

Heads You Win: Birmingham appoints top leaders to drive University to new heights

Posted on Wednesday 5th December 2007

The University of Birmingham has revealed the line-up of its top team, charged with realising the institution's visionary goals for the future.

Four Heads have been appointed to steer new academic Colleges that are being formed through an ambitious period of organisational change. This metamorphosis will put academic endeavour at the heart of strategic decision-making, reduce bureaucracy and enable the University to more quickly grasp opportunities.

Professors Anne Pauwels, Edward Peck, Malcolm Press and Lawrence Young are leading professionals in the fields of linguistics, public services analysis, environmental science and cancer studies, respectively. They will sit at the top decision-making table with the Vice Chancellor.

"Moving from 19 individual academic to five unified Colleges will give greater power to those closest to our core business, and enable the University to achieve its ambitious forward vision" says Professor Michael Sterling, the University's Vice Chancellor.

"We do need to move from being good – in fact very good – to outstanding. To define that for you it's when, internationally, we're known as the point of reference for the media; they come to us to answer questions of world importance.

"I'm delighted with the calibre of my new team who will make this vision a reality. All four Heads combine an outstanding track record in academia with the leadership skills, ambition and drive to take the University to new heights."

These new Heads of College comprise two internal and two external appointments.

Professor Anne Pauwels is to become the Head of College of Arts and Law. The College incorporates the existing Schools of Humanities, Historical Studies and Law. She is currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia. Anne is a Professor of Linguistics and has held senior posts at Monash University and the universities of New England and Wollongong. Her research examines the relationship between language, society, identity and culture, and she is currently Project Director for a large Australia-wide study aimed at strengthening the position of foreign language study in higher education. She is an elected Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. Anne said: "My vision for the College is to build upon the current strengths to achieve international excellence and recognition for its commitment to innovative and high quality approaches to student learning, for its groundbreaking research that enhances our understanding of the human condition and society, and for its global outlook."

Professor Edward Peck has been appointed Head of the College of Social Sciences and will take up his role on January 1. The College incorporates the existing Schools of Business, Education, Public Policy and Social Sciences. He currently heads the School of Public Policy and is Professor of Public Services Development and is also Director of the University's Health Services Management Centre. Edward has worked in policy analysis, public services research and organisational and leadership development for more than 15 years. Before joining Birmingham he worked at King's College London and began his career as a manager in the NHS. Edward said: "Building on our established areas of expertise, we have the potential to become one of the outstanding international centres for the study of social sciences."

Professor Malcolm Press will be Head of the College of Life and Environmental Sciences from February 2008. The College incorporates the existing Schools of Biosciences; Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences; Psychology; and Sport and Exercise Sciences. Malcolm is currently Head of Animal and Plant Sciences and Director of Research for the Environment at the University of Sheffield where he has held a Chair in Ecology since 1998. Malcolm is interested in scientific leadership and management. He currently serves as President of the British Ecological Society, and is a member of the Natural Environment Research Council's Science and Innovation Strategy Board and the Biological Sciences Research Assessment Exercise panel. Malcolm said: "There has never been a more exciting time for the life and environmental sciences. Many of the major issues that face society today are central to the College's research and teaching. These include environmental change, sustainability, healthy ageing and well-being."

Professor Lawrence Young is to be Head of the College of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences and will take up his role on January 1. He comes to the position from his present role as Head of the Division of Cancer Studies and Director of the Cancer Research UK Institute for Cancer Studies at the University of Birmingham.

A Birmingham graduate, he was appointed Chair of Cancer Biology in 1994, before becoming Institute Director in 2001. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Research Assessment Exercise Cancer Panel. Lawrence says: "Biomedical research is in an exciting phase where the basic understanding of disease processes is being translated into new diagnostic approaches and treatments. The new College, in partnership with our colleagues in the NHS, will be in a prime position to contribute to this medical revolution."

The Head of the final college, Engineering and Physical Sciences, will be appointed in the New Year, where a strong shortlist prevails. This College will incorporate the existing Schools of Engineering, Computer Science, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics and Chemistry.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Portrait photos are available of the four College Heads, please contact Rachel Burrows (details below) to request images.

The formal names for each College have yet to be finalised.

Organisational Change at the University of Birmingham:

The University's Strategic Framework 2005-2010, outlined the ambitions that would assure a position of strength for the University.

The University of Birmingham will:

invest in areas of internationally significant research that have an impact on contemporary society

create a teaching environment that promotes critical thinking, so that our students are enquiry-led learners, recognised by employers for their intellectual calibre

foster a global perspective in our teaching and research activities, preparing students for work in the global economy and encouraging research that has international impact

welcome the expertise of leaders from business and industry to inform the development of the University's education portfolio

The University's current structure includes 19 academic schools, none of which are directly represented on the management board. The University is now in a transitional year leading to the adoption of a 5-College model, where Heads of College will join the senior management team. The re-organisation will:

put academic endeavour at the heart of strategic decision-making

result in fewer administrative boundaries, enabling a swift response to opportunities and greater cross-disciplinary working

create a less hierarchical structure, with greater devolution of authority and responsibility into academic units

strengthen working relationships between academic and professional members of staff

Economic impact of the University of Birmingham in 2005/6:

Economic impact was £662m and £779m to the city and region respectively

Annual income of over £388.6 million

£64m of disposable income received by staff resident in Birmingham

Over the last 10 years Birmingham graduates have added an additional £146 million to the City economy

Eighth largest employer in the Birmingham/Solihull sub-region, representing 1.2% of total West Midlands employment

Potential £525 million additional input via research activities over the next 10 years, including over 2000 jobs by 2015

£10m estimated visitor expenditure attributable to the University in 05-06

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Rachel Burrows – Head of Communications, University of Birmingham

tel: 0121 414 6681 / mob: 07789 921165 / email: r.burrows@bham.ac.uk

[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#) | [Cookies and cookie policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site map](#) | [Website feedback](#) | [Charitable information](#)

© University of Birmingham 2015

