

Press Release

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University joins bee-keeping revolution

Urban beekeeping is becoming an increasingly popular to protect bee population as overall number of honey bees dwindle.

A London university is now home to 40,000 bees as part of its UK-leading sustainability agenda.

London Metropolitan University has installed two beehives on the roof of its Rocket Building on Holloway Road, Islington.

The beehives were installed by Barnes and Webb, a London based beehive rental company, who will visit weekly to care for the bees. The bees will produce 40 jars of honey annually which will bear the London Met brand. Each hive accommodates 20,000 bees, but this will increase up to 80,000 by the end of summer 2016.

The number of honey bees are declining worldwide, but are thriving in urban locations due to the diverse range of flowers, trees and plants. Last year, London Met installed a number of 'bee hotels' in its wildflower meadow to support the insects, which are key to the ecosystem.

The new bees come as part of the University's sustainability programme which has seen London Met named the best university in England for carbon reduction. It also installed 221 solar panels on its library roof earlier this year.

London Met's Green Team is made up of Rachel Ward, Sustainability Manager, Paul Ayles, Hard Services Co-ordinator, Jim Quinn, Building Infrastructure and Maintenance Manager, Marco Brunone, Guildhall Business and Law Officer and Olly Holmes, Head of Support Information Systems and Services. They won one of London Met's staff awards in 2015 and reinvested the prize money to install the beehives.

Rachel Ward, Sustainability Manager at London Met, said: "It's great that we've been able to use the award we received to do something everyone in the University can get involved in. We'll be running events so people can find out more about the bees and will also be gifting the honey we produce."

There's already been some drama in the hives, with one of the queens being retired early.

"One of the hives has recently changed their queen because she wasn't performing up to standard," explained Rachel. "Hopefully the new queen will settle in well and meet expectations!"

Students will also have the opportunity to watch the bees progress through a webcam which will be available both internally and externally. Staff and students also have the opportunity to visit the rooftop to watch the beekeeper every week.

You can follow their progress on Twitter at @GreenLondonMet.

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Contact

Charlotte White | PR & Internal Communications Assistant
External Relations | London Metropolitan University

+020 7133 3991
c.white1@londonmet.ac.uk

About London Metropolitan University

London Met has been providing education to people from all backgrounds since 1848, with the creation of the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Working Men.

Four faculties teach cutting-edge, relevant courses across the arts, sciences, business, law and humanities. Accelerator – London Met's specialist business incubator – helps graduates get their enterprises up and running and was named among the Top Five 'Most Active' accelerators in Europe in 2015, highlighting its contribution to London's booming start-up industry.

London Met is home to world-leading academics who regularly give expert comment to the media. The University scored well in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, being ranked 4th in the country for Area Studies and performing strongly in Education and Social Studies.

The University is strongly focused on employability. In 2015, London Met recorded its highest ever graduate employment score, with 91.1% of all 2013/14 graduates in work or further study six months after graduation.

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