

Plenary 1

Professor Julia Goodfellow, CBE, PhD, FMedSci, FIBiol, FInstP
Vice Chancellor, University of Kent

Brace for impact

Abstract

The contributions that universities make to the UK economy are well documented and have formed the basis of appeals for continued investment from the Exchequer against competing demands at a time of fiscal restraint.

The case for supporting research has to an extent been accepted, and research funding has been spared some of the more stringent cuts falling elsewhere in the sector. However, with public funding comes public accountability, and Government is increasingly concerned that the sector should demonstrate the impact of its research - whether at the level of the individual project or as part of the REF process - and, whether it states it in so many words, it seeks to privilege research with demonstrable impacts. This raises challenges for academics and research administrators alike.

Julia will set out these challenges and suggest appropriate responses in a wide-ranging presentation that will touch upon the contributions universities make globally, the place for international collaborations, the fundamental excellence in research which underpins the impact debate, and the importance of societal and cultural impact beyond the immediate economic impact.

Biography

Prior to joining the University of Kent, Julia spent five years as Chief Executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). In this post she was responsible for government funding for the biosciences in universities and in seven sponsored research institutes - she had been a member of the BBSRC council prior to this. Julia is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, a fellow of the Institute of Physics and the Institute of Biology and she was awarded a CBE in 2001 for services to biophysics.

Her career began with an undergraduate degree in physics at the University of Bristol, and she

completed a PhD in biophysics at the Open University Research Unit in Oxford. After postdoctoral studies at Stanford University in California, she moved to the Department of Crystallography at Birkbeck, University of London.

Julia's scientific studies pioneered the use of computational methods to study the structures of large biologically important molecules and she used this to probe their function and dynamics. She became Professor of Biomolecular Sciences in 1995 and Head of the Department of Crystallography in 1996 at Birkbeck, University of London. She was appointed Vice-Master (deputy head) in 1998.

Dr James Wilsdon, PhD, FSA
Director of the Science Policy Centre, The Royal Society

Seeing further: measuring the longer-term impacts of science and innovation

Abstract

The 2010 General Election was dominated by intense debate about the pace and scale of cuts in public spending. In this febrile climate we need to articulate clearly why continued investment in science, research and innovation will underpin future growth and prosperity. How well is this case being made and are the politicians listening?

James will outline the headlines of *The Scientific Century*, a recent Royal Society report on this theme. He will predict how debates over impact, investment, and innovation will play out over the course of the new Parliament, and he will also explore the changing role of the scientific and academic community in policymaking.

Linking current debates to the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society, James will defend the need for a long-term vision for research policy. We can't predict the 21st century counterparts of quantum theory, the double helix and the computer, nor where the great innovators will get their formative training and inspiration. However, one thing seems certain: unless we get smarter, we'll get poorer.

Biography

The Royal Society Science Policy Centre (SPC) aims to strengthen the voice of science in UK, European and international policy. Its work is organised under four themes - sustainability, diplomacy, innovation and governance – and recent projects include *Geoengineering the Climate: science, governance and uncertainty* (Sept 2009), *Reaping the Benefits: science and the sustainable intensification of global agriculture* (Nov 2009) and *New frontiers in science diplomacy* (Jan 2010).

From 1997 to 2001, James was Senior Policy Adviser at the sustainability charity Forum for the Future. He has a first-class degree in philosophy and theology from Oxford University and a doctorate in technology policy from Middlesex University. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Lancaster University, a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts, a Trustee of People and Planet, and a member of the RCUK Advisory Panel on Public Engagement with Research.

James became Director of the SPC in September 2008, and coordinates the Society's UK and international policy work. From 2001 to 2008, he worked at the think tank Demos - first as Head of Strategy, then as Head of Science and Innovation.

He was also Director of *The Atlas of Ideas* project, which explored the changing geography of science and innovation in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. He has researched and published widely on science and innovation policy, sustainable development, emerging technologies and the globalisation of research.

