

Happy New Year!

We hope that you've had a good summer and are enjoying post-Birmingham life. We wanted to keep you up to speed with what's happening in Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences, and make you aware of some upcoming events so that you can keep your diaries free.

We're proud to say that our new first-year cohort is our biggest yet – we met fifty-three enthusiastic new students in our Welcome Week, as well as eleven international students joining us for a semester or a year from Canada, the USA, and Indonesia (via Japan).

We inaugurated this year's Cultural Programme with a trip to Stratford to watch an impressive RSC production of *Coriolanus*. You can keep up with our Cultural Programme on the [Blog](#). Keep a look out on Facebook – if we have any free tickets for events on our cultural programme, we'll let you know through the Facebook Alumni group, but you'll need to be quick!

The Distinguished Lecture has become a high profile and prestigious series during your years with us. We extend a warm invitation to all of you to return to Birmingham to join us for our autumn lecture, on [Diffraction, Entanglement and the Sensuous Unnatural Act \(called Art\)](#), which will be delivered by Professor Johnny Golding, Professor of Philosophy and Fine Art, School of Arts and Humanities (SOAH), Royal College of Art. This lecture will take place in the Main Lecture Theatre (Arts Building) on Friday 20 October at 6pm. There will be refreshments and nibbles after, and a chance to catch up with students and staff. Let us know if you're coming by dropping us an email or posting to the Facebook page.

We received our first set of NSS results in over the summer, thanks to your characteristically enthusiastic and constructive efforts. We were thrilled and humbled to get a 100% overall satisfaction rating in this first NSS for LANS. There were of course some lower score areas where we hope we can continue to improve, and we have spent the summer addressing them. We held focus groups with first- and second-year students, held a staff-student Curriculum Review meeting, and significantly redesigned the core modules.

This year, LANS is offering two brand new optional core modules to students in their final year: the Entrepreneurial Skills and Entrepreneurial Start-Up modules. On these modules, students will work with partners from IBM, Google and others to come up with a business plan that tackles a locally-relevant contemporary problem. The modules are the product of collaboration between LANS and the Careers Network and they are delivered from the LANS team by Shelley Budgeon and Mircea Scrob. Mircea is our newest team-member and we are delighted to have him on board and to draw on his expertise in Mixed Research Methods, Food Studies and the History of Medicine.

You may recall our well-received and lively first ever Careers and Employability event last year? We're planning to hold our second at the beginning of November and we would love it if alumni could attend and speak to our current 4th years (a couple of you have already signed up), and perhaps even pick up some new ideas. The panel will be made up of entrepreneurial experts, Careers Services representatives, and alumni. Look out for the email from Neil about this, and send him an email to register.

Finally, you all know how ambitious we are for LANS, and for interdisciplinary study at undergraduate level. We are also very keen to keep working on growing the profile of our wonderful programme suite. Some of that will be through your successes and achievements as your careers develop, but for our side, we will be hosting an event at Birmingham on 4 November bringing together Liberal Arts and Sciences leads from across the country to begin formally exploring what constitutes a “Liberal” education in twenty-first century Britain. Some of you have already committed to attend, but we know you will all be excited about this development and Birmingham’s leadership in making it happen.

Best wishes,
All the team at LANS