

The Baroness of Lawrence Clarendon OBE

Chancellor of De Montfort University

New Chancellor's response

Thank you Pro Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and all of you here for your kind words, your warmth and welcome, and of course thank you for allowing me to take on this important role of Chancellor of De Montfort University.

Each of you has opportunity in your life, because education is part of your life.

We all have talent, and we are each born with something unique inside of us. But that precious gift, education, is what helps us understand talent and use it, not only so we have a better, more fulfilling life, but crucially, so we can make life better for others.

As I spoke to students and staff here last year, when DMU generously made me an Honorary Doctor of Laws, I understood quickly that everyone here felt the responsibility that came with the advantages education provides.

I saw that using education for the good of all was in the very fabric of DMU life. I saw then that we shared a vision and that we could and should work together. That is why I am not simply honoured, but very grateful, for the opportunity to do so as your Chancellor.

My work in the last two decades has been about ensuring that future generations of young people enjoy the opportunities that were denied to my son. I have come to understand that the issues highlighted by my son's case were not confined to the criminal justice system, and that change was needed in wider society. That is why I took up the offer of entering the House of Lords, and why I want to work with DMU.

Today is a great opportunity for me to begin working with you all. We know that we can make the change that is so desperately needed. I believe that greatness can come from anywhere, and young people are most inspired when they see those like themselves making a positive difference in the real world. That is what is so exciting about the work of projects like #DMUglobal and #DMUlocal - their real-world, hands-on connection – and why I cannot wait to be involved.

We simply cannot afford to waste talent, and it is so exciting to see DMU reaffirm recently its commitment to inclusion and diversity in your Strategic Framework but also in your upcoming Equality and Diversity Charter, so that you can find, nurture and retain talent from all walks of life, from all communities.

Your courage and determination can make a difference. Working with an institution where so many talented individuals are so committed to making a difference together gives me great heart, and great appetite for what lies ahead. We can change things

for the better, and I thank you for this opportunity to do so, and for making me officially part of the family. Thank you.