

Premier Breakfast Club 24th November

1. Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some of the range of pioneering activities that UWE is engaged in, and some of the ways we are striving to contribute to both business and the community in what is a very challenging economic time. These discussions are highly valuable and I hope you will see the opportunities in what I have to say.

You will, I'm sure, be familiar with the government's and the CBI's calls for increased engagement between universities and businesses. Some of the mechanisms that are frequently cited are employer engagement in curriculum design, work placements, research sponsorship, the accreditation of work-based learning, and the sponsorship of cutting edge equipment for students to engage in practical learning. Programmes such as Aerospace Design Engineering and Radiotherapy at UWE have been supported by simulation equipment from BAE and the NHS respectively. All of this is based on partnership working, investment by both businesses and universities, to the benefit of students, employers, the community, and global society.

At UWE partnership is at the heart of all we do, which is why we refer to ourselves as 'the Partnership University'. Over the course of one year alone, we had well over 20,000 interactions with 3321 business and community organisations. This excludes data from our interactions with UWE alumni. Partnership working is something we are strong at, and which permeates all that we do.

In order to facilitate partnership building I'm going to start by building a picture of UWE for you.

2. In terms of size, UWE is a very large university. In 2008/09 we had a student population of 30,644. We have been one of the largest universities, in the top 10 in the UK, for several years. In 2007/08 the average student headcount across universities was 13,900. For the same year UWE had a student population of 29,500.

The sector as a whole has increased significantly over the past 10-20 years, as has UWE. Back in 1990/91 we had some 12,692 students on what was a much smaller campus. I would like to show you a few pictures of how the Frenchay campus has developed to date, to give you a feel for some of that growth.

3. The first is from 1982, a fairly modest site, with few neighbours.
4. Then we jump to 1992, where our site has expanded and we have been joined by a business park and residential housing.
5. Then in 2008 we can see the development of the MoD site and a significant number of new buildings on the UWE campus as we have invested in the student village, sports facilities and our learning and teaching spaces, to ensure our campus meets the needs of the variety of users that engage with the university. We are continuing to invest in our future, so that we exceed these needs, and this is something that I will return to at the end of my talk.
6. In terms of income, UWE is again well above the sector average (which corresponds to its size). In 2007/08 UWE had an income of £190m, compared to a sector average of £140m. This income is from funding council grants, tuition fees and educational contracts, research grants and contracts, other operating income and interest receivable. UWE has seen an increase in this income of £64m from 2002/03.

As you will probably be aware, the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance was launched by Lord Mandelson on November 3rd. As part of the debate informing this review, Universities UK and the CBI have been very strong about promoting the contribution that the UK's universities make to the economy. The most recent report from UUK calculates an output of £59bn in terms of wide economic impact from the HE sector in 2007/08; this puts the HE sector ahead of the agricultural, advertising, pharmaceutical and postal industries. The gross export earnings of the sector were £5.3bn in 2007/08 and the sector employed more than 1% of the UK's total workforce.

In a context where government funding is decreasing, universities have had to become much more aware of, and engage with, their broader role, and their impact. At UWE we are, and have been, very conscious of our role in the economy. Our students contribute in the region of £400m per year to the local economy. We also continue to be highly engaged with our civic leadership role in the community.

7. UWE, as a partnership university, is engaged with the needs and demands of a range of users - students, employers, the local and regional community, global society and other external users. This means identifying problems and solutions, across a broad spectrum, together, through partnership. Whether this is addressing skills shortages, graduate employability skills, generating user-led solutions, for example in transport and planning, or working on the faster diagnosis of prostate cancer, and rapid tests for MRSA.
8. This is the agenda we are promoting and believe in. It translates into our vision and mission, where our vision is to be the UK's best knowledge and learning partnership university. And our mission is to make a positive difference to our students, business and society. It is our ethos of genuine partnership working that enables U+WE to successfully promote and drive opportunity, social justice, creativity and innovation.
9. This agenda also informs our goals and our approach to delivery. We believe that together U+WE will INSPIRE. That means being Innovative - pioneering and advancing in all we do, connecting our activities, such as teaching, learning, research, knowledge exchange and public engagement, in order to drive innovation. It means Nurturing talent – providing an excellent staff experience to ensure quality in all our activities. In particular it means providing an excellent Student experience, working in partnership with our students, ensuring UWE graduates are ready and able for work and life after graduation. We are also very focused on engaging potential students before they start, working with partners to raise aspirations and excite learners through a variety of widening Participation and outreach activities. I will say more about some of these a bit later. Whilst many of these activities are locally or regionally based, UWE has also developed a range of partnerships internationally. UWE is a regional university with a global outlook, aiming to provide International opportunities both at home and abroad. Partnership also informs our approach to Research, co-identifying and co-creating solutions to ensure relevance. And it informs our approach to knowledge Exchange and public engagement, ensuring that our activities have a broad impact.
10. So what does this all mean in terms of real examples? Well in terms of working in partnership with business it means Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs); consultancy projects; MBA study; graduate/student recruitment; tailored training courses; Higher Level Skills; business incubation; and solutions4recession (involving careers consultation, business advice sessions, and workshops).

I will talk through three strong examples where these activities can be illustrated.

The first is with Dycem Ltd, based in Ashley Down, who manufacture contamination-control flooring¹ and 'non-slip'² products which are sold worldwide.

Dycem have worked with UWE on a number of levels, and across different Faculties:

- Mark Dalziel, MD, completed an MBA at UWE a few years ago (having left school at 16).
- One KTP with UWE has already been completed (led by Prof Alan Tapp, International Marketing, from the Bristol Business School). This resulted in increased global sales and a 'Dycem Far East' distributor network being established. Company profits increased by over £250k pa as a result.
- Another KTP is currently being run, (led by Dr Paul Thirkell, School of Creative Arts). This is investigating substrates and digital print techniques for producing printed products.
- Dycem has also successfully filled both temporary and permanent posts with UWE students and graduates, including two new European Business Development Manager positions.
- A small consultancy project has also been conducted by FAS on: 'Time lapse photography to demonstrate the potential antimicrobial abilities of Dycem contamination control flooring'.

The second example is with Cabot Communications, based in Filwood. They are a provider of Digital Video Broadcasting middleware solutions for the digital television industry.

¹. Eg for use in clean room environments

² Eg for use in occupational therapy

The company worked with UWE as a result of their engagement with the South West Higher Level Skills Pathfinder Employer Engagement Team (based in HEIs/FECs across SW England).

- Cabot Communications initially worked with a Higher Level Skills Business Improvement Intermediary (based at UWE), to identify a training solution which would enable the management team to develop their skills in the areas of strategy and people management.
- Subsequently, the Intermediary worked directly with UWE to develop a four day programme which would effectively fulfil the company's training requirements. The resulting programme was delivered by UWE academics utilising a variety of taught and interactive methods.
- The Senior Manager and HR Manager at Cabot Communications have both expressed their satisfaction with the programme content, and the resulting impact on staff ability and moral. As a result, UWE have been invited to run further training sessions on coaching and mentoring.

The third example is with The Knowledge Business, an independent consultancy, providing knowledge management services to UK law firms, based in UWE Ventures Bristol (our business incubation centre).

Hélène Adbly, MD, engaged with UWE as a result of solutions4recession (a new range of support services and training courses designed to help businesses and individuals who have been impacted by the current recession).

- Hélène attended a FREE interview with a qualified UWE Careers Consultant at Bush House, during which her intention to progress her business start-up idea was identified.
- This led to Hélène returning at a later date for a FREE one-to-one session with an experienced UWE business adviser. Her eligibility for solutions4recession support was quickly confirmed.
- As a result, the company is now benefitting from a 50% discount on a 12 month residency in UWE Ventures Bristol (and the associated business support services – for example, access to mentoring, business plan reviews, etc).
- Hélène recently attended a FREE half-day marketing workshop, also offered by UWE as part of the solutions4recession scheme. This workshop is part of a series led by expert practitioners from Bristol Business School and UWE Careers.


These are just a few examples of what can be achieved through partnership working.

11. As I mentioned earlier, UWE is very proud to play a strong civic leadership role in the region. As part of the debate about the role of universities, this has been a particularly prominent area, alongside the role of universities in the UK's economic recovery. At a recent event on 'Re-inventing the Civic University' organised by NESTA, which was used to argue that universities need to do more to engage with their civic roots, I was pleased to be invited to speak and share with the audience the variety of activities that go on at UWE. I argued that UWE did not need to re-invent its civic roots, it has continued to be engaged. This has been through a variety of activities. For example, through partnerships with schools and colleges in the region. UWE is recognised regionally and nationally for its work with schools. In a recent meeting I had at number 10, I was able to highlight the important work that UWE does in this area. We were the first University to sponsor a City Academy back in 2002. We now have 7 strong partnerships with academies and trusts. And we have built up over 350 partnerships with schools and colleges in the region. This involves us working with partners to raise aspirations and support attainment in schools.

Our students are also very active, dedicating some 28,000 hours to volunteering in 2008/09, in a broad range of activities from reading buddies in local schools, to taking part in the Big Beach Clean at Weston. In total our outreach activities achieved 116,885 recorded beneficiaries in 2008/09, with 37,122 recorded beneficiaries to our activities specifically aimed at widening participation.

12. One key example of partnership working which we hope will benefit business, community, our students and our staff, is our partnership with Bloodhound SSC – as I'm sure you aware, the project attempts to build a car to break the land speed record by reaching 1000mph. Today Bloodhound SSC are announcing their plans to build the car in Bristol near the SSGB. This bid was won against heavy competition from Belfast, Coventry and Farnborough who all saw the project's potential in assisting the profile of their cities and inward investment. Clearly we were keen to see it built in Bristol and are very pleased to be one of the founder supporters.

There is no doubt this is a highly inspiring project, one which our students have been very engaged with.



13. This is a picture from our scrapbook on the work we did for the cockpit last March with Andy Green.

14. Lord Drayson, the Science Minister was also at this event.

Bloodhound SSC themselves have gained a lot from the relationship with UWE, through our technical expertise and through facilities like our new Exhibition and Conference Centre, the largest in the South West. We have both benefitted in terms student project work and placements, and also in the development of designs for the visitor centre. Bloodhound SSC are now working with a number students to further develop the detailed design work, at very low cost, but well supported by supervised expertise.

15. Partnership also permeates our approach to research and KE which is very much user-focused. 37% of the research at UWE was rated as world-leading or internationally excellent in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, and from that UWE increased its QR funding by 122%. We are one of the leading new universities for research.

Our institutes give you an indication of some of our strengths, for example in Sustainability, Health and the Environment, Biosensing Technology – where we have worked on research for Johnson & Johnson, Robotics, and Countryside and Community research.

16. As I mentioned earlier, UWE is a regional university with a global outlook. We have over 3000 students from outside the UK and agreements signed with over 60 international institutions. 13 of these have become affiliated institutions. In terms of areas of strength, UWE is leading partnership and collaboration in Vietnam. Very recently we signed a deal with Hanoi Law University to increase levels of expertise on international trade law within Vietnam, as part of a thirty-month collaboration. This is funded by the European Union.

17. UWE is an ambitious university, we have achieved a great deal, and we are continuing to invest in our future – for the benefit of our students, staff, employers, the community and global society. As part of our masterplan we will be investing between £350m-£400m over the next 25 years, in order to transform the Frenchay campus: through our infrastructure and estates; through implementation of our Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy; by enhancing our academic course portfolio – ensuring relevance to user needs; and we are also investing to build on our research strengths.

18. At the beginning of my presentation I showed you some pictures of the Frenchay campus as it has developed since 1982. This slide now shows you our vision for the future of the Frenchay site. As part of this we are developing a hub for employer engagement in the region, where there will be space for businesses and the university to sit side by side, exchange, learn from each other, and innovate through partnership.

19. There are a number of ways which we currently work with our business partners, as I have already referred to. We are looking to develop these further. For example, through student projects and placements – which work to benefit both the student and the business; through mentoring students with careers advice; through our short course provision – which can be developed and designed in partnership with users, so that it is bespoke to meet your needs. We also run a variety of events, for example our Distinguished Executive series, where guest speakers from industry come in to give talks at the university. We run and can host exhibitions and conferences. And we offer a range of consultancy and knowledge transfer partnerships, where we arrange for postgraduate students and academic staff to support research projects with companies. A single KTP project can bring an organisation **an average increase of over £290,000 in annual profits before tax**. Projects can help with growth, exploring new markets and expansion, best practice, and increasing competitive edge.

If you are interested in joining with us through partnership, or simply exploring what we have to offer, or setting us a challenge, please leave me your card, or contact our Research, Business and Innovation unit.

As I have already said, together U+WE will INSPIRE.

