



## **NWUA Press Release – Genesis Conference 2010**

### **England's North West Universities' Biomedical Knowledge and Expertise**

North West Universities Association attended the annual Genesis Conference to provide information on the Biomedical expertise available within the region's universities. In addition to their traditional research and teaching roles, universities are increasingly investing in knowledge transfer and supporting businesses through contract and collaborative research, consultancy, incubation, access to facilities and work based learning. In this way, the region's HEIs have a key role to play both in developing technology and core science relevant to the Biomedical sector and in transferring this to industry helping Biomedical businesses to innovate.

This world class capability is complemented by the region's Biomedical sector, which is one of the UK's top three Biomedical clusters, and is supported by Bionow. The cluster has also been supported by Cogent who has identified the skills needs of industry and has worked with and supported North West universities to ensure these needs are met and delivered in a way in which suits industry. Overall, this makes England's North West a focus for those wishing to invest in the UK and benefit from a strong science, technology and industry base.

The conference plenary session featured an address '*Delivering the talent pool for world leading life sciences*' from Professor Trevor McMillan, Lancaster University. He discussed the [Higher Level Skills Partnership](#) (HLSP) project funded by the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) which has recently received the *Outstanding Employer Engagement Initiative* award in the Times Higher Education Awards 2010, for the achievements of the project. The North West HLSP has overseen the development of 60 projects, and representatives from the four projects funded in the Biomedical sector were in attendance on the day:

- **University of Chester** - Foundation Degree in Biomedical Process Technology
- **Lancaster University** - A flexible modular postgraduate negotiated work-based learning framework for the Biomedical sector, and A training programme to support graduates during their first year of employment in the Biomedical sector
- **University of Central Lancashire** – Biomechanical Testing of Products in the Biomedical and Healthcare Industries

The HLSP Biomedical projects have received significant endorsement from employers and partner organisations involved in the development of provision, these include:

*"The NW HLSP Biomedical projects have driven forward active partnerships between industry and academia, allowing highly relevant and novel training programmes to deliver flexible learning packages to established employees and new graduates within the life science sector. Through these courses, individuals and employers can develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts, apply these within their business whilst maximising the vital communication, team working and managerial skills that are required by this fast paced sector."*

**Dr Caroline Sudworth, Science and Higher Education Development Manager, Cogent**

*“Although a majority of science degree graduates come out of University with an adequate academic grounding, from an employer perspective, most lack the industry mindset and related skills which are necessary in the ‘real life’ workplace. The broad mix of focused bioscience and business management modules offered by this course provides the extra essential knowledge and understanding that may otherwise take several years to gain exposure to; professionally delivered in an accessible and accelerated format.”*

**Dr. Richard Dennett, Head of Consultancy, Eden Biodesign**

To support Biomedical companies, NWUA has produced a Biomedical Sector Capability Mapping brochure entitled **bioKnowledge<sup>NW</sup>** which was launched at the event to highlight the extensive capabilities offered by North West universities of relevance to the Biomedical sector. It is intended as a tool for those in the UK and overseas with an interest in academic research and education but, above all, for businesses seeking to engage with universities to support their innovation activities and business development.

The brochure includes case studies from ten of NWUA’s member institutions which highlight institutional facilities available to companies, unique collaborative work with industry and examples of joint working with other North West Higher Education Institutions in the Biomedical sector.

The foreword has been provided by Andrew Miller, MP for Ellesmere Port and Neston and Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee who said: *“It is a great pleasure to be invited to contribute to this brochure and I hope that it will help further enhance the engagement of businesses with the Higher Education sector in this key growth sector for our economy.”*

The conference took place at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London on Thursday 9th December 2010. For further details on the event, please visit [the Genesis Conference website](#) or for more information please contact Dr Charlie Ellis, Specialist Advisor (Biomedical), NWUA on [cellis@nwua.ac.uk](mailto:cellis@nwua.ac.uk) or 0161 234 8889.

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