

## The engaged University

Public engagement at Bristol plays an important role in the University's communications activities and encompasses the many ways in which staff and students connect with the public, from talks, festivals, volunteering and performances to research with or driven by community and public groups.

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

- support and promote dialogue with staff/students and the public;
- play a leading role in setting the national agenda on public engagement in higher education;
- respond positively to community needs;
- play a positive role in the affairs of the city, region and nation;
- nurture relationships with alumni and other friends of the University;
- behave responsibly as an institution.

### Playing a positive role in the city

The Graduate School of Education led a series of cross-sector workshops with leaders from around the city about improving outcomes for young people, and engaged with local head teachers about how the University can best work with their schools. Three members of University staff are governors of the Merchants Academy, in which the University is a partner. The Academy's recent Ofsted report described great improvements in the school.

The University plays a leading role in Science City Bristol. The Vice-Chancellor chairs its Advisory Board, and the Centre for Public Engagement (CPE), within the Communications and Marketing Division, is involved in its public engagement activities.

The University is well represented on many of the Bristol City Partnership's Boards, covering areas such as health and well-being, sustainable communities and raising the aspiration of children and young people.

### Supporting and promoting dialogue

Examples of activities in 2010/11 include a public events programme that provided opportunities for the public to engage with staff and students, and work that supported academics to develop their own engagement activities.

The public events programme for the year included the following:

- The CPE-run Changing Perspectives project, which explored what happens when the worlds of art and science collide. It included two exhibitions, comprising art that either resulted from collaborations between University researchers and artists, or was produced by academics and students themselves; a programme of talks and workshops; and a family-

orientated weekend with circus performers and a marquee full of research-related interactive exhibits.

Over 120 academics and students were involved, and the events attracted over 4,500 members of the public.

- Twenty-three public talks, delivered at venues around Bristol, on subjects as diverse as 'Doctors and their gardens', 'Multiculturalism today', 'The use of stem cells' and the alternative vote. Over 1,300 people attended a talk.
- Nineteen public lectures organised by the Public and Ceremonial Events Office (also part of the Communications and Marketing Division).
- A range of public events hosted by the Departments of Music and Drama and the Botanic Garden.
- A CPE-hosted Charter Day event to celebrate the legacy of the University's centenary. About 70 people, including members of the public, staff and students, gathered to experience an art installation produced by Drama student Francesca Murray, where soundbites from three of the centenary lectures were projected on to the Jeppe Hein sculpture in Royal Fort Gardens.
- Two CPE-hosted exhibition tents, on 'Biodiversity is Life' and 'Technologies for the Future', at the annual Festival of Nature, organised by the Bristol Natural History consortium. Over 14,000 people attended the Festival.
- An interactive exhibition of research in the Wills Building and a photographic and film exhibition in Royal Fort House as part of Doors Open Day. Clifton Hill House and the School of Chemistry also opened their doors, with University buildings attracting a total of 3,823 visitors.



Above: Circus performer at Changing Perspectives.

Above right: Visitors at the Festival of Nature.



Examples of public engagement support provided to academics include the following:

- A team from the School of Mathematics took an exhibition about quantum graphs to the prestigious Royal Society Summer Exhibition, attracting over 13,000 people.
- CPE supported a record number of academics with public engagement sections of grant applications, and worked with several groups and individuals to secure grants either for stand-alone projects or where public engagement forms a large part of the research. Examples include a £300,000 grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for a sustainable communities project led by Dr Mike Fraser from Computer Science, £20,000 from EPSRC for a public engagement project led by Dr David Glowacki from Chemistry, and £23,000 from the HE STEM programme with Professor Colin Taylor in Civil Engineering.
- All postgraduate students from the University's four Doctoral Training Centres attended a training course in public engagement run by CPE in February.

### Setting the national agenda

Working with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), which is co-hosted by the University, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England, CPE has helped develop guidelines for the inclusion of public engagement in the Research Excellence Framework. The University was one of the first to sign the NCCPE's manifesto, making a commitment to review its progress towards becoming an Engaged University.

### Responding to community needs

The University has been involved in the University of Local Knowledge project, a sustainable communities project led by Knowle West Media Centre, which aims to value local knowledge through short films featuring community members talking about their area of interest or expertise.

Bristol's Community Sport Programme continues to gain momentum. More than 100 student volunteers were involved in planning, designing and running the three-day RELAYS secondary school Festival of Sport, involving over 1,400 pupils from every secondary school in the city.

### Nurturing relationships with alumni

Bristol is in touch with over 101,000 alumni in 170 countries around the world and nearly 8,000 individuals have signed up to the Bristol alumni LinkedIn and Facebook pages, doubling last year's participation.

During 2010/11, the Convocation Committee, the Campaigns and Alumni Relations team and alumni volunteers around the world organised many alumni events worldwide. These included a Convocation Lecture by Alastair Stewart (Economics & Politics 1970-73, Hon LLD 2008) in Bristol; a London panel discussion on flood risk and climate change; gatherings in New Delhi, Long Beach California, Paris and Japan; and a dinner in Cambridge.

Evidence of the University's excellent engagement record with its alumni is clear from the fact that Bristol has more alumni donors than any other UK university (excepting Oxbridge). In 2010/11, more than 6,100 alumni gave gifts, with more than 300 of these giving at Pioneer level (see pp27-28).

### Behaving responsibly as an institution

The University was awarded two international environmental accreditations for reducing its impact on the environment. It is one of the first Russell Group universities to achieve ISO 14001, an international standard that provides a framework for organisations to manage and improve their environmental performance. ISO 14064 demonstrates that the University has implemented rigorous management and reduction of carbon emissions with robust plans for future reductions. More information about the University's efforts to improve the sustainability of the physical estate can be found on pp22-23.