

Baroness Diana Warwick,

21 July 2022 awarded Honorary Doctor of Science (Hon DSc) with
oration given by Professor Michael Scott

Chancellor

Our honorary graduand today is BARONESS DIANA WARWICK,
created a life peer in 1999 in recognition of her public service. I am
delighted to introduce her to this Congregation.

Diana Warwick, having gained a BSc in Sociology at Bedford College,
University of London, spent the early part of her career in trade
unionism: she was Assistant Secretary of the Civil and Public
Servants Association from 1972-83 and then, until 1992, General
Secretary of the Association of University Teachers (the AUT). Next
came a period as the first Chief Executive of the Westminster
Foundation for Democracy, an independent public body established in
1992 to support democratic institutions around the world. Fourteen
years followed as Chief Executive of Universities UK, representing the
interests of 130 universities. She was Chair of the Human Tissue

Authority, 2010-14 and is currently Chair of the Property Ombudsman Board and the National Housing Federation, in which capacity she has spoken of the national need for increased social housing, and for support for the sector to undertake remedial work on its buildings in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower Fire. She has also held a number of non-executive and public interest roles, including membership of the Employment Appeals Tribunal and of the Nolan/Neill Committee on standards in public life; Board member of the Pensions Protection Fund; life Vice-President of Voluntary Service Overseas; Board member of the British Council, and Trustee of the Commonwealth Institute.

Baroness Warwick thus has, I think you will agree, an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and experience, and in particular a profound knowledge of UK higher education and a unique perspective on the sector, resulting from her many different roles – not only in the AUT and Universities UK, but also as a non-executive director of the Universities' Superannuation Scheme, a member of the Council of University College London and of the Board of Governors of

Nottingham Trent University, and as Vice-President of International Students' House in London.

Through that myriad of roles, she has championed the importance of universities as a driving force for our future prosperity and their significant role in their local economies and emphasised the vital links between teaching and research, innovation and entrepreneurship. She has encouraged investment into higher education to increase widening participation across the sector and has urged increasing collaboration between universities, further education schools and the government to build an evidence base of what really works in widening participation. And she believes deeply in widening the spectrum of UK education to include more vocational training and apprenticeships. These views are, of course, very much in tune with our own beliefs and priorities here at Warwick – the University and the Baroness are thus, you will be glad to hear, united by far more than just the shared name of Warwick! Economically, socially and culturally, we are committed to playing an important part in our local region; we are a research-led university, known for our innovation and entrepreneurial activities, but we also put widening participation at the

very top of our agenda, and we have enthusiastically embraced apprenticeships with our own Degree Apprenticeships scheme.

Since her elevation to the Lords, Baroness Warwick has been assiduous in attending the Chamber to contribute to debates on her areas of expertise and interest. In particular she has voiced her concern about the impact of Brexit on UK higher education, particularly on research funding, student mobility, numbers and educational exchanges – things that we at Warwick hold dear. She is known for speaking succinctly, backing up her arguments with well-marshalled facts and figures, and intervening with pertinent questions for the government. I know what you are all thinking – how much the Baroness' style is also an apt description of the typical Warwick student!

Baroness Diana Warwick has honorary degrees from the Open University and Brunel University. Today, it is our pleasure not only to recognise her important contribution to public life, and particularly to the Higher Education sector, but also, crucially, to affirm the value and importance of the goals and ambitions the Baroness and we as a

University both hold dear, by conferring on her an honorary degree here at Warwick.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, DIANA MARY WARWICK.

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