

Thursday 26 January 2012, 0001

New President of the British Sociological Association is appointed

Professor John Holmwood has been appointed President of the British Sociological Association (BSA) and has pledged to make sociology “a necessary part of public life and debate” during what he called “a very testing time for universities”.

Professor Holmwood, of the University of Nottingham, was elected by the trustees of the BSA late last year and will begin his three-year period in office in June. The BSA is the representative body in British sociology and has 2,500 members, most of them social scientists in UK universities.

Professor Holmwood said: “The next few years will be a very testing time for universities and for different disciplines as they adjust to the new market in higher education. A period of austerity will also test many other social institutions.

“This calls for engaged social science for difficult times. It will be a challenge to the sociological imagination and one we should face with heart, intellect and collective purpose. The British Sociological Association represents members across a diversity of institutions and settings. Over the last few years, it has demonstrated the public relevance of sociology locally and globally.

“We also face a new obligation to students to ensure that they benefit from an education designed to enhance both their critical skills and their sympathetic understanding of social problems. Within the profession, we owe a particular obligation to postgraduate students and to early career academics to ensure that they are properly supported during these difficult times.”

Professor Holmwood is Co-founder of the Campaign for the Public University, set up to oppose the government’s policy of marketising higher education.

Professor Holmwood replaces Professor John Brewer, and thanked him for his “tireless and successful” work in promoting sociology over the past two years, during which he instituted a series of presidential events on topics of immediate concern such as global warming and humanitarianism. “I plan to build upon the initiatives taken by my predecessor to make sociology a necessary part of public life and debate,” he said.

John Holmwood is Professor of Sociology in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at Nottingham. He has previously held posts at the universities of Tasmania, Edinburgh, Sussex and Birmingham. He has been an active member of the BSA since he was a postgraduate student and has been Chair of the UK Council of Heads and Professors of

Sociology. He is a member of the ESRC Training and Skills Committee and a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

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Notes:

1. The British Sociological Association's mission is to represent the intellectual and sociological interests of its members. The BSA is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales. Company Number: 3890729. Registered Charity Number 1080235

2. The University of Nottingham, described by The Sunday Times University Guide 2011 as 'the embodiment of the modern international university', has award-winning campuses in the United Kingdom, China and Malaysia. It is ranked in the UK's Top 10 and the World's Top 75 universities by the Shanghai Jiao Tong (SJTU) and the QS World University Rankings. It was named 'Europe's greenest university' in the UI GreenMetric World University Ranking, a league table of the world's most environmentally-friendly higher education institutions, which ranked Nottingham second in the world overall.

The University is committed to providing a truly international education for its 40,000 students, producing world-leading research and benefiting the communities around its campuses in the UK and Asia. Impact: The Nottingham Campaign, its biggest ever fund-raising campaign, will deliver the University's vision to change lives, tackle global issues and shape the future. For more details, visit:
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/impactcampaign>.

More than 90 per cent of research at The University of Nottingham is of international quality, according to the most recent Research Assessment Exercise, with almost 60 per cent of all research defined as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'. Research Fortnight analysis of RAE 2008 ranked the University 7th in the UK by research power. The University's vision is to be recognised around the world for its signature contributions, especially in global food security, energy & sustainability, and health.

More news from the University at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/news