

Dear Colleague,

It has been great to welcome our new and returning students and feel the excitement across campus. First impressions really count, and it is fantastic to see our whole BU community working together to help our new students settle in and to welcome back our returning students. Thank you very much to all the staff involved in recruitment, admissions and enrolment and the lead up to the start of term. Welcome also to our new members of staff – this is an exciting time to be joining BU.

Recent developments

Our learning environment continues to develop. We were pleased to be recognised with a Silver award in the Teaching Excellence Framework in June and to maintain our overall position in the National Student Survey. I'd like to congratulate all those involved in the three courses that received 100% in their overall satisfaction score in the NSS this year: BA (Hons) Social Work, DipHE in Operating Department Practice and the BSc (Hons) Archaeology.

As well as student satisfaction, we also need to make sure that we are maintaining focus on student retention and progression, including student support and ensuring that we are equipping students with the skills for employment after they leave BU. Over the summer, there has been a lively national debate around value for money and student satisfaction, which is continuing, and it is important that we maintain our focus on addressing areas of concern to ensure that we are providing consistently excellent learning opportunities and service excellence across our whole portfolio.

In this context, it is great to see that we are rolling out the new Brightspace learning environment. This modern and mobile technology offers our students an even more personalised learning experience and our staff a fantastic tool to engage with our students. I would like to take this opportunity to thank faculty and professional services colleagues who have worked incredibly hard since Christmas to prepare BU for the launch. More than 350 staff have received training on Brightspace, delivered by CEL's Academic Learning Designers together with BU's Learning Technologists in the build up to the launch. Guidance on how to use Brightspace is available [here](#).

Our physical campus is also developing and I was pleased to see the university street developments and the landscaping project at Talbot completed on time, and looking great. The new bus hub and road are on track to be completed in the coming weeks too. We will then start the two year build programmes for the Bournemouth Gateway Building and the Poole Gateway Building.

Looking forward

As we approach the end of our current BU2018 plan, there is a real focus on delivering our BU2018 objectives. Priorities for the year ahead include building on the work we have done so far to deliver our BU2018 vision of Fusion to differentiate ourselves – by consistently embedding our approach to linking research, education and practice so that the outcome is greater than the sum of the parts.

Research performance is just one aspect that we need to work on as we prepare for the Research Excellence Framework in 2021. We welcome the inclusive approach following the Stern review, but it does mean that we need to greatly increase our participation rates and the quality and impact of our research, as well as our research income.

We also need to broaden and deepen our engagement with professional practice, industry and

employers – to support our research and education and to build our impact.

I hope that you have already had a chance to engage with our informal consultations and workshops on the development of our vision and strategic plan for BU2025. Our draft vision statement is bold and exciting, “**We are recognised worldwide as the leading university for the fusion of education, research and professional practice**”, and is linked to our purpose to inspire learning, advance knowledge and enrich society.

We have held more than 25 workshops across BU and the feedback along with direct feedback is summarised and presented, along with our responses, on the staff intranet. If you have not had a chance to participate, or would like to catch up with the latest updates, there is still time, see the [staff intranet BU2025 pages](#). We will be finalising a draft of our strategic plan by the end of November, which we will share with staff for further comment in December and January - you can book to attend a [workshop here](#).

One of the changes we are considering alongside the new vision and strategic plan is an update to our BU values, to simplify them and incorporate feedback about the importance of words like inclusivity, collegiality, community, citizenship and adaptability. You can see the [new draft values on the intranet](#) and I welcome your comments.

Best wishes for the new academic year,

John Vinney
Vice-Chancellor

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