Corporate partnerships fund scholarships and transform lives

A new focus on corporate philanthropy is leading to a win-win situation for students, Birkbeck and major companies.

Things happen when universities and businesses combine forces. Expertise, resources and ideas are shared, research is generated, and innovative solutions and new companies are formed. For example, the internet giant Google began life as a research project at Stanford University, and many other technology companies, including Hewlett-Packard and Yahoo, can trace their roots back to the same university campus. Closer to home, some 1,500 companies, including spinouts (based on intellectual property produced in universities and start-ups) created by university staff and recent graduates, have emerged from UK universities and research institutes since 2000, according to The Spinouts UK Survey.

Birkbeck is no stranger to working with business, and staff have recently intensified their efforts to work with firms to generate new research and support students. Three major schemes are underway (see below) and more corporate partnerships are expected to be signed in the coming months.

Good Energy PhD studentship: researching renewable energy

One recent leading collaboration involves Birkbeck and Good Energy – the 100% renewable electricity supplier. As part of a four-year initiative, Good Energy is funding a PhD studentship to address some of the most pressing environmental issues of the day.

Marit Stromberg (pictured right) was selected for the studentship and began her research at the College in autumn 2013. Michael Lusada, from Good Energy, said: “Receiving the Santander Scholarship as well as being a really big help financially – is an acknowledgement of my commitment to working towards improving the lives of coffee producers. It is really important to me that my aim and plans in this area have been acknowledged in this way.”

Santander scholarships and travel bursaries

Scholarships are also at the heart of Birkbeck’s developments.

The first Santander scholars – all from South America – began their studies at Birkbeck in autumn 2014. Michael Lusada, from Good Energy, said: “Receiving the Santander Scholarship is important to me as it is an acknowledgement of my commitment to working towards achieving the best renewable ‘mix’ and how solar and wind power can make a substantial contribution to our overall energy needs. Good Energy has always believed that renewables offer a better long-term solution to our energy requirements, and Marit’s research will help us identify the most effective type of wind and solar developments.”

ArcelorMittal: widening access to higher education

One recent leading collaboration involves Birkbeck and ArcelorMittal – the 100% electric steel producer and mining company. Both companies have received the Santander Scholarship students at Birkbeck.

Three major corporate partnerships are underway and more corporate partnerships are expected to be signed in the coming months.

A Santander Scholarship has been awarded to Marit Stromberg (right) to research renewable energy. She has already signed up to work with Good Energy, the 100% renewable electricity supplier. The Santander Scholarship is an acknowledgement of the student’s commitment to research in this area.

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