



Innovative collaboration

Imperial VP launches KIOS Centre of Excellence with UCY

By **Athena Karsera**

Cyprus took a step closer to becoming a regional technology hub this week as Imperial College's Vice President David Gann visited the University of Cyprus to help launch the two universities' joint KIOS Centre of Excellence.

President Nicos Anastasiades was expected to attend yesterday's kick-off ceremony.

Speaking to the Cyprus Weekly on the occasion, also his first visit to Cyprus, Gann said: "This is an EU-backed Horizon 2020 teaming partnership, bringing together experts from Imperial's Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering with a multidisciplinary team at the University of Cyprus. Together, we are developing the region's leading research centre for the monitoring, control and security of critical infrastructure".

He continued that the project "shows Imperial and the University of Cyprus at their best: working with partners to tackle major societal challenges like cybersecurity and smart control systems - while contributing to economic growth.

"In an ever-changing globalised world, we need infrastructure that is adaptable and resilient to all sorts of threats, like cybersecurity."

Noting all those involved were "tremendously excited" to get the project started, Gann also said he would be meeting with some of Imperial's 1,000 alumni living here. "We take great pride in our connections to Cyprus and look forward to strengthening them further," he added.

An academic, university leader, strategist and advocate, renowned for his work on innovation, entrepreneurship and technology management, Gann also revealed some of the global trends he sees emerging in the university/education and related sectors.

"Universities are engaging in truly international activity in education, research and how we translate our ideas into benefits for society. It is often when students and academics from different nationalities and cultures get together that innovation happens.

"Universities are globalising fast. We're at the front end of this change at Imperial. We're the UK's most international university. We expect to deepen and increase this international presence - that's why we are in Cyprus and working with the University of Cyprus," he said.

As to whether this country could also apply and benefit from more international activity, Gann noted: "we know that universities in Cyprus are becoming more innovative and international, because they are rapidly becoming ever-more important collaborators for us.

"Over the last five years alone, my Imperial colleagues have published more than 600 high-impact research papers with Cypriot colleagues, primarily at the University of Cyprus."

Leading innovation within the framework of his position at Imperial, he also noted that: "change and innovation occurs when institutions are flexible, collaborative and able to create the space for experimentation and strategic thought".

Gann continued: "in recent years, many organisations and businesses have appointed chief innovation officers, recognising the need to manage change strategically. My role in the lead-

ership team is about providing Imperial with the capacity to take on more strategic initiatives".

His advice for someone wanting to enter his sector today is the following: "for students: maintain your focus on your core work, while also lifting your eyes up to the wide range of multidisciplinary opportunities in today's universities; for faculty: be excited about the opportunities to develop modern approaches to education, to collaborate in your research, and to see the fruits of your work have an impact on society".

Gann CBE CEng FICE FCGI is Imperial College's Vice President, leading innovation, and is a member of the College's Executive Board.

His research spans strategy, management science and systems engineering. His expertise lies in building relationships proactively and internationally, to connect ideas, research and solutions with substantial funding drawn from academia, business and government.

Gann also plays a central role in developing the vision, strategy and innovation agenda for Imperial College's 25-acre, White City Campus, and the development of new ventures, such as the Imperial College ThinkSpace, increasing and diversifying the College's income.

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IMPERIAL College's Vice President, leading innovation, David Gann was at UCY this week to help open the joint KIOS Centre of Excellence