

## **Distinguished Achievement Awards 2024 – Citations for Researcher of the Year**

### **1. Researcher of the Year – Professor Anthony Green – Faculty of Science and Engineering**

Professor Anthony Green has made seminal contributions to enzyme design, engineering and biocatalysis research and is internationally recognized as a leader in the field. Anthony has pioneered the design and evolution of enzymes made from an expanded alphabet of amino acids. Anthony's discoveries and inventions are profound and have changed the way that chemists think about designing enzymes for new functions. His achievements have been recognized by the award of the RSC Harrison-Meldola Prize, ERC Starter and Consolidator Grants, and a BBSRC David Phillips Fellowship. Most recently, Anthony has been named the 2024 UK Blavatnik Laureate in Chemistry, which is among the highest accolades available at his career stage.

The influence of Anthony's research is further reflected in strategic partnerships with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and global companies to develop catalytic technologies to address societal needs. Recent examples include the development of engineered enzymes to efficiently deconstruct plastics. This award is well-deserved recognition of Anthony's pioneering contributions to the design and engineering of enzymes with new catalytic functions that are beyond those found in nature.

### **2. Researcher of the Year – Professor Rob Ford – Faculty of Humanities**

Professor Rob Ford has worked at the University of Manchester for all his highly distinguished career and in that time has built a portfolio of truly excellent research that crosses and bridges the boundaries between academia and broader society. Professor Ford is one of the best-known Politics Professors in the country, with multiple awards to his name and an exceptional record of high-quality publications. He has published three major books, received four prizes from the UK's Political Studies Association (PSA), and raised over five million pounds from external agencies. His co-authored volume, *Revolt on the Right* (2014) challenged the paradigm of UKIP voters as disaffected Conservatives by showing that the party also took voters from Labour and introduced the concept of the "left behind", which has generated its own sub-field of research. This was followed by his 2020 volume, *Brexitland*, which won the top book prize of the PSA. His dissemination efforts are unceasing, with thousands of appearances in the British and international media.

### **3. Researcher of the Year – Professor Qing-Jun Meng – Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health**

Qing-Jun has an international reputation for academic excellence in musculoskeletal circadian clock and cell matrix research. Qing-Jun's highly innovative work has transformed conventional cell-matrix and clock research, and it has driven the recognition of chronomatrix research in Manchester as world-leading. Many of his landmark papers in this research area represent a step change in our understanding of the daily dynamics of the extracellular matrix in normal tissue functions, ageing, and diseases—including cancer, one of the University of Manchester research beacons.

Qing-Jun' research has been recognised both nationally and internationally, with invitations to numerous talks, and appointments which reflect the impact his research is having in the fields of circadian biology and cell-matrix research.