

## **President's vlog transcript 31.10.24**

Hi everyone, Duncan Ivison here.

What an amazing first three months it's been for me at the University of Manchester. Thanks so much for all the warm welcomes, the feedback, the criticism, the suggestions, it's all very welcome.

It's also been an amazing time, given that we launched the strategy, I gave my inaugural address and we've had the World Academic Summit and a lot more. And so, I'll update you on that right now.

One really exciting event was the inaugural address and the launch of our Manchester 2035 strategy.

You know, one question is what kind of university do we want to be by 2035?

I think really the harder question, the one I think we really need to focus on, is what kind of university do we need to be by 2035?

And I tried to make an argument that the world is changing, the sector is changing in a whole range of ways that I think a university like ours, a university that aspires to be one of the leading global universities in the world, needs to respond to, needs to have an answer to.

The last week we had the first, I guess, formal consultation session that Alan and April led. And there are more sessions rolling out every week pretty much from now until early in 2025.

Please do sign up for an online workshop, for an in-person workshop, you can make a short submission online or a longer one through the through the portal.

The most important thing is that I want to encourage you to engage and the more you engage, the more you contribute to the discussion, I think the deeper and better our strategy will be.

We're going to be gathering up and capturing all the feedback we can get wherever it's given.

Of course, I'll be doing townhalls over the next few weeks and months. I'll also be visiting schools, departments, whole range of organisations and institutes in the university. So that's another way that you can engage with the strategy process. So hopefully it's easy to find your way to the various sessions. If it's not, just get in touch and we can help.

But I really look forward to the contributions that the whole of the university community is going to be making over the coming weeks and months.

One part of Foundation Day, I was asked to reflect on the charter of the University of Manchester that was created back in 2004.

And I reflected on the role that slavery had played in the life of the University in, in terms of the founders of the University and, and some of the original gifts to the University, and the families connected to it.

That's a really important part of our history that I think we need to have an honest and open and transparent conversation about.

It's also caused me to reflect because this month, of course, is Black History Month. And this week I had the privilege of meeting the third cohort of the 100 women Black professors Now group, which was incredibly helpful to me.

I'm, I'm learning, I'm, I'm listening, I'm, I'm trying to understand the challenges and, and opportunities, you know, that our colleagues face and the need to deepen our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

And then yesterday I participated in a panel with Professor Dawn Edge and other colleagues. And again, a really important discussion.

I need to learn and reflect on the, the history of this place and what it means for our colleagues who are really trying to advance our EDI agenda. And it's not easy. You know, there are things we're not getting right that we need to continue to reflect on and try and improve.

So that's been a really, really important series of discussions for me. Lots more work to do, but something I'm really, deeply committed to advancing.

One of the other really exciting things that happened this month was we hosted the Times Higher World Academic Summit. So we had over 600 university leaders from all over the world come to Manchester to meet and talk about the future of higher education.

We had a whole range of colleagues from the University participating on panels and workshops. It was also really exciting to show the world Manchester.

We had events at the gallery at the Whitworth, the Science Museum in the city, we had city leadership come along and talk about the role of the University and it had a genuine Manchester feel which I know the delegates really appreciated.

It was a great moment for our University. It was an amazing event. Thanks to everyone who helped contributed to making it such a successful event. The volunteers, the catering staff, the support staff, all the colleagues who contributed to the workshops

and sessions, you really need to understand just what an amazing experience the delegates had and how they left Manchester thinking that this is a really special place.

Another big theme for me over the past month has been working with our students around not only our strategy but our NSS plan and thinking about the role of students more generally in the University.

Student voice is central to everything we're going to need to do over the next few years. It's going to be central to getting our strategy right. It's going to be central to improving our NSS scores. And as you know, we're working on that. We've got an NSS plan in place.

Having worked at a number of different institutions around the world, our Student Union is amongst the best I've ever worked with. The commitment and, and the seriousness with which they engage not only the student community, but the academic community and the University leadership is really quite extraordinary.

They are doing some really interesting work around student voice themselves. For example, I attended the Teaching and Learning Strategy day the other week and Lexi and the team presented the outcomes of some of that work. And that's going to be incredibly valuable as we think about how we improve the student experience on campus.

And the feedback that comes through, whether it's on Instagram, whether it's on, you know, YouTube, whether it's, you know, in podcasts has really been remarkable. I mean, some of it, you know, is quite critical. And that's useful for me. Also, a lot of great ideas are flowing through as well. So we're going to continue to do that. And of course, if you've got ideas or suggestions about what else we can do, always happy to hear it.

So thanks everyone. As I said, it's been an amazing month. Please do keep the feedback and suggestions, advice, criticism coming. It's gratefully received through whichever way you want to deliver it.

I can't resist saying of course it's 31st of October. Halloween's a big day in our household. Don't know if it isn't yours, but enjoy the festivities.