Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham celebrate first anniversary of landmark collaboration

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Against a backdrop of the most challenging time in UK higher education for a generation, a landmark collaboration agreement between the University of Birmingham and University of Nottingham is celebrating a successful first year.

This innovative partnership builds on the complementary strengths of the two universities and has already enabled the institutions to secure multi-million pound research income, explore new international markets, and develop new research collaborations.

The two universities were recently awarded several million pounds in research funding by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Arthritis Research UK to jointly explore ways to reduce the pain and disability caused by ageing. They are also working on a number of high-profile collaborations in areas such as liver and gastro-intestinal research.

From the outset, a key focus for the two universities was exploring emerging markets and they have made significant in-roads into Brazil over the last 12 months. This includes a £480k fund for research projects between the Universities of Birmingham and/or Nottingham and Brazilian institutions in São Paulo State and a scheme with the Brazilian funding council which will see 20 PhD scholarships for Brazilian students across the two universities. Brazil has also seen the first joint appointment of a new in-country officer.

Both universities are also looking at offering greater opportunities for students to spend time between their UK campuses and Nottingham's overseas campuses. In addition a number of other joint projects, which aim to enhance collaborative working and share best practice amongst the professional and administrative teams at the two universities are also being developed.

Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, said: "A key challenge facing all UK universities is to enhance services and facilities to students and staff in a more constrained funding environment. Our landmark collaboration has already enabled us to strengthen our research and teaching, share and develop innovations, and diversify income streams. Our strong partnership is delivering strategic advantages and enables us to collaborate in areas where it is mutually beneficial, while we continue to work closely with other leading institutions."

David Greenaway, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham said: "The framework for collaboration between our two Universities has focussed and expanded some pre-existing links and provided a foundation for new ones. Our partnership has recognised each other's strengths and used them to leverage and exploit new opportunities, whilst maintaining our distinct identities.

"We are demonstrating the benefit of collaboration in these challenging times for UK higher education, whether this is with each other or with other institutions and partners, both nationally and internationally."

The universities of Nottingham and Birmingham share characteristics of scale, history, outstanding research, high quality student experience and international engagement. These latest activities have built on existing collaborations, including involvement in the Midlands Physics Alliance, the Manufacturing Technology Centre, and the Midlands Energy Consortium. Nottingham and Birmingham are also formal partners in two large Research Council-supported Doctoral Training Centres, one in the area of Efficient Fossil Energy Technology, the other in the applications of Hydrogen and Fuel Cells.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

The University of Birmingham:

1. The University of Birmingham is a truly vibrant, global community and an internationally-renowned institution. Ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions, its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 4,000 international students from nearly 150 countries.

2. The University is home to nearly 30,000 students. With more than 7,500 postgraduate students from across the world, Birmingham is one of the most popular universities for postgraduate study in the UK.

3. The University plays an integral role in the economic, social and cultural growth of local and regional communities; working closely with businesses and organisations, employing approximately 6,000 staff and providing 10,000 graduates annually.

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