****

No. 016.19 17 April 2019

**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**Ground-breaking computing and AI centre**

**comes to University of Buckingham**

Four new courses and a Doctoral Training Centre will be launched at a pioneering Computing and Centre for AI at Buckingham thanks to a £2m Local Growth Fund grant.

The University has been awarded £2m by Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP), which will enable it to build a new School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence.

The new School of Computing and Centre for AI will offer new undergraduate and Masters programmes in AI, Cyber Security, Immersive Technologies and Data Science.

Located on campus, it will also house specialised labs for augmented and virtual reality and an Innovation Hub for students and businesses.

The Innovation Hub will house state of the art technology and will be open for students and businesses to use with the aim of encouraging exploration and research.

For up to one year after completing their course, graduates from the School of Computing will be able to use the Innovation Hub to start up their own tech company.

**more…**

**Ground-breaking computing and AI centre: 2**

The Local Growth Fund Grant from BTVLEP will be matched by private investment as part of the £6 million building development. The aim is to open in spring 2021 ready for students to begin academic programmes in September 2021.

Space in the building will mean student numbers in these popular curriculum areas could increase from 100 to 300. It will nurture the next generation of spin-off companies; commercialising research and innovation and contributing to local and regional economic growth.

Over the past five years, the School of Computing has successfully won four Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) awards (part funded by Innovate UK) and overseas industry funding worth £1.7 million to conduct industry linked research and developments in AI, Agritech, Biometrics, Internet of Things and Medical Image Analysis.

 A recent survey by Deloitte found only 20% of businesses believe there are enough school leavers and graduates entering work with the appropriate digital and analytical skills and experience so there is likely to be big demand for the services and courses at the centre.

Interim Dean of Computing Harin Sellahewa said: “The demand is extremely high and it’s outweighing supply. The new Centre could help to plug a skills gap and triple our computing student numbers.

“The Centre will train a generation of specialists and doctoral students in artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, computer vision, data science, internet of things, machine learning and mathematics; embedding cultural awareness, ethics, enterprise and leadership skills in all its graduates as core competencies necessary to work in industries of the future.”

**more…**

**Ground-breaking computing and AI centre: 3**

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham and author of the Fourth Education Revolution, Anthony Seldon said: “We are enormously grateful to Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership for this extremely generous grant for the Centre for AI.

“The university is committed to taking a leading role in training the next generation of leaders in these sciences, supporting the UK to realise its industrial ambitions.”

The project could create around 10 new teaching a research jobs at the university, indirectly create up to 100 new high value jobs and train 75 AI Data Science specialists a year.

The new campus development will have a game-changing impact on Buckingham and the surrounding area. It will enhance Buckinghamshire’s pivotal position at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and help to attract inward investment and create a step change in local economic growth.

BTVLEP also provided additional funding to the National Centre for Immersive Storytelling at the National Film and TV School in Beaconsfield and Bucks Creates @ Pinewood along with the School of Computing Centre for AI to support growth of the Bucks creative and digital sectors.

Andrew M. Smith, Chair, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “Buckinghamshire’s creative sector is world-renowned and we want to do everything we can to support and continue its growth and links through new digital technologies. Funding these three major projects will help to unlock long term impact for the local economy and support the delivery of the Government’s Industrial Strategy.”

Andrew added: “We are delighted to start work with our partners on these exciting new projects.” **more…**

**Ground-breaking computing and AI centre: 2**

Digital and Creative Industries Minister, Margot James, said: "Buckinghamshire is a hotbed for the creative industries and it's fantastic to see even more investment being made in the area to grow and nurture new talent. Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are making sure that the UK is a world leader for the creative sector and an industry that will continue to go from strength to strength."

For more information on the School of Computing, please visit: [https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/computing](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/t4RbCY5E2f3L6C0Uly7).

BTVLEP is a business-led Local Enterprise Partnership which promotes economic growth and prosperity across Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire is a significant wealth generator for the UK economy, and the commitment of over £73m in Local Growth Funds is unleashing ambition and creativity in the county. This funding is enabling the delivery of new road and rail infrastructure, better skills and business opportunities and enhanced digital connectivity to support sustainable economic growth in the county which sits at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

The [**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[**Buckinghamshire Business First**](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

For further information please contact:

Richard Burton

Communications Manager

T: 01494 927160

M: 07866 492292

E: richard.burton@btvlep.co.uk