDITOR

Something I’ve said?

Sir – I have recently raised several issues of major concern in relation to the University of Oxford EJRA procedures (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 358, Eighth Week, Hilary Term, p6)

Surely coincidental, there has since been publication of the Review of the operation and future of the EJRA: Clarification of the Aims and changes to the Procedure of the EJRA. To the interested reader, there certainly seems to have been a major shift in emphasis, policy and procedures – and indeed tone – in these proposed revisions to the earlier EJRA documentation.

In my article relating to the current process, I highlighted that no reference is made in any of the current documentation requiring an applicant to cover part or all of his/her/salary by current, pending or future grant income. I note now one of the main amendments to the EJRA procedure states:

“In all but very rare cases, the applicant will have secured grant or other funding to cover their full costs (i.e. including on-costs) while in employment beyond the EJRA”.

Note; this is not only... “...rare cases...” but “...very rare cases”, a rather excessive dual combination of descriptors which establishes a threshold *ipsissima verba* for EJRA – even before any application is even forthcoming. One notes also that, as far as the EPSRC, for example, is concerned, an investigators contract needs to be longer than the grant applied for i.e. an extended, post-EJRA employment has to be agreed prior to any grant application to cover any full salary and on-costs.

I note the widespread use of “very” in various key places across the new EJRA Procedures. Thus, one sees in the first main amendment that “Applications for extended employment will be approved only in very exceptional circumstances”; again here, the descriptor “exceptional circumstances” is apparently not sufficient, but only “very exceptional circumstances” is required to capture the exactitude of the intended intergenerational spirit of these amendments.

And once again “very” occurs in the formulation “If an extension in employment is to be granted, it is expected that, in all but very rare cases, those who hold permanent posts would need, as a minimum, to step out of

their current post into a newly-created, fixed-term post...” I searched to see if “... extended employment...” was indeed replaced by “...very extended employment” but, alas, it was nowhere to be found.

One cannot help but draw comparisons – one has to say highly unfavourable comparisons – with other institutions who are carefully and sympathetically looking at the changes to age and retirement legislation, to take just one excellent example e.g. The University of Sheffield (<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/guidance/retirement/age-discrimination>)

I am at present trying to find out the number of current EJRA applications in Oxford at this time since, as noted in the new Procedures... “...the views of stakeholders [this group of faculty are surely stakeholders] will be consulted about their views on the future of the EJRA”. Perhaps others who find themselves in, or are about to enter the same murky waters – very murky waters – might care to compare notes (peter.edwards@chem.ox.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

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Not the Gazette

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