

End of year message from the Vice-Chancellor

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To: All Staff <AllStaff@bournemouth.ac.uk>



Dear colleague,

This time of year always provides an opportunity to look back and forward, although this year, this process feels rather different – like so many things in 2020.

I want to start with a huge thank you. It can't be repeated often enough that our people are at the heart of everything that we do at BU and this year that has been demonstrated over and over again. We could not have achieved anything we have achieved this year without your commitment, care and effort. And you have done all of it in incredibly difficult circumstances, given everything that has happened in our lives away from work, and the unusual difficulties of remote working.

We've found new ways to connect, and either embraced or battled with technology, but ultimately made the best of it. Some of the changes we have made we will be glad to reverse, when we can. I hope others will stick – a heightened level of collaboration, more and better communication across BU, more overt support and care for others, less formality on occasions (welcoming a cat on your keyboard or a child on your lap). We have learned that we can be more agile than we ever believed possible and have a new confidence in our capacity to adapt to change and challenge.

Thanks to everyone at BU, some amazing things have happened this year. I can't mention everyone or everything but some highlights:

- In March, so long ago, we responded to the call to move all learning and working online almost overnight.
- We finished the [Bournemouth Gateway Building and welcomed students into the Poole Gateway Building](#).
- We changed our assessments, our policies and processes and supported our students to the end of the academic year 2019/20.
- We managed a remote admissions cycle and welcomed our new students virtually in the Autumn.
- We prepared and delivered semester 1 despite constant changes in guidance and have planned and prepared for semester 2.
- Research activity continued, with staff being successful in external bids and making progress on existing projects. We are delighted that Professor Kate Welham, Professor Tim Lloyd and Professor Vanora Hundley have been appointed as members of sub-panels for the REF, and that Shelly Anne Stringer is a secretary for a sub-panel.
- Our Estates team kept the campus safe and managed all the behind the scenes activity that has to continue even when many of us are not here, preparing for staff and students to return in September and continuing maintenance to ensure that our buildings are ready for us.
- Our IT team supported us whether we were embracing or battling with technology, delivering equipment and online support, keeping the BU virtual world turning.
- A cross BU team delivered a mass testing facility in a matter of days, providing reassurance to thousands of students and their families, and are preparing now to repeat it

over a longer time frame in the New Year.

- Student Services, including AskBU, Reslife and the accommodation team, responded to thousands of student queries and provided support for their mental and physical wellbeing.
- At a time when sustainability is in everyone's mind we have achieved [two ISO certifications](#) for our environmental and energy management systems.
- We delivered [resources for all staff and students](#) relating to the pandemic – including stories about the contribution made by so many members of staff, wellbeing tips and many updates on the fast-changing situation.
- You all, colleagues across the whole BU community, supported, advised, listened, checked in with, organised support for, and were just there for our students and your colleagues at a time when human contact was vital.

I have [recorded a message for you](#) and I am pleased that the Chair of the BU Board, Richard Conder, has also shared [an end of year message](#). I know that this time of year can be hard for many, especially those who have lost loved ones or who will be spending the festive period alone. You can access support and information on [our website](#) and [intranet](#). While we know that change and challenge will continue for a while longer, it is a relief to end the year with a vaccine being delivered and the hope that by this time next year we will be in a very different place.

This year the usual carol service run by University Music cannot take place, but a lovely virtual service has been recorded, which you can [find here](#). While the celebrations this year will not be the same as usual, and many of us will miss the usual face to face meetings with family and friends, the break this year is a well-deserved and much-needed opportunity to switch off from the endless cycle of news and comment, to focus on what is important to you, to rest and to look forward to a better 2021.

I wish you a happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

Best wishes,

John Vinney
Vice-Chancellor

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