

Dear Colleague,

November is a great time of year at BU as we celebrate success across our community.

VC Staff Awards

I am looking forward to the VC Awards on 24th November, which is a great opportunity for us to recognise the contribution of staff from across BU to the staff and student experience, including staff affiliated to BU and staff in partner institutions. We also celebrate promotions to Professor, staff achieving qualifications relevant to their roles and staff with long service. SUBU will also announce their 'Most Outstandingly Brilliant!' Gold Award winner. Congratulations to all those who were nominated and I look forward to meeting those who have been shortlisted.

Open days

I'd like to thank the many staff and students who support our open days – we had our biggest ever in October. Experience at an open day is a key factor for many applicants in deciding which university to choose, and these days are a real opportunity for us to showcase what BU is all about – and I am looking forward to the last one this year, taking place this Saturday.

Student achievement



Our graduation ceremonies last week were a great success - nearly 3000 students crossed the stage, from 110 countries, reinforcing the importance of global engagement at BU. I really enjoy graduation – celebrating with our graduates and their family and friends, demonstrating the value of what we do at BU, changing lives with education. It is also an important civic and regional celebration which showcases our graduates as the next generation of global talent, and it was fantastic to meet so many of them last week. Many thanks to all the staff who supported the ceremonies, from those who volunteered to marshal or look after our guests, to those with more public roles on the day. It was also great to have a speech from a SUBU sabbatical officer at each ceremony.

International context

While we wait for clarity on what Brexit will mean for the sector, it has now been confirmed that EU students starting their courses in the 17/18 academic year will continue to receive loans and grants, if they are eligible under current rules, for the whole of their period of study. The Education Select Committee is running an [inquiry](#) into the impact of Brexit on HE and BU submitted evidence last week about the importance of international staff and students coming to the UK as well as the impact of any restrictions on our staff and students being able to travel outside the UK.

I was pleased to see that Jo Johnson confirmed in the House of Commons on 14th November 2016 that the government are committed to the best possible settlement for universities in negotiations with EU, and that he acknowledged the sector's priorities. He also reassured the

House of Commons that the Prime Minister has every expectation that the UK will guarantee the status of EU academics in the UK as long as other countries reciprocate for UK academics.

At BU, we are committed to global engagement, and it was great that Dr Sonal Minocha, our Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) was part of the UK's Higher Education delegation to India last week with the Minister, Jo Johnson. The visit was part of the wider trade delegation led by the Prime Minister. The focus of the HE delegation was on collaboration in science and technology, as well as the future of education, and some important new research funds were announced.

Of course, there has been wide coverage of the debate that took place in India about immigration rules. At the Conservative Party Conference in October, the Home Secretary announced consultations on potential changes to immigration rules affecting employers and student visas. These consultations are expected in the next couple of weeks. Our international staff and students play an important role in creating the environment for global talent development here at BU, and mobility and collaboration are a key part of our vision for BU2018.

Sector changes

It is important that at this time of change we keep focused on our BU2018 strategy and our vision to inspire our staff and students to enrich the world through the fusion of research, professional practice and excellent education.

The Teaching Excellence Framework guidance is now in place for applications by January, there is an on-going consultation about universities working with schools, and a consultation is expected soon on the implementation of the Stern Review in the Research Excellence Framework assessment in 2021. The Higher Education and Research Bill is progressing through parliament, and the government have just announced amendments, which demonstrate some welcome progress based on feedback from the sector, including the role of student representation in the Office for Students, which has been the subject of an energetic campaign by the National Union of Students.

Celebrating enterprise at BU

The [BU Festival of Enterprise](#) is now on. The Festival, running in Global Enterprise Week, celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit and provides information and support for those who have just set up their own business or are planning to set one up. The event runs from November 16th to the 18th and features events created by BU staff, local entrepreneurs and organisations. If you haven't visited it yet, please try and drop in.

And finally, although it seems very early to be thinking about Christmas, there are only 37 days to go. Our end of year festive celebration is on [Friday 16th December](#) from 3pm in the Fusion Building on Talbot campus, so please make a note in your diaries and I look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes,

John Vinney

Vice-Chancellor

Follow me on Twitter [@VCJohnVinney](#)