

## Editorial

Professor Les Ebdon CBE DL  
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive  
University of Bedfordshire

Subsequent to my appointment as the Director General Designate of the Office of Fair Access, I have had to step down from being the Chair of the University Think Tank, million+. Over the five years I have been Chair we have published a number of reports, but I think it is particularly appropriate the last report that we published while I was Chair was entitled '*Teaching that Matters*'. It was launched at the University of Greenwich by the Universities and Science Minister, The Right Honourable David Willetts MP. The title for the report was suggested by the Minister himself when he launched the million+ report '*Research that Matters*' in May 2011. The Coalition Government is attaching renewed importance to teaching in higher education. So will students as fees rise to £9,000 per year.

The report highlights the dynamic, innovative and diverse developments in teaching in modern universities. '*Teaching that Matters*' investigates how modern universities support high quality teaching and learning for the hundreds of thousands of students who perhaps, in previous generations, would not have had the transformational opportunity to benefit from higher education. One characteristic of the many developments described is the way in which modern universities connect with the experience of students and put them at the centre of their learning. The report was researched and written by colleagues at the Centre for Developmental and Applied Research Education at the University of Wolverhampton and can be downloaded from the million+ website, [www.millionplus.ac.uk](http://www.millionplus.ac.uk).

Given the emphasis on innovation in our own values, I was delighted that our own Business Pods are singled out as an example of making learning relevant. The emphasis on real projects for real businesses, in which students manage their own learning through problem solving, has clearly engaged students in the University of Bedfordshire Business School. It can be demonstrated that academic achievement and retention have risen and that the students value the unique opportunity that the pods allow.

The report covers many other innovations in learning from which we could certainly learn from as a University. It is encouraging to see that, in universities which take high quality teaching seriously, there are still creative ideas being developed which place the student at the centre of their own learning, use technology to promote engagement and enhance the transforming life experiences available to students.

As I contemplate a life change from educator to regulator on my retirement, it is encouraging to see that teaching in universities is in good hands in universities like the University of Bedfordshire.