

## **DR BRIAN ASTIN**

Pro-Chancellor,

Dr Brian Astin has given long and outstanding service to BU, which he joined as a Chemistry lecturer in 1990. He quickly moved to senior roles in the School of Applied Sciences, later becoming its Dean and ultimately the University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education. He has played a leading role in ensuring that the University has a progressive and contemporary curriculum.

Brian is a Lancashire man who proudly recalls watching the original Accrington Stanley football team before it fell out of the Football League. He has spent all his working life in academia, having made a classic beginning with a First in Chemistry at Bath and a PhD at Bristol. His first academic post was a lectureship in Organic Chemistry at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, an experience which could scarcely have been more of a contrast to his previous short period of work as a post-doctoral researcher at Bristol. He worked in Ibadan's branch Campus at Jos, and it took five months for the main Campus to arrange for salary payments, during which time he survived on loans from the University. While he was in Nigeria the government was overthrown in a coup; the head of state was assassinated, and demonstrating students wrecked the University where he was working. When Brian arrived at his office on the morning of the coup he found the words 'CIA agent' painted on his door. Even more mystifying than this was the explanation: 'it's because of the way you walk'. At one time of heightened tension he even found himself invigilating exams under armed police guard.

Then, after Ibadan, Brian held a brief lectureship at Bath, followed by nine years as an Associate Professor at the University of Bahrain. Thus he was an experienced academic when he came to Bournemouth in 1990 and joined the School of Tourism and Field Sciences (which was a predecessor of our School of Applied Sciences) as a senior lecturer in Chemistry. This was a time of expansion at the University, and the rapid development of its course portfolio. Brian was soon in a position to lead these developments, initially in the School of Conservation Sciences but later at institutional level. In 1994 he became a Director of Studies, first to manage all taught postgraduate programmes in Conservation Sciences and later to manage all the School's programmes delivered at Talbot Campus.

Between 1997 and 2002, in a range of roles including Head of Quality, Brian did much to shape the future academic direction of the School. He promoted the use of small-group tutorials instead of seminars, and pioneered staff workload patterns which allowed lecturers to balance their research and teaching commitments, using a model which was later developed further and implemented across the rest of the University. He was appointed Head of School in 2003, and later became its first Dean; under his leadership Conservation Sciences, now Applied Sciences, became BU's most research-active School.

In 2008 Brian became Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education for a period of one year before retirement. During this short but eventful time he served, in the words of a senior colleague, as a 'voice of common sense' who 'knew the University inside out', 'knew what was important', and 'could make things happen'. With his immense experience in management roles at BU he 'added an important dimension to the University Executive Team that others could not'.

While steadily advancing through the ranks of seniority Brian maintained his academic credibility, and built an international reputation, by continuing to carry out research and publish. He has written 35 scientific papers (ten of these since 2000) in internationally recognised, refereed journals. He is an authority on chemical reactions taking place in monolayer assemblies, and has served the American Chemical Society as a member of peer review panels in this area. His most recent research has taken him into the field of environmental science, where he works with CNRS Toulouse in a French government initiative supporting research into wet zones. This involves surveying the floodplains and banks of the River Adour in south-west France. His reputation in this field is such that he has refereed papers for the journal *Water Research* and reviewed research grant proposals for the US Geological Survey and the National Institutes for Water Resources.

Brian has had a profound effect on the University's educational provision and has made an enormous contribution to its academic development, not least by chairing numerous evaluation panels for Campus-based and collaborative courses. Through this work he has played a crucial role in ensuring that BU provides an excellent curriculum for all students, on campus and in its partnerships. Now, although retired, he still actively contributes to institutional life and can often be seen around the Campus. Today we honour his long and outstanding contribution to Bournemouth University.

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