

News and Current Affairs

Simon Fanshawe (right) helps celebrate sustainability achievements in the higher and further education sector at this year's Green Gown Awards

The Green Gown Awards 2012, hosted by broadcaster and writer Simon Fanshawe, was a resounding success and a fitting celebration for the pioneering environmental and sustainability initiatives that have been championed in the tertiary education sector this year. The Awards Ceremony venue, The Great Hall, University of Birmingham, maintained the important connection between the Awards ethos and its continued support for the sector.

Winners and highly commended Awards were bestowed across 13 unique categories and included the inaugural launch of the Green Gown International Awards. The UK and Australasia winners across three of the categories went head-to-head for the coveted



Green Gown Awards 2012

'International Award' for each category.

Guests included university and college representatives from across the UK, joined by leading figures from institutions such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) to commend visionary projects which are pushing the sustainable good practice boundaries.

Organised by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), Chief Executive Iain Patton describes the Green Gown Awards as a shop window for social and environmental sustainability good practice, stating that, "sustainability isn't going away: we can't let it. Although it remains a challenging and anxious time for universities and colleges, this year's winning and highly commended entries demonstrate not only that innovative institutions are taking successful action to minimise their environmental footprints and enhance their social contribution, but also that this is often accompanied by other organisational benefits. The financial savings gained from many sustainability actions are certainly a much needed and welcomed benefit. It is

therefore all the more important the whole sector learns from not only the successes of the Green Gown Awards' winning and highly commended entries but also from all finalists. By promoting these good practice initiatives – nationally and internationally, we hope some of these great achievements can be replicated by others".

With the inaugural launch of the Green Gown International Awards, combining the excellence from the UK and Australasia, Leanne Denby, President of Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) and partner with the EAUC in delivering the International Awards said, "Internationalising the Awards provides further opportunity to

share learning and experience to ensure that as a sector we continue to improve, progress and recognise the great work being done. These Awards show that the tertiary education sector is committed to sharing examples of best practice internationally and at home, further demonstrating the critical role tertiary education plays in delivering sustainability."

A selection of winning entries include: the University of Bradford (Construction and Refurbishment category sponsored by CUBO) with 'The Green', a large scale sustainable student village allowing residents to experience and be educated in living a sustainable lifestyle; Lewisham College incorporating Southwark College (Learning and Skills category) with 'Eco-skills' innovatively providing skills training to hard to reach individuals; De Montfort University (Social Responsibility) with 'Square Mile', an innovative project tackling deprivation through a wide range of disparate projects; Scotland's Rural College (Research and Development category) with 'Green Cow' tackling one of the world's most in-



Iain Patton
EAUC CEO



tractable problems with immense significance for world agriculture and the University of Technology - Sydney Students' Association (International Award - Student initiatives and Campaigns category sponsored by SFC) with 'Bluebird Brekkie' showcasing an excellent example of an initiative run by students for students incorporating all aspects of sustainability - social, environmental and economic.

A wide range of representatives from the further and higher education sector enjoyed the glamour of the black tie gala dinner. Vice-Chancellors, principals, directors, managers and the staff on the ground mixed with the media, corporate representatives and other guests from a whole host of important organisations, making the Green Gown Awards 2012 the place to be seen and to network. This truly was a gathering of the movers and shakers of the sector.

In an effort to promote dissemination of good practice, all the 2012 Green Gown Award winners, highly commended entries and finalists have all been asked to provide a case study and a short video on their Awards. These will be available from the Green Gown website in early 2013 and is supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Now in their eighth year, the Green Gown Awards were founded in 2004 by the Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement (HEEPI) project and have grown in reputation and stature year on year. The Green Gown Awards are firmly established as the most prestigious recognition of sustainability excellence in the tertiary education sector.

WINNERS

- *Best Newcomer* - **South Thames College**
- *Carbon Reduction* - **University of Cumbria**
- *Colleges and Smaller Institutions* - **Walsall Adult and Community College**
- *Construction and Refurbishment* - **University of Bradford**
- *Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change* - **Manchester Metropolitan University**
- *Courses* - **University of Manchester**
- *Green ICT* - **De Montfort University**
- *Learning and Skills* - **Lewisham College incorporating Southwark College**
- *Modernisation: Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Estate* - **University of the West of Scotland**
- *Promoting Positive Behaviour* - **University of Leeds**
- *Research and Development* - **Scotland's Rural College**
- *Social Responsibility* - **De Montfort University**



Cross-organisational collaboration and partnership is at the heart of the Awards' success, which are administered by the EAUC and governed by a cross-agency steering group including

- **Association of Colleges (AoC)**
- **Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE)**
- **British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG)**
- **Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement (HEEPI)**
- **GuildHE**
- **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**
- **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)**
- **Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)**
- **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)**

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS - WINNERS

- *Continuous Improvement - Institutional Change* - **Manchester Metropolitan University, UK**
- *Social Responsibility* - **De Montfort University, UK**
- *Student Initiatives and Campaigns* - **University of Technology - Sydney Students' Association, Australia**

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- *Best Newcomer* - **Belfast Metropolitan College**
- *Best Newcomer* - **Bloomsbury Colleges**
- *Best Newcomer* - **Redbridge Institute of Adult Education**
- *Carbon Reduction* - **University of Bradford**
- *Carbon Reduction* - **University of Cambridge**
- *Colleges and Smaller Institutions* - **Circus Space**
- *Construction and Refurbishment* - **Aston University**
- *Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change* - **Harper Adams University College**
- *Courses* - **Nottingham Trent University**
- *Green ICT* - **Nottingham Trent University**
- *Learning and Skills* - **The University of Nottingham**
- *Modernisation: Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Estate* - **University of Worcester**
- *Promoting Positive Behaviour* - **University of Salford**
- *Research and Development* - **Aston University**
- *Social Responsibility* - **Hull College**
- *Social Responsibility* - **Nottingham Trent University**
- *Student Initiatives and Campaigns* - **London School of Economics and Political Science**
- *Student Initiatives and Campaigns* - **University of Southampton**

- **NUS Services Limited**
- **Scottish Funding Council (SFC)**
- **Skills Funding Agency (SFA)**
- **The Higher Education Academy (HEA)**
- **Universities UK (UUK)**

The EAUC would also like to thank the sponsors of the event:

- **Future-Tech**
- **The Higher Education Academy (HEA)**
- **Sodexo**
- **The Association of College & University Business Officers (CUBO)**
- **Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE)**
- **Sustainable Procurement Centre of Excellence (SPCE)**
- **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) - supporting dissemination of good practice**
- **Nottingham Trent University - the Awards sustainable dinner**



Green Gown Awards continued...

What the 2012 winners had to say:

After the ceremony we caught up with some of the winners to find out just what makes a HE and FE both green and great



★ **UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD**
Winner: Construction and Refurbishment for The Green – A Large Scale Sustainable Student Village

Congratulations on winning the Green Gown Award for Construction and Refurbishment. What does the Award mean for the University? “Our new student residences are a proven green construction having achieved BREEAM outstanding with one of the highest ever scores. Winning this award however shows that we are going beyond BREEAM and turning the building into a living learning device, teaching the residences what it is to live sustainably.”

What were the main challenges of creating ‘The Green’ and what makes it unique?

“The Green was a first on many fronts. Its construction was the largest single phase student residence built at an English university and in doing it we’ve had to foster a great partnership with those involved to ensure sustainability was kept at the forefront of people’s minds. The new residents are now living in the greenest halls in the country, making sure they understand this and help reduce the environmental impact is now the key challenge and opportunity.”

What’s next for continuing to improve the green credentials of the University of Bradford?

“We are in the final stages of construction for two more BREEAM outstanding buildings. One of them, the Sustainable Enterprise Centre, will be the new home for our Ecoversity sustainability programme and the building will be a living demonstrator of sustainability, showing visitors the technologies used in the construction. Our big challenge however lies in further improving the efficiency of our older 1970s estate – we’ve made a 27 per cent reduction on Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions so far since 2005. We are putting a lot of effort into refurbishment using good building physics e.g. passive systems, natural ventilation, thermal mass etc. As part of our future strategy we’re looking at bringing key buildings off grid with renewable energy generation to ensure a good service to our students in the future times of uncertain power.”



★ **SOUTH THAMES COLLEGE**
Winner: Best newcomer
What does the Best Newcomer Green Gown Award mean

for South Thames College? “The Award will provide a real boost for the sustainability work of the College. We hope it will have a wider significance within the sector as an example of community engagement. The project is a very practical example of how to enhance student employability by forming alliances with key organisations who can offer work experience. Winning the Award has already generated a huge amount of interest in the work and we want to maximise the opportunities available to embed the work within our institution.”

What’s next for continuing to improve the green credentials of South Thames College in 2013?

“We want to maintain the impetus of the last 12 months by continuing to support the Furzedown Low Carbon Zone. The new focus will mean working with local schools. The aim is to provide an example of how tertiary sector institutions – South Thames College and Kingston University – can engage with the school sector to promote education for sustainable development. This work begins in November 2012 with the start of an energy project in Eardley School, a primary in the low carbon zone. We will also be working on a toolkit for staff and students to help embed sustainability within the curriculum.”



★ **UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**
Winner: Promoting Positive Behaviour – ‘It All Adds Up’ energy reduction campaign

What does a Green Gown Award mean for the University of Leeds?

“It All Adds Up involved a wide cross-section of University staff. Winning the Award gave us the final seal of approval for the campaign, external recognition from the sector and helps re-invigorate everyone involved for next year’s work!”

How will the University continue to improve its green credentials?

“We now have a Head of Sustainability at the

University and have become our own service within the Facilities Directorate. A key area of work in the coming months will be the development of a new integrated sustainability strategy which encompasses all University activity; this includes research and teaching activity as well as operations. It will be the aim of the strategy and the team going forward to help all of the different parts of the University community to work together. Once this development process begins we will involve as many people as possible, so we can reflect the diverse activity that takes place in and around the University.

In addition to the strategy development, over the next few months the sustainability team’s work will include the next instalment of It All Adds Up energy campaign, working with Green Impact teams, updating the University’s travel plan and reviewing the current status of the Environmental Management System, amongst other things. The team is not only here to drive forward change and make Leeds one of the most sustainable universities but also to support others in making what they do at the University more sustainable.”



★ **UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA**
Winner: Carbon Reduction
What does the Green Gown Award for Carbon Reduction mean

for the University of Cumbria? “That we have been able to contribute to knowledge about how to reduce carbon emissions and have helped to demonstrate that people are more open to changes in their behaviour than is often thought.”

What was your main challenge when faced with trying to reduce car journeys to/from and in/around the University? “Where people can see direct personal benefit resulting from changing their behaviour (such as our first class upgrade scheme), then achieving change can be a matter of targeted communication and information. Where the benefits are less tangible, or staff perceive the obstacles to outweigh the benefits, then the process is more difficult. This has been the case in developing our car club, although we now have a greater level of general understanding and membership is growing as a result.” ●