

# Foreword



MARTIN CHANEY

The Chairman's introduction and the rest of this document cover many of the year's major achievements. I should like to reflect briefly on the often challenging national context in which we work and then to pay tribute to the University's people.

2002/03 will be remembered as a year in which higher education occupied the headlines in a way that rarely happens.

The possibility of higher tuition fees from 2006, the prospect of new ways of assessing research quality, the notion that the public funding of universities might be linked to more specialised missions, the scrutiny of universities' leadership and management capabilities – all these were on the agenda. And then there was the issue of university admissions, which inspired genuine passions and valuable debate (but also some nonsense).

Through all this, the University has held fast to its principles. In particular, it has articulated the fact that Bristol stands for quality. If it charges higher fees, it will be because that is the only way of raising the substantial additional funds necessary for it to remain internationally competitive. No matter what approach is used to judge the standard of university research, Bristol will strive for the best. Whatever may happen elsewhere, this University will seek to retain a diverse mission that embraces first-class teaching as well as research. Whether universities in general are deemed well managed, this University will maintain the professionalism cited in the Standard & Poor's report and outlined in the submission to the Lambert Review. It should also go without saying that while Bristol will continue to use more than just A-level grades to assess academic ability, motivation and potential, and while it is fully committed to widening participation, it will never lower the quality of its undergraduate intake.

Our successes in 2002/03 and our maintenance of the 'Bristol standard' in the future depend, of course, on people. We are fortunate in having a remarkable staff (both in the academic departments and in the support services), committed lay members, great students, supportive alumni and dynamic partners in Bristol and across the world. We have also been fortunate in having such a widely admired Chancellor, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank Sir Jeremy for all the wisdom he has brought to the University throughout his term of office.

Professor Eric Thomas

Vice-Chancellor

Left: Background image shows detail of the 1908 letter from H O Wills in which he pledged £100,000 towards the establishment of the University