

Leader column

Building on our commitment to deliver world leading research and education

I have been a bit pre-occupied during January and February, focusing on the appointment of two new Deputy Vice-Chancellors and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor to lead our international activities, and working on our bond issue.

I am delighted to welcome Professor Lisa Roberts as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation and Professor Tom Ward as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Education from August 2016. Both will build on our commitment to deliver world leading research and education in powerful combination, ensuring that each reinforces the other goo.gl/orcbaV. An announcement about the PVC International is expected before the Easter break.

In mid-February, I was pleased that the University was able to announce a £250m bond issue goo.gl/b23Bro. This will accelerate our programme of growth over the next five years enabling the University to invest in high quality facilities that will enhance student education and our commitment to develop cutting edge science, technology and innovation platforms which will drive progress in our world leading research. This success reflects an enormous amount of hard work on the part of Jane Madeley, Alan Thomson, Roger Gair and many others and, on behalf of the University, I thank them warmly. Jane, John Fisher and I spent three days on the road immediately before the bond issue and had the pleasure of explaining

the history, education and research profile, credit strengths and future ambitions of the University to the investment community who, in the event, proved to be remarkably responsive.

Meanwhile, we will open our doors with two major events that invite more people than ever before to visit us and find out more about what we have to offer – academically, culturally and aesthetically.

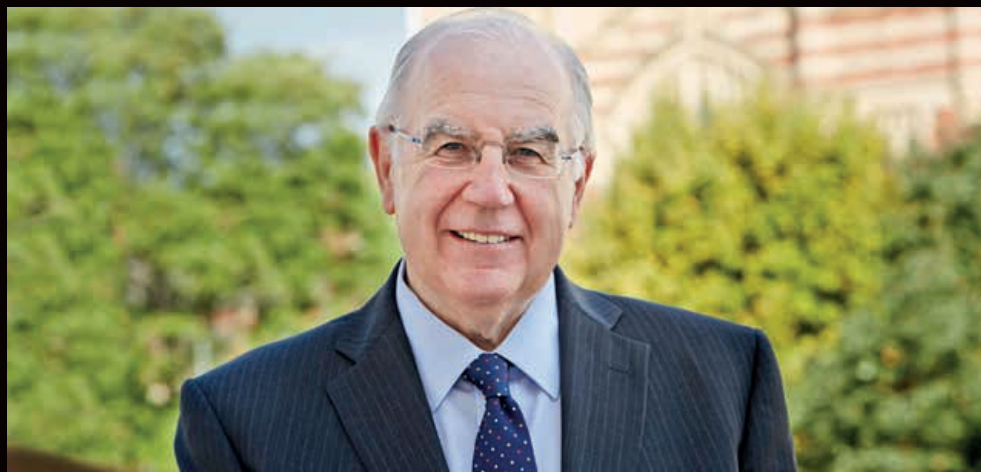
There are high hopes that our inaugural Be Curious Festival will prove popular, attracting the public to campus on Saturday 19 March, featuring as it does a range of family-friendly, free activities. The main aims of Be Curious are to provide an opportunity for people to get a feel for the fantastic research the University conducts and for our researchers to gain first-hand experience in engaging the public with their research. Visitors can take part in hands on research, attend mini lectures, go inside a planetarium, talk to our academics, and take a number of different guided campus trails (Senses; Through Time; Virtual; Engineering; Minds, Brains and Bodies) – all around the theme of Health and Wellbeing, and involving eight out of our nine faculties. I will be attending

with Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor David Hogg, who is involved in a hands-on activity on the Virtual trail demonstrating Lucie the care home robot. Be Curious is part of the wider Leeds Festival of Science which itself will be attracting thousands of children and young people to campus and other locations around the city to learn more about science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

For colleagues unable to visit the Be Curious event, there will still be time to take part in another 'first' for the University when we stage the Astbury Conversation on 11-12 April. Following an academic symposium, members of the public and colleagues can visit 'The Secret Life of Molecules' – an exhibition that will enable people to see at first hand some of the science behind the molecules of life, and to hear how understanding of life in molecular detail is helping to shape the future, from healthy ageing, to disease intervention and the creation of new biomaterials. The exhibition will be followed by a public lecture by Professor Michael Levitt, FRS, who was awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. More details at www.astburyconversation.leeds.ac.uk



2016 women of achievement winners (l - r) Dr Andrea Utley (School of Biomedical Sciences), Dr Caroline Peacock (School of Earth and Environment), Professor Karen Lucas (Institute for Transport Studies), Dr Susan Hamer (NIHR Clinical Research Network), Kairen Skelley (Spark, Careers Service), Professor Vivien Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student Education, 2006-2016), Professor Ruth Wilcox (Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering), Professor Cath Noakes (School of Civil Engineering), Professor Alison Fell (School of Languages, Cultures and Societies), Sannia Farooque, student (School of Chemistry), Dr Anja Schmidt (School of Earth and Environment), Lucy Bailey, student (School of Politics and International Studies), Emma McNamara, student (School of Law), Professor Julia Brown (Leeds Institute of Clinical Trials Research), Professor Michelle Peckham (School of Molecular and Cellular Biology), Antonia Jones (IT Service Desk)



These two events are both 'firsts' but the intention is that they will both run again – Be Curious yearly, and the Astbury Conversation as a biennial event. I am also hopeful that in future they will be joined by other regular events that either take the University to the outside world or bring the outside world on to campus.

Finally, I must mention our 2016 Women of Achievement (WoA) and congratulate all the women who have been recognised with a WoA award or been nominated for one during the five years the initiative has existed. This year's ceremony was bigger than ever – honouring 16 women whose work has had a significant impact across the University and in the wider world, socially, scientifically, culturally and environmentally, and including a compelling lecture from Professor Jane Francis in her role as Director of the British Antarctic Survey.

Whilst each woman of achievement has her own story of success they all share some defining characteristics – they have approached their careers with enthusiasm, determination and a






commitment to excel in their professional fields of work, research or study. For some of these women, the success they have enjoyed comes from being pioneers in their work, for others it's the recognition for their unwavering hard work and dedication.

To mark the occasion, a booklet has been produced which features the 54 women who have received a Women of Achievement award during the five years it has been running goo.gl/oVIsf5. I'd urge you to read it and join me in hoping that their success stories inspire a new generation of women to pursue careers within academia and higher education with equal determination, pushing boundaries and taking risks to achieve rewarding and exciting opportunities.

Vice-Chancellor Sir Alan Langlands



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About the Reporter

The Reporter is the University of Leeds' staff magazine, produced eight times a year. More than 7,600 copies are distributed to our staff and stakeholders. The Reporter is produced by the Communications team.

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Your comments are always welcome.

The front cover shows 15 of the 16 recipients of this year's Women of Achievement Awards.