Dentistry at Birmingham scoops THES award

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A team of staff from the University of Birmingham's Dental School are celebrating after winning a prize at the prestigious Times Higher Education Supplement Awards, which took place in London.

The prize in the Outstanding ICT Initiative category, sponsored by JISC, focuses on the school's newly developed Content Management System, which complements traditional learning and teaching environments and materials.

The new system allows students to create their own content online as well as giving staff a way of delivering interactive learning and teaching materials. This includes a range of educational podcasts, which are available through iTunes, and video content, which helps students prepare for clinical problems at short notice.

Giles Perryer who leads the ecourses team said: "We have a diverse student body, who are based away from the University's main campus and also spend a significant period of time in clinics.

"This makes interactive learning particularly important to make sure we give students a high quality experience. This open environment also encourages a stronger sense of being part of a student community even when our students aren't in the school."

Giles has an additional reason to celebrate after winning the national Dentist Teacher of the Year award at the Caledonian Club in London on 7th November.

Professor Damien Walmsley, of the University of Birmingham's Dental School, said Giles and his small team had beaten off stiff competition to scoop the coveted prize. He said: "This is fantastic news, both for the school and for the university and I'm delighted our work has been recognised at the highest level.

"This initiative was student-driven: we embraced new technologies to provide an interactive style of communication, which has really captured the interest of both students and staff. It was this innovation, combined with the students' imagination and enthusiasm, which impressed the judging panel and sealed our success last night."

He added judges were particularly impressed by an innovation of the microscopic kind. Recently the school's content management system has been enhanced further by the development of a component-free virtual microscope allowing students to view slides remotely. The virtual microscope recognises what features are on a slide, and guides students to zoom in on areas of specialist interest.

The system will also allow staff to create virtual patients with a variety of dental conditions to simulate the experience of testing and applying knowledge in the clinic.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The winners of the Times Higher Education Supplement Award in the Outstanding ICT Initiative category are the Ecourse Team from the University of Birmingham's School of Dentistry are: The award is sponsored by JISC.

Giles Perryer – Ecourse Developer / Lecturer in Clinical Practice

Dr Deborah White – Director of Learning and Teaching / Head of Dental Public Health

Professor Damien Walmsley – Chairman of ICT Committee / Professor of Restorative Dentistry

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