

Principal's Update 19 December 2011

Colleagues

As the Christmas holidays draw near, I wanted to use this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work during the past year. Once again, in 2011, our staff at Aberdeen have continued to demonstrate the professionalism and commitment that give our students a superb intellectual experience and which produces world class research. As a result I am very proud that we head into 2012 in good shape and able to work positively towards achieving our goals.

Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences (IBES)

I was pleased to be able to open the IBES annual research day recently. The programme of talks and posters gave a real demonstration of the outstanding research being undertaken by IBES colleagues at all stages of the academic lifecourse. The programme featured many examples of both great unidisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. Meetings such as this are an essential part of our academic enterprise.

Professor Anne Glover

I know that we are all delighted that our colleague Professor Anne Glover, Chair in Molecular and Cell Biology, and currently the Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, has been appointed as the Chief Scientific Adviser for Europe. This is fantastic news not only for Anne but also for the University of Aberdeen. Anne is an outstanding scientist who has achieved a tremendous amount at the University and for Scotland and she thoroughly deserves this success.

New Book on Special Collections

I also had the pleasure of attending the launch of a beautiful new book on the University's Special Collections edited by Peter Davidson, Jane Stevenson and Iain Beavan. The book features contributions from many colleagues and is a piece of true scholarship which enunciates clearly the importance of our position as the guardian of one of Scotland's more significant collections.

Promotion Round

Everyone will have recently received the email from Stephen Logan initiating the new promotion round. This gives everyone an opportunity to reflect on their career and I do advise people to discuss with senior colleagues how their cv is developing and whether this year is the time to apply for promotion or to understand what is needed to develop a compelling case. Could I also remind academic colleagues that we recognise explicitly contributions to developing pedagogy, research, engagement with industry and public engagement in looking at a case for promotion.

Our University Community

I also attended two events recently which highlighted the range of the extracurricular strength of the University. First, I gave a keynote address on the role of sport in universities at a British Universities and Colleges Sport seminar. It was great to feature our long history of engagement with sport (my talk included a picture of our 1872 football team) and to look forward to our future engagement both in terms of facilities such as the new Aquatic Centre and in elite excellence. This term has seen some great performances from many University teams and individuals such as a trophy for the football team to celebrate. Meanwhile its great to see participation in sport from many colleagues like myself just aiming to help ward off senility! As part of this I am proud of our commitment to staff well-being which is manifested in many ways including, for example, free membership of the Aberdeen Sports Village.

The other event that brought the wider role of the University into focus was the carol service which was a lovely celebration of the Christmas story with inspirational music by our wonderful choir. The

packed congregation at St Machar's Cathedral was also a vivid reminder that the University is more than just an organisation, it is a community and an important part of the civic life of Aberdeen.

I wish you all a wonderful festive season.

Best Regards

Ian Diamond

Principal and Vice-Chancellor