

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT TO COURT 16TH JANUARY 2018

During her report the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the University's 50th Anniversary celebrations which had taken place in 2016/17. These included events ranging from a celebration in Bath Abbey in October 2016 to the University of Bath Festival in May 2017, and these were key in respect of alumni engagement and particularly fundraising, with £63.2 million to date raised towards the target of £66 million. The 50th Anniversary celebrations had also raised the University's profile, and enabled engagement with the City and regional opinion leaders, with around 10,000 people attending the Festival in May.

Research

The University's growing research power had seen much activity to raise awareness of the social and economic impact of its research, which was vital in persuading research funders to support it in the future. Examples included:

- The purchase, in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, of the Bristol and Bath Science Park, a 37 acre site around 11 miles from Bath which already housed the National Composites Centre and a large Innovation Centre. This would become the site of the University's new Institute for Advance Automotive Propulsion Systems (IAAPS). The legal purchase process was underway and planning for the building of IAAPS on the Science Park has begun. IAAPS and the Science Park represented the opportunity for a step-change in the scale of the University's research activity, especially through industrial partnerships.
- The creation of a new senior post, Vice-President for Corporate Engagement, to which Professor Veronica Hope-Hailey has been appointed alongside being Dean of the School of Management. This recognised the need for a more active engagement with corporate sponsors for both research and learning/teaching developments, and was already paying dividends.
- The University winning £5m from HEFCE to lead the SETsquared consortium which would support identifying fast-growing SMEs in the South of England and connecting them to universities to encourage research and innovation collaborations.
- The University's response to the refugee crises in the Middle East referred to earlier by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) in building on the very strong links the Department of Education had in Jordan. Alongside this intervention, with a variety of sources of sponsorship (including philanthropic donations and an Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility grant supporting academic staff exchanges), the University had been able to send multidisciplinary teams of researchers to visit refugee camps and to consult local politicians, practitioners and academics. This had resulted in a major programme of research "Healthy Housing for the Displaced" focussed on the design of refugee housing and funded by EPSRC, which was producing practical solutions to important problems affecting the lives of many hundreds of thousands of displaced persons.

Learning and Teaching

The 2016 recruitment cycle saw the University hit its target for the stabilisation of undergraduate numbers, and recruits in 2016 mirrored the high 'A' level attainment of recent entrants. Indicators of the student experience suggested that the University was doing well in some respects (e.g. Sports University of the Year) but needed to do better in others (e.g. the provision of independent study spaces). 2016 saw the University respond to student

concerns by committing to providing a new gym (now under construction); the establishment of a range of new learning commons facilities for independent study; the opening of the Virgil Building to students (a prime hub in the city centre); and the new Centre for Learning and Teaching to support teaching quality.

Alongside this commitment to continue to improve, the University received a Gold rating in TEF – being exceptionally highly rated against very high benchmarks in teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, and graduate access to highly skilled employment or further study.

Postgraduate / Doctoral

During 2016-17 a number of actions were taken to realise the University's ambition to increase its number of postgraduate taught and research students:

- The development of a new portfolio of PGT and Doctoral programmes;
- The development of the pan-university Doctoral College, with a physical home and a leader in its new Academic Director (Prof Cathryn Mitchell). This would be supported by the newly appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International & Doctoral) Professor Jeremy Bradshaw;
- Postgraduate taught recruitment co-ordination across the university, with a new organisational structure;
- Postgraduate Student Officer in the Students' Union;
- The Campus in London Pall Mall, with its initial focus on Executive MBAs and IPR doctoral work;
- The development of new postgraduate accommodation on campus, with 270 beds in Polden now being built;
- The business planning for the new building for the School of Management, which would be the natural home for significant numbers of postgraduate students.

Recruitment for the 2017-18 academic year showed that these changes were already having an effect, with the growth in postgraduate taught students marked.

All of the implications of the current University strategy took significant financial investment. The University had been very prudent for a long time, and was fortunate to be in a position as a consequence to invest in this development programme. Alongside this new financial investment, the University was fortunate to be able to attract highly qualified and talented people to take it forward. The Vice-Chancellor was particularly happy as she came to the end of her own period of office to know that the University of Bath had an increasing capacity to attract extraordinary people to work and study, and she was confident it would continue to thrive.