



THE TIMES
HIGHER
Awards 2006

THE WINNERS

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



WINNER
LEEDS METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
WITH BRADFORD CITY
FOOTBALL CLUB



What began almost as an emergency intervention has long-term potential for the community and its university

Sir David Watson



Highly commended
Hertfordshire
University for its
Uno community
bus service

A football club can be a beacon of local community cohesion and inclusion by bringing together groups that might not normally mix — but only if it is run well.

The effort by Leeds Metropolitan University to help rescue Bradford City Football Club from administration and encourage it to fulfil its obligations to the community made a big impression on *The Times Higher's* judges.

Sir David Watson, professor of higher education management at the Institute of Education, said: "It is a highly imaginative programme in a high-profile area [football], and one that links with one of the university's strongest areas of academic work. What began almost as an emergency intervention has real long-term potential for the community and for its university."

Just two years ago, Bradford City seemed to be heading for collapse. Not only was the club in administration, it was criticised for not playing its part in the community cohesion agenda meant to repair damaged relations after the Bradford race riots.

Leeds Metropolitan offered the club the help of its business experts to draft

a financial recovery plan, and it even seconded David Ward, its business development manager, to the club. Students were enlisted through work placements to help provide facilities and services for the community, such as study centres and wedding facilities.

Liz Thomas, senior adviser for widening participation at the Higher Education Academy, said: "This is a great initiative that utilises the specialist knowledge of academic staff and students, through valuable work placements. It is also sustainable — it does not rely on university funding beyond the initial in-kind and financial support that was provided. The positive benefits of work placements are likely to ensure that the partnership continues to thrive while allowing the university to target other community initiatives in the future. An added bonus is that football is an effective way of reaching into wider segments of the community."



Leeds Met: helped rescue Bradford City FC

YOUNG ACADEMIC AUTHOR OF THE YEAR



WINNER
DAN TODMAN,
QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Dan Todman, author of *The Great War: Myth and Memory*, impressed, *The Times Higher's* judges with his expert juggling of "an enormous body" of sources.

He delves into literature, films, war comics and television programmes to present his compelling argument about how attitudes towards the First World War have changed.

Today, it may seem a cut-and-dried case: the war was a national disaster, ill-managed and horrifyingly futile. But Todman illustrates that such a view is anachronistic. At the time, he argues, generals were trusted and the public were more interested in patriotic poetry than in the pity of war.

Jon Turney, former commissioning editor at Penguin Press and convener of the MSc in creative non-fiction writing at Imperial College London, said: "He handled all these sources without ever losing control of the material.

"He latches on to things people remember, from *Blackadder* to the Pat Barker trilogy of novels. It was a very readable book."

Turney added: "Along the way, he rather subtly and nicely changes one's opinion of the whole trajectory of the war – which is, of course, what he set out to do."

Todman's PhD at Cambridge University, on representations of the First World War in British popular culture, clearly paved the way for the book, which he started immediately after his thesis.

His first teaching job was in the war studies department of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. He joined Queen Mary, University of London, in 2003. He lectures on the shaping of contemporary Britain, the First and Second World Wars and the cultural legacy of conflict.

Todman is now working on a general history of the Second World War, which he hopes will interest and excite the public as much as the academic community, just as his first work has.



He handled an enormous body of sources without ever losing control. He latches on to things people remember

Jon Turney



Todman: tracked war in popular culture

YOUNG RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR



WINNER
DANIELLE TURNER,
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

It was her ethical achievements that gave Turner the edge over other shortlisted candidates

Danielle Turner's pioneering research into the brain-enhancing effects of the stimulant drug modafinil really impressed *The Times Higher's* judges.

The Cambridge University psychopharmacologist showed that it is possible to improve the short-term memory of patients with schizophrenia with brain-boosting drugs that have minimal side-effects — and that research won national and international recognition and widespread public interest. Her work offers hope for the thousands of people who suffer from schizophrenia.

Turner published nine excellent peer-reviewed papers detailing original research during her PhD, and since graduating her endeavours have continued alongside a burgeoning interest in the social and ethical implications of developments in neuroscience.

Neuroethics is a new field that involves not only scientists and ethicists but the general public, and Turner has taken part in workshops and government reviews in the area. Her work has been instrumental in

providing guidelines for tackling the ethical dilemmas neuroscientists face.

She was already clearly respected by the research community, the judges said, and demonstrated a good balance between research, ethics and public understanding.

Philip Esler, chief executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, said her scientific work was of "outstanding quality" but it was her ethical achievements that gave Turner the edge over other shortlisted candidates. He said she tackled the ethical challenges her work posed very professionally. "She represents cutting-edge but responsible science," he said.

"Drugs such as modafinil have enormous potential for alleviating pathological conditions but also for expanding the cognitive capacities of healthy individuals," he added. "A new road to the enhancement of brain function opens before us."



Turner: responsible cutting-edge science

Highly commended

Samuel Chamberlain, Cambridge University, for his work on the neurological basis of self-control

RESEARCH PROJECT OF THE YEAR



WINNER
ECZEMA GENE,
DUNDEE UNIVERSITY



The discovery could help attack the root cause of a disease that makes the lives of millions a misery



Highly commended

The 'staggeringly original' discovery of the physics behind invisibility made by Sir John Pendry, professor of physics at Imperial College London

Irwin McLean's discovery of the principal gene behind eczema, and the often related condition asthma, made his project the clear winner for all the judges.

Last year, McLean and his genetic research team at Dundee University isolated the gene that produces filaggrin, the protein that causes eczema. The discovery opens up the possibility of attacking the root cause of a disease that makes the lives of millions of people around the world a misery.

The filaggrin protein is normally found in large quantities in the outer layer of the skin, where it provides a barrier to keep water in and foreign bodies out.

The research team is already working to develop methods of treating and potentially preventing both diseases that go far beyond the creams, ointments and anti-inflammatory drugs used today.

Their findings have resulted in several major high-impact research papers — including one in *Nature Genetics* — and have attracted

worldwide media attention. There is a great deal of interest from the scientific community and also the cosmetics industry.

This excitement is understandable. Roughly 5 million people in the UK carry the filaggrin mutation that causes dry skin and predisposes them to eczema and, to a lesser extent, asthma.

Worldwide, about 60 million people are estimated to carry these particular gene defects, and more than 1 million are predicted to have the severe form of the disease because of these mutations alone.

Peter Atkins, SmithKline Beecham fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College, Oxford, said: "Irwin McLean's project has substantial, perhaps considerable, implications for people who suffer from debilitating or at least irksome skin disease."



McLean: paving the way for eczema cure

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BUSINESS INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR



WINNER
SYRINIX, UNIVERSITY
OF EAST ANGLIA
SPONSOR MICROSOFT



Against the backdrop of climate change, an initiative such as this should be much welcomed

Sir Richard Branson



It has been a good year for Syrinix. Shortly after being shortlisted for the Business Initiative of the Year award, the University of East Anglia spin-off jointly won the £50,000 top prize in a national competition for engineering start-ups. After much deliberation by the judges, the company can now add a *Times Higher* award to its increasingly crowded mantelpiece.

Syrinix, which grew out of blue-skies research funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, has developed signal processing techniques and equipment to detect and locate very small leaks in large-trunk water mains. The detection stops bigger, more devastating leaks from springing up and helps water companies prevent massive loss of water and damage to roads and buildings surrounding the pipes.

Sir Richard Branson, the multi-millionaire entrepreneur who founded the Virgin empire, felt that Syrinix was an extremely timely business idea. Branson, a firm believer in the concept that the simplest business ideas are often the best, said: "Against

the backdrop of climate change, an initiative such as this from Syrinix should be much welcomed and fully recognised."

He added: "The early detection of leaks from large water mains will help to save a precious resource, as well as millions of pounds lost by homes and businesses through water damage each year. I hope that water companies across the globe take a look at this product to see how it can make such a difference."

Arthur Francis, dean of the School of Management at Bradford University, was impressed that the company had secured considerable development funding — making it something more than an academic dream.

When asked to sum up the winning formula that has made Syrinix such a success, he said simply: "They seem to be good ideas that have the potential to work."



Bright ideas: Paul Linford, founder of Syrinix, pictured with Vic Lee, Andrew Jessop, Hal Belmonte, Chris Harrison and Alex Palmer

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



WINNER
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY



Newcastle was praised for its “innovative behavioural framework” and its willingness to be “strongly self-critical”



In assessing leadership programmes nominated for this award, the judges looked for innovation, originality, impact and sustainability. They also sought evidence that the scheme was suited to higher education. Newcastle University’s programme had it all.

In 2005, the university won a prestigious Leadership Foundation fellowship to develop its academic leadership capability. It used this to begin a rigorous succession management programme that helped identify and develop prospective leaders within the institution.

The programme devised a leadership framework that set out ideal behaviours in an outstanding leader and introduced development centres that brought together talented individuals for intensive training.

The judges — Linda Holbeche of the Work Foundation; Baroness Fritchie, a consultant on strategy and leadership; and Sir David Watson, professor of higher education management at the Institute of Education, London — discussed

the entries at meetings led by Ewart Wooldridge, chief executive of the Leadership Foundation, which sponsored the award. The judges praised Newcastle’s “innovative behavioural framework” and its willingness to be “strongly self-critical”.

Indeed, Newcastle’s submission was blunt, saying that academic leadership appointments had historically been made “papally”. Its statement concludes: “This work has given the university more confidence that, in a culture where leadership roles were accepted reluctantly, leaders at Newcastle are more likely to develop the skills to lead in higher education over the next five to ten years.”

The judges felt that the programme worked well at all levels, including the topmost. It fitted into arrangements for promotion and succession planning, they said, and was sustainable because it was easily measurable.



Nurturing leaders: Tony Stevenson, pro vice-chancellor for planning and resources

BEST STUDENT EXPERIENCE



WINNER
LOUGHBOROUGH
UNIVERSITY



Loughborough really excelled when it came to offering a social life, extracurricular activities, amenities and sports facilities

Ben Marks



Whether it is the lectures, the lacrosse or the launderette, Loughborough University gets the thumbs up from students. And that acclaim has won the 94 Group institution the award for Best Student Experience.

The award was based on the results of an online survey in which 6,552 full-time undergraduates at 97 universities gave a rating of between one and seven for their lectures, courses, social life and union, among other things. Pollsters at the market research firm Opinionpanel then calculated the average score for each institution.

Ben Marks, managing director of Opinionpanel, said: "Loughborough really excelled when it came to offering a social life, extracurricular activities, amenities and sports facilities, underpinned by exceptionally high ratings for its academic performance. Loughborough consistently was rated a score of six – very satisfied – or seven – the top score."

The university, considered the number one for sport in the UK, counts world record-breaking athletes such as Baron Coe, Paula Radcliffe and

Steve Backley among its alumni.

Cambridge University came second in the poll and St Andrews University finished third. Cambridge was particularly praised for its tuition in small groups, accommodation and libraries. St Andrews was rated highly for its campus environment and student societies.

Unlike the National Student Survey, our poll included the opinions of first and second-year undergraduate students – not just those in their final year. Marks said: "We asked students to come up with the categories for the Best Student Experience award, so this is the most student-centred poll of full-time undergraduates.

"New universities put in an impressive performance. The universities of Chester, Portsmouth and Central Lancashire came in the top 30."

Last year's winner was Swansea University.



Thumbs up: students rate Loughborough

The UK Research Councils are pleased to support the 2006 Times Higher Award for:

Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers

This award provides an opportunity to highlight some of the innovative schemes to enhance and develop the transferable and career skills of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

Through the Research Careers and Diversity Unit the Councils are working together to:

Attract the best people into research training.

Assist universities to improve the quality of their research training and employability of early stage researchers.

Promote improved career development for researchers.



In addition, we have two cross-cutting aims:

To promote diversity within the research workforce at all levels and in the governance of science.

To enhance the international attractiveness of research training in UK HEIs.

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Kate Reading - Post-graduate skills

General Enquiries:

Annabel Clifton on 01793 444388
ResearchCareers@rcuk.ac.uk

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS



WINNER
IMPERIAL COLLEGE
LONDON
SPONSOR RESEARCH
COUNCILS UK AND UKGRAD

Imperial College London has taken an innovative and integrated approach to supporting early-career researchers, according to *The Times Higher* judges.

Julia Goodfellow, chief executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, said: "Imperial has moved from being a traditional graduate school to one in which the focus is on transferable skills and career development."

The university's two graduate schools are clear that they have shifted from a traditional focus on admissions and examinations to the provision of high-quality skills training and development. Their courses have brought together staff from across the institution. The university has, for example, a three-day residential research skills development course for first-year research students that uses postdoctoral staff as tutors. They can apply the experience towards a more formal teaching qualification.

Sir Gareth Roberts, president of Wolfson College, Oxford, said: "The university has been innovative in

using postdoctoral staff to tutor the postgraduate students and in awarding bursaries for research purposes."

Imperial is developing an educational research programme in skills development and has awarded bursaries to students to pursue research under the guidance of two senior lecturers in transferable skills.

Bob Burgess, vice-chancellor of Leicester University, praised Imperial for integrating its skills-development courses into the main business of the university. "It is not 'bolted on'," he said.

Bernie Morley, director of the Graduate School for Life Sciences and Medicine at Imperial, said: "These efforts have led to fundamental changes in the culture, whereby skills development is no longer viewed as something that is brought in or tagged on, but something that staff across the college work together to produce."



Development of skills is now viewed as something that staff across the college work together to produce

Bernie Morley



Innovative: Bernie Morley, director of Imperial's Graduate School for Life Sciences, with Esat Alpay and Dame Julia Higgins

OUTSTANDING STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT PACKAGE



WINNER
EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY



I was impressed by the creative initiatives designed to encourage retention

Sir Martin Harris



Highly commended
Leeds University's City and Regional Team's scholarship scheme developed with the Skipton Building Society. It supports young people in rural North Yorkshire

Providing a suite of bursaries and scholarships that are linked to keeping an individual in study rather than “just giving money away” to targeted groups has helped Edge Hill University win this year’s award.

The institution offers up to £1,000 a year for students from low-income families. Research shows that this group is most likely to struggle to stay on a course.

But it was the university’s development of a range of innovative support schemes, worth more for their capacity to maintain a student’s commitment to learning than for their monetary value, that caught the eye of the *Times Higher’s* judges.

Edge Hill’s “progression bursary”, for instance, is worth just £100. But to get this small carrot students must first complete a questionnaire that helps them evaluate their academic progress, decide how likely they are to drop out of their course, and take part in follow-up tutorials to help them resolve any difficulties they have identified.

Another small but significant award is the “facilities card”, a benefit worth £200 that students can use to help cover

the cost of books, printing and photocopying.

Sir Martin Harris, director of the Office for Fair Access, said: “Edge Hill’s entry was an excellent example of a broad package of financial support tailored to the needs of a number of underrepresented groups. I was particularly impressed by the range of creative initiatives designed to encourage retention and achievement.”

Anthony McClaran, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, said: “Developments like the progression bursary show a spirit of innovation.”

Geoff Layer, pro vice-chancellor for learning and teaching at Bradford University, said that Edge Hill stood out because it had “built in support for buying essentials and additional support to encourage those who having started their courses may need additional encouragement to keep going”.



Targeted assistance: Marnie Jackson, Christine Coleman and Adam Bell

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS



WINNER UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

SPONSOR HIGHER
EDUCATION ACADEMY

An innovative approach to tackling one of the biggest challenges facing overseas students coming to the UK has helped the University of Central Lancashire win this year's award for Outstanding Support for Overseas Students.

The Times Higher has highlighted the difficulties many international students face in understanding and speaking English when they first arrive in the UK.

Uclan is one step ahead of most other institutions in recognising this and investing in a language programme designed to address the problem before students arrive.

The award judges were impressed by Uclan's investment this academic year in an English language and culture programme in China, where it has a large number of franchised courses.

This included the appointment of a head of overseas operations, a dedicated language co-ordinator, and ten specialist language tutors based in partner institutions in China.

Pat Killingley, director of educational services for the British Council, said: "The range of the programme is impressive, providing excellent support not only in

language skills relevant to their subject of study, but also to UK culture and traditions and to the visa and other formalities of entering the UK."

Beatrice Merrick, director of services and research for Ukcosa, the council for international education, said Uclan stood out "for the way that it focused on one of the key aspects to ensuring that international students have a successful stay in the UK".

She added: "Language and cultural adaptation are key for all international students, but this is particularly true for students from China, for whom the linguistic and cultural transition can be particularly great."

Uclan's programme is assessed by the department of languages and international studies, which means students can count successful completion of it towards their degree. Uclan is now extending the programme to its operations in other countries.

The range of the programme provides excellent support in language skills and UK culture

Pat Killingley

Highly commended

Warwick University for the range and scale of its support services for its 7,000-plus international students



Isabel Donnelly: on Uclan's TEFL course team

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



WINNER
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY

SPONSOR
HIGHER EDUCATION
ACADEMY

Anything that makes it easier to get employers to provide work-experience placements is to be supported
Susan Daniels

Academics, students and employers agree that the perfect work experience placement is hard to find. And it becomes even more difficult when it is for a student with disabilities.

So Manchester University has done students, their tutors and employers a huge favour with www.disabilitytoolkits.ac.uk, which scooped the award for Outstanding Support for Students with Disabilities.

The website offers advice and information. Students can use it to discover disability-friendly employers, employers can check their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act and tutors can browse to learn about the specific needs of their students.

The site's aim is to "enhance the competitiveness of disabled students in the graduate labour market".

It was the clear winner for one of the judges, Susan Daniels, chief executive of the National Deaf Children's Society. She said: "Work experience for disabled students can be extremely problematic, and anything that can be done to tackle the difficulties of

getting employers to provide high-quality work experience placements is to be supported."

Pat Dyson of the Royal National Institute of the Blind praised the initiative for involving employers as well as students and tutors. "This addresses all the key players and also has links to the Government's disability agenda."

Tammy Goldfeld, one of the minds behind Disability Toolkits, said she had been inundated with requests from careers services for information about the site and had been invited to speak at conferences. Ms Goldfeld, who works in the Careers and Employability Division of Manchester University, said: "The volume of requests indicates that the service is filling a gap in provision.

"It also illustrates the university's commitment to promoting and sustaining diversity within academe, business and society at large."



The toolkit team: Patrick Johnson, Fiona Christie and Chris Hughes

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



WINNER
ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

It displays a comprehensive approach, showing what can be done when “student enthusiasm is matched by executive leadership”

Highly commended Gloucestershire University, the first university to gain ISO 14001 from the British Standards Institution

The judges for our first award for Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Development, made in association with Forum for the Future, praised the high quality of the nominations and admitted that it was a close-run contest.

They looked for entries covering the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, with proven achievement over the past year, and chose St Andrews University as the winner. Sara Parkin, co-founder of Forum for the Future, said: “St Andrews’ partnership with students, along with innovative multidisciplinary teaching methods, a commitment to executive leadership and bottom-up engagement of staff and students, tipped the balance.”

St Andrews is charting the progress of the first student cohort taking a four-year interdisciplinary honours degree in sustainable development. Staff from three faculties teach the course. St Andrews believes that no single discipline can span the field effectively.

Dominic Houlihan, professor of zoology and vice-principal of Aberdeen University, said it was notoriously

difficult to get units to contribute to a new degree across disciplines, and the programme was an achievement.

“It will be very interesting to see how these students develop – and also whether the momentum in teaching as well as in other areas of the university’s life really can make a difference to the profile of St Andrews, which is already very attractive to students.”

Elaine Thomas, rector of University College for the Creative Arts, said St Andrews displayed a comprehensive strategic approach, showing what could be done when “student enthusiasm is matched by executive leadership”. The degree sits alongside initiatives including Fairtrade status for the university and a students’ association, a comprehensive sustainability strategy including an ethical screening policy for investments, and completing a carbon budget for the science campus in partnership with the Carbon Trust.



Green leader: Jan Bebbington, who serves on the degree’s management committee

WIDENING PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR



WINNER
THE CERTIFICATE
IN HEALTH SCIENCE,
NOTTINGHAM AND
LINCOLN UNIVERSITIES



This guarantees sound progression routes for successful candidates at various levels

Sir David Watson



A partnership that helps people from poor backgrounds enter medical school has won Nottingham and Lincoln universities the prize for Widening Participation Initiative of the Year.

The judges said the scheme identified gifted students who would otherwise stand little chance of entering some of the most academically demanding and oversubscribed subjects including medicine and other health-related disciplines.

Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said: "This is making a real difference in a university discipline that is perhaps the most socially exclusive of all."

The certificate in health science will boost by some 50 per cent at Nottingham's Medical School the number of students from neighbourhoods with a history of low participation in higher education. Students who initially enrol at Lincoln must meet at least two of a number of criteria, which include being the first in a family to go to university, being in care and being from a school with a poor academic record. Ten students

from the course will then go on to become medical students at Nottingham this academic year.

Sir David Watson, professor of higher education management at the Institute of Education, London, and former vice-chancellor of Brighton University, said: "The real strength of the certificate in health science is that it guarantees sound progression routes for successful candidates at various levels — unlike some schemes that merely move a few candidates into another competition."

Liz Thomas, senior adviser for widening participation at the Higher Education Academy, said: "This initiative provides an innovative approach to widening access to the elite disciplines of medicine, veterinary medicine and other health-related programmes. The particularly unusual collaborative approach enables the provision of a range of progression opportunities."



Improving health prospects: Penelope Griffin, John Clayton and Mark Barren

MOST IMAGINATIVE USE OF DISTANCE LEARNING



WINNER
DERBY UNIVERSITY

This category drew a very strong field of innovative entries that impressed the judges, but the decision to honour Derby University's Learning through Work scheme was unanimous.

The initiative customises courses to meet the workplace needs of more than 830 learners. It lets them plan and structure their learning around their job, and it certifies their accomplishments.

Gráinne Conole, professor of e-learning at the Open University's Institute of Educational Technology, said: "Derby's entry represents an excellent example of how technology can be used to provide more flexible and individual tailored learning to meet the demands of a modern workforce. It offers many pedagogical ingredients for success — self-paced learning, personalised environment, negotiated contracts, event-based activities — in a coherent programme of support."

More such courses are needed to allow people to progress towards their goals in their own way and time, said Erica McAteer of Strathclyde University's Applied Educational Research Centre.

"The 'interchangeability' of credit

gained within the different ranges of programme supported and other cognate courses is a huge plus; and the developing interface with employers and the potential for real, grown-up, workplace learning gives the final gong to this one," McAteer said.

Sir John Daniel, president of the Commonwealth of Learning, said: "The submissions illustrated the great variety of ways in which technology is being used to enhance learning. In this sense, I sometimes felt we were comparing apples, oranges and bananas."

He said he was particularly impressed by projects that could scale up a quality learning experience to make it available to more people. "This competition serves a useful purpose, not least to remind us of the great creativity in UK higher education."

Economic development agency Manchester Solutions is interested in franchising Derby's approach.



Bespoke options: Chris Newman



This shows how technology can provide more flexible and individual tailored learning for a modern workforce

Gráinne Conole



Highly commended

Andrew Hugill, professor of music at De Montfort University, who developed a MOO to combat the isolation of music technology students

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OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY



WINNER
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**This undoubted
winner showed
technological
innovation in a
very demanding
environment**

— space

David Way



The judges were unanimous in their decision to award the prize for Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology to Surrey Satellite Technology Limited.

The spin-off from Surrey University's department of electronic engineering has developed space technology that has provided support for relief missions after disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

But disaster management is just a small part of the activities of the company, which has a turnover of £18 million. SSTL specialises in low-cost access to space and in the construction of low-cost satellites and services using off-the-shelf technology.

David Way, director of innovation platforms and key technologies at the Department of Trade and Industry, said SSTL was his "undoubted winner". It had "clear technological innovation in a very demanding environment — space". He added that it had enjoyed a series of novel achievements in the past year and had made inroads in its market.

SSTL supplies devices to the Disaster Monitoring Constellation,

a global collaboration made up of five imaging satellites that is now an integral part of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters. In October 2005, it launched Top Sat, an imaging satellite built for the UK Government, and in December, it created GIOVE-A, a demonstrator for Europe's planned Galileo positioning system.

Stephen Brooke — former director of business development at knowledge-transfer investors IP2IPO — said he was a "big fan" of the company.

Andrew Ramsay, executive director of the Engineering Council UK, said the company was "so self-evidently a service that is transforming public and private work by putting a 21st-century resource affordably in reach of so many businesses and countries". He said he was also impressed that SSTL met his personal criterion of being "inherently supportive for sustainable development, as the UN work demonstrates".



**Over the moon: Sir Martin Sweeting,
chairman of SSTL**

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR



WINNER
UNIVERSITY OF
WOLLONGONG



The School of Medicine will seek to tackle a shortage of doctors in remote areas by training people to work outside urban centres



Highly commended

The National University of Singapore for its strong academic performance and international profile

Judging the Commonwealth University of the Year for the first time was no easy task — not least because the judges themselves were ricocheting around the world during much of the process.

The toughest task was defining the ground rules — should the judges look for the best university in the Commonwealth or for the university that best reflected the ideals for which the Commonwealth is respected?

In the end, they did neither — and both. The Commonwealth not only works for international peace, liberty, democracy and equal rights for all, it also aims to end poverty, ignorance, disease and racial discrimination.

The eventual winner, Australia's Wollongong University, 80km south of Sydney, seeks to make a significant impact on its community. When civic pressure to establish the university was at its height in the 1950s, Wollongong was in Australia's grimy industrial heartland. On opening in 1962, its aim was to train a few hundred students a year as metallurgists, engineers and chemists to work in the steel industry.

Today, the university is a major player in the local economy. It has also made big contributions to the city's social and cultural life. But it wants to be even more involved in improving community life. Its proposed Innovation Campus and its plans for a Graduate School of Medicine will, the judges feel, reinforce an engagement with the community that chimes with Commonwealth ideals.

The School of Medicine will seek to tackle Australia's shortage of doctors in regional, rural and remote communities by training people to work outside urban areas. It will encourage students to develop links with regional areas while they train, in the expectation that they will be more likely to practise there when they graduate.

And when the Innovation Campus is completed in 15 years, it is expected to employ 5,000 people in knowledge economy jobs.



Wollongong: a pillar of the community

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



WINNER
LISA JARDINE,
QUEEN MARY,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

In academe, a great many people know a great many things, but few can match Lisa Jardine when it comes to communicating that knowledge.

Jardine, whom Baroness Kennedy called “a force of nature”, won this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award for her unique ability to communicate complex ideas and engage people who might otherwise find academe impenetrable. Baroness Kennedy, the barrister and Labour peer, said: “Lisa bridges that world of academia and the public domain with great skill and elegance. She is a great ambassador for the academic world, making complex ideas seem accessible.”

Jardine’s contributions to broadcasting, including Radio 4’s *Start the Week* and *A Point of View*, as well as regular contributions to newspapers, would be impressive enough.

But judges were also pleased to find that Jardine was no mere media darling whose star status means she can’t find time to teach students at Queen Mary, University of London, where she is professor of Renaissance studies.

Baroness Kennedy said: “There is

the public face of Lisa but then there is the less visible work she does, helping to motivate and educate young people for whom higher education would not be a natural choice.”

Bernadette Porter, former vice-chancellor of Roehampton University, said: “Both to the students within Queen Mary and to the interested public beyond, Lisa Jardine is an inspiration.”

Jardine has been forced to slow down since being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005, but she still teaches graduates at the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters, which she established at Queen Mary in 2002.

“Lisa transcends higher education. She has brought her discipline to a much wider audience without ever compromising the interests of her students or her research. She is one of the genuine stars of the system,” said John O’Leary, editor of *The Times Higher*.



Jardine: ‘an inspiration and a force of nature’



**Lisa bridges
that world of
academia and
the public
domain with
great skill and
elegance**

Baroness Kennedy





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HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OF THE YEAR



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NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY

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There is huge excitement about the overseas campuses, particularly with the emerging importance of China

Bernadette Porter



Highly commended
Leeds Metropolitan University

To open one overseas campus in a year is impressive, to open two is almost showing off. Yet this is exactly what Nottingham University, winner of the Higher Education Institution of the Year award, did when it unveiled the Ningbo campus in China and the Semenyih campus in Malaysia within a week of each other last September.

The scale of the achievement is summed up by a photograph taken at the Malaysia site in 2003. It shows Douglas Tallack, pro vice-chancellor, standing by a clearing in the Malaysian jungle. Behind him is an expanse of reddish earth and a bulldozer.

Just over two years later, the 101-acre purpose-built campus boasts lecture halls, laboratories, a library, a sports complex and a lake. Between them, the Malaysian and Chinese campuses are home to 4,000 students. Curiously, both Semenyih and Ningbo are modelled on the university's UK campus – Ningbo is a near carbon copy of Nottingham's Trent Building, complete with a facsimile of its clock tower.

Bernadette Porter, former vice-chancellor of Roehampton University,

said: "There is huge excitement about these international campuses and particularly with the emerging importance of China. It is a spectacular achievement by Nottingham."

Baroness Kennedy, the barrister and Labour peer, said: "This is about Nottingham being really bold. It is about looking to the future and Nottingham saying it wants to have a relationship of substance with those parts of the world. I am sure that the campuses will reap huge rewards for Nottingham."

Judges were also impressed that staff and students have the chance to move between campuses.

"At home and abroad, Nottingham has made great strides, and it has all come together in the past year. The opening of the Chinese and Malaysian campuses shows the university stealing a march on its competitors worldwide," said John O'Leary, editor of *The Times Higher*.



Nottingham: making great strides



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