

The Honorary Graduate: Melanie Watson

The Orator: Dr Antony Hill

Melanie Watson is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Master of Science.

"Born in Bristol, I was educated in school and college in South Bristol. I graduated from UWE in 1994 with a BTEC HND in Medical Laboratory sciences, having completed a training placement in Pathology at the Bristol royal Infirmary laboratories. I then registered to practice as a Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer (MLSO) and began my practice in the Haematology and Blood Transfusion services at the BRI.

"In 1995 I completed the primary examinations of the Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), which I managed two weeks before I married my husband Lee. I obtained my full IBMS fellowship in 1997 having completed a dissertation on Tissue Factor Pathway Inhibitor and a research project entitled 'Diagnostic tools for functional iron deficiency, a comparison study'.

"My knowledge through these studies and practical experience in the lab led to promotion to an advanced biomedical science practitioner in Haematology. I really enjoyed these very 'hands on' scientific period of my career. I was keen to enthuse and train others and in 1998 became training officer.

"With my eye on the undergraduate trainee scientists from UWE, I also went on to introduce the IBMS medical laboratory assistant training portfolio and supported Specialist registrar training for the Royal College examinations. Due to my passion for encouraging young people into science I became a Healthcare Science regional STEM ambassador for the regional network and formalised a schools work experience package for the laboratory. I gained a level 3 diploma in teaching and learning which broadened my skills in delivering vocational qualifications. At this busy time I brought our two sons into the world: Luke in 1999 and Todd in 2001 and continued part time working during their formative years. I still managed to continue with a challenging work schedule.

"My heart set on education and workforce development, I threw myself back into part-time study alongside my work. I first gained a level 4 OCR Business diploma in Internal Verification. My real pride was graduating from the University of Bristol in 2016 with an MSc in Teaching and learning for Health Professionals. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of interviewing trainee science practitioners at UWE to find out their perception of what learning in an inter-professional module meant to them as part of my final research project.

"I had an amazing opportunity in 2011 to move into an educational leadership role and made the difficult decision to move from a practical science role. I then focussed on my development as a leader in science education. At this time the landscape of healthcare science education went through significant change and I became a member the national Healthcare science bodies to help shape this change ensuring that the workforce voice in the region was heard. I also had secondments with commissioning of education with Health Education England offices and supporting the Chief Scientific officer's scientific directors' network in the South of England. I am currently education and training lead for the West of England NHS Genomic Medicine centre. A leadership role that delivers on all my educational values: partnership and network working, interprofessional working, STEM engagement and quality assured educational activities."

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Melanie Watson's commitment to contribution to Healthcare Science.