

I am Professor of Theatre & Performance at the University of Greenwich where I am also the Pro Vice Chancellor of a large Faculty encompassing the liberal arts and sciences. I have previously worked in both in the Russell Group and in the post-1992 sector, and also have an established practice within our discipline having worked for both the Royal Court and the National Theatre. My research interests are contemporary playwriting both within and outside of the British context, the relationship between these works and translation/adaptation, and the relationship between public policy and the arts and humanities. I previously served on the SCUDD Executive as the Chair of the Postgraduate Committee.

As Chair of SCUDD, I would seek to sustain the excellent work that Professor Stephen Lacey has undertaken over recent years in matters as diverse as the organisation of the annual conference, supporting the vital scholarship of *Studies in Theatre & Performance*, and in particular the building of partnerships and collaborations with other groupings such as TaPRA. The latter has helped to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up approach to calls to our discipline from sources such as the REF and the TEF where a considerable amount of collaboration and attention to detail was required. From this firm foundation, I would like to extend new linkages to other subject associations further afield where the potentiality for closing national boundaries (post Brexit) would and should be challenged.

While the future is always unpredictable, we all recognise that life in higher education for our discipline is not going to get any easier. Among many of the core challenges coming our way, I would highlight the following as both urgent and in need of a critical counter-narrative:

- The flawed financial modelling of higher education in the UK
- The threat to differentiate fee levels across different disciplines
- The measurement of the success of the arts and humanities through the prism of a commodified customer experience model
- The downgrading of arts subjects and particularly Drama in the school curriculum
- The threat to recruitment to Drama programmes as a consequence of the policy agenda
- The absence of teaching quality assessments in the Teaching Excellence Framework
- The move to align the arts as a service industry to enhance the impact of other disciplines.

SCUDD needs to be agile and poised to tackle these challenges head on. At times, we will need to be nuanced and diplomatic in our approach, at others we need to be campaigning and radical. If elected to the SCUDD Chair, I will do my utmost to support and lead the organisation to address this unfolding landscape with both humility and good humour.

Prof. Mark O'Thomas