

WINEVVS

Retiring DowDuPont chief hands over \$13.5m to build UQ sustainable future centre

By Kathy McLeish

Updated Fri 6 Apr 2018, 10:41am

One of Australia's most senior international business leaders has donated \$13.5 million to help build a Brisbane university research facility to develop budding leaders of a sustainable global future.

Andrew Liveris will retire as chairman of DowDuPont in July and said he and his wife Paula wanted to invest in the future by funding a centre at the University of Queensland (UQ), to be called the Liveris Academy.

Mr Liveris, a UQ chemical engineering graduate, is in Brisbane today to announce the gift at a formal ceremony.

He said the centre would aim to attract, support and develop some of the world's "smartest young people and finest minds in engineering and science while addressing major challenges facing society today".

"We're sharing this one environment and we'd better get into the solutions space for clean air, clean water, affordable food, housing, medicines for the hundreds and hundreds of millions of people that are in poverty that are dying as we speak from hunger," he said.

Career included advising US presidents

During his 40-year career with Dow and then DowDuPont, Mr Liveris guided the company through often turbulent times, including the global financial crisis when bankruptcy loomed at one point.

Last year, he oversaw the multi-billion-dollar merger between Dow Chemical and DuPont, the two largest chemical companies in the US.

He has acted as an informal adviser to US President Donald Trump and he headed Mr Trump's manufacturing council before it was disbanded last year, having also served as co-chair of one of then-president Barack Obama's advisory committees.

Mr Liveris raised concerns when Mr Trump withdrew from the Paris Accord, saying it was important to have a seat at the table as the world headed toward lower carbon emissions, but he said he also understood governments needed time to transition to affordable sustainable energy solutions.



PHOTO: The Liveris Academy will seek to support young leaders of a sustainable future. (Supplied: Lyons and m3architecture)



PHOTO: Andrew Liveris said the business world and governments had to work together. (Supplied: UQ)

"Business people need to embrace it so we can help governments come up with affordable trajectories and runways to get to this better place where we have lower temperatures, lower emissions," he said.

A gift that will keep on giving

The Liveris Academy will seek to identify students of all ages across the world who show promise as future leaders and are passionate about addressing sustainability issues such as clean energy, clean water and food security in the face of climate change.

Australian students will be offered scholarship opportunities.

"I think leadership today, if it's done well, is age-blind," Mr Liveris said.

"You can be 18 or 60-something and have the energy and the passion to chase and seek creativity to help the world be a better place, a sustainable place and then of course embrace digitalisation — these are the principals that will be embedded in this facility and this academy," he said.

The new program will be housed in the Andrew N. Liveris building, an 11-storey engineering and research hub to be constructed within UQ's faculty of engineering, architecture and information technology.

UQ vice chancellor Peter Hoj said Mr Liveris was one of the university's most successful graduates and a long-time supporter of the institution.

Mr Hoj said the Liveris Academy would prove to be a gift that kept on giving.

"The idea is that graduates from the academy will come back and contribute to the teaching and learnings of future generations of students creating a bigger pool of expertise available to the younger people coming through," he said.

Mr Liveris said he planned to return to Australia to help business and government develop sustainable solutions together.

He has promised to raise an extra \$26.5 million to boost UQ's philanthropic campaign by a total of \$40 million.

Topics: engineering, university-and-further-education, chemicals-and-pharmaceuticals, sustainable-development, research, science-and-technology, research-organisations, environmentally-sustainable-business, brisbane-4000, qld, university-of-queensland-4072, australia

First posted Fri 6 Apr 2018, 5:35am

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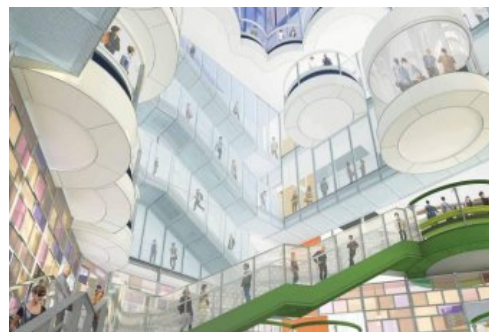


PHOTO: The centre will seek out future leaders from across the world. (Supplied: Lyons and m3architecture)