

Conference Chronicle

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CONFERENCE KICKS OFF!

The conference began in style on Wednesday night. The Haseltine Lake sponsored Drinks Reception saw our delegates coming together to begin their Conference experience. Despite the weather warnings, the sun shone, the swans were out and delegates from six continents joined us to celebrate the opening of the 2016 PraxisUnico Conference.



Isobel Finnie, a Partner at Haseltine Lake and first-time delegate commented, “The wide range of expert speakers, topics, high calibre delegates and the collaborative environment is truly impressive. It is no wonder that the members of PraxisUnico are viewed as world-leaders in their field.”

KE FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Keele University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Trevor MacMillan, provided an interesting overview the KE Framework project which he is heading up on behalf of HEFCE. The two main work-streams of the project look at benchmarking and good practices.

How do we know what is good?

Professor McMillan commented that the emphasis on technology transfer within the project is not because it is the most important part of knowledge exchange. In fact, it’s a small part - however it lies at the root of a lot of recent criticism. Part of the usefulness of the KE Framework group is to try and get a voice in the debate which represents as many views as possible and furthers understanding of the breadth of the role, the function of KE, sharing good practice and helping policymakers make informed decisions.



Prof. McMillan & PraxisUnico Executive Director Maxine Ficarra

The report also looks at how we compare internationally and how we can identify where we might improve. The comparison is a fascinating one, and it’s clear that while the US puts more into its KEC, when the ratio of returns are benchmarked, the UK compares very well with the US and rest of the world.

One size does not fit all whether you are comparing countries, ecosystems or universities. But we can and



should be expected to set aspirational standards and try new things. We look forward to seeing the final report, which is due out in July.

“Really enjoying it!”



Adele Roberts-Hunt, Business Development Manager at Kingston University is a first time delegate. She came to the conference with her colleague: they are both based in the Research office at Kingston. Adele said “I’m really enjoying the conference and I’m getting to know lots of people.”

EXPANDED WORLD-VIEWS: A TASTE OF BRIC & MINT

Brazil, Russia, India and China are the BRIC countries while Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey are the MINT countries. A very diverse group of culture and key drivers operates within these groupings, and we heard how knowledge exchange practitioners can actively and successfully engage with the opportunities presented for working with these countries.

Gloria Wu of Kangxin Partners, Mireya McKee of Isis Enterprise and Shirley Coutinho, Vice-President of FORTEC were the speakers.



Gloria told us how things are changing in China. Technology transfer is booming and China is becoming better at protecting IP. Recently new courts have opened and higher damages awarded, making it more worthwhile to pursue cases. Gloria shared her top tips for protecting IP in China, which included: file in China ASAP, understand the differences in rule and procedure, be careful in choosing the right partners and work with local IP professionals. Gloria also provided us with useful tips on negotiating an agreement in China.

Mireya McKee spoke about Knowledge Transfer in Mexico, describing the innovation agencies and situation regarding science and technology in that region.

Turning to Brazil, Shirley Coutinho traced the evolution of IP in that country. It was interesting to note that it was inspired by UK practice, back in 1809!

“Fascinating conference”



Katie Hornby is a Knowledge Exchange and Business Development Manager at Southampton Solent University and first time delegate. She said, “It has been fascinating to see the common issues around efficiency, effectiveness and best practice and how to apply these in a Research & Innovation context.”

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Malcolm Skingle of GSK commented that industry is increasingly externalising parts of their R&D function through innovative collaborations with universities and platform delivery companies. He observed that the trend and direction of travel for university-industry interactions is very positive, across all sizes and types of university, and introduced three compelling industry speakers who highlighted how they work with universities.



Robert Sorrell of BP highlighted the essential nature of collaboration with universities for the business. He said that it is important to get together with academic partners from the beginning to frame the problem together. The fresh perspective results in more innovative solutions. He described how they have people working on the ground with the research team, “BP mentors”. The focus is on fundamental science, which plays out in benefits in the short, medium and long term.

Elsevier is evolving to build strategic partnerships around the world, to adopt new technologies faster and stretch the capabilities of the company in a fiercely competitive business. Lesley Thompson highlighted that key challenges are advancing recruitment and upping their capabilities to be a good partner with the science base, but these challenges contain potential opportunities within them. As new players, Elsevier are learning how to pull the knowledge in successfully, and how to budget for that activity. Collaborations can't be rushed – however much senior management may wish to! Enduring long term relationships need time investing as well as resource.



BT is one of the largest investors in R&D in the UK. Fraser Burton described how working with government funding agencies is central to what they do. The key criteria for university collaboration are quality and relevance of the research, and that judgement of quality and relevance is largely steered by BT's own researchers. He felt there was a lack of support for post-graduates and post-doctorates in transitioning from the research community to the industrial community, and back and forth. This poses an opportunity for companies to come together and identify research challenges which

are appropriate to support post-doctoral/graduates, and grow the skill base within the UK. By identifying common goals in the research and training area there is opportunity to strengthen ties between business and university sector.

JUICY GOSSIP!

The Smoothie Bike was a smash hit, with hundreds of innocent fruits and vegetables pummelled into tasty drinks as delegates converted their pedalling energy into smoothie power – now that's my kind of technology transfer!



Speedy: PraxisUnico's International Director Nessa Carey

“Useful networking”



Madhu Madhusudhan is a Business Manager at Medical Research Council Technology (MRCT) and a regular at the PraxisUnico Conference. He says 2016 has been a good one, adding, “The most useful thing about the conference is the networking and sharing best practice”



ARE YOU RTTP?

RTTP is a recognition of Registered Technology Transfer Professional status, conferred by the Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals (ATTP), of which PraxisUnico is a founder member. You can apply for RTTP at any stage of your career. Want to know more? Stop by the ATTP stand, ask a PraxisUnico team member for more details, or visit attp.info.



Conference Sonnet

*To Stratford Upon Avon they did come
To sing the sweet songs of KEC successes
And they didst work hard, play hard, and then some
Here where no speaker ever digresses
Ah! The PraxisUnico Conference
How I wish it could go on forever
I can say with every confidence
We've made some happy mem'ries together
Lo! PraxisUnico enjoyed meeting
Speakers, guests and delegates, all
But, forsooth, time is sadly too fleeting,
Hope you had a good time, we've had a ball,
Don't forget to come back again next year
Prithee, look forward to it with good cheer!*

(Think you can do better? Submit your own sonnet to info@praxisunico.org.uk and the best ones will feature on our website!)

See you in Sheffield in 2017!

TRAIN TO GAIN

Don't forget, PraxisUnico runs training throughout the year – you can check our upcoming courses any time on our website. Coming up soon: Research Contracts, New Venture Creation, Business Development, Software Commercialisation, Fundamentals of Technology Transfer and the brand **new** Knowledge Exchange in the Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities. All courses have CE points which can go towards your RTTP application. Visit www.praxisunico.org.uk for more details.



HUNGRY FOR FEEDBACK

Please spare a few minutes to fill out the feedback forms available on our app. We rely on your info to shape future offerings! If you have any comments or ideas you wish to send separately, please email info@praxisunico.org.uk

JUST FOR FUN

How many words can you make? Target 42

