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“Studying at City College Plymouth has given me the knowledge and confidence to succeed in my career”

**Engineering Alumni**  
**Mike Hurrell**

## Introduction



Welcome to our Higher Education Strategy 2014 - 2018, which builds on our reputation, achievements and successes in higher education (HE) over the last 24 years.

The HE landscape has undergone significant change in recent years, with the introduction of higher tuition fees, changing student demographics and expectations, increased competition, rapidly changing technologies and the increasingly international nature of HE. These changes represent an opportunity for City College Plymouth to reaffirm our distinctiveness and to be highly successful through our unrelenting commitment to high quality teaching, learning and support with vocationally and academically relevant HE programmes. We place students at the heart of all that we do and through our work with key employers, provide them with essential graduate skills to enable them to succeed.

We operate in an increasingly competitive climate, characterised by a difficult set of economic circumstances which are likely to persist into the future. The economic and social landscape of which the College is a part, both locally and nationally, is changing and we must ensure that what the College does, and how it does it, continues to fit into that.

Positioned at the heart of our community, we have bold ambitions for the College, the City and the region. We believe that we have the capacity to make a major contribution and impact positively on individuals, families, employers, our communities and the wider economy through the transformative potential of HE. We work to raise aspirations and create an environment focused on enterprise and employability.

This strategy sets out how we intend to deliver our vision for HE at City College Plymouth and reflects the values and ethos of the whole College community.

Phil Davies  
**Principal**

## Brief context of the College

**Founded 125 years ago, City College Plymouth is a large general further education (FE) college and is the largest provider of FE education and skills training in the Plymouth travel-to-work area.**

First established as a school of science and art, it became Plymouth College of Further Education in 1969 and rebranded in 2007 to become City College Plymouth. There are two main campuses, one at Kings Road (where the majority of HE provision is delivered) and another at Saltash Road, and a number of smaller units spread throughout the City.

Plymouth is a vibrant, beautiful and historic waterfront city and has an extensive FE/HE learning network comprising a large university, a university-college, a specialist medical teaching facility, a successful research-based science park, and two FE colleges which both deliver significant amounts of HE.

The learning infrastructure is one of Plymouth's major assets which, utilised as fully and creatively as possible, is a mechanism for generating significantly greater competitiveness and prosperity for the City, its businesses, communities and citizens.

HE has been of strategic importance and a key element of the continuing success of the College since the early 1990s. The College makes a distinctive and crucial contribution to the development and delivery of HE across Plymouth and surrounding areas. It plays a significant and successful role in the development of higher level skills, widening participation and progression in HE locally and in supporting regional economic, community and cultural development. The College provides the opportunity for successful participation in HE to all who can benefit from it through dynamic, accessible, cost-effective, flexible and responsive provision with strong student satisfaction.

In 2011, The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) confirmed that both the academic standards and awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies and the quality of learning opportunities fully meet, with confidence, UK expectations for HE provision. The College was recognised by Ofsted in 2012 as a 'Good College with Outstanding Features'.

City College Plymouth has been launched as an enterprise college, joining the Gazelle Colleges Group in 2012, involving a range of different stakeholders - both internal and external - in the design, delivery and evaluation of our provision. This led to a recent restructure of HE to support a highly responsive curriculum and growth, aligned to key priority sectors, and to encourage student progression through a clear ladder of opportunity. HE provision refocused on programmes with stronger demand and reintegration in to curriculum specialisms, overseen and supported by the highly successful HE team.

As an entrepreneurial college, City College Plymouth believes that skills and qualifications will be effective

only in combination with the broader attributes of enterprise awareness, creativity, confidence and resilience.

The College offers a broad portfolio of HE provision giving excellent choice in subject range, mode of delivery, qualification and award title. With strong leadership, highly professional and enthusiastic staff who genuinely care about what they do and how they do it, an on-going commitment to continuous enhancement, and excellent relationships with major employers and our successful, well-established relationship with Plymouth University, we believe we are well placed to realise our ambitions and positively transform the lives of students across Plymouth and beyond.

### Key facts about City College Plymouth

- Number of full-time students - 4,486
- Number of part-time students - 14,033
- Total number of students - 18,619 (which includes 869 higher education students and 204 non-EU 'international students')
- Number of apprentices - 1,188 (included sub-contracted apprentices)
- Number of employees - 821
- Annual College Group turnover - £36m
- Train 10% of Plymouth's population every year
- Direct contribution to the economy - £53m, indirect - £61m

## College Vision

'We are a College with a national reputation for promoting opportunity, enterprise and employability'

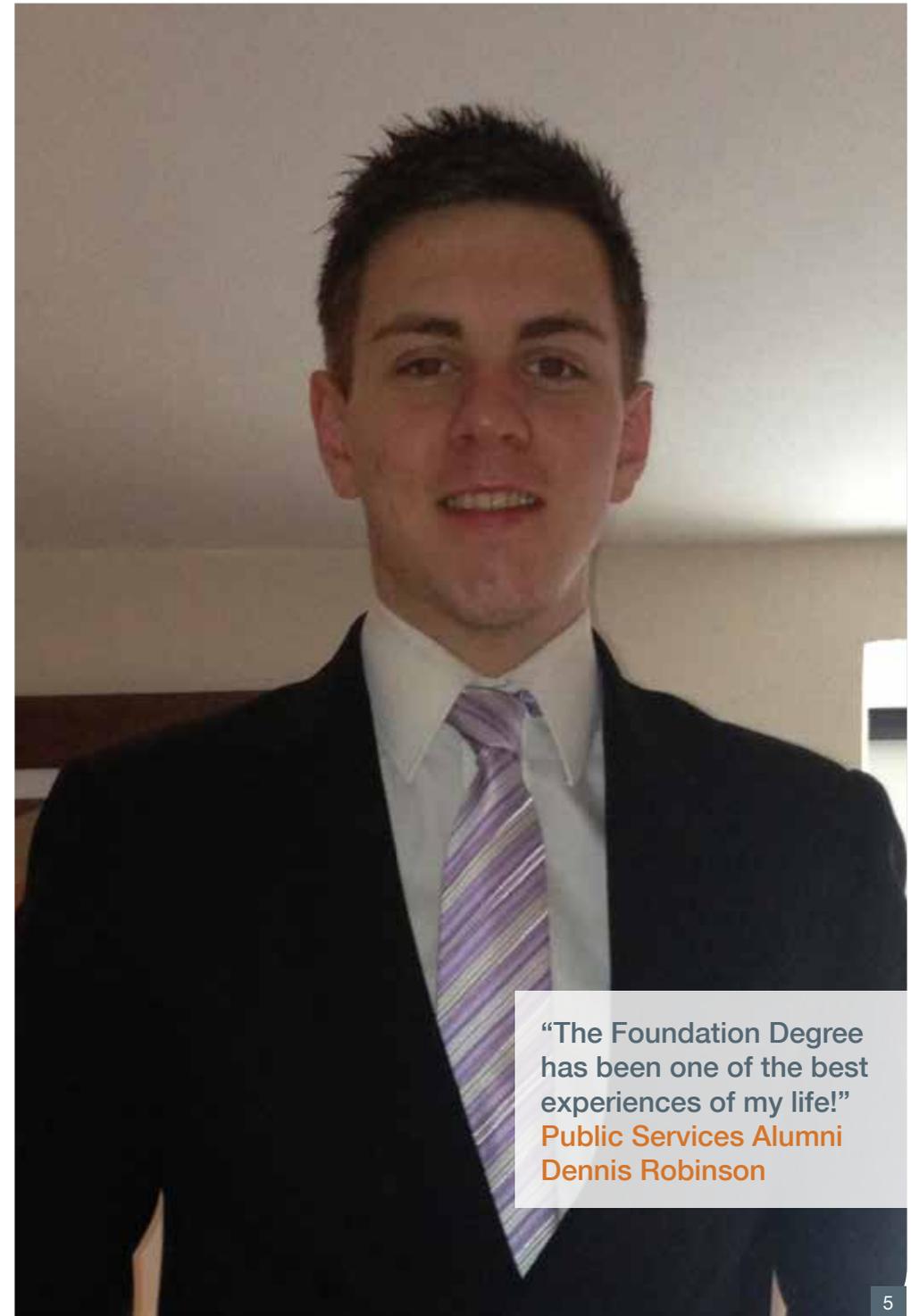
## College Mission

To be the South West's leading provider of innovative, skills-based vocational education and training by supporting partnerships for growth, raising aspirations and enabling wealth creation.

## College Values

- We put our students and our community at the heart of all that we do.
- We foster excellence, innovation and creativity.
- We celebrate diversity and inclusion and the breaking down of barriers to success.
- We have high expectations of ourselves, our students and our partners.

Our core values underpin our strategies, policies, objectives and procedures by providing an anchor and a reference point for everything that we do. They have informed the development of this HE strategy, in particular, by reinforcing the primacy of the student experience to our future direction.



"The Foundation Degree has been one of the best experiences of my life!"  
**Public Services Alumni**  
**Dennis Robinson**



“I was impressed with the continued aim of the College to welcome and receive student feedback”  
**Engineering Alumni**  
**Emily Mousley**

## College strategic priorities at a glance

### Opportunity

We will provide a learning experience which is motivating, rewarding and aspirational. We will place even greater emphasis on putting students at the heart of everything we do at the same time as we are contributing to the stimulation of economic growth across the City and the region.

### Enterprise

We will be employer-driven and put students first. Our focus on enterprise will energise our relationships with partner organisations, employers, higher education and local communities and underpin a differentiated position for the College in its various markets, both at home and abroad.

### Employability

We will strengthen our marketing and employer engagement activities, particularly at the curriculum level. We will develop the employability skills of our students so that they can obtain and sustain high quality employment opportunities and life skills.

### Curriculum and Quality

We will deliver inspirational teaching that equips our students with contemporary knowledge, enterprise and employability skills, enabling them to be active students, employees and citizens.

### Human Resources

We will support our staff to be professional and proactive in their pursuit of current knowledge and skills and to demonstrate their commitment to embodying our values and responding positively and innovatively to the challenges we face.

### Finance

We will maintain good financial health and invest our funds to provide inspirational training and education opportunities for our local communities and to support local employers.

## **Plymouth 2020 Local Strategic Partnership priorities**

The College will contribute to the Plymouth 2020 Local Strategic Partnership priorities:

### **'Reduce inequalities'**

by fostering a culture of enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability; and growing talent in both students and staff - underpinned by the every child matters agenda

### **'Raise aspirations'**

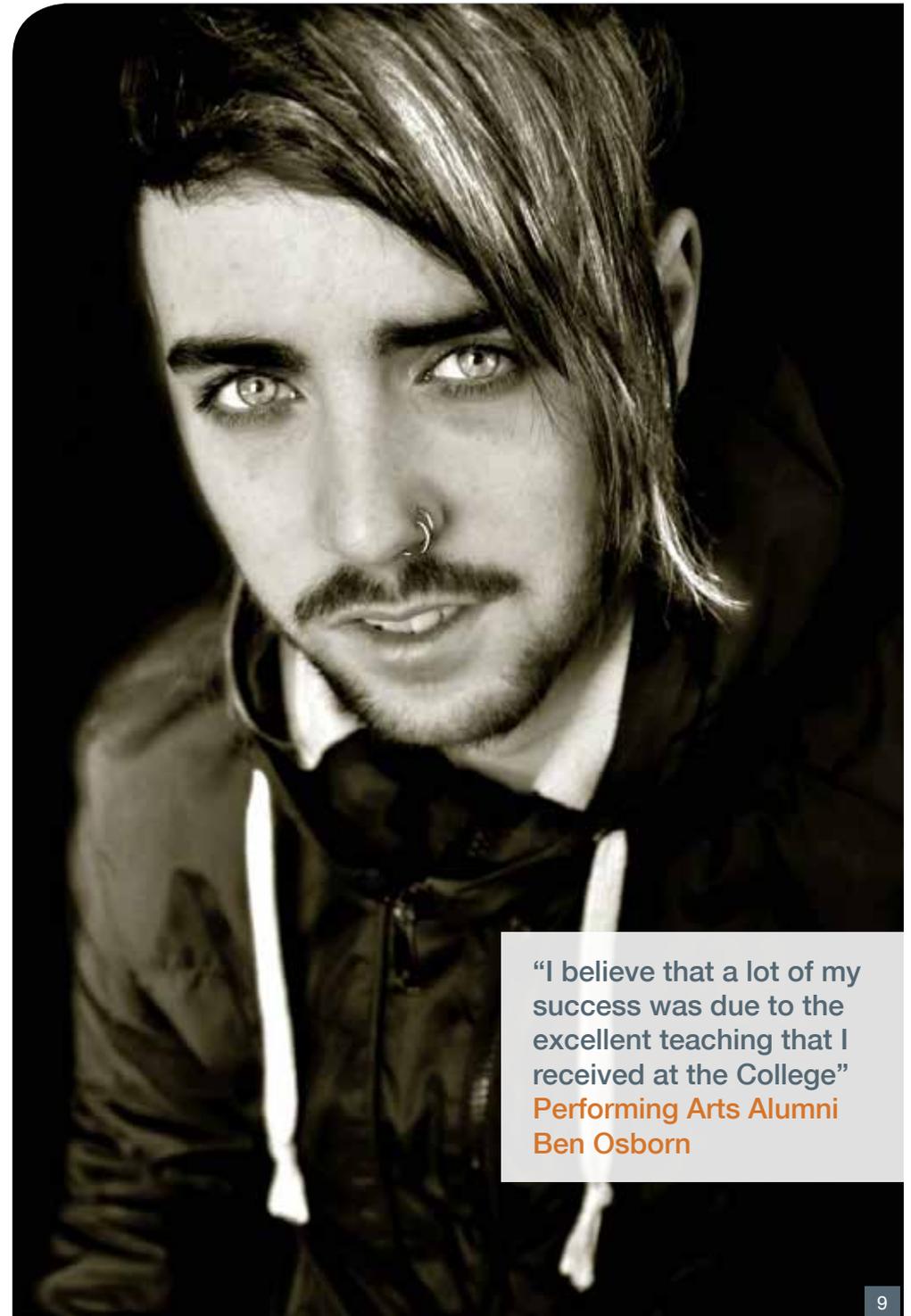
by improving educational attainment levels, skills levels and employment outcomes to provide opportunities for students to progress seamlessly from entry-level through to university-level qualifications

### **'Provide value for communities'**

by positioning the College at the heart of our communities and contributing to regional partnership strategies for growth and prosperity

### **'Deliver growth'**

by delivering an employer-led curriculum offer which supports economic development and is aligned to the priorities of the City and the wider region



**"I believe that a lot of my success was due to the excellent teaching that I received at the College"**  
**Performing Arts Alumni**  
**Ben Osborn**



“The course gave me the opportunity to progress to Plymouth University, where I obtained an Honours Degree”

**Business Alumni**  
**Lee Doney**

## **Our vision for Higher Education**

**We will provide first class HE teaching, learning and support that is a model of excellence in the delivery of HE within FE and meets the expectations of the QAA to manage academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. We will work with employers and their representative bodies, our University partners and our communities, to identify their continuing needs; to develop a HE curriculum offer, including higher Apprenticeships, which meets these needs; extend our delivery; and increase the breadth and volume of our provision.**

The College has a central role to play in the educational, cultural and economic life of Plymouth and the surrounding area. We will work closely with other education providers and our strategic partners to ensure that there is a wide range of learning opportunities within the City that are available to all. We will continue to deliver employer-focused, cost-effective opportunities for individuals and employers to up-skill and re-skill for the future. We take this responsibility seriously and will continue to deliver high quality HE learning opportunities within a culture of continuous enhancement.

Following the restructure of our HE provision, we will maintain a strong sense of HE community for our students and our staff. This community will be built around the principles contained within our core values and the College will be a place of opportunity and enterprise. Our HE strategy includes expansion of priority curriculum areas with support for sectors identified as key to the City's growth, including advanced manufacturing, marine and renewables, business services, creative industries and tourism and leisure. A clear priority continues to be a focus on higher level apprenticeships and up-skilling opportunities for those who wish to progress further at work. Over the life-time of this strategy we will continue to explore the further potential of this type of provision.

The College will deliver vocational, academic and professional programmes that enable our students to meet and exceed their aspirations, ensuring that each individual achieves to the best of their ability.

The College is committed to facilitating progression through FE and into HE, raising and meeting aspirations. It is particularly committed to raising progression for those who would not normally access HE; with the provision of HE in FE helping to ensure seamless progression, where appropriate.

**Widening participation is at the heart of the College's FE and HE ethos and operations - providing a ladder of opportunity for all students.**

The College strives to be responsive to the voice of business and industry and more actively engage employers in the development and delivery of its HE provision. Alongside increasing access and maintaining cost-effectiveness, we will develop new curriculum to respond to emerging local and national priorities. We will also develop an improved commercial offer and deliver our provision in increasingly flexible and innovative ways. An increasing amount of provision will be delivered effectively through the use of our virtual learning environment to complement our face-to-face model; ensuring greater accessibility, flexibility and adding real value to the learning environment for our students.

We have previously been commended by the QAA for our links to industry, which were seen as contributing significantly to the success of our HE programmes. We will further foster these links so that they flourish. In addition, our HE offer will respond to changing demographics and enable students to fit their studies in with their busy lives.

We will continue to ensure that an already talented College staff will have the skills and confidence to respond quickly and effectively to future challenges. Our HE teaching, learning and assessment will be predicated on sound pedagogic principles that enhance the individual learners' knowledge and skills that are critical for their future success. We will continue to enhance engaging and inspirational teaching and learning approaches to raise students' aspirations and provide a stimulating learning experience, accompanied by opportunities for personal development to prepare students for success.

A strong student focus and student involvement will remain a priority for the College. Our students will leave the College with a broad set of graduate skills that prepare them for work and for life. This means reinforcing our

position as a major vocationally-orientated institution in Plymouth, which is committed to opportunity, enterprise and employability, applied scholarship, quality and cost effectiveness within a local, regional and international environment.

The College will be responsive to the changing economic climate, to local needs and to new policy initiatives. However, we will also be consistent in our approach and will remain committed to our core values.

**Our highest priority will remain delivering a high quality HE student experience through a highly responsive curriculum and teaching and learning excellence, where students are at the heart of all our considerations.**

We look forward to working with our students, our colleagues and all our partners to realise our ambitions and transform the lives of students across Plymouth and beyond.



## Higher Education Strategic Aims

The College realises its vision, mission and values through its strategic priorities and the following HE strategic aims:

### 1. Enhancement of the HE student experience

To provide an excellent experience for all HE students which is motivating, rewarding and both challenges and inspires within an inclusive, energetic, engaging and supportive environment; thus increasing students' employability skills and encouraging in them an ethos of lifelong learning.

### 2. Development of teaching and learning

To enhance excellence in teaching, learning and assessment, informed by scholarship and professional practice, by identifying, developing and disseminating evidence-informed approaches and impacting positively on student success.

### 3. Provide regional and employer focussed provision

To enhance the social and economic contribution vocational HE makes through continuous development of our highly responsive, flexible, employer focused curriculum, developing students' higher-level skills and knowledge, which will positively prepare them for future success in their professional and personal lives.

### 4. Focus on widening participation

To continue to raise aspirations, widen participation and increase progression into and through HE, providing the opportunity for successful participation in HE to all who can benefit from it and building on our success in this area.

### 5. Develop our strategic partnerships

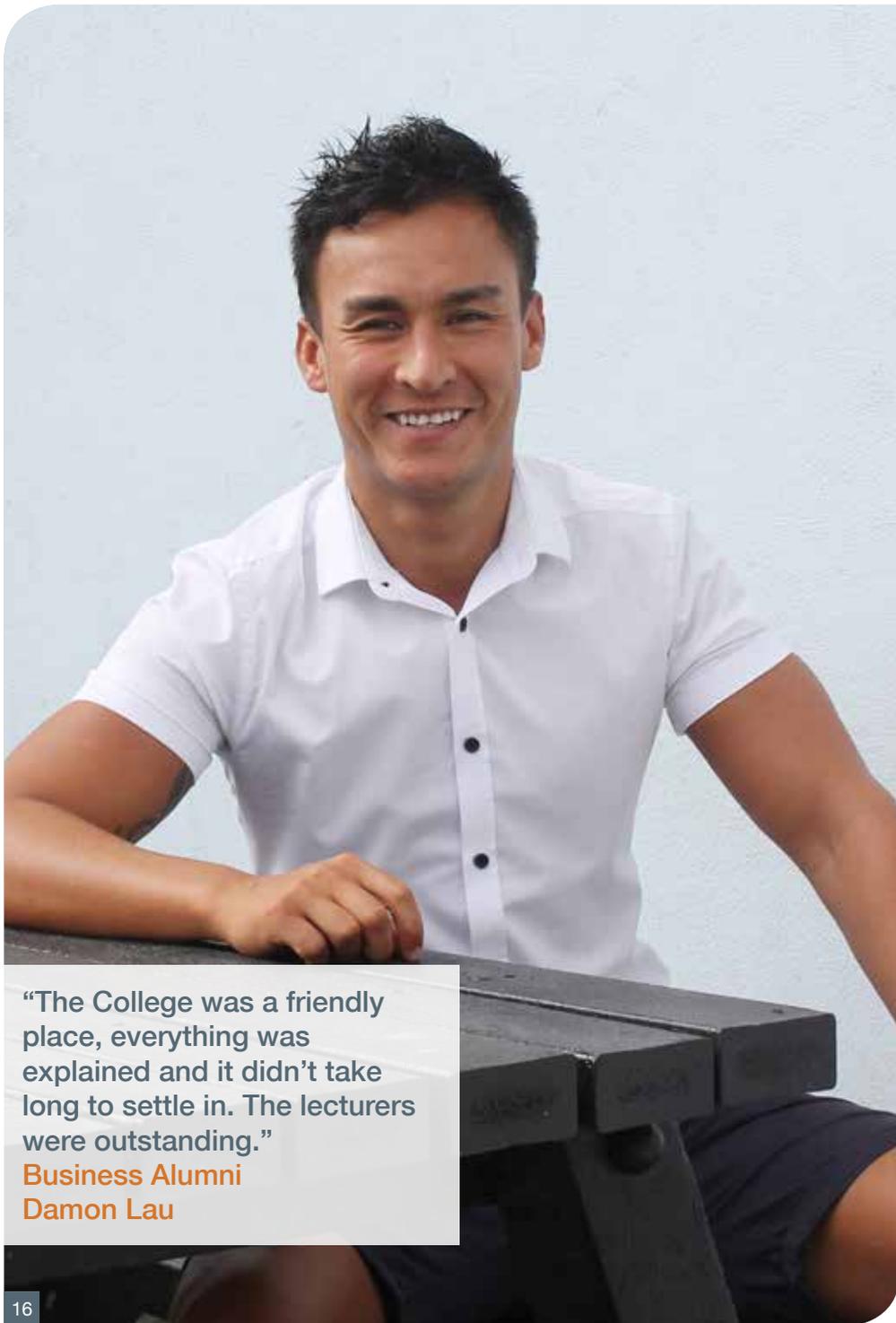
To energise and continue to develop our strategic relationships with employers, industry, partner organisations, awarding bodies and wider communities, enhancing our external reputation, visibility and enabling staff and students to demonstrate an HE ethos of enterprise, innovation, personal and professional development.

### 6. Work in partnership with our students

To continue to develop our HE community in partnership with our students to understand their needs, learn from their experiences and continually enhance their experience; helping to secure future levels of recruitment and maximising student retention and achievement rates across our HE provision.



“It gave me the confidence, knowledge and skills to progress to a BA (Hons) Hospitality, Tourism and Event Management at Plymouth University”  
**Hospitality and Catering Alumni**  
**Maria Smith**



“The College was a friendly place, everything was explained and it didn’t take long to settle in. The lecturers were outstanding.”

**Business Alumni**  
**Damon Lau**

## Relevance to you

This strategy defines our vision for HE alongside the College’s Strategic Plan and acts as a guide to focus our activities and allow continuous improvement and enhancement to meet our shared ambitions for the future of HE at City College Plymouth.

The strategy will drive our success and our operational plan. Our HE action planning process will allow us to monitor our progress.

**For students** the strategy provides information about what we believe is important and emphasises the importance of engaging with you as a partner; working together to inform and support your learning, personal development and enhance your overall student experience.

**For colleagues** the strategy identifies our strategic aims and will help to guide you in your work and continuous personal development to deliver our shared ambitions.

**For our partners** the strategy outlines our vision, mission and ethos and details how we will learn from and work collaboratively with you to support you in achieving your goals.

## Risk assessment and management

The Senior Leadership Team, HE team and associated faculties ensures a robust and on-going assessment of high-level risks, both strategic and operational, and have identified the following key risk factors and associated management processes:

