HUGHES HALL WELCOMES THE DUKE OF YORK, HONORARY FELLOW, AT LAUNCH OF THE BRIDGE

On 22 May 2019, Hughes Hall welcomed HRH the Duke of York, Honorary Fellow, at the launch of its exciting new research translation initiative, The Bridge.

The Bridge at Hughes Hall leverages the College’s multi-disciplinary perspective, international nature and external focus to bring the research and expertise of its academic community to solve real world problems. The Bridge facilitates interaction and connection between academic experts and policy-makers, practitioners and industry leaders to promote dialogue, understanding and innovation. It drives the translation of research and knowledge, turning brilliant ideas into lasting change, and equips our researchers to progress successfully in their future careers, whether in academia or the wider world.

His Royal Highness became an Honorary Fellow of Hughes Hall in 2018 when he pledged his ongoing support for students and the wider aims of the college.

During his recent visit, the Duke of York had the opportunity to meet students representing the MCR, sports teams and societies, and those specialising in the sciences and humanities. His Royal Highness heard about their experiences of college life and academic interests. Students enjoyed sharing some new ideas with their peers and hearing the Duke’s views on the relevance of entrepreneurship to so many areas of current research.

Alexandra Entwistle-Thompson, President of Hughes Hall MCR, said: “It was fantastic to have the chance to meet the Duke of York and learn more about the new opportunities for students afforded by The Bridge. The Duke was interested to learn about the role of the MCR and had a lot of questions about our areas of work. I look forward to seeing the results of the Bridge collaborations and hopefully playing a part in its aim to make a difference to society.”

His Royal Highness joined the President, Anthony Freeling, at the launch of The Bridge. Dr Freeling welcomed a number of guests to the College, together with a mix of Fellows, students and college staff, and explained the significance of His Royal Highness’s expertise in business and innovation for the future success of The Bridge. The Duke’s work to encourage innovative thinking in business and entrepreneurship through programmes such as Pitch@Palace provides an important alignment with Hughes Hall’s research translation ambitions, and will help to leverage the College’s longstanding outward focus based around its strength in subjects such as business and economics, and the work of its City Fellows.

Dr Anthony Freeling, Hughes Hall President, said: ‘This was an important day for all of us at the College to remember and celebrate. It was a privilege to welcome our Honorary Fellow, the Duke of York, back to Hughes Hall. His expertise in business and entrepreneurship is a highly valuable resource for us and his support and connections will be critical as we develop The Bridge initiative and strive to translate some of the best thinking on the planet into the best solutions for all – in ten years’ time, we will have changed the world for the better.’
Professor Patrick Maxwell, Regius Professor of Physics, spoke about the importance of developing academic research into knowledge which can create real change.

**Professor Maxwell said:** “Academics are brilliant at turning money into knowledge but often useless at turning knowledge into money. We need diverse groups to turn new discoveries into something useful – knowledge itself is not enough. Here, in Cambridge, our role is to serve society and The Bridge is an exciting new initiative to foster discovery and make a difference. By joining together through the ambitious projects, we can solve some of today’s key challenges.”

A Bridge workshop session, devised by Dr Stephen Axford, Director of Research Translation, provided a dynamic platform from which four groups were able to explore important links between entrepreneurship and a number of Bridge Centres and projects: Regulating the Digital Economy; Oracy and Teaching Philosophy of Science; Climate Change Engagement; and 100 Healthy Years.

Talking to Martin Coleman, an expert in competition law and policy, and Professor Michael Barrett, about issues facing the digital economy, The Duke raised the importance of digital platforms for entrepreneurship, noting how these must be balanced with the need for light-touch regulation which provides a wider function that just rule-making. The group went on to address broader issues around protecting consumer choice in the face of significant market power and turning marketplace best intentions into a measurable framework for change. They pointed to exciting opportunities for further research around the regulation of the digital economy and its relevance to future entrepreneurship and business.

The Duke then joined Mark Anderson (City Fellow), Professor Neil Mercer and Professor Rupert Wegerif to explore the importance of teaching oracy skills in schools, especially in a world overwhelmed by social media. They pointed to the significance of addressing these issues from early on in the primary curriculum, and noted the difference between state and private sector schools in terms of teaching the necessary skills. His Royal Highness speculated whether this is a modern problem as schooling a generation ago included these skills. However, he also highlighted how impressed he has been by the articulate and persuasive manner in which the young people he works with through Pitch@Palace convey their ideas. Everyone agreed on the need for oracy to become integral to the national curriculum. The group also explored commercial opportunities, including the global demand for tool kits to support teaching philosophy of science in schools as well as the long-term benefits to business in having a workforce skilled in oral communication.

The climate change engagement group, led by Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger, Dr Markus Gehring and Dr Ron Zimmern, provoked a great deal of discussion about how best to work with global business in order to change policy and practice on climate change. The group considered engagements at the highest level of business – influencing decisions taken by Board members on strategic priorities, and on the tension between profit and
perceptions around ethics. The group acknowledged the challenges involved in communicating relevant scientific understanding to the people, companies, governments, NGOs and international organisations that can make a difference. The Duke noted that with so many regulations and so much legislation already influencing business operations, and the absence of a clear, unified message for industry on climate change, it will not be easy to change priorities. He suggested that this is both a moral and financial question and one which will only be effectively addressed once many thousands of the world’s brightest researchers can convey their findings to the highest levels of business. The group concluded that true innovation in addressing climate change must directly influence long-term strategy and priorities within the commercial sector.

To conclude his overview of Bridge activities, the Duke joined Professor Paul Tracey and others to hear about the 100 Healthy Years programme – a collaboration between Hughes Hall and the Clinical School. The group discussed which diseases have the biggest influence on life expectancy and noted how many trends are changing. The Duke highlighted the importance of focusing on conditions which result from lifestyle choice; the group also explored the many challenges in enabling behaviour change amongst those most at risk. Socio-economic factors were highlighted, as well as the pervasive effect of influencers such as anti-vaccination movements and social media misinformation.

Finally, each group shared a short summary of the key points from their discussions with all those present. The President then invited His Royal Highness to offer some concluding remarks. His Royal Highness summed up his thoughts on the launch by focusing on the role of pioneers in entrepreneurship; he highlighted the importance of The Bridge in making positive societal change for future generations, and expressed his personal pleasure in returning to the College to share in such an important occasion.

**His Royal Highness said:** “It is a huge pleasure to be here today to recognise what is happening in The Bridge and this opportunity to support knowledge transfer. In the world of entrepreneurship we are lacking pioneers and I’m very interested to meet people making change, in new and different ways, for the next generation, to right some of the wrongs of previous generations. The Bridge can help to produce new ideas and boost new thinking in ways that support new businesses, and create new policy, to change the world.”