

SOUTHAMPTON: As graduates celebrate there could be hard times to come for others



DEGREES OF SUCCESS: Celebrating graduates yesterday, above, and, right, jazz musician Courtney Pine. Echo pictures by Stuart Martin. Order no: 10799159 (above),



Taxing times for graduates

STUDENTS celebrating the end of their university education in Southampton have rejected proposals for a graduate tax as a way to pay for their qualifications.

Government ministers announced they were considering an extra tax for graduates to fund higher education on the same day hundreds of students from the University of Southampton donned their gowns and mortar boards to collect their degrees.

But, as Business Secretary Vince Cable yesterday revealed plans to consider a tax to pay for degree education, some students said extra taxes were unfair as they would end up paying a higher rate of tax if they were successful enough to get a well paid job.

By Corey Stephenson

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Others said the idea would take a lot of convincing for future students who may be deterred from going to university if they knew they would be penalised later on.

All students agreed, however, that leaving university with thousands of pounds of debt was not necessarily any better than being charged later on, but said it seemed the better of the two options.

In a speech in London yesterday Mr Cable said students would have to pay more for their education and has asked Lord Browne to look at the possibility of a graduate tax as a priority.

At Southampton Solent University, students' union president Daniel Prendergast said it could bring about a system

where two students on the same course could find themselves paying two different rates for the same level of teaching.

He added: "At this stage, this is something we do not wish to endorse and therefore we wish to keep an open mind on the matter until further, more specific information has been released."

"In addition, we do not support any increase in tuition fees. Many have accused Mr Cable of simply attempting to 'rebrand' tuition fees, and if this is the case we do not support any exercise that has this notion at its core."

"We also do not support any measure that could see students repaying their fees over the entire duration of their post-graduate lives."

Honour for Courtney

WORLD-renowned jazz artist Courtney Pine was among those picking up the honours at the University of Southampton's first graduation ceremony of the year.

The award-winning saxophonist was presented with an honorary degree at the Turner Sims Concert Hall where he is no stranger to sold-out audiences for his concerts. Receiving an honorary doctorate of music, he was praised for playing a major part in the transformation of the British jazz scene.

It was the latest in a list of honours for the jazz star after he was made a CBE in the New Year's honours list last year.



INJURED: Shelley Jory Leigh.

Brave Shelley takes one day at a time

HAMPSHIRE powerboat champion Shelley Jory-Leigh is getting set to go into hospital for an operation on her broken nose after a 83mph accident caused horrific injuries to her face.

The *Daily Echo* revealed yesterday that the 40-year-old sportswoman could give up her career after miraculously escaping the second dramatic accident in just one month.

Now Shelley will go to hospital on Monday to get a "new nose - hopefully like Angelina Jolie's", she joked recovering in bed at her home in Sarisbury Green.

She said: "I can't move my head at all. It feels like it is in a glass cage."

Her world championship hopes were shattered when her boat came off the top of a rolling wave and shattered as it dipped into the water causing it to stop violently while she was practising ahead of a world championship race in Sardinia.

Shelley and her co-driver Patrick Huybrechts, 53, were thrown against the boat's interior so hard it felt like they were smashed into a brick wall. In the race before - just three weeks earlier - the pair miraculously escaped from a 90mph spin-out while racing in Malta.

YOUR SAY

What do new archaeology graduates from the University of Southampton think of the plans?

Martin Turrell, 24, from London said: "There is already a lot of tax and fees and the worry is that it is already too pricey. I think everyone would agree they have to pay for it sometime but not sure this is the way to do it."



Miles Leavold, 20, from Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, said: "I don't really agree with it. There's enough already and I think it is taking away the encouragement for people to go to university to better themselves."



Lauren Tilley, 21, from Wiltshire, said: "I wouldn't be very happy about having to pay a graduate tax. University is already very expensive."



Rhys Arnold, 21, from Fareham, said: "I think it's a bad idea. Graduates already pay more tax being on a higher earning scale when they have jobs."



Stephany Van Der Walt, 22, from South Africa, said: "I can understand why they want to do it but I would hate to pay it when I graduated."



Carina Mincione, 21, from Brighton, said: "If it costs people less in the long run then it's a good thing, but I would not like to pay it especially if I was still leaving university with £14,000 of debt."



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