



## Press Release from Bournemouth University

15 October 2009

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### Vice-Chancellor proud of BU achievements

Bournemouth University (BU) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Curran, has hailed the University's "best year ever" following its success in the 2009 *Times Higher Education (THE)* Awards.

BU was short-listed for two *THE* Awards, considered the 'Oscars' of UK higher education: 'University of the Year' and 'Research Project of the Year'.

Although Bournemouth finished as runner-up in both categories, Professor Curran stresses that being named a finalist for these two outstanding awards underlines BU's wide-ranging achievements of the last 12 months.

"Our commitment to academic excellence has been at the forefront of our transformation into one of the UK's leading new universities," said Professor Curran. "We are very proud to have been in the running for these awards with such prestigious company. Just being a finalist acknowledges just how far BU has come in a very short time and we have much more that we plan to achieve in the months and years to come."

Professor Curran paid particular tribute to the University's staff and students. "I would like to extend my congratulations and gratitude to everyone at Bournemouth University for taking us to such heights over the last year," he said. "Our people were the key factor in our short-listing for 'University of the Year'. Their talent and hard work have certainly paid dividends."

BU's recent achievements include:

- Recruiting 50 academics to key posts during 2008/09 (and 150 over the last three years) as part of its investment in established and potential areas of excellence;
- Launching and sustaining the comprehensive and award-winning 'Releasing Potential' programme of staff development - one of the largest in UK higher education;
- Being assessed in the UK's national Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) as the fourth most improved UK university in research quality, tripling its quality-related research (QR) funding as a result;
- Appearing on the cover of *Science* for the first time through Professor Matthew Bennett's research on hominin footprints (the subject of the 'Research Project of the Year' submission) and featuring in two further papers in *Science*, one of the world's top two research journals;
- Receiving the largest Research Council grant in the University's history – an award worth over £6.3M to launch an Industrial Doctorate Centre in Computer Animation jointly with the University of Bath;

- Rising in all four major UK league tables, in some cases above many older universities, and becoming the fastest rising University in *The Times Good University Guide*;
- Featuring as the UK's number one new University for the second consecutive year in *The Guardian University Guide*;
- Launching a pan-University Centre for Well-being and Quality of Life;
- Being awarded the highest level of confidence by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for the maintenance of academic standards and the enhancement of quality across the University;
- Increasing to 75% the number of graduates entering graduate level jobs or further study in 2008-09, one of the highest rates in the UK (up from 57.1% in 2004/05);
- Refurbishing library facilities to create high technology learning spaces, winning the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) large library award and receiving the inaugural *THE* 'Leadership & Management Award for Outstanding Library Team'.

"We are proud of our strengths in education, research, enterprise and professional practice, and the growing international reputation of our centres of academic excellence," said Professor Curran. "To thrive in this very competitive world, we have restated our commitment to academic excellence and planned afresh for the future. I am delighted to say that these plans are coming to fruition."

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to *The Guardian University Guide* 2009 & 2010 ([www.guardian.co.uk/education](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education))
2. In the 2008 [Research Assessment Exercise](#) (RAE) BU is the 4th most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*). Eight BU subject areas produce research of a quality that is comparable with the very best in the world including: Art & Design (including Computer Animation); Archaeology; Business Management (including Tourism); Communication, Culture & Media; Computer Sciences; General Engineering; Geography & Environmental Sciences and Nursing & Midwifery.
3. In September, BU embarked on its latest phase of investment in academic excellence with the advertisement of 37 new academic posts. Further information is available at: [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/jobs/academicexcellence](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/jobs/academicexcellence)

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