A healthy start to the New Year

It is an obvious point, but one well worth making, that the University has to have a sound financial base if it is to continue to develop the excellent teaching, research and other activities that it carries out.

I am pleased, therefore, to say that the end-of-year accounts for 2003/04, approved by Council at its meeting just before Christmas, show that the University has broken even on general activities, one year ahead of schedule. In fact, the figures show a surplus of £247,000, compared with a forecast deficit of £1,087,000. This surplus was despite £799,000 charged as a net loss, largely arising from the dismantling of 4-West.

I would like to emphasize that this result would not have been possible without the considerable efforts of many staff in improving the financial health and viability of our core business, particularly by boosting student recruitment and by maintaining tight controls on costs. It is important that these efforts continue.

One of the immediate benefits of meeting the financial targets is that we can move forward in supporting general strategic change across the University and to promote this in particular areas. The approach we intend to follow is explored in more depth in the article on page 11.

What we can definitely say is that success in keeping to financial targets, coupled with the work of the Teaching Efficiencies Working Group, should enable us to lay the foundation for a programme of targeted development of the University’s research base. As our ‘Future Academic Shape of the University – Next Steps’ document indicates, this could include having four or five areas of research where we are known to have truly world class activity, and becoming a centre of excellence for postgraduate education with a high quality international reputation.

Our financial position will be further strengthened when variable fees are introduced in the 2006/07 academic year. I can confirm that, subject to the agreement of Office for Fair Access, the University intends to charge a tuition fee of £3,000 per year to all new full-time EU undergraduates, except those defined by the Government as deferred entry candidates.

The University intends to safeguard access to all those qualified for admission by providing significant bursary support, which, for each student entitled to full Government assistance, will be £1,500 a year, with a sliding scale of support (from £300 to £1,200) for those receiving a partial Government grant. In taking this decision, the University is part of a general consensus in the higher education sector; only one university has so far said it will charge less than £3,000.

This issue of Insider also contains a special feature on Oakfield. I’m delighted to see highlighted the invaluable work that staff are doing to ensure that we offer the best opportunities to local people and businesses, both at the campus and by direct links between departments at Claverton and a range of partners in Swindon. Now that our plans for the Gateway site have passed the first stage of the planning process, it is vital that people can see what the University of Bath in Swindon has to offer.

Professor Glynis Breakwell
Vice-Chancellor
First woman professor in Pharmacy

The first woman professor in the 98-year history of pharmacy research at Bath has been appointed.

Melanie Welham is one of three staff appointed to Personal Chairs by the University to help strengthen the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology’s position as a leading centre for research.

Professor Welham’s research interests are in the signalling processes that control the growth and development of stem cells. This is an important part of future treatments for a range of diseases, including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, and spinal cord injuries.

In 2003 she was awarded a three-year Research Development Fellowship from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council to develop this research further.

Anthony Smith, who has been head of the Department since 2002, has been appointed as Professor of Pharmacy, whilst Steve Ward has been promoted to Professor of Molecular Pharmacology.

Although the University began in 1966, the Bath School of Pharmacy was founded in 1907.

“All three of us are delighted to have been given Personal Chairs at the University,” said Professor Smith.

“The Department has a 5-star ranking for the quality of its research and we will continue to strengthen and build on this position for the future.”

Professor Smith’s research is focussed on the factors that contribute to the survival and antibiotic resistance of infection-causing bacteria.

Professor Ward is researching the signalling mechanisms that control immune cell activation during inflammatory responses.

Puzzled by family arguments?

The way people tackle jigsaw puzzles could throw important light on how humans collaborate, according to latest research.

Researchers in the Department of Computer Science have found that when people using different strategies tried to collaborate, this increased the level of competition between them. This led to acts of one-upmanship, such as hiding the last jigsaw piece in order to be the ‘winner’ who places the last piece into the puzzle, shielding parts of the completed puzzle, hoarding piles of pieces and hiding the picture on the lid from others.

The findings are important because they illustrate how and why people choose to collaborate, and are helping scientists in the Department to design software that supports collaboration on shared activities.

This software - known as groupware - could be used in offices to help manage large projects, to support collaboration across different locations, or as part of packages used in animation or other creative industries.

In a series of studies, the researchers monitored two people – students at the University - at a time as they constructed a 120-piece dinosaur jigsaw puzzle on their own, and then as part of a larger group.

They found that ‘border obsessives’ focussed exclusively on sorting through the entire stock of pieces for the sole purpose of completing the border before concentrating on the rest of the puzzle.

‘Opportunists’, in contrast, are much more creative in their approach, sorting piles on more complex criteria and completing the puzzle using a range of different methods.

“A person’s jigsaw strategy closely reflects both their personality and level of skill,” said Dr Hilary Johnson from the Human and Computer Interaction Laboratory at the University. “In one of our studies, even when people knew they were being video-taped, we saw people refusing to allow a fellow player to touch their part of the jigsaw and squabbling over access to pieces.”

Humans’ gene pool too shallow

Our evolutionary ancestors’ lack of choice in the mating game has left modern humans exposed to disease, according to new research.

Important regions of our DNA have been altered by around 140,000 naturally-occurring mutations over the last six million years, according to researchers from Bath, Edinburgh and Sussex universities.

These regions control when genes are switched on and off, and this has left modern humans with ‘sloppy’ gene control mechanisms which can make us susceptible to diseases, or directly cause genetic diseases.

The researchers suggest that most of the ‘mildly harmful’ mutations occurred at a time when there was only a small population (10,000) of early hominids that were to later evolve into both humans and chimpanzees.

Had there been more early hominids, and hence a greater choice of mates, most of these mutations would have been overridden by natural selection from a larger pool of available DNA.

This contrasts dramatically with rats and mice which, because of their larger ancestral population, have been able to maintain the integrity of their regulatory sections of DNA.

The researchers made the finding after comparing control regions in human, rat, mouse and chimpanzee DNA.

“We are used to viewing ourselves as the pinnacle of evolution but seeing that rodents control their genes much more precisely is somewhat sobering,” said Dr Martin Lercher, from the University’s Department of Biology and Biochemistry.

“As a species we have become used to the benefits of ever-increasing health care and nutrition, but if what we found is still ongoing, then these improvements might at some point be offset by the deterioration of our gene control regions.”

INdEX 3
Since its launch in 2000, the Oakfield campus has expanded its work into three main areas: vocational studies, enterprise and the community. It has grown steadily, the latest figures showing that Oakfield now employs 38 part- and full-time staff, and has 864 post- and undergraduate students. Courses and facilities offered by Oakfield have been tailored to fit the vocational needs of Swindon and the local community; Swindon’s business community benefits from the wide range of enterprise and business support activities; and its Lifelong Learning and Widening Participation initiatives benefit the community as a whole.

As Dr Faith Butt, who became Oakfield’s Director last year, said: “Swindon has to have a skilled local workforce if its businesses are to compete successfully in the rapidly changing 21st century market. To reach this end, the University works with partners in Swindon to develop education and research programmes which serve local needs.

”Although rooted firmly in the local community, Oakfield is also looking outwards, nationally and internationally, to establish centres of international excellence that will be second to none.”

Community provision
The latest HEFCE report showed that only around 23 per cent of 18 and 19-year-olds from Swindon went to universities and other higher education colleges in the years 1994-2000, well-below the national average of 30 per cent. In response, Oakfield has pledged to continue its vital work encouraging young people to go into higher education through widening participation schemes run alongside its academic courses.

Professor Glynis Breakwell said: “Swindon’s own future – and the future of many of its young men and women – depends on being fully prepared for the major changes that are taking place in the world of work in the UK. The University of Bath in Swindon wants to play a full part in ensuring that the town’s young people have every opportunity to acquire the skills they need to be at the forefront of these changes.

“We are absolutely committed to encouraging local people to go to university. In the past four years we have steadily increased work in schools and neighbourhoods that have a low proportion of young people going into higher education.”

To oversee this work, the University is currently recruiting a Widening Participation Officer who will be based at Oakfield full-time. This position will be responsible for increasing the participation of people from families with no history of higher education, from under-represented ethnic groups and people with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. The focus will be on the vocational opportunities available at Oakfield, primarily the new portfolio of foundation degrees being developed by the Division of Lifelong Learning.

The Division for Lifelong Learning is starting its fourth year of part-time courses with over 4000 students having already taken courses. Aimed at making its courses and resources as accessible to as many people as possible, Oakfield’s evening classes, day schools and lectures cover both practical and academic topics. The free GULP lectures have proved so popular that this year the Division of Lifelong Learning hopes to run a series of GULP for Kids. These lectures, aimed at local 11-16 year olds, would have a broadly scientific theme and include a practical element.
Every spring the Department of Mathematical Sciences runs masterclasses for local pupils. Funded by the University, the Oakfield classes attract between 60 and 80 students from the area’s state and private schools. The classes, also run in Bristol, form the largest regional maths masterclass organisation in the UK, and since the beginning of the scheme about 4000 school children have passed through the system.

Since Oakfield opened the Facilities team has been hiring rooms that are not required for teaching. This has generated income from room hire, AV and catering (operated through Swindon Services). Over the next couple of months Oakfield will be launching a dedicated conference area by inviting local businesses and organisations to attend an open day.

**Creative learning**

In addition to vocational courses, Oakfield runs a variety of schemes to increase awareness amongst school children in the region, such as the Creative Arts Week. The aim of this week is to give children an opportunity to find out more about going to university, and where their interests lie. The activities are all run by tutors, and University students are on hand to answer any questions on their different experiences of coping financially, managing workloads and balancing study, work and social life. Last year’s Arts Week was so popular that four more have been scheduled to run this year. The Student Mentoring Scheme has proved to be another valuable way of forging links with local schools. Students are available on email and in person to advise pupils on issues ranging from school work to problems with classmates or family. The scheme succeeded in increasing pupils’ confidence as well as giving them an insight into higher education.

Over the last year the Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts (ICIA) has been very busy in Swindon. Having transformed itself from a campus-based arts provider, ICIA is now firmly established as an organisation developing research and innovatory practice in the contemporary arts. One of the success stories has been the way that many of these projects have been delivered - through strategic alliances and partnerships.

One of the key initiatives was contributing to the establishment of Swindon Cultural Partnership which brings together Arts Council England, Swindon Borough Council, Swindon Business Community and the Swindon voluntary and community sector to identify and fill gaps in current cultural activity, and to set up new facilities to enable Swindon to prosper. Another recent initiative is the organisation TheatreWorks, set up to help the development of a theatre infrastructure in the Swindon and Wiltshire region. The post is hosted by the ICIA, and Deryck Newland is the newly-appointed Director.

The ICIA has supported the Swindon Festival of Literature (1-15 May 2005) for the last five years. High-profile events will be held around Swindon and this year Oakfield will host two speakers: news correspondent Fergal Keene will talk about his newly-published autobiography and his work (3 May), and Professor Lisa Jardine and Andrew Roberts will speak on their book Making History! (11 May).

**Sporting excellence**

TeamBath has expressed its commitment to Oakfield by piloting a vocational Diploma in Fitness Excellence, 30 per cent of which will be delivered at the campus. Currently recruiting students, the course is available to all University staff as well as students and the public. The course will run on Friday evenings and weekends over a 20-week period (the next one is due to start in September). It can be studied alongside a BA or HND; or the four certificates in gym instruction, personal training, circuits and sports massage can be taken individually as Premier International Qualifications. In addition to vocational skills, the diploma leads to access onto the National Register for Exercise Professionals which is crucial for employment in the fitness industry.

Nicky Fossey-Lewis is to extend the Corporate Wellness Programme in Swindon. The programme helps local businesses improve the physical and mental well-being of their employees through exercise, healthy eating and work-life workshops. To maximise participation Nicky will be offering workplace visits to local companies in addition to on-site training.

Oakfield’s sport-based community work includes working with Sport England, Swindon Borough Council and Swindon Town Football Club to try and re-open the nearby playing fields. Currently the town suffers from a critical shortage of community sports facilities.
Academic courses

The University’s academic departments have tailored their courses to ensure that they meet the specific needs of Swindon and the local area. One of these areas is teaching.

Like many other towns and cities, Swindon needs as many well-trained teachers as possible. It suffered from a lack of local training opportunities and schools had got to a point where they simply couldn’t recruit enough teachers. Students were having to relocate to study and invariably ended up staying with the schools or in the area in which they had moved to. The education courses run at Oakfield enable Swindon to home-grow its own teachers.

The Early Childhood Studies BA(Hons), partly delivered at Oakfield, will be heading into its second year with an intake of students from all over the UK. The course focusses on education, social care and management and provides an academic grounding in the issues related to working with children between the ages of three and eight.

The Oakfield Education Group has been established to encourage the University’s Department of Education to develop links with local early years teachers and practitioners and to work together on education and research activities.

“I would be very interested to hear from staff who would like to join this initiative,” said Dr Rita Chawla-Duggan, Lecturer, Early Years Education. “It has potential to provide an invaluable link between the work of the University and Swindon’s teaching professionals.”

The University has formed a partnership with local head teachers and launched the popular School Centred Initial Teacher Training programme (SCITT). Based at Oakfield, SCITT runs a teacher training course which has an emphasis on practical experience. The course provides training in the national shortage subjects: Design and Technology, English, Maths, Science and Information Communications Technology. The course has been a huge success and out of last year’s intake of 23 local students, 20 are now teaching in Swindon schools.

It’s not just the Department of Education that is looking at ways to increase local recruitment and professional development. Swindon also has a low retention rate for its social workers, and this will be raised by a full-time BSc(Hons) in Social Work, which will be offered at Oakfield in October 2005. There will be an initial intake of 13 students, building up to 45 by 2008. In addition to foundation year students and local residents, employees of Swindon Borough Council will join the course on secondment. The Social Work degree based at Claverton continues to have strong links with Swindon through work placements in the area.

Enterprise

Oakfield’s Enterprise Gateway is a major centre for supporting business, both locally and internationally. Through the range of initiatives run at the Innovation Centre and the Small Business Hub it provides expertise and networking opportunities for everyone from an individual with a business idea to an international venture capitalist.

The Innovation Centre provides incubation for high-tech, high-growth start-ups. It supplies companies with a physical space to work in, access to top-of-the-range software and

Update on the new campus

Plans for the new Gateway campus, next to the new Great Western Hospital, went through the first major stage of the planning process in late 2004, when an independent panel recommended that it be included in the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan.

The next stage of the planning process is now taking place as an independent planning inspector considers the proposals and the opinions of others as part of the revised draft Local Plan for Swindon. If plans are approved the University will create a campus for 10,000 students, 600 academic staff and around 1400 non-academic staff, as well as a smaller campus in the proposed cultural quarter of the town centre, which will house the ICIA.

Links with the Great Western Hospital are a crucial part of this project. The School for Health will allow joint research and teaching activities with the hospital and will lead to joint staff appointments, joint seminar series, shared research facilities, work placements and consultancies. The Gateway campus will also focus on other disciplines, such as engineering, biotechnology, environmental technology, information and technology.

The development of the Gateway site would bring substantial benefits to the local community. As well as creating around 2000 new jobs, the University would spend somewhere in the region of £150 million a year in Swindon, as it does in Bath.

The new campus would be also be a major resource for residents in Swindon and the surrounding area. In addition to the academic resources the site would incorporate high-quality playing fields and sporting facilities for local people, as well as for elite athletes. It would also allow more people to take part in lifelong learning, and for more businesses to benefit from the expertise and facilities offered.
Beyond Oakfield

Swindon and the local area boasts a rich industrial heritage and the University is involved in several projects to promote this. Although not based at Oakfield, these projects serve to widen the University’s involvement in the region.

The Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering has worked closely with English Heritage, recently relocated to Swindon, to develop a module on industrial archaeology, which will be run as part of a Conservation of Historic Buildings MSc. The course will enable the University to measure if the demand is there for a full MSc in Industrial Archaeology.

The department has also been developing the research-led Institute of Scientific Archaeological Industrial and Architectural Heritage (ISAIAH). Two symposia were organised under its aegis at Oakfield during 2003, with third planned for spring 2005.

Also, discussions are continuing to hold a symposium at Swindon’s Lydiard Park in June 2005 which will discuss the Park’s restoration. This symposium will include an element of community involvement.

Additional Heritage work is being done by Adrian Winnett of the International Centre for the Environment (ICE), part of the Department of Economics and International Development. Adrian has joined a newly formed steering group concerned with the environmental aspects of plans for the regeneration of Swindon’s town centre.

“The group has been brought together by Swindon Borough Council with representatives from the New Swindon Company, South West Regional Development Agency and a number of local commercial and environmental organisations,” said Adrian. “At the initial meeting in December it was agreed to take forward consideration of an ‘environment centre’ - within which ICE could have a prominent role”.

A subsequent meeting in January with Creative Planet at the Science Museum, Wroughton explored possible synergies between the town centre scheme and Creative Planet.

In 2002 the Department of Economics and International Development initiated an MSc Economics (Finance) programme delivered on-site to the Swindon-based company RWE Innogy. The taught component is due to be completed by March 2005 and will be followed by the dissertation/projects.

......Swindon special feature continued

mentoring support. The Centre also runs regular networking events and workshops for existing clients.

“The South-West is becoming internationally recognised as the centre of the international semi-conductor industry, and in Swindon we are right in the heart of that,” said Simon Bond, the Centre’s Network Manager. “Major companies are relocating to the area and bringing with them venture capitalists and start-ups. The Innovation Centre is ideally positioned to offer them the support they need to get started.”

In addition, funding is being sought to establish an Institute for Integrated Industrial Innovation (i4). The institute will analyse the factors that affect productivity in manufacturing and service industries and go on to design systems to improve this productivity.

The Small Business Hub provides support and training to local entrepreneurs. Partly funded by the European Social Fund, it provides business training and support. It runs a range of projects and seminars, such as Entrepreneurs South West – a seminar series that gives small business owners and managers the chance to discuss business with a range of business and motivational speakers.

Women into Enterprise, launched in mid-October 2004, champions local women who are interested in starting up their own business. No qualifications are required. Around 70 women aged 18 and over have signed up for the free initiative, which gives access to advice and guidance to those who already know what business idea they want to develop, as well as helping those whose ideas are as yet undeveloped. The scheme provides networking opportunities as well as a programme of training sessions held on various aspects of entrepreneurship.

Also based at Oakfield, Syntacta is the translation and interpreting service of the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages. The service has been providing translations, interpreting and proofreading to local and international businesses for over six years. The MA in Translation and Professional Language Skills is taught one day a week at Oakfield, making use of the expertise of Syntacta.

Dr Steve Slade, Director of the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages, said “The success of the course we offer is illustrated by the fact that all the graduates from the first year of this programme are now working in translation-related jobs throughout Europe.”
The Department of Education has an international reputation for both its teaching and research – it has been awarded 23/24 by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and grade five in the Research Assessment Exercise. At the beginning of this academic year this high achieving department welcomed a new head – Yolande Muschamp.

From primary teacher to influential educational researcher...

Following training as a primary school teacher in Leicester, Yolande’s first job out of full-time teaching was as an advisory teacher for Avon County Council during the introduction of the SAT exams for seven-11-year olds.

“At the time there was a lot of Government funding for professional support for teachers as they adjusted to the change in testing methods,” said Yolande. “Initially, one-to-one SAT testing was required for all primary pupils in all subjects, which was incredibly work-generating for the teachers. As primary teaching tends to be very child-focussed the teachers were keen to have as much support as possible.”

In 1990 Yolande was invited to join a research unit based at the University of the West of England (UWE). The team was established to monitor the effects the SAT system was having on the National Curriculum and its findings heralded fundamental changes in the system.

“The results of our research at UWE influenced the decision to reduce SAT tests to just core subjects,” she said.

In 1995 Yolande joined Bath as a Senior Research Fellow. Her first project was to work on a national evaluation of the testing of 11 year olds.

Although Yolande’s career has taken her away from daily classroom teaching, she...
has always managed to maintain hands-on involvement through extensive case studies with pupils and teachers, and this is a contact she hopes to encourage within her department.

“Recently, I have become aware of a worrying trend,” she said. “I’m in my 50’s now and academics of my generation normally have had 10 or 15 years of teaching experience before joining an academic department. Financial incentives offered to new school teachers these days mean academic positions cannot compete. So we are looking at a future where school teachers, the people with the hands-on class-room experience, don’t make the transition into academia and pass their experience on to new teachers.

“This means that in departments such as this one, it is increasingly important that we do a lot of school-based research to ensure a sharing of information and experience with professional teachers.”

...To head of department

Ten years after joining, Yolande is head of department. With approximately 60 staff (40 academic and 20 administrative), plus her own teaching commitments, she is less able to spend time on research.

“It’s hard to maintain research as a head of department although I was lucky enough to complete a piece of research at the start of my term. For the project I interviewed pupils and teachers about the lifelong learning skills taught at schools, which I hope to use as the basis for my next book,” said Yolande. “As my position has a standard three-year term, I know it’s something I can go back to.

“In the meantime, this is a very exciting time to be working as head of department. In addition to the three main areas of education that we focus on: Coaching, International and Environmental, we also work with a huge range of disciplines – from social and economic policy to philosophy.”

Publicity about the UK ‘teaching crisis’ could mislead people into thinking that course numbers must be down. In fact, almost all the courses are over-subscribed, reflecting figures released by the Teacher Training Agency which puts applications up by 13.5 per cent this year. The problems arise when young teachers leave the industry after a few years.

“As a top-ranking department there is very high demand amongst students for places at Bath. This is especially true of international students, who find that in addition to a guaranteed standard of teaching our ranking increases funding opportunities. The only course that under-recruits is maths, which again reflects national trends.

“As head of department I’m not looking to expand our courses but to consolidate what we offer. Through funding, fees and grants this department was able to contribute £400,000 to the University last year which gives me a good target to aim for.”

Financial achievements aside, an area that Yolande identified as something the department was particularly proud of, and would be promoting, was the flexibility and range of the courses offered.

“In addition to nationally renowned undergraduate coaching courses, we are in a position to offer incredibly flexible MA and doctorate courses. We can cater for full- and part-time students, offering units as summer schools and distance learning.

“Our summer schools, taught in July and January (summer in the southern hemisphere), are particularly popular with international students. It makes for an incredibly stimulating environment when teachers from all over the world can come together to learn and share their experiences. This is valuable for students and academics alike.

“There’s no doubt that this is going to be another exciting year for Education, in research and in teaching. With the team I have working with me, I am confident it can’t fail to be a huge success.”
Who’s who?
The International Office operates as a specialist section within the Recruitment and Admissions Team, providing dedicated expertise on all issues connected with international student recruitment and support. The International Office has six members of staff: the Head of the International Office Andrew Howman, two International Officers Zoe Whittle and Sarah Watts, two International Student Advisors, Sally Saca and Jessica Scott, and an Office Co-ordinator, Linda Maxwell. It works alongside staff from other areas in the University, including academic departments and the Student Support team.

Andrew Howman manages both the recruitment programme and matters relating to welfare. He says, “In many universities recruitment and welfare are considered mutually exclusive and dealt with by separate departments. However, we find the two feed into each other and the sharing of cultural information can be hugely beneficial to all.”

Zoe Whittle and Sarah Watts spend approximately one-fifth of their time working abroad, counselling students and identifying and developing strategic partnerships with overseas staff and institutions. Sally Saca focuses mainly on the welfare of students, providing practical and personal advice as well as organising trips and social events; she works alongside Jessica Scott. Administrative support is provided by Linda Maxwell.

Overseas work
Members of the recruitment team have their own country portfolio and represent the University through private visits and attendance at overseas education exhibitions. As part of their work they forge links with schools, universities, sponsors and alumni. They also engage widely with the academic community at Bath on many different levels and much appreciate the involvement of a range of departments.

“Much of our work promoting Bath is only possible with the help of colleagues in academic departments,” said Andrew. “We rely heavily upon academic staff to represent the University on visits overseas and an increasing number of our outreach activities are jointly funded with departments and faculties.

“Although the University visits around 25 countries each year, the success we have achieved in recruiting over 2000 international students also owes much to the efforts of admissions tutors, directors of studies and support staff in maintaining dialogue with applicants throughout the months preceding students’ arrival in Bath.”

In addition to work with academic departments, the International Office works closely with alumni who can go on to become global ambassadors for the University.

“The importance of the student experience cannot be underestimated; it becomes an invaluable marketing tool when alumni spread the word about good times had at Bath. We know that above and beyond any practical work we do, the best possible recruitment drive is by word of mouth.”

The International Office also works with a number of agents overseas who provide in-country support to students and give pre-departure briefings. These briefings provide both cultural and practical support and an opportunity for students to meet each other.

Home work
Welfare work begins even before the students touch down in the UK, with pre-departure briefings in their own countries, and continues throughout their time at the University. The International Office provides a huge range of social activities and schemes on- and off-campus. It also runs a very popular daily drop-in centre where students can talk through practical or emotional issues. The international students themselves are encouraged to make their own contribution to the community, for example through the student newsletter or helping to organise events.

A recent success story has been the introduction of the mentor programme, Amity. New international students are offered the services of a mentor to help them settle in. The mentors, a team of UK students, arrange informal weekly meetings to discuss issues such as study skills used in the UK. The scheme runs for the first four weeks of term and ends with an informal award ceremony for the mentors.

In addition to work done directly to support the students, the International Office also works with staff. It has developed a Cultural Awareness training programme and runs regular workshops open to all members of staff. “We are in the process of talking to departments to develop a better understanding of their needs and we plan to offer further staff development opportunities in future,” said Sally.
Senior managers are planning to make a significant financial investment in strategic areas of the University’s work, following the latest financial figures showing that it is now running a surplus ahead of schedule.

The end-of-year accounts for 2003/04 show a surplus of £247,000, against a forecast deficit of £1,087,000. The University’s total income, excluding endowment and investment income, increased by nine per cent over the previous year.

The introduction of variable tuition fees from 2006/07 will further help to put the financial situation on a sustainable footing. The University has confirmed that it will charge the full fee of £3,000 to new UK and EU students.

The choice of where to make the investment will be guided by the Future Academic Shape of the University – Next Steps document. This stresses the need for the University to promote its international standing in four or five areas of world-class research, with ‘beacon status’ activity in a similar number of areas, to be a centre of international excellence for postgraduate education; and to be in the top-tier for undergraduate courses. Knowledge transfer will be threaded through all these activities.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee it was decided to establish a plan for phased investment within the University, starting in the current financial year and setting out priorities for the following three years.

This plan, drawing on the ideas for strategic investment emerging from the Annual Planning Cycle, will identify projects that could either enhance the University’s current areas of strength or develop areas with potential for growth and innovation. The deans, heads of department, the pro-vice-chancellors and the Registrar have been asked to put forward preliminary ideas.

The Executive Committee also decided that the criteria to be used when deciding which proposals to carry out should be the return on the investment, value for money and the impact and visibility of investment.

An announcement will be made about the projects approved in the first cycle of investment.

In her editorial column for this edition of Insider the Vice-Chancellor highlights the work of staff in improving the University’s financial position, particularly by boosting student recruitment and maintaining controls on costs.

Speaking about this to Insider, Professor Breakwell said: “I’m delighted that we now have the foundation for targeted investment in key areas across the University. This is an achievement of which we should all be proud. “I hope that work to increase income and tackle costs will carry on, as this is essential if the University is to continue to have the financial elbow room to invest in its future. I want us to build the capacity that will allow the University to capitalise on opportunities as they arise over the longer-term, not just as a one-off exercise. This is the key to success.”

This is an achievement of which we should all be proud

The decision on tuition fees is subject to the agreement of the Office for Fair Access. The £3,000 fee will be charged to all new full-time UK and EU undergraduates, except those defined by the Government as deferred entry candidates.

The University intends to safeguard access by providing significant bursary support to academically-able students in financial need. Each student entitled to full Government assistance will receive a bursary of £1,500 a year, with a sliding scale of support (from £300 to £1,200) for those receiving a partial Government grant. This will reinforce a number of widening participation projects aimed at young people with no family tradition of going to university.

Jon Bursey, Registrar, said: “The decision to charge the full fee of £3,000 follows careful consideration of how best the University could balance preservation of the character and quality of the student experience offered by our undergraduate programmes, particularly placement provision, with the need to maintain levels of student recruitment and to generate additional income for investment wherever possible. We are convinced that the bursary provision will benefit a substantial proportion of the undergraduate body.”
This December, four exceptional individuals were awarded honorary
degrees in Bath’s Assembly Rooms.

**Michael Eavis**
**Doctor of Arts**
Michael Eavis is the creative force behind the Glastonbury Music Festival. He has managed and promoted the music festival for 34 years. From a small local festival it has grown into an internationally acclaimed event and is host to a huge range of bands - old favourites and young hopefuls. In addition to its cultural contribution, the festival supports a number of causes including Greenpeace and Oxfam.

**Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss**
**Doctor of Law**
Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss became president of the Family Division of the High Court in 1999 after a long and distinguished legal career within the Division. She has been hugely influential in the areas of child protection, medical ethics and human rights, and has laid down legal recommendations for child welfare. This was highlighted in 1987 when she chaired the Cleveland Child Abuse Inquiry, in which she was also praised for her compassionate and practical approach to highly emotive family issues.

**Stephen Lillicrap**
**Doctor of Science**
Stephen Lillicrap is the director of the Bath Institute of Medical Engineering - a design engineering group focussing on the development of high- and low-tech innovations to aid disabled people and those in hospital. The institute pioneered a design allowing sensor-activated devices to be fitted in a house to aid dementia sufferers. Professor Lillicrap has also been an active force in the Department of Physics at the University for over 20 years and has been involved in important research on medical ultrasound.

**Dame Louise Johnson**
**Doctor of Science**
Dame Louise Johnson is Director of Life Sciences at the Diamond Light Source, which researches crystallography and structural biology. This is the culmination of a long and distinguished career in structural and molecular biology with academic positions at both Yale and Oxford Universities. Professor Johnson received her DBE in 2003 for services to biophysics and she has also received several medals in recognition of her work, including the Lindestrom-Lang Prize for pioneering work in protein crystallography. She is committed to promoting science education both nationally and internationally.