

Professor Stuart Brand

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Stuart Brand is Director of Learning Experience at Birmingham City University and firmly believes that staff-student partnership in academic processes is crucial to the development of a real learning community. He drives a university wide focus on student academic engagement which has brought national and international recognition.

He drew upon experience of innovation in the university's Faculty of Health, where he began his teaching career as a lecturer in applied human physiology some twenty five years ago. He developed an initiative, linked teaching, which sought to address a theory-practice gap by employing recent graduates to work with academics developing students' skills of application. Later he generated a faculty wide culture of innovation and modernisation in learning and teaching through a focussed Task Group, innovation funding and staff development workshops.

He also led the University's Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). This focussed initially on partnership work with National Health Service employers but grew to encompass student engagement as its primary aim. The CETL also developed a health faculty simulation centre which is transforming the student experience.

Stuart moved to a centrally located university post in 2007 and this allowed wider application of the learning from his faculty based work, building on partnerships with students, staff, employers and other universities. His work on student engagement has, for example, been greatly stimulated by collaborations with Northwest Missouri State University and Copenhagen Business School.

Stuart led a strategic three year initiative for the Redesign of Learning Experience (RoLEx) across the university and through this actively promoted student engagement whilst seeking better working lives for staff. He focusses on improving the student learning experience through more effective partnership with Birmingham City Students' Union. This partnership, recognised with a Times Higher Education Award in 2010, led to development of the nationally recognised Student Academic Partners scheme through which students are employed to work in partnership with staff on enhancement projects. This is underpinning culture change at Birmingham City, stimulating new approaches to curriculum design and delivery and generating a wide range of student employment activity on campus.