



Dear Colleague,

The start of a new academic year is always an exciting time – it's great to see students arriving and feel the buzz around our campuses. There are [lots of events planned](#) across BU as we help new students to settle in and make the most of their time with us and welcome back our returning students. Thank you very much to everyone involved - I hope that as many people as possible from across the BU community will be involved in making this a brilliant start to our academic year. I'm sure you'll also join me in a warm welcome to our new members of staff who have joined us over the summer.

The BU experience

At BU we believe that collaboration is key to our success and we have a strong and productive partnership with SUBU, the students' union at BU. Over the years we have worked closely with the sabbatical officers and staff of SUBU, and many students who have been involved as student representatives, ambassadors or through other activities. I was delighted that SUBU won the Education Award at the NUS Awards 2016 in July, for their work on student feedback, student experience and development, and their partnership with BU. I am also very proud of the important role that we give to the student voice in our decision making here at BU. The new SUBU sabbatical officers have settled in quickly and I look forward to working with Daniel, Brooke, Georgia, Jamie and Charlie this year.

The Global Engagement Plan is now in its second full year, and the year ahead looks set to be another productive one. Brexit and the uncertainty about how it will be implemented presents a number of practical challenges but it does not in any way alter our global ambitions and we look forward to building on our success as one of the top 200 most international universities in the world. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), Dr Sonal Minocha will be writing to all staff later this month with a full update and as ever, all the latest news can be found on the Global BU [website](#) and [intranet pages](#). I am looking forward to the second International Commencement Ceremony, on Friday 23rd September to welcome all our new international students to BU. It was a fantastic celebration last year! To find out more and register, visit the [internet page](#).

It was great to see that student satisfaction at BU has risen by 3% to 82% in the 2016 National Student Survey (NSS) - the highest that BU has achieved since the NSS survey began in 2005, and an important achievement when the sector average has remained steady. 19 courses have been rated above the sector average this year compared to 15 last year. I'd like to congratulate in particular all staff involved in the three courses that achieved a 100% satisfaction rating – BSc (Hons) Children's and Young People's Nursing, BA (Hons) Events and Leisure Marketing and BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy. The overall improved scores reflect the hard work of all staff, including professional services and support teams as well as academic staff, to improve all areas of the student experience, as well as our investments in Fusion and in academic staff, our focus on service excellence, and enhancements to our estate. There is still more work to do - the national sector average has remained at 86% and NSS scores will play a key role in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), so we need to continue to focus on student experience across BU to build on this strong progress this year.

I was pleased to see that the Bournemouth Echo [featured BU last week](#), highlighting our contribution to the local economy.

Our learning environment

It was fantastic to [open The Fusion Building formally](#) last week and it will be great to see it fully occupied and delivering on our vision of a space for creating, sharing and inspiring. If you haven't had a chance to visit it over the summer, do come and see what all the fuss has been about, and enjoy the learning and social spaces. It will still be warm enough to take a (hot) drink onto one of the roof terraces for a little while!

I was also very pleased that we received planning permission for both the [Bournemouth](#) and [Poole](#) Gateway buildings and infrastructure improvements at Talbot Campus in the last few weeks. These buildings will provide fantastic new teaching, research and learning space in both our Lansdowne and Talbot campuses. As I write the work on Talbot Campus is ongoing, and I am looking forward to seeing the staff zone, new labs and the finished street through the centre of the campus. Even with the work unfinished, the campus feels more open.

Looking ahead

This is a good time to think about our plans and opportunities. We have two more academic years to achieve our ambitious [BU2018 vision \(Creating, Sharing, Inspiring\)](#) and our [strategic plan 2012-2018](#). If you haven't had a look at them lately, do refresh your memory about our vision and about how the fusion of education, research and professional practice is at the heart of everything that we do. I hope that you will be thinking about how you can bring this to life in your area this year. The BU board and executive and leadership teams will continue to focus on our priorities for the next phase of this 6-year plan, and we are starting to plan the development of what will come next. I will be in touch later in the year about our plans to involve staff in thinking about our vision for BU2025. It is good to see that our enrolment is going well and that we expect to meet our targets for students this year. The application cycle for next year is now open and we are hoping for a strong performance, including with EU and international students, despite some of the longer-term uncertainty.

Of course, the external context for Higher Education continues to be extremely busy. The Higher Education and Research Bill is going through the committee stage of Parliament, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) guidance will be published in October so that institutions can apply for TEF ratings by January and there is a new consultation on universities engaging with schools to improve attainment. Thank you to all staff who contributed to the workshops to develop the consultation responses that we submitted over the summer. I encourage all staff to get involved with our work on these important changes. Take a look at the [policy and public affairs intranet pages](#) to find out more about this and about other developments for the sector – including the latest position on Brexit.

I am also looking forward to our Graduation ceremonies, which are from 8-11 November at the BIC - more information is available on the [Graduation ceremonies webpages](#). The Graduation ceremonies are a fantastic celebration of student and staff success, and a real highlight of the year. I hope that all staff have the opportunity to attend at least one ceremony - if you would like to come to a ceremony, please agree it with your line manager and then [register](#) for a staff ticket.

I wish you all the best for a successful 2016/17.

Best wishes,

John Vinney
Vice-Chancellor

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