

Eminent Energy Experts Converge for Birmingham Conference

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Energy efficient greenhouses, a fossil free future and hydrogen powered vehicles are some of the topics being discussed at the University of Birmingham, when it hosts the Universitas 21 (U21) International Conference on Energy Technologies and Policy at its Edgbaston campus from 7 – 10th September 2008.

This is the first conference on the theme of energy that has been convened by U21, an organisation which brings together some of the world's leading research-led institutions. The Birmingham conference will showcase some of the cutting-edge energy research that is being carried out in universities all over the world.

Professor Nigel Weatherill, Head of the University of Birmingham's College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, who will be welcoming the international delegates, says, 'The topic of energy is now on everyone's agenda, not just that of politicians and scientists. The University is making a significant contribution to the energy debate and we are delighted to be hosting this meeting where ideas on new technology, as well as policy issues, will be discussed.'

Bob Taylor, Managing Director, Generation, E.ON, says, 'The challenge of providing secure, affordable low carbon energy will require innovation in technology, markets and regulatory policy. The Universitas 21 conference at the University of Birmingham provides an excellent international mix of thinking and research in these areas.'

Mike Loftus of Locate In Birmingham, the city's inward investment agency, which is supporting the Universitas 21 Energy Conference, says: 'Birmingham was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution and as a Science City, Birmingham is leading the way in powering the Low Carbon Revolution. This conference will examine the new energy geo-politics as well as showcasing the new energy technologies of the 21st century. We are delighted to be associated with such an important conference.'

A range of topics are to be discussed at the conference as the leading experts look to a future without fossil fuels. Scientists from Sydney will be debating strategies for the future supply of sustainable power generation for Australia; Swedish scientists will explain how their country is breaking away from fossil fuels and has decreased its dependency on them by 45% in 35 years; and University of Birmingham academics will consider the 'chicken and egg' issue of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and hydrogen fuelling stations.

Networking opportunities will be available for delegates throughout the conference and they will also be able to view the University of Birmingham's hydrogen fuelling station, take short trips in the University's own fleet of five hydrogen powered cars as well as the hydrogen hybrid canal boat, which has been developed by Birmingham engineers and is moored on the canal which runs through the campus.

The conference ends with a panel discussion entitled 'Solutions to the Energy Crisis' which will be chaired by Patrick Burns, the BBC's Political Editor in the West Midlands. Members of the panel include Dr Sue Ion, former Group Director of Technology, BNFL and John Loughhead, UK Energy Research Council.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The programme for the conference is available - you are invited to send a representative. Please telephone the press office for further details of the schedule.
2. Universitas 21 was founded in 1997 as a network for international higher education, bringing together a collection of some of the leading research-led universities around the world.

Since then, Universitas 21 has evolved into an internationally recognised partnership, which strives to facilitate collaboration and co-operation between the member universities, creating entrepreneurial opportunities on a scale that no member would be able to achieve operating independently or through traditional bilateral alliances.

Universitas 21 comprises the following members: University of Auckland, University of Birmingham, University of British Columbia, University of Delhi, University College Dublin, University of Edinburgh, Fudan University, University of Hong Kong, Korea University, McGill University, University of Glasgow, Lund University, University of Melbourne, Tecnológico de Monterrey, University of New South Wales, University of Nottingham, University of Peking, University of Queensland, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, National University of Singapore, University of Virginia, Waseda University.

For more information or further details about the network, please log on to www.universtias21.com (<http://www.universtias21.com/>)

For further information

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