

# STAFF

The University of Bristol is committed to ensuring that it has the right people in place to achieve its vision and mission in an increasingly competitive international market for the best academic talent. It also needs outstanding people across the broad range of support roles. Personnel activities in 2008/09 focused above all on the organisation's aim of providing a stimulating, supportive working environment where staff can achieve their full potential, while individuals' and departments' achievements over the course of the year are evidence of their contribution to the success of the University.

## The University's priorities in this area are to:

- recruit and retain first-class talent;
- foster a high-achieving workforce that is competent, committed, creative and capable of managing and responding positively to change;
- develop a culture and an environment that motivates and enables people to make an excellent contribution.

### Integrated recruitment policy

The University recognises that staff recruitment is a strategically important activity that needs to be undertaken professionally with the full engagement of all those involved. In 2008/09, it agreed a fresh approach to the recruitment of academic staff, which will be implemented in the coming year. The new policy aims to provide an effective platform to face the challenges of the modern recruitment landscape while upholding the University's commitment to ensuring equality, diversity and transparency throughout the organisation.

The emphasis is on robust selection criteria and effective decision-making as well as on proactively representing the University as an attractive destination for exceptionally talented people. Integral to the policy is a partnership approach in which Personnel Services works closely with the recruiting department or faculty to co-ordinate the recruitment and selection process and a smooth introduction for new staff.

### Managing change

Continuous improvement and strategic change are a central part of life at the University. In order to maintain staff effectiveness during such changes, Personnel Services established a Change Team in 2008/09 that aims to:

- support change within individual projects and programmes;
- build change-management awareness, understanding and capacity within the organisation;

- establish an overview of where change is happening and how much impact it is having in order to minimise bottle-necks and encourage collaborative working.

Perhaps the most significant change programme initiated in 2008/09 was Support Process Review. A new vision for the University's support services was adopted as the basis for an effort to transform the efficiency, consistency, resilience and cost-effectiveness of the structures and processes that underpin the academic endeavour. The cost pressures on the University (which have parallels across the higher education sector) have increased the urgency of this project, and of measures to boost income. An early retirement and voluntary severance scheme implemented in 2008/09 was helpful in controlling costs, as was a 'salary exchange' programme that should save about £1 million a year. However, further measures will be required in order to achieve financial sustainability and allow ongoing capital investment. The costs and risks associated with pension schemes are among the major factors that the University, in common with other organisations in every part of the economy, will have to address.

### Excellence in human resources

Bristol University won the Outstanding Human Resource Initiative Award at the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards 2009 ceremony. The award recognises the single initiative or innovation that has had the most positive impact in the field of higher education human resources. Bristol won for its exceptional



Positive Working Environment (PWE) initiative, which aims to make working life productive, rewarding and enjoyable for all staff.

The PWE agenda, which encompasses staff counselling, career advice and healthy living opportunities, has led to a reduction in absenteeism and sick leave, increased institutional loyalty and improved staff well-being. Ann Mroz, editor of *Times Higher Education*, said: 'This holistic approach to human resources management has produced brilliant results. The fact that other institutions have enlisted the services of the University of Bristol's HR consultancy proves that this is an initiative that could have far-reaching effects.'

Bristol also won an award from City of Bristol College for its Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, provided by Personnel Services and Staff Development. In addition, two apprentices working at the University won Apprenticeship of the Year Awards: Charlotte Wyatt, working in the Department of Anatomy, was named Business Administration Apprentice of the Year and Steven Bush, an advanced fitter in Estates Services, won the Best Apprentice Engineer Award.

### Equality and diversity high on the agenda

The University's equality and diversity strategy supports the organisation's efforts to attract the best employees from all walks of life and all parts of the world, improve motivation and productivity and reduce staff turnover. Activities undertaken in 2008/09 by the Equality and Diversity team to help create a stimulating and supportive working environment that values difference included:

- establishing a Work and Family Buddy Scheme, where staff with caring responsibilities share their experiences with others;
- setting up a Russell Group Equality Network, where equality and diversity

practitioners from leading UK research-intensive universities meet to discuss and influence strategic and policy development, share best practice and respond to national issues relating to equality and diversity;

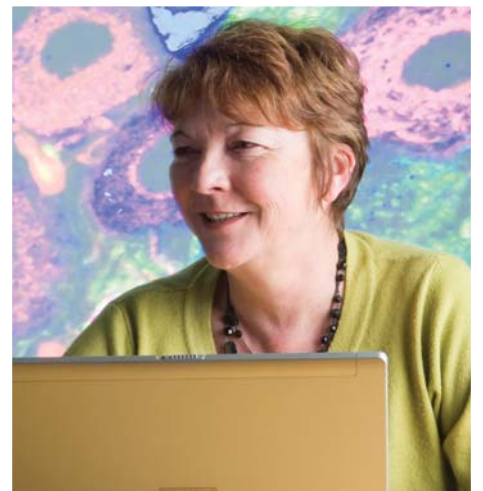
- developing networks for disabled staff and black and minority ethnic staff;

• expanding the successful Mentoring Circles model for women in the faculties of Science, Engineering, Medical and Veterinary Sciences, and Medicine and Dentistry;

• launching a process of equality risk assessment across the whole organisation, whereby decision-makers are encouraged to consider the impact of any existing or proposed policy on people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances in an effort to ensure that such policies are inclusive. More than 30 policies and 14 capital projects have been subject to this process so far;

• working with academic colleagues to better support Deaf and disabled students. An annex on disability equality was also developed for inclusion in the University's Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Taught Programmes to encourage a consistent approach to this element of the student experience;

• supporting the University's commitment to the Athena SWAN Charter, an initiative that recognises excellence in employment in science, engineering and technology. In particular, the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology won a silver SWAN award in recognition of its success in recruiting and retaining women and developing an innovative staff review and development programme designed to encourage more women to advance their careers; the University's Equality and Diversity Manager was invited to sit on the national judging panel for the Athena SWAN Awards; and the University featured as an example of best practice in several sector-wide guides for its success in recruiting, supporting and retaining women in science.



**Top:** Professor Bridget Lumb, first female Head of Department in Physiology and Pharmacology

**Bottom:** Personnel Manager Christian Carter (left) receives the Times Higher Education Outstanding Human Resource Initiative Award from satirist Rory Bremner

## STAFF CONTINUED

### Movers and shakers

Many Bristol academics achieve the distinction of being appointed to sit on the boards and decision-making committees of external organisations, which in many cases enables them to contribute to shaping national policy. Some examples from the year are as follows:

- Professor Tariq Modood of the Department of Sociology was appointed to the National Equality Panel, an independent panel of experts that will provide the government with an authoritative analysis of inequality in Britain by the end of 2009. The panel will provide a factual analysis of how equality trends have changed over the past ten years and map out where gaps have narrowed and widened in society; investigate how people's life chances are affected by factors such as gender, race, disability and age; and show how these factors interrelate.
- Dr Jo-Anne Baird of the Graduate School of Education was appointed an independent adviser by the government's Department for Children, Schools and Families to give advice to an expert group on future assessment and accountability systems for primary and secondary schools. Part of the group's remit was to examine government proposals for the introduction of a new School Report Card, designed to give parents a new, simpler and more comprehensive way of understanding schools' performance and achievements.
- Professor David Gordon of the School for Policy Studies and Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research was appointed to the Supervisory Board of the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF) by the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. The UMF is a government grant scheme that provides financial assistance to trade unions to help them improve the services available to their members. The Supervisory Board of the UMF advises government ministers on the projects that should receive financial support in each bidding round. The current funding round aims to help unions improve

the support they give to vulnerable workers, in partnership with voluntary and community organisations that have specific expertise in this area. This focus on vulnerable workers is particularly important at a time of rapidly rising unemployment and recession.

Many others, such as Joe McGeehan, Professor of Communications Engineering, Director of the University's Centre for Communications Research and Managing Director of Toshiba's Telecommunications Research Laboratory in Bristol, play an active role in industry, helping to stimulate the economy and enable businesses to compete globally. Professor McGeehan, who is credited with pioneering many of the major developments in mobile communications, was appointed a member of the South West Science and Industry Council (SWSIC). SWSIC promotes greater understanding of science and technology to business, and raises awareness of the opportunities presented by science for the overall economic advantage of individual businesses and of the region.

### Fellowships and professional appointments

Many members of staff represent the University through prestigious Fellowships and membership of professional organisations as leaders in their field. 2008/09 saw the following influential appointments, among others:

- Mike Ashfold, Professor of Physical Chemistry, and Jon Keating, Professor of Mathematical Physics, achieved the rare distinction of being elected Fellows of the Royal Society for scientific excellence. The Fellowship of the Royal Society is composed of the most distinguished scientists from the UK, other Commonwealth countries and the Republic of Ireland. It is the highest accolade a scientist can receive, short of a Nobel Prize. These latest awards bring to 31 the number of current Bristol academics whose work in the fields of science, engineering, technology and medicine has been honoured in this way – a remarkable total for a relatively small institution.



Top: Mike Ashfold, FRS, Professor of Physical Chemistry  
Bottom: Jon Keating, FRS, Professor of Mathematical Physics

- George Davey Smith, Scientific Director of the University's Children of the 90s study and Professor of Clinical Epidemiology in the Department of Social Medicine, was elected a Foreign Associate of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies in the US. Professor Davey Smith is one of around 80 foreign associates elected by the Institute on the basis of professional achievement and of demonstrated interest, concern and involvement with problems and critical issues that affect the health of the public. The Institute of Medicine is a non-profit organisation that provides unbiased, science-based advice and authoritative information on biomedical science, medicine and health to policy-makers, professionals and the public. Professor Davey Smith has pioneered the use of genetic studies to inform us about disease prevention and is a recognised international leader on research in this area and in social inequities in health.
- Professor Jenny Donovan, Head of the Department of Social Medicine, was elected to the Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences, which promotes advances in medical science and campaigns to ensure these are converted into healthcare benefits for society.
- Judith Squires, Professor of Political Theory and incoming Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law (from 1 August 2009), was elected an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences. Academicians contribute evidence drawn from in-depth research that has a positive impact on public policy-making and practice through knowledge exchange and public engagement.
- Dr David Langley, Director of the University's Research and Enterprise Development division, was appointed a Distinguished Faculty Member of the Society of Research Administrators International. Members are called upon as expert consultants and speakers to present and review professional workshops, continuing education courses and professional development programmes, and as expert researchers to

conduct periodic external reviews of research administration capacity and process within organisations.

### Awards and prizes

Staff continue to distinguish themselves through the receipt of awards and prizes. Accolades from the year include:

- Four Royal Society-Wolfson Research Merit Awards, to Professor Nigel Smart in the Department of Computer Science, Professor Peter Cullen in the Department in Biochemistry, Professor Richard Evershed in the School in Chemistry and Professor Jens Marklof in the Department of Mathematics. The awards recognise researchers of outstanding achievement.
- Two Leverhulme Prizes, to Dr Harald Helfgott and Professor Andreas Winter, both in the Department of Mathematics.

Elsewhere, the University's Quantum Photonics group won a global award for innovation in the Institution of Engineering and Technology's annual Innovation Engineering Awards. The team, led by Professor Jeremy O'Brien, Professorial Research Fellow in Physics and Electrical Engineering, and including Alberto Politi, Dr Martin Cryan, Professor John Rarity and Dr Siyuan Yu, won the award for the development of silicon chips for optical quantum technologies.

Beth Tarleton, a research fellow at the Norah Fry Research Centre, received an Early Career Research Award from the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities for her work with parents with learning disabilities.

*Subtext*, the University's magazine, won two medals in the 2009 Circle of Excellence Awards, an international programme run by the US-based Council for Advancement and Support of Education. *Subtext*, which was conceived as a magazine for staff but has developed a much wider readership, was selected for a gold medal in the Print Internal Audience Magazines category and a silver medal in the Periodical Staff Writing for Internal Audiences category.



Top: Judith Squires, Professor of Political Theory, elected Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences  
Middle: Joe McGeehan, Professor of Communications Engineering, appointed a member of the South West Science and Industry Council  
Bottom: *Subtext*, the University's award-winning magazine