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As a University that is connected to people and place, what we do here matters. We are proud of the strong economic, social and cultural contribution we make to our communities, and value the connections we have with individuals and organisations within them locally, nationally and around the world. Through teaching, learning, research and innovation we work in partnership with our students, staff, community, business and the professions to drive social inclusion, economic prosperity and sustainability in Plymouth, across the nation and globally in our mission to advance knowledge and transform lives – as the enterprise university.

Innovative and shared learning partnerships enrich the Plymouth University student, staff and partner experience, and develop skills and expertise, creating new learning pathways and employability opportunities that raise aspirations. That spirit of collaboration makes a real and sustainable difference as you will see from the powerful examples contained in this edition of Enterprise.

At our very core is the unique partnership approach we take with our students to provide them with the best university experience we can, whether at home or overseas. Working together across academic and professional boundaries, we place our students at the heart of our University, engaging them fully as partners in their academic learning and personal developments. Their voice permeates every conversation and shapes all that we do.

As you will see, our partnership approach is also a through-life journey, with partners ranging from the Children’s University, our Academy Schools through to our alumni network and celebrated collaboration with the University of the Third Age. Our partners are proud to be ‘with Plymouth University’, and span a diverse range of sectors, including professional sport – with Plymouth Albion Rugby Football Club and the Plymouth University Raiders Basketball Team – to powerful collaborations in health, education, and research, such as with the NHS, and the military, through the Britannia Royal Naval College. And our partnerships know no physical boundaries either, whether they’re raising aspirations and addressing health inequalities in the City of Plymouth or helping to create a vibrant and sustainable knowledge economy in Sri Lanka.

Aristotle once said ‘friendship is essentially a partnership’, and this is the key to our success as our approach to partnership is one based on mutual trust and benefit. We are stronger and more impactful as a result of our connectivity and the very real opportunities that they realise for our entire global community. So I want to say ‘thank you’ and dedicate this edition of Enterprise to each and every one of our partners for the role they have played in transforming lives through partnership with Plymouth University.
Plymouth University is an anchor institution for the South West, working to address inequalities, and generating opportunities for its communities across health, education, arts and culture.
Those words, from Alzheimer’s Society Chief Executive Jeremy Hughes, demonstrate the size of the challenge facing dementia researchers. But they also point to potential ways of addressing the condition’s wide-ranging effects, and it is through a partnership approach that Plymouth University has quickly become a pioneer in all aspects of dementia diagnosis, treatment and support.
From developing mobile apps to help GP diagnosis, to using innovative technology to assist those affected by it in their day-to-day lives, the University’s work focuses on helping those affected by the condition, providing a support network for their families and carers and raising awareness among the wider community.

Ian Sherriff, Plymouth University’s Academic Lead for Dementia, and one of the Prime Minister’s national Dementia Champions, said: “It is fast becoming the case that when people think of dementia research, they think of Plymouth University. We are providing an integrated and multidisciplinary research, training and consultancy service which is at the top table as far as dementia is concerned in the UK. By continuing to work together we can make a difference to the lives of those families affected by this horrible condition.”

The University’s mission to work in partnership to tackle dementia starts at home, as its own dementia research group includes academics from the fields of social work, healthcare, medicine, robotics, health informatics, and the arts. They, in turn, work with other sections of the institution with the result seeing Plymouth commit to becoming the country’s first dementia-friendly university early in 2013. That pledge has already seen specialist training being provided for hundreds of managers and front line staff, with dementia now embedded in courses across the academic spectrum.

That initiative complements the University’s role as a founding partner in the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance, launched in the city in 2011 and bringing together businesses, statutory and civic organisations, and voluntary groups. Working in conjunction with the Prime Minister’s National Challenge on Dementia, the partnership promotes awareness across the community, in particular assisting in a pilot project to educate young people in city schools.

Former BBC newsreader and Plymouth honorary graduate Angela Rippon OBE worked with the University and the alliance on the pilot project. She said: “The lessons we learn from this initial stage of the project will ensure we can offer schools all over the country the opportunity of being involved in a nationwide scheme. Ultimately we will be creating not just dementia friendly communities, but a dementia friendly generation, and that will have a major impact on the way we react to dementia, patients and their carers in the future.”

The success of the University’s work on dementia has placed its research group in great demand, and its list of collaborations now includes the top tables of government and the NHS, national charities such as Alzheimer’s Society and Age UK, and public sector authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. The research team has also presented papers at the International Alzheimer’s conference in Vienna 2012 and various conferences across the UK.

Also in 2013, the Plymouth team joined forces with Bournemouth University’s Dementia Institute to launch a dementia challenge for public sector executives across the South West. An initial two-day event included workshops to make managers more aware of the condition, and steps they can take to identify and support people affected by it, and it has led into an ongoing mentoring programme.

This national profile was emphasised in September, when the University’s research group was invited to showcase its research and support initiatives to an audience of MPs and Peers at the House of Commons. The event also featured presentations from partners including the Dementia Action Alliance, Plymouth SeniorNet, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, the Devon Partnership NHS Trust and the city’s Clinical Effectiveness and Medicines Optimisation Team.

Mr Sherriff, who was recently re-elected onto the national board of the Alzheimer’s Society, said: “The event provided us with the chance to showcase our expertise, but also to network with some of the country’s most influential people. It was invaluable in helping us expand the fantastic work we are already doing, encouraging others to follow our lead in this field, and ensuring we stay at the forefront of dementia research for years to come.”
Plymouth University is the largest provider of education to the combined health, medical and dental professions in the South West. From nurses to neurosurgeons, physiotherapists to paramedics, Plymouth has become home to a multi-disciplinary community of student health professionals, who, thanks to the partnerships that the University has put in place with trusts, hospitals and authorities across the region, have the opportunity to learn and train in a clinical environment.

Now the University is pioneering an innovative style of health education – one that brings together clinical treatment, patient care, staff expertise, and student learning, with elements of social enterprise and community engagement. And nowhere is this better embodied than in the Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE), within the Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry (PUPSMD).

Established this year, the PDSE brings PUPSMD’s successful Dental Education Facilities and their community activities under a single strategic umbrella. In doing so, it becomes the first clinical entity to be incorporated into a social enterprise by an education provider – one that received the Social Enterprise Mark along with the University itself.

Professor Christopher Tredwin, Head of the School of Dentistry, said: “We are excited that Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise is now up and running and already making a positive impact in the communities within which we operate. The social enterprise structure gives us the flexibility to achieve so much more and to build on our historical successes.

“Achieving the Social Enterprise Mark brings with it immense kudos and is a powerful endorsement of all we plan to do – working to improve access to dentistry for the local community, as well as delivering the highest level of training.”

PDSE employs 70 members of staff, including dental nurses and technicians and administrators, and they work across the centres in Exeter, Plymouth and Truro, as well as reaching out into the community, through schools and local organisations to address educational issues. And already a number of projects are up and running.

One such is an oral health round table being held in Plymouth in November in partnership with Wrigley, an event which features key figures in the world of dentistry, local MPs and other leading thinkers, focusing on how local health stakeholders can best work together within the new NHS landscape to encourage people to take better care of their oral health.

Another project in its infancy is a collaboration with the University’s Institute of Digital Art and Technology. Plans are afoot to develop an educational experience using the University’s Immersive Vision Theatre, taking the audience inside a giant’s mouth, featuring teeth, gums, tooth brushing, having a filling and other dental activity. When the project goes ahead, potentially later next year, it will be the first time in the world that this technology will have been used for such a purpose.

Professor Tredwin said: “The projects we are planning will involve students going out into the community and addressing issues of oral health care and oral health inequalities, working with a wide range of groups, from primary school pupils to care homes, substance abusers and the homeless. This is invaluable experiential learning for them in the process.”

A similar ethos pervades the work of the Cumberland Surgery, a partnership between the University and Plymouth Community Healthcare, which was launched in February to provide Devonport residents with greater access to health services.

Located inside the Cumberland Centre, the surgery provides frontline treatment to more than 600 patients, including the homeless and those with drug and alcohol problems, as well as many families moving into the area, among them those from Eastern Europe.

The team of two doctors, one nurse, a nurse practitioner, and a phlebotomist (a professional skilled in the administering of blood tests etc) see up to 35 patients per day, five days per week. They also provide advice and guidance on social and exercise issues, as well as sexual abuse.
Like the dental educational facilities and the Centre for Eyecare Excellence – the University’s new optometry centre – the Cumberland Surgery also serves as a teaching hub. Indeed, medical students are now coming to the surgery on special study units, and they’ve established referral systems between Cumberland and the neighbouring PUPSMD dental training facility, as well as enrolling patients in clinical trials.

“Through partnership – both internal between our faculties, and with Plymouth Community Healthcare – we’ve built a platform for a range of experiential learning opportunities, which could be extended across the University,” added Richard. “So while we’re treating patients, our students are developing, learning, and taking the first steps towards hopefully building their careers here in the region.

“We’ll also be having conversations with other organisations such as NHS England and Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust to see how we can work together and improve primary and secondary care for patients, and reduce the strain on our hospitals. In many respects, this is just the beginning of the story.”

“Healthy Community

“Plymouth has some challenging health inequalities across the city, with Devonport a particular focus. So the Cumberland Surgery is right on the frontline, providing treatment and patient care where it’s genuinely needed the most.

“For example, we’re detecting a number of new cases of diabetes, and we’re working to improve cardio-vascular risk factors and support enormous mental health and social care needs.”

Dr Richard Ayres, Lead for Population Health at PUPSMD
A CULTURE OF PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY COHESION

British Art Show 7; The America’s Cup; the Plymouth International Book Festival; the Moby-Dick Big Read; the Respect Festival. Study the dramatis personae of those people and organisations who’ve brought major artistic and cultural experiences to Plymouth in recent years and you’ll find the University’s name near the head of the cast list.

But this is not about hogging the limelight; it’s an indication of just how hard the University is working in partnership with other organisations in the city – such as the City Council, the Theatre Royal Plymouth, and the Plymouth and District Racial Equality Council to name but three – to attract major names and events to the region, and provide a stage upon which local talent can shine.

“The arts and culture agenda really benefits from Plymouth University’s partnership approach,” said Professor David Coslett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor. “We have some significant cultural players in the city but also a number of smaller but passionate organisations here in Plymouth and the South West and working with the University, through Peninsula Arts, we can create that critical mass that achieves amazing results.

“The British Art Show was a classic example, with organisations, community groups, even individual artists, all collaborating with the University to secure and stage this internationally-renowned event.”

After its spectacular debut in 2012, thanks in no small measure to the global success of the Moby-Dick Big Read, the Plymouth International Book Festival is another that has quickly developed a critical renown. A partnership between the University (with Peninsula Arts at the forefront), Plymouth City Council and charity Literature Works, with funding and support from Arts Council England, the festival is now looking to secure its place on the national literature calendar alongside the likes of the Hay Festival – but one with its own distinctive qualities, such as promoting literacy in the South West.

Bertel Martin, director of the festival, said: “It’s no over-statement to say that it has put Plymouth on the national literary map, attracting new authors and audiences to the South West. For this year we looked to build on that success, with an increased number of events aimed at getting local people more involved in literature in all its forms. From the classics to the spoken word, and from horror to comedy, there was something to cater for all tastes.”

That translated into a programme which featured big names – Man Booker Prize winner Ben Okri, global bestseller Kate Mosse, and comedian-turned-author Charlie Higson – alongside more intimate writing workshops and family events.

“The festival intends to offer something for everyone, with a strong focus on enabling local people to get involved with their own ideas as well as pushing the
“boundaries of international discussion and literature,” said Sarah Chapman, Director of Peninsula Arts. “By bringing the University, Literature Works and the City Council together, we’ve been able to create something truly special which will have a lasting impact on the city and its culture.”

The Respect Festival has even deeper roots within the community, having launched 14 years ago. It has traditionally taken place every October, bringing a blend of music, entertainment and food from across the globe, alongside a range of community focused and awareness raising activities, to celebrate multiculturalism.

After a hiatus in 2012, the festival returned this year with the Devon Racial Equality Council partnering with the University to examine how it could be expanded and enhanced in the coming years.

Ann Wilkinson, Co-Director of the Plymouth and District Racial Equality Council, added: “We’ve worked for many years to ensure the Plymouth Respect Festival has become an important event in the city’s calendar for highlighting diversity and celebrating differences. The new collaboration with Plymouth University will open up a whole range of innovative developments, which will undoubtedly breathe new life into a festival which Plymouth has embraced wholeheartedly over many years. The festival has been a tremendous force in the city and beyond, and as we enter this new era, we hope more partner agencies and people will join us and be inspired for the future.”

The Kala Chethena Kathakali dance group, and the Inner Vision Orchestra, comprising blind musicians from around the world – who wowed crowds during a performance with Coldplay at last year’s Paralympic closing ceremony – were the headline acts this year, combined with world food markets and a number of school visits.

Dan Thompson, artistic director of the festival, said: “The opportunity to bring such world class acts to the city is an absolute pleasure and must reaffirm that we are a city with culture. The Respect Festival has a huge role to play in raising awareness of Plymouth’s diversity and celebrating the many cultures and communities who call the city their home.”

When you add to the mix partnerships in sport (through both the Plymouth University Raiders Basketball Team and the Plymouth Albion Rugby Football Club), support for the Lord Mayor’s Day Parade, the Ocean City Festival and the Blue Mile, and programmes such as the Community Research Awards, it is clear that the touchstones between University and its region are growing by the year.

“Audiences mingle – and that is something that is easily forgotten by event organisers,” added Professor Coslett. “But partnership brings together our literature, music, dance, and other cultural organisations and enables us to create a melting pot of ideas. ‘Culture for All’ is the goal, but without watering down the quality, or losing the distinctiveness. It is about creating with and for the people of the city and region a quality cultural experience that is impactful for them.”

“This is a great example of partnership working to build a strong and resilient literature sector that can reach out and engage local people and visitors with high quality work.”

Kate Offord, Literature Relationship Manager, Arts Council England.
Plymouth is in partnership with its students, forming an academic community that works together across teaching and learning, research, and entrepreneurial development. And those partnerships extend along the lifelong learning timeline, from the very young, to the young at heart, from sporting endeavour, to social enterprise.
PARTNERSHIPS FOR EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISE
Plymouth University has a proud track record of working with educational institutions to raise aspirations and widen participation in higher education. From the outreach that takes place in local schools to the award-winning network of colleges within Academic Partnerships, the University places great emphasis on inspiring young people to make the most of their abilities.

Now a new stream of educational engagement is emerging. What began with the sponsorship of Marine Academy Plymouth back in 2010 has developed further with a second academy – Mayflower – and partnership in the new University Technical College (UTC) Plymouth.

“When we refer to Plymouth University as an ‘anchor institution’ this is one of the defining characteristics,” said Professor Richard Stephenson, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Student Experience and chair of the Talent & Enterprise Trust, the multi-academy trust set up by the University to oversee Mayflower.

“We’re investing in the young people of Plymouth – an investment of the University’s expertise and knowledge, its time and its people. In doing so, we’re not only addressing the educational needs of the pupils of MAP, Mayflower and UTC Plymouth, but also demonstrating to our communities that we’re working for them, and with them.”

Mayflower Academy opened in September after a 12-month transition period in which the University worked alongside the former Mayflower Community Primary School to create an action plan that would drive school improvement. The University now plays a direct role in the management of the school and the welfare of its 400 pupils.

Will McBurnie, Head of the Plymouth Institute of Education, chairs the Mayflower Academy Council. This body of 15 manages academic performance, holding the head and teaching staff accountable; develops community links and partnerships; and acts as a critical friend.

Will said “The children, staff and governors at Mayflower had made great improvements since the school was formed in 2009, and the decision by the Department for Education was one focused upon moving it on to the next level.

“This country’s changing education system needs inspirational and reliable partners to help schools develop and provide the best learning possible for our children and young people. Plymouth University has been extremely active in supporting our city schools through this period of great change and challenge. They are helping to pioneer new approaches in learning, as well as supporting schools and the council in our ambition to continuously improve educational performance throughout the city. In our bid to make Plymouth a fairer and more co-operative place to live, the University is key supporter and we feel very lucky to have such a visionary and community-spirited organisation to work with.”

Councillor Nicky Williams, Plymouth City Council. Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.
“Plymouth has been extremely supportive of the UTC, which is a new college that will begin to change the shape of England’s educational landscape.”

Lord Baker of Dorking, speaking after he received his Honorary Doctorate of Education.
If partnership is at the heart of everything that Plymouth University does, then its collaboration with the student body is one of the most profound examples of that ethos in action. Formalised in a ‘Students As Partners’ agreement, following innovative work undertaken at the Change Academy in 2010, it facilitates an academic culture where students become custodians of their education, and play a more profound role in the decision-making process of the institution.

“As an educator, I have long admired universities that put students at the centre of all decision-making,” said Dr Maureen Powers, Dean of Students. “The responsibility to shepherd, through true partnership, a robust relationship between students and the university, where the voice of the student body is both listened to and influential, is an exciting proposition, and one that Plymouth is very much pioneering.

“It takes an enterprising academic community to embrace such a forward-thinking approach and we’re bringing the concept to life in a variety of ways.”

That variety is underpinned by choice, with a range of opportunities from which students can choose to augment their student experience. Some of these have been created by the University itself, such as the Plymouth Award, while others owe a great deal to partnering with other organisations.

In sport, for example, close ties with two of the city’s teams – Plymouth Albion Rugby Football Club, and the now sponsored Plymouth University Raiders Basketball Team – has resulted in student societies receiving professional tuition and training from coaches and players, as well as access to top-class facilities. The ‘Active Partnerships’ link with Albion is the more established, having been running for three years. Quite simply, it has had a transformative effect upon the Men’s and Ladies’ rugby teams, who have flourished in the British University and College Sport (BUCS) competition, has helped to ‘graduate’ several University players up into the full Albion side and enabled Albion to bring their games to new audiences. It’s a template that the University hopes will bring similar success to the basketball teams.

But there’s more to these partnerships than just sport; they also offer experiential learning, volunteering, and employment opportunities for students. At Albion, students have been using their skills to contribute to the running of the club, such as reviewing business and marketing strategies, while a research project has also been started by the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences into groin injuries with Albion. University media arts students will be documenting games through photography and video, while the players will be offered appointments at the Centre for Eyecare Excellence. They’re also exploring how students can work on educational and community outreach projects, including the Raiders’ existing Hoops for Health programme and Numeracy and Literacy scheme.

“The beauty of these partnerships is they provide something for everyone,” said Professor Richard Stephenson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience). “Our sports teams are clearly being enriched by professional mentoring and access to facilities at Albion and the Raiders, while students across the institution are benefitting from volunteering and learning opportunities.

“Crucially, it also benefits our community. These projects help raise aspiration levels and encourage young people to strive for their goals, whether sporting, social or academic. So our students are playing their part in inspiring the next generation.”
This mutually beneficial concept is also being applied to other University sporting partnerships such as those with the Devon Junior & Minor Football league and Mountbatten Centre, including to the benefit of sporting scholars such as the Plymouth Sailing Team and Olympic swimmer Antony James.

Another key partnership is with the University of the Third Age (U3A) Plymouth branch, which was recognised with a Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Award in 2013. U3A members participate in lifelong learning activities with the University, attending seminars and lecture series, with some presentations arranged specifically for them, delivered by academics across the institution, and even the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the Board of Governors. In return, U3A supports international students with language skills, receives and feeds back on research presentations from postgraduate students as a 'non-specialist audience’, supports career mentoring, sits on employability panels such as the FLUX competition, participates in research activities, and helps with audience development activities for events such as the Science and Technology Public Showcase through to the Peninsula Arts public programme.

U3A Plymouth also proactively disseminates engagement opportunities to its 800+ strong membership, has a dedicated Plymouth University co-ordinator as part of its formal governance structure, and has recently established four subject coordinators to maximise engagement for arts, health, languages and science/technology, working alongside designated faculty contacts.

Maureen said: “It says a great deal for the University’s commitment to collaboration that the partnership with the U3A is being held up as a national exemplar. It’s another example of how we’re transforming lives through partnership where others simply imitate.”

Bob Widdecombe, Chairman of the Plymouth University Raiders, said: “We are absolutely delighted with the partnership between ourselves and Plymouth University. The agreement sees both parties benefit enormously, and we are proud to take the University’s name and identity to all corners of the UK during the BBL season.”
Without question, it’s been a remarkable 12 months for the city of Plymouth and the University in the realm of social enterprise; a year of firsts, in fact.

In becoming the first university in the world to receive the Social Enterprise Mark, Plymouth University was given the ultimate external validation that it’s putting people and planet first in its operations. A second mark followed for the Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, after they became the first to launch a social enterprise within a clinical entity (see also page 8) – bringing dental care into the community and funding the next generation of dentists in the process.

And then in September came the news that Plymouth, along with Bristol, was to become the first Social Enterprise City, thanks to the efforts of the Plymouth Social Enterprise Network – run by Entrepreneur-in-Residence Gareth Hart, and involving the University.
“There’s no question in my mind that Plymouth University has a real opportunity to become not just the national, but the international lead in social enterprise and related forms of entrepreneurialism,” said Judith Reynolds, University governor and the lead for the Social Enterprise University Enterprise Network (SE-UEN).

“It’s a natural fit in terms of our sustainability credentials and our links into business, and has incredible potential for the student experience. When you tell them about it you can see this light switch on!”

Through the UEN, the University is working with four partner institutions, as well as other public and private sector bodies, to nurture, grow and strengthen social enterprises across the country. Among the projects that Plymouth has undertaken during the first year of UEN operation has been the distribution of £30,000 of UnLtd and HEFCE money to staff and student start-ups, working in conjunction with Formation Zone, and organising the Money Talks Conference to bring investors in from London.

Discussions are also taking place with the University’s partners Crowdfunder over the potential to establish a crowd funding platform to boost investment in the region.

And the UEN is also at the heart of the Social Enterprise Investment Challenge, in which six social enterprises from Devon and Cornwall will pitch for investment in the region of £50,000 to a panel consisting of Santander Bank, Unity Bank, and Plymouth alumnus and business entrepreneur Dominic List.

Dominic, who graduated from the University in 1997 and has retained close ties with the institution as recognised in his Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Award this year, has funded a number of social enterprises, including Gandys Flip Flops. He said: “I’ve always felt that everyone should have a social element to work, rather than having an attitude of getting round to goodwill at some point. I think social enterprise is a fantastic thing, and can achieve so much as it isn’t reliant on donations to move forward like a charity has to be.

“It’s fantastic also to see Plymouth University supporting social enterprise as a concept as well as doing so much to support the local economy.”

One aspect of that support will be through research – a recent example of which was the paper published on engagement with social enterprise, sent to all of the Local Enterprise Partnerships last summer. And Judith Reynolds said that that element of the UEN’s work will only benefit from their move into the new Futures Entrepreneurship Centre within the Faculty of Business.

“The Futures Entrepreneurship Centre is a natural fit for the UEN, and will increase the opportunities for us to work with leading academics and talented students,” said Judith. “And already, in terms of engagement, we as a University are leading the way. In fact, we’ve recently been invited by the University of Trentino in Italy to join their international network, Euricse, which is fantastic recognition for Plymouth.”

Right across the campus there are outstanding examples of how students and graduates are engaging with social enterprise. Take graduate Becky Barber’s BOO Enterprise as an example, which is creating jobs and wealth in Madagascar through the manufacture of solar-powered, bamboo radios. Or how about student James Holden, who is already the managing director of his own social enterprise, Student Safety Ltd, which is providing safety alarms to students, and donating a share of the profits – and the alarms themselves – to charity organisations.

“Because Plymouth University is so dynamic in this field, social enterprise is making a great difference to the experience of students here,” said social enterprise Entrepreneur-in-Residence Gareth Hart. “And many of them are setting up inspiring social enterprises themselves. In fact, social enterprise is fast becoming the business model of choice for entrepreneurial learners.

“And in receiving the Social Enterprise Mark, Plymouth is becoming a torch bearer for the sector. It is waving a flag to the rest of the world and showing that you can do business differently, and that we don’t have to repeat the mistakes of the past.”

Dominic List
Plymouth University is among the new global elite of modern universities, with a reputation that extends around the world. As it does so, it extends the range of its partnerships – both geographically and across disciplinary frontiers.
Plymouth University has a long and proud history of exploring and understanding the challenges of the marine environment, dating back to its foundation in 1862 as a School of Navigation. This heritage was recognised in 2012 with the award of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education – the highest honour bestowed upon a university. And it is evident in the wealth of partnerships that Plymouth has forged with organisations across the naval and maritime spectrum.

One of the most innovative is the Hydrographic Academy, a first-of-its-kind distance-learning programme launched in partnership with global geosciences company Fugro. Developed in collaboration with the Royal Navy through Flag Officer Sea Training’s Hydrography and Meteorology team (FOST-HM), the academy provides bachelors and masters-level diplomas covering subjects such as hydrography, oceanography and meteorology, and has been tailored to accommodate the realities of life at sea. Each module of the course is housed on a single memory stick so that students can work even when they do not have internet connectivity. This is supplemented by web-based tutorials, fieldwork, and intensive teaching during shore-leave.

Developed by Dr Richard Thain, an Enterprise Award winner for 2013, and launched at Oceanology 2012, the Hydrographic Academy has enrolled more than 100 students from around the world and has received more than 700 expressions of interest. “The partnership with Fugro has been integral to the success of the Hydrographic Academy,” said Richard. “They approached us with a proposal that would seek to address the urgent need for education and training for professionals working in the sector, as well as establish a pathway into it for school-leavers. Plymouth University answered that challenge.”

The Hydrographic Academy has recently led on the investment of a new state-of-the-art multi-beam sonar, which will enable its students – and all University students studying hydrography – to conduct fieldwork that will help visualise the seabed in stunning detail. It is a further demonstration that 150 years on from the School of Navigation, Plymouth is still finding new ways to improve the student experience. Richard said: “Whether you’re based on an oil rig in the North Sea, or a survey vessel in the middle of the Southern Ocean, you can study with Plymouth University. Through partnership and technology, we’re pushing back the boundaries of teaching and learning.”

Plymouth’s holistic global expertise in marine and maritime training and education has forged many partnerships with international naval institutions. Chief among them is that with the Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in Dartmouth, which is founded upon an historic accord signed in 2008 that sees Plymouth deliver and accredit the academic aspects of its officer training programmes.

Hitherto, Plymouth has delivered a two-year foundation degree consisting of meteorology, oceanography, sensors and telecommunications, ship technology, strategic studies, and English, open to Royal Navy Officer Cadets. In 2013, the first full-degree course was approved – a BSc in Defence Studies – with a BSc in Military Aviation Studies for the Royal Navy’s Fleet Air Arm set to follow.

Professor Alan Myers, Director of Studies for the BRNC programme, said: “As the needs of the Royal Navy change, so we’re developing our academic offering to meet them. There is an onus placed upon officers being critical thinkers and so we have to create the right educational environment to bring that out of our students.”

SEA CHANGE IN MARINE, MARITIME AND NAVAL EDUCATION
The success of the BRNC partnership has led directly to a number of other opportunities for the University. The Centre of Excellence in Naval Oceanographic Research and Education (CENORE), for example, is a joint venture between Plymouth, BRNC, and FOST-HM, to provide a focus for Royal Navy personnel seeking advanced academic degrees, and offers a platform for the development of research and enterprise activities of mutual interest to the Royal Navy and the University. Recently, CENORE was commissioned to carry out an important study for the Ministry of Defence investigating oceanographic model resolution to meet the operational requirements of the Royal Navy. The results of this study, carried out in collaboration with the MetOffice, will help to inform future MoD investment in oceanographic research.

A partnership with the Kuwaiti Coastguard sees trainees from the Ministry of Justice studying for computer science, marine science, and oceanography degrees. In the United Arab Emirates, the University works with the Higher Colleges of Technology to deliver maritime sciences and marine engineering to students. The Plymouth-BRNC partnership has also created a new five-year programme for the Qatari Emiri Navy students, and since 2009, the University has also accredited the Masters Programmes in Applied Strategy and International Security to the highest military academic institution in Greece – the Hellenic National Defence College (HNDC) in Athens.

And the University now also accredits the BMus (Hons) degree at the Royal Marines School of Music. Based at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth, the School trains musicians for the Royal Marines Band Service (RMBS) covering a range of duties including musical ceremonies for the UK both at home and abroad. The partnership means students from the RMBS enrol with Plymouth University and have access to resources available at the city campus and online. Academic staff act in an advisory role to the students, and their assessments are ratified through a panel linked to the University’s School of Humanities and Performing Arts.

Professor Myers said: “We’re just beginning to explore the potential of our partnership with BRNC – and with naval partners around the world. With our world-class reputation for marine and maritime studies, and our historic connections to the sea, Plymouth University brings prestige and progress to the naval sector. It’s a natural fit.”

“I have quite literally searched the world for an institution that offers this kind of tertiary education and from Australia to Europe I have been unsuccessful so thank you for your efforts! It’s a huge step in the right direction!” Hydrographic Academy student.

The SS James Eagan Layne as pictured by the University’s Multi-Beam Echo Sounder.
As Plymouth University enhances its portfolio of world class research and world-leading facilities, so it comes to the attention of new international audiences. But growing the University’s global profile is not just about bringing students to the South West – it is about taking the University’s values to the world, and encouraging people to explore, dream and discover wherever they may be.
“There are many reasons why someone may not want to leave their home country to further their studies, but that doesn’t mean they cannot become a student of Plymouth,” says Peter Ingram, Head of International Partnerships at Plymouth University. “By forging links with leading educational establishments across the world, we can take our teaching and research expertise and experience to them.”

Nowhere is this more evident than in Asia, where degree courses designed in Plymouth are already being taught to hundreds of students, meaning the University is playing a key role in inspiring the next generation of business leaders in some of the world’s fastest developing economies.

One of the flagship partnerships is with the Hong Kong University School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE), where a portfolio of Plymouth’s maritime and business degrees are taught and awarded to around 450 students. The collaboration marked a major milestone in November 2012, when the first cohort completed their studies and passed out at Plymouth’s inaugural graduation ceremony in Hong Kong, China. Eighty new graduates from Hong Kong attended the ceremony, having completed their studies on the BSc (Hons) International Supply Chain and Shipping Management and BA (Hons) International Trade and Operations Management degrees.

Professor Lee Chack Fan, director of HKU SPACE, who was awarded an honorary doctorate from Plymouth University at the ceremony, said: “To promote lifelong learning, there is no doubt that the partnership between HKU SPACE and Plymouth University has provided quality opportunities for career advancement and personal development.”

A few thousand miles away on a brand new campus in Colombo, Plymouth’s business courses are also being taught in Sri Lanka’s National School of Business Management. Thanks to a commitment to driving enterprise and innovation to create a vibrant knowledge economy, Plymouth has been sharing its expertise in Sri Lanka for a number of years, by helping to deliver a programme of enterprise and employability as part of the Prime Minister’s Initiative for International Education.

The NSBM partnership bids to build on that by harnessing the very best of both institutions, with students enrolling with NSBM and studying for Plymouth degrees, creating bright and sustainable futures for Sri Lankan graduates. The suite of courses has been specifically designed to provide the essential knowledge and skills that the Sri Lankan graduates of tomorrow will need to grow and prosper.

Speaking at the launch of the partnership, Hon Bandula Gunewardena, Sri Lanka’s Minister of Education, said: “The NSBM offers a novel approach to learning, with the perfect blend of technology and research to prepare our students to take their place in tomorrow’s increasingly competitive world. The government of Sri Lanka realises only too well that the future lies in education, and the entrance of Plymouth University only serves to underline its commitment to the furtherance of higher education in the country.”

As well as taking Plymouth to the world, the University’s links in Asia offer up a range of unique opportunities to students at home and abroad. Through a 20-year partnership with Shanghai Maritime University, more than 50 Plymouth students travel to China each year with a similar number from Shanghai spending six weeks in the South West.

“This internationalisation is all about opportunity and when they return from China, our students have a whole new perspective on their studies and life in general,” said Peter Ingram. “Partnerships like these are real eye openers for everyone involved and by creating them, and making the most of them, we are enabling our students and partners to explore and discover more about themselves and the wider world.”
Plymouth has been a gateway to the Americas for centuries, ever since the Pilgrim Fathers left the city on board Mayflower. And as the 400th anniversary of their epic voyage approaches, Plymouth University is playing an increasingly prominent role in exploring new opportunities that will ensure the spirit of discovery that carried them west lives on.

The historical ties between the two countries mean that, unsurprisingly, many of Plymouth's links are on America’s east coast, with a glance at a map of that area revealing the full extent of the UK's influence in the region. And one of its most senior political representatives, Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray, is playing a key role in strengthening those ties and building towards 2020.

Senator Murray, who recently travelled to Plymouth to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Health from the University, said: “We want to strengthen our bond with Plymouth, England, and the other communities that played such an important role in the Pilgrims’ story. This anniversary is about the founding of a nation, and the changing of the world as a result, and by developing a multifaceted plan for 2020 – including education, cultural, historical, and even sporting events – we can both commemorate and educate the public on the anniversary of the Pilgrims’ landing.”

The University enjoys a number of innovative partnerships across the Atlantic, with one of the most high profile being its membership of Babson College’s Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (GCEE). In 2013, Plymouth became the only UK university to be invited to join the GCEE, which provides the opportunity to share expertise with like-minded institutions around the world.

Founded in 1919 in Wellesley, Massachusetts, Babson is one of the world’s most acclaimed private business schools, recently beating all challengers to be named the US’s top centre for entrepreneurship for the 17th consecutive year. It created the GCEE to disseminate its expertise, and its members are given access to a number of exclusive benefits.

For Plymouth, it provides a structure to collaborate with institutions engaged in entrepreneurship education, and the link with universities from Chile to China, India to Indonesia, and Mexico to Malaysia shows Plymouth’s ambition to be the enterprise university is no longer simply a national ambition, but one being realised on a global scale.

Professor Simon Payne, Dean of Academic Partnerships at Plymouth University, said: “This partnership, and others between ourselves and institutions in the US, is testament to a special relationship that has been built up over the past four centuries. They are crucial to the University’s enterprise mission, as we look to expand our expertise and experience in this area, and create opportunities for both of staff and students.”

A RELATIONSHIP FORGED FROM SMALL STEPS
Also in the past year, Plymouth’s links across the Atlantic have been bolstered through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass), which will see researchers collaborating on topics including IT, management, international business and finance.

The partnership will see a range of exchange programmes opened up to students from both universities, as well as research initiatives and academic events. The two institutions will also work together to explore potential entrepreneurial projects, and the possibility of joint degree programmes.

UMass was founded in 1964, and is metropolitan Boston’s only public research university. Its Chancellor J Keith Motley said: “UMass Boston is training the next generation of global citizens, and we welcome this wonderful opportunity to partner with Plymouth University in this effort. Our agreement enables students from both these great institutions to draw on the expertise of leading thinkers and innovators from around the world.”

Plymouth’s pioneering partnership approach has also sparked the advancement of a masters programme for robotics run jointly with Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, ranked 24th in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings in October 2013. Students enrolling on the two-year programme have the opportunity to study with both institutions and the relationship – the first of its kind to feature a European university – aims to train future leaders of robotics and intelligent automation enterprises and agencies, in the principles and practices of robotics, automation science, engineering, software engineering, and management.

Programme leader Dr Guido Bugmann, of Plymouth’s Faculty of Science and Environment, said: “By bringing together Plymouth and Carnegie Mellon in this way, we can create new opportunities for our students to develop their skills. The programme reflects global interest in the application of robotic technology, making it ideal for international students who are looking to take their skills and ideas and make a difference in emerging economies around the world.”

With Plymouth alumnus also playing a high profile role in public life across the Atlantic – including Law graduate Nick Schwaderer’s election to Montana’s House of Representatives, and Design graduate Jon Parlby creating the torch which led the epic One Run for Boston memorial relay – the University’s links to the States are arguably stronger than ever.

Nick Schwaderer said: “I had a wonderful experience, one in which I was truly immersed in the culture and a genuine part of the University. I was a die-hard Plymouth Argyle fan by the end, and my friends all took to calling me ‘Janner Montana’. Every single American knows two cities in the UK – London and Plymouth – so I’m looking forward to 2020 and the opportunities it will bring on both sides of the Atlantic.”
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