

## **Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration**

Working with businesses is at the core of Bournemouth University's mission and strategy, and reflects our view that effective skills development and knowledge transfer lie at the heart of a modern competitive economy and inclusive society. The whole university is highly focussed on vocational work and we achieve an outstandingly high level of graduate employment. This and the examples that follow demonstrate that we are structured precisely in order to work well with business and are highly successful in this. With this in mind we have chosen a representative sample of the ways in which we work with businesses; as well as offering comment on aspects which require further consideration.

### **Leading examples**

The University works with a wide range of businesses and professional bodies. Working with **Independent Television Commission** and **British Screen Advisory Council**, researchers from Bournemouth undertook a scenario analysis of the British broadcasting industry. The findings were presented to an audience of some 100 senior industry executives at a reception sponsored by **BSkyB**. Similarly, the University's Sustainable Product Engineering Centre has a close working relationship with **SKF** – the world's largest ball bearing producer – for whom it undertakes research into ceramic bearings.

Working in a sub-region with poor transport links and high proportion of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) possess particular challenges. Reaching SMEs without incurring excessive cost is one difficulty. Innovative solutions to this problem have included developing a collaborative arrangement with the privately run **Southwell Business Park**.

This allows some 100 SMEs geographically remote from the University to gain access to its services through an on-site business information centre and programme of business breakfasts.

Use of DTI business support programmes – e.g. SMART and TCS – help ensure the services of the university are affordable to SMEs. For example, **Fudge's Bakery** in rural Dorset experienced great difficulty in balancing the needs of its own label products and propriety brands. Through a collaborative TCS programme with the University is now helping the company to developing a new integrated business and marketing approach. Similarly, a TCS programme with **Cannon Technologies** led to the development of sophisticated environmental control units for ICT installations, and subsequently to the employment of graduates and the successful application for a SMART award. The University has also pioneered the development of TCS programmes with social enterprises e.g. **Bournemouth Churches Housing Association** and the **YMCA**, a sector of the economy that is often over-looked.

Working with larger companies often takes place out-of-region. **Procter and Gamble** sponsor research at the University into sophisticated psychological models of consumer behaviour. Equally, the University's Centre for Intellectual Property Policy and Management has supported the needs of a number of private sector companies, including **Gillette UK**, **GKN** and, most recently, **Delphi Autoparts** to improve the management of their intellectual property through the delivery of specialist training programmes.

For **Siemens Traffic Controls**, the University has responded to the company's needs by running specialist short courses, undertaking consultancy, supplying placement students

and graduates, and making specialist facilities available for the company. With over 70% of the University's undergraduate courses incorporating a placement period, Siemens is one of many companies who attach great value to the sandwich year in assisting students develop their skills and transfer knowledge to the workplace.

The quality of its work with business can be gauged by two Millennium projects for which the University was responsible, i.e. forward looking sonar for **Echo Pilot** and an innovative interchange and boat lift for **British Waterways Scotland**.

The recent establishment of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) makes comment at this point difficult. The University has however strong links with many of the organisations that are now becoming SSCs. For example, the University's Media School has extensive links with **Skillset**, with the Head of School chairing the group that produced 'Skills for tomorrow's needs (2001),' a survey of future skills needs for the audio-visual industries.

### **Strengthen HE-Business relationship**

'Third stream' funding has provided a major boost to strengthening the infrastructure to enhance the ability of HEIs to respond to businesses' needs. Securing new funding has allowed the University to professionalise its interface with business and release academic staff to undertake new activities. Growth and continuity of institutional funding will be important in order to meet increasing demands to support existing and new businesses.

Supporting and helping to create business networks is an essential component to encouraging existing or new business clusters. Responding to the needs of independent producers engaged in the production and distribution of screen-based media in the

Wessex Region, the **Wessex Media Group** has been established to form the nucleus of a new cluster of organisations and individuals in the audio-visual industries. The University's central involvement in this Group reflects its commitment to support existing businesses, encourage graduates to build businesses in the region and stimulate inward investment.

### **Graduates at all levels**

The need by **JPMorganChase (JPMC)** to increase its intake of graduates has led to the company and the University jointly developing a corporate partnering scheme. The scheme assists the company in recruiting graduates of the right calibre, and allows JPMC the opportunity to input into course design and provide case material and guest speakers.

For most businesses the fusion of different academic disciplines and skills (an essential element to every programme at Bournemouth), is a key factor in the effectiveness of graduates and postgraduates. The University's National Centre for Computer Animation brings together high-end mathematics and computing with softer creative skills to produce world class computer animators. Working with the US company **Industrial Light and Magic (IL&M)**, graduates from Bournemouth play a leading role in the world of animation. Further, staff from IL&M spend periods of attachment to the University, learning and developing new animation tools and techniques.

### **Summary**

For skills development and knowledge transfer, you need relevant knowledge. Our research and expertise is relevant and drives knowledge transfer and the preparation of graduates. But this expertise is not developed overnight. Rather, it has been developed by

the University having a long-term commitment to working with businesses and professional bodies.

If there is a need, it is for all areas and levels of government to recognise and support the centrality of HE in building a knowledge based economy; helping to enable the University to develop this aspect of our mission and avoiding sharp changes in institutional structures, policy or funding.