10 Million Pound Scheme Brings Young Science Stars to Birmingham Science City

Posted on Tuesday 5th February 2008

The Universities of Warwick and Birmingham, have together just been awarded almost £10 million to bring young science stars to the Birmingham Science City region.

The £9.6 million award, by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Strategic Development Fund, is a massive investment in the Birmingham Science City region. The initiative, supported by the regional development agency Advantage West Midlands (AWM), is a partnership of industry, business, education and the public sector, working together to establish the West Midlands region as a centre for world-class scientific research.

The funding will establish "The Birmingham Warwick Science City Interdisciplinary Research Alliance", an alliance of the region's two highest ranking research universities.

This alliance of interdisciplinary, inter-institutional academic research staff gives a further boost to the already planned considerable capital investment of up to £80 million for collaborative research for the Birmingham Science City initiative funded by AWM.

The funding will allow the Alliance to recruit 15-20 young but very high potential researchers in science, engineering and medicine, who will be appointed as staff in one of the two universities, but who will also have an honorary position in the other university. They will focus on interdisciplinary projects between the two institutions and across three key themes:

Energy Futures – looking at hydrogen energy generation, storage and use, and how to reduce energy demand and increasing efficiency in transport and buildings.

Advanced Materials - research and development into the creation, development and characterisation of new, advanced materials and sensors for applications in a diversity of industries from aerospace engineering to medical/healthcare and ICT.

Translational Medicine - Translating high quality clinical and biomedical research into improved disease prevention, new diagnostics and innovative therapies in Obesity/Diabetes (Metabolism), Infections, Heart Disease (Cardiovascular Sciences), Reproduction and the nervous system.

Minister for Higher Education Bill Rammell said:

"This is a very good example of innovative collaboration between two universities, bringing great benefits to the region though world-class research and I am really pleased that the Government is able to fund this project.

"The Government is committed to increasing the number of people studying and working in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects and this interdisciplinary work will address some important themes and thereby further our goal of making Britain a world leader in research, development and pioneering new technologies"

University of Warwick Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Thrift said:

"This HEFCE award will help underpin a very substantial programme of research collaboration that will bring real science- and technology-led benefits to our region in partnership with AWM. Even more of the best researchers and students will be drawn to the area from across the world."

University of Birmingham Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Sterling said:

"This is a fantastic boost to the joint research that the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick are already carrying out through our unique collaboration on Science City projects.

We look forward to welcoming the brightest young minds who can assist us in our goal to

put the region on the map as a world leader in the fields of energy, materials and medical science."

Professor David Eastwood , HEFCE Chief Executive said:

"Bringing together two research intensive universities in this alliance around the Science City initiative will provide a dynamic and exciting way of enhancing the critical mass and range of research and knowledge transfer activities. The benefits for the West Midlands region will be substantial and we are very pleased to be able to support this collaborative enterprise."

Phil Extance Director of Innovation at AWM said:

"Advantage West Midlands is delighted that HEFCE have provided funding that complements our own capital investments in the collaboration between Birmingham and Warwick, further strengthening the capability of Birmingham Science City. This is a strong endorsement of the two universities and of the region's science and technology base."

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Note for Editors

Birmingham Science City is a widely drawn partnership of industry, business, education and the public sector, working together to establish the West Midlands region as a centre for world-class scientific research.

By building on the region's well established reputation for innovation; working closely with the knowledge base and bringing partners together through supported projects and communications, Birmingham Science City aims to promote the value of science and innovation in improving lives.

For more information please visit www.birminghamsciencecity.co.uk

For further information contact:

Peter Dunn, Press and Media Relations Manager

University of Warwick 02476 523708

mobile 07767 655860 p.j.dunn@warwick.ac.uk

Rachel Burrows, Head of Communications

University of Birmingham 0121 414 6681

mobile: 07789 921165 email: r.burrows@bham.ac.uk

Philip Walker, HEFCE

p.walker@hefce.ac.uk

0117 931 7363

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