

Nigel Moss, Hon DLitt, Friday 21 July 2023, am

Chancellor

I am delighted to introduce our honorary graduand, the outgoing Chair of Governors of University College Birmingham: NIGEL MOSS.

Nigel has devoted much of his professional life to securing better opportunities for those children and young people who are unable to access traditional routes into education and training. He spent some of his earlier career at Students' Unions at Keele and Newman Universities, growing students' roles in the universities' governance structures. Subsequently, at the specialist Glasshouse College Stourbridge, he supported young people with disabilities and specific learning needs to achieve their potential through vocational education. This experience, strengthened his commitment to broadening and varying educational opportunities, to enable all students from all backgrounds to succeed.

When he became Chair of the governing body at University College Birmingham – UCB – Nigel found an organisation whose ethos chimed with his own. From small beginnings in Birmingham the 19<sup>th</sup> century, UCB grew and developed its vocational training and educations. It was granted degree awarding powers in 2007, it gained university status in 2012 and it now teaches undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses and high-level apprenticeships. Throughout its many incarnations, UCB has specialised in vocational courses to meet the skills needs of the West Midlands region, currently in areas such as Business Enterprise, Sports Therapy, Culinary Arts Management, Health, Social Care, Education, Science, Engineering and Construction, Aviation and Airport Management. It has worked to provide opportunities for those capable of success, meeting the needs of a wide diversity of its students. Nigel has been a passionate advocate of its work to address awarding gaps between black and white and black and Asian students, and has championed work towards a more inclusive curriculum and effective mentoring for minority students. 50% of UCB's student body now comes from ethnic minorities and almost 20% from the most economically and socially deprived segment of society.

Nigel has been a wonderful chair of UCB's governing board, encouraging the University's leaders to take major strategic decisions on an impressive range of projects.

He was determined that the University's financial resources should be used to provide its students with the very best study facilities, believing that students from non-traditional backgrounds are equally deserving of world-class teaching and learning environments.

The resulting building programme saw the opening of McIntyre House in 2015, and of Moss House in 2020. A new student support hub, The Link, opened in 2019, as well as a major upgrade and refurbishment of the historic Summer Row building; a Centre of Excellence for Engineering, Digital and Sustainable Construction followed in 2022. I visited the facilities a few months ago and they really are brilliant. Altogether, Nigel has overseen more than £200 million of investment in student facilities, at the same time ensuring that this did not create long-term debt – an extremely impressive feat!

And finally, it was Nigel who encouraged the UCB leadership team to open a dialogue with us at the University of Warwick, resulting in a formal Partnership Agreement between the two institutions in 2022. Initially those partnership discussions were focused on Warwick awarding some of UCBs degrees. But Nigel always believed that a wider-ranging partnership, going beyond just an accreditation agreement, could produce a fundamental shift in the way FE, HE, vocational training and apprenticeships were offered to all sections of West Midlands' society. We all believe that the Partnership in its final form will produce graduates with the right skills for the West Midlands' economy, and encourage social mobility within the region. The partnership also seeks to address pathways for science and engineering education in the region – subjects close to Nigel's heart. We at Warwick, are working with UCB to develop new courses in areas such as Engineering, to create pathways for students to study across both our institutions, and we are developing joint initiatives in such areas as Business Incubation and E-Sports.

The Partnership Agreement is just one part of the impressive legacy that Nigel Moss leaves as outgoing Chair of UCB's Governors – a legacy that benefits the entire West Midlands economy and brings new opportunities for countless students. Thank you Nigel, It is a pleasure to celebrate your legacy here today and I am confident that the partnership between UCB and Warwick which you have supported will go from strength to strength.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, NIGEL MOSS.