

Pro-Chancellor,

Alan James has helped thousands of students to make the most of their university experience as General Manager of SUBU* – BU's Students' Union – for the past 25 years. Over this time, he has become known for his empowering approach to leadership, as well as his ability to co-ordinate the energies and interests of the union's staff and full-time elected officers.

Alan was born and raised in Liverpool. His parents were strong believers in the power of education and Alan recalls his father – who was originally a joiner – attending night classes to retrain as a teacher. This change of vocation enabled the family to move out to the suburbs and Alan obtained a place at a grammar school, before becoming the first in his family to attend university. He completed a degree in hotel and catering management at the University of Surrey, before joining a graduate scheme with the Trusthouse Forte Group.

In 1985, Alan joined Dorset Institute of Higher Education – the forerunner to BU – as a lecturer. He progressed to a management role before returning to corporate life as a catering manager for ICI. By this time, Alan had discovered a passion for learning and development and decided to re-join the world of higher education as manager of BU's Students' Union in 1994. He quickly realised that SUs** were about much more than student socialising and helped to develop SUBU's advice, involvement and representation services. In his time as manager, Alan developed a culture which reflected his personal values – those of openness, empowerment and making a positive impact. He has been a particular support for SUBU's sabbatical officers, as they take up important roles representing the student body to BU.

As he prepares to retire this year, Alan reflects that the role has been “a pure joy”. He has appreciated the freedom to make decisions that are driven by serving students' best interests and has taken daily inspiration from seeing those around him grow and develop.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Alan James and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.