

Our Ref: FJG/avel/ext/lambert

6 June, 2003

Mr R Lambert  
Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration  
1 Horse Guards Road  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Mr Lambert

Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration

The University is pleased to reply to your request for responses to the questions posed by your Review.

Our response is set out in the attached. It focuses primarily upon identifying what we consider to be best practice in creating sustainable relationships with HE and the varied needs of SMEs.

Leeds Metropolitan University has a long track record of effective working with this sector and this is something we are committed to in the future.

In addition to working directly with SMEs the University also contributes by participating in regional and local activities aimed at disseminating best practice and encouraging employer engagement.

On a more personal note I am Chairman of Business Link West Yorkshire Ltd (BLWY), the second largest SBS franchise in the country. It is in recognition of the central role to be played by universities in providing small business support that the members of Business Link, comprising three Chambers of Commerce, five Metropolitan District Councils and the four Universities in West Yorkshire, appointed me to this position. As a non-executive Chair I have helped influence the positioning strategy of BLWY in relation to university-SME interactions.

This strategy is described in our operational plan sent to the Small Business Service. Essentially it reflects an acceptance of reality by seeking not to align our universities with the totality of SMEs but rather to recognise that only particular types of business will in the main benefit from the specific technology transfer expertise of HE.

cont./...

2/...

Mr R Lambert

17 April 2003

Arguably too much rhetoric of the past has implied an undifferentiated university and SME sector. By clearly identifying respective roles and responsibilities for both our universities and the way BLWY manages its five local 'concessions' we are able to approach the needs of SMEs more appropriately.

I trust you will find this response helpful. Please let me know if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

F J Griffiths  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Enc

## **Lambert Review**

### **Examples of good practice and interaction with business**

The University is active in Knowledge Transfer to the business sector primarily but not exclusively with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The University has gained a reputation for working with SMEs at local, regional, national and international levels. This has been achieved by leading and managing complex partnerships which was recognised nationally in 1996 with the Queens Anniversary Prize Award for our work in Technology Transfer to SMEs.

We are constantly seeking mutually beneficial partnerships with business, business support organisations and other HE and FE institutions. The University believes partnerships will be a major feature of future development and we currently lead and support major education/business partnerships eg Foundation Degrees and the New Technology Institute.

We have many interactions with business almost every day particularly as most of our programmes are of a vocational and professional nature. However it is probably appropriate to highlight some of our current major activities with business.

- **ChinaVentures**

This builds on the work of UniVentures International, a company set up by the University to develop high technology companies in the UK and to transfer high technology products from companies in the UK to SE Asia. The company has developed several years' experience in SE Asian international trade, particularly with Singapore, as well as a reputation for delivering appropriate knowledge transfer to SMEs which had a direct benefit to bottom line profit. Building on that knowledge and reputation the brand ChinaVentures was developed to exploit the huge market opportunities in China.

The University has taken almost 100 businesses to China over the last 3 years to support a range of trading activities. The project is funded regionally by Trade Partners UK. The University provides international trading knowledge, cultural and language skills training and support, and facilitates network support through its contacts in the region and in China. We are extending the success of this project by developing an international trading incubator in Hangzhou in partnership with Business Link West Yorkshire Ltd (BLWY) and the municipal government of Hangzhou. We will work with Zeijiang University of Technology in Hangzhou to supply the Chinese graduate talent to support the trading activities of West Yorkshire businesses wishing to set up a start-up representative office in China.

- **WYTES-West Yorkshire Training Export scheme.**

The University provides training, grants and other export support in partnership with BLWY. The University also supplies grant application advice, training and international knowledge transfer.

- **Job Shop**

The University has developed its successful Job Shop provision to support the local and regional business sector. The Job Shop was set up to provide earning opportunities and employability skills for undergraduates as well as supply skilled labour for the University and other local public sector organisations. Over 3,000 short term job opportunities are offered each year which provide ‘earn as you learn’ opportunities for undergraduates particularly those from poorer backgrounds who are put off university by mounting debt.

The Job Shop is actively targeting private businesses, particularly the IT sector, and developing charge rates dependent on the acquired skills of the graduate and market demand. Training programmes are provided by the University to improve the employability skills of undergraduates and hence their earning power in the short term job market.

- **The West Yorkshire New Technology Institute (NTI)**

The NTI is becoming a major tool to improve relationships and improve knowledge transfer between the FE, HE and business sector. It will become a major broker of IT knowledge transfer, job placements, skills training and IT consultancy advice. We are already establishing an international network of partners in Europe and SE Asia to offer a range of IT trading opportunities building on the knowledge and skills developed by UniVentures and ChinaVentures.

This brings together under one agency all the vendor specific training in the sub-region e.g. Cisco, Microsoft, IBM etc. In the first 3 months of this year we have delivered vendor training programmes to over 300 learners increasing the supply of these highly valued skills to industry.

We are delivering a range of IT breakfast briefings to offer applied university research partnership opportunities to business. In partnership with Business Links and UK-On-Line-for-Business we are currently targeting a range of small businesses with IT training and knowledge transfer services. An example of this activity is a partnership with a small IT business called ‘Shopcreator’. They provide software and other bespoke IT solutions to clients who wish to establish e-business services. We are introducing their products to our international network and developing an e-business driving licence programme to provide the skills necessary to trade on the internet. We hope to be their first regional ‘Academy’ and accredit their learning programmes.

- **The Creative Services Incubator**

The incubator was established after 2 years of developing entrepreneurship in the curriculum of courses at the University. It was in response to the demand of learners who wished to try self employment and small business start-up as an alternative to employment. This was particularly evident in the creative services sector. The incubator, although only established towards the end of last year, has over 20 clients providing a range of services from ‘hot desking’ to a representative office. We have an extensive local business start-up support network that includes banking, legal and financial services as well as business start-up advice and business mentoring. As the

NTI develops we expect to see more and more IT based companies emerge and we are already in discussions with BLWY to develop a further incubator next to their offices at Millshaw Business Park in Leeds. The NTI is also located at Millshaw.

The University has delivered flexible short training opportunities to over 2,500 learners in business in the last 2 years. Almost all of these learners were working in SMEs, had non-traditional HE entry qualifications and the learning was delivered off-campus and predominantly in the workplace. Examples of these projects are as follows:

(a) Employability in Manufacturing(EIM)

The core measurable outcome is for 300 workers in manufacturing and other key sectors to be trained in higher level transferable skills for sustainable employment and attain a nationally recognised qualification accredited at NVQ Level 4 equivalent.

The numbers of trainees are well over 300 with 349 candidates participating in the training up to and beyond 120 hours and another 60 candidates choosing not to complete their first module.

(b) Training Evaluation Delivery (TED)

This project is targeted at managers and supervisors of small to medium sized enterprises operating in West Yorkshire and is designed to respond to the Regional Development Priority 4, 'Adaptability and Entrepreneurship', specifically the identification and addressing of skill shortages.

Training is on the basis of delivering 4 modules that lead to a recognised University Certificate (60 point award) either at on-site locations or at community learning centres and will begin in June 2003.

Project targets

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Project beneficiary target: | 139 (by 6/03)    |
| Beneficiaries since 9/2002: | 125 (to 18/3/03) |

(c) Community Business Skills (CBS)

A project designed to respond to Regional Development Priority 3 'Lifelong Learning', specifically to promote wider access to lifelong learners and improve employability for those in work through lifelong learning provision.

The project targeted individuals in the Leeds inner city areas and those living in former coal mining centres such as Castleford. The training programme is delivered in partnership with the Chapeltown Enterprise Centre, other community organisations and Leeds Business Link.

Training is on the basis of delivering 4 modules that lead to a recognised University Certificate (60 point award) at community learning centres.

### Targets

Project beneficiary target: 345 (by 6/03)  
Beneficiaries since 9/02: 325 (to18/3/03)

#### (d) Skills for Rural Adaptability

A project targeted at employees of SMEs in vulnerable sectors and those dependant on the agricultural sector, responding to Regional Development Priority 3, specifically improving the employability of those in work through Lifelong Learning provision. The project was focused on North Yorkshire.

The project is targeted towards unskilled, semi-skilled, supervisory and lower management occupations whose skills need updating or need formal recognition within national accreditation frameworks

Training is on the basis of delivering 4 modules that lead to a recognised University Certificate (60 point award) at community learning centres.

### Targets

ESF project beneficiary target: 224 (by June 03)  
Beneficiaries since 9/02: 187 (to18/3/03)

#### (e) Leeds Training Partnership for Workforce Development

A project to deliver a range of short taster courses of non-accredited training to micro-SMEs (SMEs of less than 50 employees) within Leeds; to supply customised training to these groups and engage them within the culture of Lifelong Learning.

The project is delivered in conjunction with a partnership that includes FE colleges within Leeds, the University of Leeds and the Leeds Learning Partnership.

Since October 2003 a partnership consisting of the FE Colleges in Leeds has been brought together to provide ½ day (3 hour) training sessions to the target market of SMEs with less than 50 employees. The primary recruitment phase of the project began in January 2003 (in line with the project plan) with delivery of training commencing March 2003.

The project has been promoted primarily using direct marketing activity, telemarketing support and attending various promotional events in the city.

Beneficiary target: 400 employees of SMEs  
Beneficiaries since January 2003: 38 (to18/3/03)  
Prospective leads for April start: 88