
A Case Study of Business & Community Engagement (BCE)

at The University of Newcastle

Clive Alderson & John Burke

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Evidence from the JISC BCE User Needs, CRM and IPR studies has shown that institutions need help in understanding how to achieve alignment and integration of different processes, systems and operations in support of the developing BCE capability and infrastructure, especially within the information, administration and IT services. This project will gather evidence of current levels of integration and identify models of cross-institutional business processes impacting on BCE activity. It will identify good practice and ways for improving processes to better integrate BCE with core activities.

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Executive Summary

Staff at the University of Newcastle took part in the Embedding BCE through Business Process Improvement and Internal Engagement Project in 2009, analysing the efficiency of the institution's business processes with respect to BCE. The study found that the breadth, variety, richness and impact of BCE work at Newcastle was significant, especially with regard to its stated aims to be a world-class research intensive university, to deliver teaching of the highest quality, and to play a leading role in local economic, social and cultural development.

During the project the University was in the process of drawing up a new strategy for BCE, including the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of partnerships and alliances. The Business Development Directorate acts as a gateway to external organisations, offering a group of multidisciplinary specialists with technical, commercial, marketing, legal and management skills. The team both generates external links, and services internal engagement opportunities. Contracts are worth £6-7 million per annum to the university.

It was found that commercial engagement using collaborative approaches was an established part of the culture in many parts of the university. Engagements range from small scale knowledge transfer consultancy to longer term industry based initiatives. The university also hosts long standing strategic units and institutes. Consistent success in BCE was felt to be due in part to an ability to align internal processes to the needs of external partners.

Teaching staff pointed to engagement activities being a major input to the relevance and currency of what they teach; further, in some areas engagement was felt to be crucial to professional credibility. Using external partnerships to support the learning process has provided many benefits for students, and supported the current focus on improving employability. However, it was felt that the university could do more to disseminate good practice. In terms of research, engagement was found to encourage practitioners to be outward looking and to pursue research which impacted more widely than just in academic circles.

In terms of BCE and its affect on other internal processes, the university has observed a massive impact on IT systems. Although IT is a key enabler for engagement, it is difficult to systematise, so work is necessarily ongoing to develop processes for easier engagement with the university. BCE is embedded in HR processes, however lack of recognition of efforts in BCE is a barrier to recruiting more academics to activities. At Newcastle other central services, such as the Library and Finance, are effectively aligned to the needs and expectations of external partners.

Internally, robust processes for sharing information and knowledge regarding engagement are seen as the building blocks of effective external engagement; the perception is that Newcastle has a successful relationship with key regional funders and decision makers. The major strategic challenge is to plan and manage the many partnerships as effectively as possible.

The number of staff at Newcastle involved in BCE has increased in recent years. BCE is felt to be a bottom up activity and a new senior role of PVC for Engagement aims only to coordinate efforts. BCE practitioners need the ability to engage at all levels, and core skills in leadership, planning, time management, and communication; further it was acknowledged that disposition and personality lead to the self-selection of most people involved in engagement.

The institution has a comprehensive range of measures to track the performance of BCE activity; however, it has been acknowledged that there is a lack of internal information exchange which impairs the ability to improve and learn from evaluation activities.

Overall it was felt that there were pockets of good practice with regard to BCE within the university, but more knowledge needs to be shared to show the opportunities to others.

Overview

Statement of Importance

Evidence from the JISC BCE User Needs, CRM and IPR studies¹ has shown that institutions need help in understanding how to achieve alignment and integration of different processes, systems and operations in support of the developing BCE capability and infrastructure, especially within the information, administration and IT services. These internal services are often not as responsive to BCE as they are to teaching and research because of uncertainty about policy, a perception of relatively reduced importance and the simple fact that BCE is not yet embedded in most institutions' organisational design, policies and practices.

Other related JISC projects² have sought to identify top level institutional business processes and functions, and the international e-Framework³ has process identification and improvement as its underpinning rationale, to enable technical interoperability and an internal service orientated approach.

The BCE Customer Relationship management (CRM) project⁴ is deriving process mapping and self-analysis tools to help institutions manage an enterprise-wide approach to CRM, before delivering some pilots to test effective approaches to CRM. Managing relationships, contacts and business intelligence is clearly core to BCE operations, so the CRM work is important in the context of this project, but here the focus is much more on the business processes implicated in all BCE operations, so interoperability with core institutional functions is main area of investigation.

Strategic change of the type spearheaded through BCE brings with it, not only the operational changes referred to above, but also changes in resources and resource profiles. BCE requires new and distinctive skill-sets, which include negotiation, high-level communication skills, brokerage skills and legal knowledge, as well as an understanding and experience of both business and academic sectors. The training and staff development needs are therefore considerable; a parallel BCE Programme activity 'Supporting Training, CPD and Staff Exchange for BCE Practitioners'⁵ is focussed on providing process, system and technology enhancements for existing training programmes, delivered by AURIL-CPD, PRAXIS, the UK Universities CPD Network and others.

The increasing professionalisation of institutional Knowledge Transfer and workforce development practitioners, through professional bodies like the Institute of Knowledge Transfer and networks like the UK Universities CPD Network, adds to the gathering momentum of BCE activities. This makes it more critical that effective processes to support these activities are identified, integrated and communicated and effective change management processes adopted to minimise risk, ensure sustainability and ensure that the institutions have the operations suitably configured to deliver their strategies.

¹ http://www.jisc.ac.uk/home/whatwedo/themes/business_community_engagement.aspx

² Notably: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme_jos/project_hilda.aspx

³ <http://www.e-framework.org/>

⁴ <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/funding/2008/03/circular308appendixg.doc>

⁵ <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/bce/bcesupportingtraining.aspx>

The Project

The Embedding BCE through Business Process Improvement and Internal Engagement project is one of four projects managed by the Advisory Services of JISC. The project is being managed by JISC infoNet (<http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk>), based at the University of Northumbria, with John Burke, Senior Adviser at JISC infoNet as Project Manager and Clive Alderson as Project Consultant.

Aims and Objectives of the project are:

1. Identifying the key business processes and system implications involved and analysing the related coherence and efficiency of these. This will be achieved through information gathering from a range of institutions across the sector, including some FE institutions and some from the devolved administrations;
2. Producing case studies which illustrate different models and degrees of business integration for different approaches to BCE. This will be achieved by working with a small representative sample of five institutions (including one English FE, one Scottish HE and one Welsh HE institution) to examine and document the 'as-is' state of business processes around BCE activities;
3. Devising change plans in each of the five cases to enable BCE functions to be more effectively embedded by identifying areas for process improvement, actions, resources and change agents needed in each of the five cases which would result in better integrated strategic BCE operations;
4. Producing an infoKit which distils the learning from the above activities and highlights recommended business process improvement steps and methods for better integration of BCE operations within institutions;
5. Base-lining and developing the level and nature of engagement between central functions, (including libraries, administration and information management/IT) and BCE operations;
6. Producing an infoKit for managers of the central functions within an institution, with advice and guidance on BCE and how to support it. This will demonstrate the benefits for the institution and promote enhanced internal engagement and better integrated BCE.

The Context

The University of Newcastle is situated within the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, situated on the north bank of the River Tyne in the Metropolitan Borough of Tyne and Wear in the north east of England. The present economy rests mainly in the city's function as a major service and financial centre.

Newcastle is also an important centre for education, and is one of the oldest university towns in England. Newcastle developed as a civic university in response to the regional demands of the industrial economy. It originated as a college of Medicine in 1834, and was part of the Durham University structure. In 1871 the College of Physical Sciences was founded and renamed as Armstrong College in 1904. It continued to be a division of Durham University until 1963 when the University of Newcastle upon Tyne was created by Act of Parliament. Newcastle is a member of the Russell Group of universities.

The University has a very physical presence within Newcastle, being located at the heart of the City Centre. It currently serves approximately 20000 students and has over 4500 employees.

The BCE landscape at Newcastle

The comments and feedback contained in this case study should be prefaced with an acknowledgement of the breadth, variety and richness of the engagement activity being undertaken at Newcastle. The impact of this work, both internally within the institution and externally across the broader community, is significant. Although not exhaustive, the following are some of the activities and initiatives identified during discussions and interviews with members of the university:

- The organisation of writing festivals and initiatives such as the Common Book Project resulting from collaboration between the university and external agencies and organisations.
- The operation of 2 working farms to provide real engagement in the agriculture sector and work experience for students.
- The placement of 450 students into 160 schools, colleges, and companies each year to improve employability and build community engagement.
- The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health. A planned £14 million investment in a unit dedicated to translating research into practice through engagement with non-academic community representatives.
- Science Central, part of the Science City initiative. The £33 million acquisition of the former Scottish and Newcastle brewery site by the university in partnership with the City Council and One NorthEast is the first step to creating a science, business and education complex in Newcastle city centre. The university plans to establish world class research teams to work with companies and other partners in the fields of nanotechnology, biosciences, and molecular engineering.
- The establishment of the North Leadership Centre, to increase development activity with head teachers and middle managers in the education sector.
- The Newcastle-Durham Beacon for Public Engagement project. An initial investment of £8 million rising to £12 million over 4 years will seek to deliver improved dialogue with community partners and wider society by improving systems and processes for public engagement.
- Inreach for outreach. A system for sharing information and improving access to people and skills across the university. Started as an informal approach to bring people together, it is now building momentum and has established a mail-base and runs quarterly meetings hosted at different university locations.
- The Creative Construction Competition is an engagement programme with secondary school students. Designed to raise interest and aspirations the competition involved 1000 participants this year.
- The Centre for Life is a science village where scientists, clinicians, educationalists and business people come together in one location. Almost 500 people from 30 countries now work on site. The Life Centre delivers one of the biggest hands-on science education programmes in Europe.
- The Great North Museum Project is a Newcastle University led £26 million development to establish a new facility containing a library, 11 galleries, purpose built exhibition space, and an education suite. The development was created in partnership with Tyne and Wear Museums, Newcastle City Council, The Natural History Society of Northumbria, and the Society of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne.
- The digital media Culture Lab, a research facility which also generates greater engagement both internally and with a wider external user group.

The Enquiry Process

The review of BCE activities at the University of Newcastle was structured around a series of one to one interviews with a cross section of staff drawn from across the institution. The approach was conversational and

responses were noted down and have been aggregated to form the basis of this case study. Comments and feedback have been anonymised.

A self-assessment tool in the form of a workbook was also developed (based on the format of the EQFM Beta model) to facilitate a half-day group workshop/discussion which was held at the end of the interview schedule. A small representative group were invited to this event. The aim was to stimulate comment and debate around some of the fundamental issues associated with how the University structures, manages and measures its' BCE plans and activities. The key points raised during this event are noted in [Appendix B](#).

Findings

The findings and feedback have been aggregated under the following headings:

- Strategy and Policy
- Processes and business systems
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Roles and skills
- Customer perceptions and Key performance measures

The findings have been informed by the views expressed by staff during interviews and the self evaluation workshop facilitated by the JISC infoNet project team. A full list of participants is provided at [Appendix A](#).

Strategy & Policy

Strategy & Policy at Newcastle

The University of Newcastle has a stated vision of being a civic university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Furthermore, its mission statement adds further emphasis to the importance of engagement with external stakeholders by identifying 3 main aims, to be a world class research-intensive university; to deliver teaching and facilitate learning of the highest quality; and to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England.

This is an extension and reaffirmation of the university's commitment to reinvent the notion of Newcastle as a landmark institution within the civic landscape. The Vision 2021 document goes on to identify "Engagement" as one of 3 core academic functions, with a new Pro Vice Chancellor to lead the agenda and identify sustainable models and structures to develop and embed engagement as a recognised mainstream activity.

The University is currently in the process of establishing its new strategy for engagement. To inform this process a number of contributing activities have been implemented, firstly an engagement mapping exercise has been undertaken to profile and assess the volume and nature of engagement activities taking place, to date there have been 436 respondents. Secondly, there has been a critical literature review to identify best practice in societal engagement, and thirdly, in addition to policy driver documents such as Innovation Nation, and the Investment and Innovation Framework, publications such as the State of the Nation Report (North East Regional Partnership) have been used to sharpen the focus and emphasis of strategic thinking.

The university has convened a strategy group of 20 members, drawn from across the organisation and involving both people with statutory responsibilities as well as engagement enthusiasts and activists. The role of the group is to debate the issues and consider the direction and strategic priorities and to produce a consultative strategy which will be submitted to the University Senate and Executive. It will advise and propose developments in terms of roles, collaborative working and sustainable approaches.

A number of key internal enablers to support the translation of strategy into action have already been identified, these include:

- the need for staff to be comfortable that time spent on engagement activity is recognised, and that promotion and career development opportunities are provided. It is therefore essential to agree and develop appropriate criteria to facilitate this.
- structure and roles may need to be amended and reconfigured, for example to establish Deans for Engagement.
- the need to create ownership groups amongst management.
- the need for all faculties and schools to have an engagement strategy.

These enablers are seen as a few of the strategic building blocks to support change and facilitate the consistent move towards engagement becoming a more obvious and integral instinct within research, curriculum and the drive for global excellence.

Although the term Civic University has been widely picked up, there is still a perception that some areas of the university are still trying to decide what kind of institution they are. To some, this results from the need to

balance the two aims of being a civic university along with the drive for international recognition and positioning. The general feeling however, is that the two aims do not need to be in conflict, and that the university needs to generate an image of strength in both international and regional presence (New York was cited as an analogy - being an example of an international city, with a strong civic pride).

Another important element of the current strategy is the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of strategic partnerships and alliances. A Strategic Positioning Review is being implemented which apart from clarifying who the university's audience is, will also look at how that audience can and should be reached, and which partnerships will be essential to support engagement and the delivery of the strategy.

In terms of commercial engagement, the University has established a central Commercial Development Team which operates as part of the Business Development Directorate, and which acts as the main gateway for external organisations to university resources, facilities and contacts. The team offers a group of multidisciplinary specialists with technical, commercial, marketing, management and legal skills. This central facility also fulfils the main role in recording and reporting on external engagements and income generating activities.

In addition to the in-house commercial development team, Newcastle along with the other 4 North East of England universities (Sunderland, Northumbria, Durham, and Teesside) have established a collaborative venture, Knowledge House, which acts as a central contact and referral point for external organisations looking to engage and collaborate with universities within the region. Knowledge House operates as a centralised filtering and referral facility, which signposts companies and organisations to the most appropriate contact inside the partner institutions. This further supports a regional commercial presence and generates additional engagement and referral opportunities.

Taking engagement as a whole, a large proportion of activities result from the efforts and interests of a relatively small number of activist and groups. Engagement is a predominantly bottom-up activity and rather than being a typically strategy-led function is more accurately characterised as self-directed and emergent in nature. There is also a strong, school-centric culture within the university, reflecting the devolved structure of the institution. This mitigates against any drive to centralise plans and decision making or develop cross institutional processes for measurement and reporting on engagement activity.

Nevertheless, the current strategic planning initiative and existing documented priorities provide a clear message to everyone across the university that Newcastle prioritises engagement with external organisations, public, private or voluntary, and has undoubtedly created more of a civic focus and a facilitative environment for BCE.

Processes & Business Systems

Commercial and income generation processes at Newcastle

The Commercial Development Team is the central hub for managing commercial activity within the university. It performs a dual role of identifying, protecting and commercialising the university's intellectual property, as well as promoting Newcastle's expertise, know-how and facilities to help external organisations to maximise their own products and services. It does this by offering a range of services on the university's behalf including consultancy, training and CPD, organising and managing KTPs, technology licensing, and other knowledge transfer, partnership and collaboration activities.

The Commercial Development Team handle approximately 600 contracts per year, performing a contract management and facilitating role including dealing with the financial and legal aspects of projects and external interactions. As well as generating external business, the team also service the internal market. The university manages contracts on both a national and global basis with an annual turnover of £6-7 million. Approximately 60 - 70% of activity is generated via direct contact and requests from external organisations and companies, with 30 - 40% of business generated from proactive marketing and sales. The university is in high demand with a broad customer base and doesn't struggle to find new and repeat business.

Records of interactions and contracts are maintained using the university self - developed and bespoke "My Projects" system which performs all of the main features of a CRM system. The process is almost paperless and provides a full audit trail of all projects. The "My Projects" system links in to the "My Profiles" system, which academic staff use to maintain and hold all their references and research data. Currently under development is an all embracing system, to be called "My Impact" (see later section on IT systems and processes).

Each project is allocated an owner, as well as an assigner, and all projects can be tracked through a series of status points built into the system. This report driven process is central to the HEPCES return which is generated using the system.

The Commercial Development Team doesn't currently have its own marketing budget, and doesn't employ any staff with a sales specific remit. The use of brochures, leaflets and sales literature is minimal, however there is a dedicated website where many of the requests and enquiries are now generated and sourced. External contacts also come through to the individual schools, and the reception staff will then signpost to the appropriate office or member of staff. The central team will then be informed of any projects and will become involved to provide any necessary support or advice. Occasionally the Commercial Development Team find that they are contacted some way down the pipeline when the process has been progressed and certain arrangements have already been agreed with the external party. This can result in the team having to sort out problems and deal with retrospective issues before the projects can be properly controlled. This does lead to frustration and conflict at times.

The other route for referrals and external contact is through Knowledge House, the joint venture initiative with the other regional universities. Companies and organisations can access university services by using Knowledge House as the conduit. This facility performs a filtering and referral service, and will direct requests to the specific university and service which best match the requirements of the company, organisation or individual making the enquiry. Although Knowledge House is based at Sunderland University, Newcastle will receive a number of requests and referrals through this system.

The use of collaborative approaches is a key element of the university's commercial strategy. Engagements range from smaller scale, emergent knowledge transfer consultancy and industry based applied research projects to larger, longer term initiatives. There are a number of long standing strategic units, institutes and service providers based within the university including:

The Engineering Design Centre (EDC) - a centre for collaborative research between local authorities, industry and the academic sector. Providing many practical implementation projects, the EDC was founded in 1990, originally with EPSRC funding but currently mainly financed by industrial sponsors. Commercial activities include the provision of usable technologies for industrial partners, course provision, and specific project based contracts.

The Design Unit - established over 35 years ago, the Design Unit is a specialist outreach centre providing design, development and consultancy services to industrial engineering customers in the UK and around the world. Services include materials testing, transmission design and development, mechanical testing and running commercial seminars and courses. Design Unit is the UK's largest group specialising in gearing consultancy and operates with a team of 20 engineers and technicians.

The Industrial Statistics Research Unit - provides commercial consultancy, coaching and training in the application of statistical techniques to improve business performance. The unit works with customers across different sectors including the NHS, the Department for Work and Pensions, and private sector clients such as Aviva.

The Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology (INSAT) - working in the field of nanotechnology, the Institute's strategy includes the commercialisation of research and engagement with the community.

The Resource Centre for Innovation and Design - established in 1995, the centre brings together a group of university outreach units and provides a focal point for academics, business and industry to transfer knowledge through testing, consultancy, IP exploitation and professional training and CPD.

In addition to the service providers above, there are other initiatives and units which provide commercial services and income streams for the university. Although not exhaustive, the following examples were highlighted during the staff interview schedule.

The Business School offers a range of training, consultancy and CPD services including leadership and management courses, customised training and CPD, and executive development programmes. The School are also successful at securing endowments and sponsorships to fund visiting professors (e.g. The Goldman Endowment and the Alcan Chair in Management), and to finance prizes and awards (e.g. sponsors such as Wellstream and Aspire Technologies etc).

Netskills is a stand alone unit (part of the JISC family of services) who provide internet training and IT -based courses for both the education sector and commercial clients.

The Language Centre and Open Access Study Centre is a recently completed multi-million pounds resource providing self study facilities with access to 40 PCs, and language training equipment including a learning podcast site.

There are numerous other forms of engagements which generate income for the university ranging from the provision of creative writing courses for the general public to the commercialisation and development of spin-out opportunities from stem cell research work. Indeed, commercial engagement is an established part of the culture in many sections of the university.

Adopting collaborative approaches is also seen as helpful for attracting funding as partnerships often look more attractive to funders such as private trusts. One reason for this is that the impact of projects beyond the academic community is an increasingly required outcome from funded activities.

The university also has a dedicated office for managing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, and has established a separate programme called Collaborative Innovation Partnerships. Similar to KTPs, this is an initiative which links SMEs with technical expertise, generally for a period of 6 months funded on a 60/40 basis with the Regional Development Agency (One NorthEast) typically paying £12000, and the employer paying £8000 towards the cost of the placement.

One further area of commercial activity is the Alumni Association. The Association at Newcastle generates income through a number of activities including an on-line memorabilia shop, through donations and bequests, by involving alumni in initiatives such as internships and placement provision for students, as well as by organising fund raising events.

The long term consistent success of all these initiatives is largely down to the energy, commitment and expertise of managers and project team staff. However, another key enabler is the ability to align internal processes and mechanisms to the needs of the varied external customers and partners. This results from a successful model of collaboration between projects and the central teams within the Business Development Directorate who provide a central facility which support key processes including bid preparation, contact management, financial management and record keeping, and other administrative functions.

Although operating commercial activities through the Commercial Development Team is the preferred model, staff are not compelled to administer external engagements through the central facility and a proportion of interactions are performed in isolation. Apart from resulting in engagement which may not therefore be formally recorded for capture and measurement purposes, having different arrangements for commercial work can also raise a number of risks. One such potential risk is the absence of adequate professional indemnity insurance cover. Some staff, and the university by association, could be exposed to significant liability should a claim for professional negligence be made by an external customer.

Feedback from across the group of respondents reinforced the view that external engagement requires effective processes which are aligned to the needs and expectations of the multi types of users, customers and partners. In general, delivery and management processes have been the result of gradual evolution and learning, and the development of internal relationships between the projects and central services such as HR, marketing and the Commercial Development Team. The majority of comments acknowledged the difficulties associated with dealing with such a large and disparate group of stakeholders, but viewed the challenges of BCE as an integral part of being a vibrant and relevant institution.

Academic and curriculum development processes

Many of the teaching staff respondents pointed to their engagement activities being a big influence on the content of the curriculum and a major input to the relevance and currency of what they teach. In certain subject areas it was felt that external activity and engagement is crucial and necessary if professional credibility is to be maintained. As one respondent said, “There is a need to place learning in real contexts”.

This was seen as particularly important where the course has a strong vocational or professional emphasis. However, this view was not just limited to the more obvious subject areas such as engineering, health, business, or performing arts. In many other areas practitioners were equally as passionate about the need to bring practical information and practice back to influence and inform the curriculum and academic thinking e.g. using engagement to assure the matching of academic relevance to policy relevance in regional urban studies.

The co production of curriculum and learning solutions is a prime driver for engagement. Within the faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering for example, they have established the Collaborative Training Account Scheme which has resulted in programmes which connect with business and are developed in consultation and collaboration with external companies and organisations. The programmes, including a customised, project led Masters programme looks to attract talent and link the curriculum to the strategic aims of the local Regional Development Agency (One NorthEast) and is ethically and commercially driven around the themes of age and

health, and sustainability. Similarly, various Business School programmes are heavily influenced by the outputs from external engagements and interaction. The development of strong links with commerce, industry, and public sector bodies has ensured that curriculum development results from a balance of outside-in as well as inside-out processes.

The impact of initiatives such as KTPs and student placements have also led to change and development in terms of teaching and learning. The need to expand work based learning methods and strategies involving active learning approaches has challenged traditional classroom and tutorial based pedagogy. Greater emphasis is now placed on project work and the use of coaching and mentoring skills in addition to the greater utilisation of electronic and web based technologies for the delivery of learning materials and information to support the monitoring and measurement processes. The provision of work placements has also led to the establishment of new processes and systems to manage, coordinate and protect learners in a variety of environments. The creation of placement opportunities requires a significant on-going engagement effort, however student placements and using external partnerships to support the learning process has provided many benefits for students and has injected energy and value adding opportunities for many programmes. In particular, it has supported the current focus on building employability into the curriculum, and has assisted to embed this within courses.

At Newcastle there are a variety of new and long standing engagement initiatives involving students. These are managed by both central service teams as well as within individual faculties. These initiatives include volunteering with between 200 - 300 students involved at any one time, across a broad spectrum of contexts and environments. Internships are another vehicle for external engagement, along with the development and interaction of faith groups, and finally programmes like Pathfinder and the Higher Skills initiative. The Students into Schools initiative is an accredited module which has involved approximately 10000 participants over the past 10 years.

The Quality Assurance Agency requires that policies and standards are in place to manage these activities and different curriculum frameworks. Although there are commonalities in some processes and curriculum, in many cases, the engagements and the nature of learning and projects involved are very specialised or do not readily transfer. Therefore faculties tend to develop their own academic processes and recording systems. The general perception amongst practitioners however, is that more could be done to stimulate and disseminate good practice and curriculum development ideas.

One example of a planned, proactive approach to using engagement to inform curriculum content and learning emphasis is in the area of public health. There are current plans to set up a public engagement committee as part of the drive to establish engagement as a major theme at every stage of projects and learning activities. Similarly, the Education and Language School see relationship building with external bodies as an important element within the dual function of building social capital over time, and also to stimulate different approaches and pedagogy to help to broaden access and supply learning which is relevant and attractive to existing and future learners.

Engagement is also seen as a vehicle for change in terms of research. There is a view amongst some of the people interviewed, that engagement encourages practitioners to be more outward looking and to pursue activities and research which impacts on a wider group, beyond the traditional academic audience. This view is tempered by concerns about striking the right balance between academic emphasis and pure engagement. Nevertheless, the current focus on expanding engagement activity and improving the recognition which this type of activity is given is widely supported.

IT Processes

The use of IT systems is seen by many as an integral part of the engagement agenda, but that getting it right should realistically be accepted as a long game. There is a massive impact on systems when critical issues such as data sharing, establishing workable protocols, and managing consistent metadata are considered. Multi contact inefficiency is a major risk and therefore many can accept that the IT team are inevitably cautious when faced with making decisions about future developments.

Nevertheless, IT provides a key enabler for engagement, and a number of important systems are already key elements in the engagement delivery chain. The university web site provides one of the main gateways for incoming requests from external contacts. Dedicated areas of the site provide information and signposts to specific services. Work is currently going on to develop a new interaction centre providing an easier direct route for anyone contacting or engaging with the university. This will be fully rolled out over the coming months, with students being the first users this year.

Newcastle is the only UK university using [SAP](#) student system. The system has a CRM package which has been customised for H.E. and also has a prospects system. Both are managed centrally but can be accessed by faculty staff. The university also uses the “My Projects” system, a CRM/Project Management package which has been designed and developed in house. My Projects is used to control all project work and contracts with external partners and customers, and can be used to link documents, emails and interaction details through a unique identifier given to each project. The system is divided into 5 accounts dealing with the major areas of activity (these are commercial, research, IP/Spin out, Singapore activities, and internal interaction), and a team of 5 developers continuously adapt and expand the system. However as with any system it is reliant on personnel and team discipline to maintain the integrity of input data. There are 22000 contacts held in the system including a record of all enquiries and all contracted activity. The data can be segmented in many ways e.g. key words, sectors, geography etc. however, permissions are required to use the system, with different classes of user and restrictions on which areas of the system are made available. In all cases the system can only be operated through the Business Development Directorate. Mail shots and email lists are also contained in My Projects and the system is designed to work effectively with Outlook. It is not compulsory to work through My Projects, and there are some people who do their own thing.

Knowledge House, the consortium initiative between the 5 North East universities, currently has its own system but are looking to replace this with the My Projects package.

Currently under development is “My Impact” which will supersede “My Projects”. The aim is to create a holistic picture of peoples activities and to integrate the measurement of those activities. This raises questions about whether the system will include recognition of engagement and if so, how will this be measured and what criteria will be used?

Other references to the use of IT in engagement included the utilisation of teleconferencing to link with partners regionally, nationally and internationally. Use of web based technologies and mediums were also mentioned and the ability to share information using mobile devices was seen as a growing method of communication. It was also pointed out that emergent, inconsistent and sometimes off-structure activities like external engagement are difficult to systemise, and that this affects the ability of the institution to embed support for this type of work.

The use of IT is a central theme of the Beacons Project, in particular that of social inclusion through IT and improving access to university services and expertise. This adds further weight to the consensus view that IT is a

key enabler for engagement and therefore a critical development issue. It was felt that the establishment of an engagement committee would be useful as a forum for looking at system needs and opportunities and would be a useful addition to the current strategic decision making framework. It would also ensure that IT specialists could be involved at an early point in the decision making process, and have an influence over direction and priorities.

HR Processes

The HR function at Newcastle is a devolved service with an operational team with representatives in each of the faculties. The function is line managed by a senior manager who sits on the Executive Board of the university. Newcastle is a major employer within the city with approximately 4500 employees. Engagement is well embedded within HR processes, and Third Stream activities are recognised and cited as criteria for promotion. Newcastle has Professors of Practice, which is not the traditional background for Professorships. In addition the Performance Development Review, the formal appraisal system within the university, does provide a forum for identifying and gaining recognition for the practical application of research and for external engagement work with people beyond the academic community. Nevertheless, there is still a perception amongst many practitioners that although engagement is becoming more mainstream and accepted as valuable work, it is still seen as being lower in the hierarchy of activities and interpreted by many as a subset of teaching and learning and traditional academic research. This is not necessarily voiced by respondents as a strong criticism but rather as an acknowledgement that a lack of recognition is a powerful barrier to recruiting more people to the engagement agenda.

Engagement can raise a number of HR and employment related issues, particularly where external consultants or project-based staff are involved on short term contracts and the occasional ad hoc activity. Feedback suggests that processes appear to work well in the main, with isolated cases where problems have arisen. Occasional time delays in agreeing appointments or in formalising a one off engagement are the common examples of when the system can break down.

Finance and Legal Processes

The Commercial Development Team provides both financial and legal support for commercial projects including credit control, vendor appraisal, invoicing, contract management, insurances, and making funding claims etc. This arrangement ensures that processes and systems are consistently applied, and reduces the administrative burden on project teams and managers. The service provided by the central team is acknowledged as good and quick, with the ability to respond efficiently in an arena which often demands a rapid reaction and decision.

There is an overhead/charge levied on projects when operating through the Development Team to cover the costs of management services, however this is recognised as an acceptable charge. The umbrella of the university brand provides additional credibility as well as ensuring that commercial rates are achieved for work undertaken. The central service team are a well established unit and have built up significant experience in dealing with external commercial organisations. Mechanisms and processes are therefore effectively aligned to the needs and expectations of external customers and partners.

Library and Academic Services Processes

The Library Service at Newcastle is outward facing and supportive of the need to engage with all potential users and partners and to broaden involvement. As such, the library is involved in a lot of demand driven activity and is proactive in promoting engagement in its own work. A number of constraints are recognised such as the rules surrounding licences for many resources and publications. This often precludes commercial activity and access

issues which can pose difficulty e.g. spin-out companies from the university technically shouldn't have access. This is a problem in the digital world, however it is possible to get commercial add-ons to licences, a prospect which is being explored further.

Efforts are made to support projects and activity levels are increasing, for example the support provided to Marine project work currently underway. Nevertheless, there is no formal strategy or library plan for engagement or to integrate with the university strategy. Therefore the action taken to support external projects and activity is largely self directed and motivated by a professional desire to continuously increase the responsiveness of the service to the needs of different users.

The current barriers to more comprehensive involvement in engagement are perceived to be:

- ignorance of what people really want
- time, and the capacity constraints on responding to such a potentially diverse range of demands
- general resource issues and the need to prioritise
- the lack of sharing, of experience, practice and knowledge, which leads to duplication and re-invention

The library service makes every effort is made to keep all staff up to date with the resources and facilities available including the running of library update sessions with academic staff. This is open to staff who are involved in engagement and external activity.

Other central processes

Estates/Campus Services have a direct involvement in BCE, largely through their role of facilities management and maintaining the fabric of the university campus. This can appear to be a nebulous issue, however presentation and access are important considerations when thinking about the wide range of users and their different expectations. Providing services like parking, comfortable eating facilities, cleaning, security etc play a huge part in the value chain of customer perception. Being physically part of the city adds a further dimension to the positioning of the university within the civic landscape. Many of the respondents made the point that the design and emphasis of the current new build activity is supporting the view that the university wants to be perceived as open and accessible.

Partnerships and collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration at Newcastle

The establishment, maintenance and development of strong partnerships and relationships is a cornerstone and critical enabler of the university strategy for engagement. The perception is that at an institutional level Newcastle is gaining an increasingly sophisticated understanding of where the organisation is positioned and its relationship with key regional funders and decision makers such as One NorthEast and City Councils This has been achieved by putting in place robust processes for sharing information and knowledge and having regular formal engagement and discussions such as the monthly meetings with Newcastle City Council leaders.

In reality however, the majority of engagement and collaborative activity is taking place at all levels and across all faculties and sections of the university. The major challenge strategically is to plan and manage the myriad of partnerships as effectively as possible. Establishing review, measurement and evaluation processes to enable this is a constant challenge. Resource issues will always mean that planning the use of partnerships to fully support

the strategic goals will not always extend to how this is achieved with individual schools or individual companies. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed on relationship building and partnership within the university's portfolio of external engagement is significant, the following are a few examples:

- Numerous links to local schools and colleges which facilitate initiatives such as “Students for Schools”, creative writing courses for teachers and professional development work with the education sector through units like the North Leadership Centre.
- Collaborative ventures with other regional universities including Knowledge House, the Newcastle-Durham Beacon for Civic Engagement Project, and the Eco-neighbourhoods Project in partnership with Northumbria University.
- International partnerships with universities across all continents to support and facilitate the internationalisation strategy, e.g. partnership with Monash University in Australia to maximise opportunities resulting from stem cell research and development.
- Community and Arts partnerships with organisations including the Sage, Baltic, Tyneside Cinema etc to consolidate collaborative working and generate projects such as the Music Centre for Excellence.
- Joint partnerships with public bodies like Tyne and Wear Museums to support large projects such as the Great North Museum.
- Long standing partnerships with the Health Service to support multiple initiatives, projects and services including the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, and the Institute for Human Genetics.
- Collaboration and partnerships with local and regional authorities to support and fund projects in regional and urban regeneration and sustainability.
- Key partnerships with professional bodies and accreditation authorities, a diverse group who provide membership services and the licences to offer industry recognised CPD and other commercially significant courses and programmes. These links also provide important continuing links with industry practitioners, and useful networking opportunities.

Many respondents pointed to the success of internal collaboration and partnership as building blocks of effective engagement. In particular the need to continue to develop and improve internal relationships between faculties to facilitate more effective knowledge sharing and awareness raising regarding the availability of resident expertise and skills. The emergence of In-Reach for Out-Reach was cited as an example of an initiative to generate internal partnerships and collaboration.

Roles & Skills

Roles & Skills at Newcastle

There are numerous roles involved in BCE at Newcastle and the interconnectivity is strong where activities are planned and structured through central services like the Business Development Team. In less structured activities, particularly community-based and non funded engagement, practitioners are often acting independently and collaboration is more evolutionary with little or no contact with functions like marketing, HR, finance or other formal processes. As a result, it is difficult to create a full profile of engagement activities and the full and diverse roles and skills being used. Nevertheless, the interviews provided a rich picture of activities from which a number of conclusions can be drawn.

Based on anecdotal evidence the number of staff involved in BCE appears to have grown in recent years. This perception is based upon the observations of practitioners and evidenced by the emergence of new roles across different faculties, the relative volume of activities, and levels of interaction with external organisations and projects as well as the greater degree of emphasis now given to the engagement agenda. In terms of specific targeted roles the Business Development Team have a number of specialised functions with well established skill-sets including customer contact, project management, sales, and financial control, and commercial experience in areas such as bid creation and legal knowledge. Recruitment and selection for roles in central process teams like business development are well established.

However, other roles are more recent and embryonic, including the establishment of the new role of Pro-Vice Chancellor for Engagement. Although the legacy of previous members of the executive such as Professor John Goddard have created the foundations for such a role (through their support, interest and drive to be active in cultural and civic engagement) the promotion and priority given to engagement now has a powerful voice at the highest level within the institution. This is strengthened further by having Deans with specific responsibility for engagement and for translating strategy into action across all faculties and schools.

Many schools and institutes have people with responsibilities for BCE and/or business development. Many of these positions have emerged recently. In the past, for example, schools may have focussed all attention on the appointment of roles such as research fellows, whereas now there are more roles in schools which concentrate exclusively on income generation, relationship building with external organisations and building collaborative networks to develop funding and engagement opportunities.

When asked what skills, experience and attributes are required by engagement practitioners, respondents identified a number of core abilities. These mainly related to the areas of communication skills, and the ability to engage at all levels and within different contexts, planning skills, and being able to manage time and changing priorities, being able to multi-task and switch between different operational demands, and the ability to lead and build momentum by establishing effective coalitions both inside and outside the organisation. However, the most common response was that to a large extent it is predominantly about disposition and personality type, with the widely held view that most people involved in engagement are self selecting. A frequent comment and observation is that not everyone is suited to this type of activity and it isn't an automatic transition for academics to become consultants or to operate in an outreach environment. It was generally agreed that there is a high skill level required to operate successfully in many engagement situations. This work can be very challenging and will inevitably be interpreted as a distraction to many who view academia in traditional teaching and learning, and academic research terms.

At Newcastle, there is a healthy and active staff development and continuing professional development programme. Many of the topic areas integrate with the themes and skill sets mentioned above. There are also some specific initiatives designed to support staff in engagement-led activities. An example of this is the "Faculty Futures" programme which has been designed to expose staff in Humanities to challenges such as giving talks to schools, and taking part in external activities.

Other additional comments made during the staff interviews included:

- Internal engagement is required first, to raise awareness about engagement opportunities and to identify staff that show an interest in becoming involved.

- We need a staff development programme that defines and clarifies what we mean by engagement, that develops the necessary skills and aptitudes with a focus on specific areas like coaching and consultancy skill, negotiation skills, and which deals with awareness raising issues like identifying funding opportunities and how you go about accessing them.
- We should be doing more in terms of in-house self help and knowledge sharing. We all tend to work in silos and despite best efforts there isn't the will to share things across schools and faculties.
- Engagement should be voluntary, if it becomes a compulsory part of the role, many will opt out.
- Having access to those practitioners who have been successfully operating in outreach and engagement areas for some time seems a good strategy for staff development. Organising a group of mentors to support and encourage less experienced staff would be beneficial.

Performance Measurement & Evaluation

Performance Measurement and Evaluation at Newcastle

Overall, the institution has established a comprehensive range of measures to track the performance of specific elements of BCE activity. In particular, for business engagement and commercial training and the delivery of CPD programmes there is data to illustrate the volume of business, the revenue generated, the direct costs incurred, areas of growth and contraction, the types of engagement, and the margin achieved across the portfolio. The Business Development Directorate maintains these records and prepares the annual returns for BCE (Third Mission) activities. Results and records have been compiled for a number of years, therefore trends can be traced for different elements of activity. Other commercial engagement activities involving units like Netskills, are also responsible for their own internal financial records and measurement of activity such as number of users/customers, resources used and expenditure, and value evaluations driven by the requirements and protocols of the different funding agencies.

In terms of community engagement, records and measurements are not consistent and aggregating information is more difficult. The ability to improve and learn is impaired due to a lack of knowledge sharing and information exchange. The perception is that measurement and evaluation can be characterised as an activity undertaken in silos with few or no platforms or processes for cross interrogation, comparison and corporate learning. This weakness has been acknowledged and the university recently undertook a mapping exercise to find out more information about the scale and nature of engagement activity and to inform future plans for supporting and managing engagement.

Having third party accreditation to the ISO 9001:2000 standard for quality management systems requires that the Business Development Team acquires and monitors customer feedback. It undertakes this via the use of customer surveys and evaluations. Commercial training activities are all subject to internal evaluation and the acquisition of customer and learner feedback. The University has a complaints management system, as well as maintaining records of feedback and accolades. Newcastle is a high scoring university in terms of student feedback and has featured as one of the best places to study in recent league tables and articles.

The results from the Performance Development Review process are also used to better understand the perceptions of staff including feedback on engagement.

Appendices

Appendix A – Interviewees and participants

Zoe Bright (Project Manager); Linda Anderson; Vervan Johnston; Jim Wood; Peter Stone; Martin White; David Leat; Sue Robson; Francis Barber; Catheryn Harvey; Steve Williams; Jane Delaney; John Tomaney; Paul Younger; Lucy Backhurst; Catherine Purvis; Phil Renforth; Bryn Jones; Gerry Docherty; Eric Cross; Douglas Robertson; Graeme Young; John Burn; Jill Taylor-Roe.

Appendix B – Self evaluation workshop results

The workshop was held on 3 April 2009 with 9 representative staff members of the University, using the Diagnostic and Evaluation Workbook, included as Appendix B.

The workshop was facilitated by JISC infoNet representatives John Burke and Clive Alderson. Also present was Simon Ball of JISC TechDis.

All content under the headings Strengths, Weaknesses, Areas for Improvement and Comments are taken from the discussions that ensued from reading the statements and examples within the workbook and as such are the consensual perceptions of those involved following discussion. Where no content is given against the heading it is because no content was volunteered. In some cases all delegates to the workshop agreed on a grading without identifying content for the headings.

Gradings for sections 1 – 4 are to the following descriptors:

1. Nothing Happening
2. Making a Start
3. It's our Normal Practice
4. We are Sector Leaders

1. Policy & Strategy

Grade: 2-3 (close to 3)

Statement:

We have a formal documented strategic plan with clear objectives for our BCE activities

Strengths

- Strategy will be in place by September 2009
- Strategies at School level already exist and include targets
- Each of the services – IT, Estates etc. Already have relevant plans

Weaknesses

- There is limited joining up of the various strategies – this is embryonic

Areas for Improvement

Comments

- Target numbers are participatory – visitor numbers to public lectures, concerts etc. These are reported formally to council and included in the HEBCES return.

Statement:

We ensure that we put in place the support mechanisms we need to make our plans work

Strengths

- Deans draw together what happens in Schools and Faculties (with the Dean of Cultural Affairs having responsibility for all faculties)
- All Schools are expected to have an Engagement Activity Schedule

Weaknesses

- Each Dean has their own interpretation
- Some areas are still to have much in the way of formal plans

Areas for Improvement

- There needs to be a culture where Engagement is seen as a valuable thing to do
- Engagement needs to be built in formally to the promotions activity and criteria

Comments

- Engagement is mainly a bottom up activity. The PVC was asked to put in a governance structure but demurred, saying it would have a high risk of killing activity. *“The strongest word I’d use is “co-ordinate”*
- It is easier to be more strategic for the Business facing and KTP activity than for other civic non-awards based work
- Single-School activity is easier to do than cross-institutional activity, though not all real-world problems fit into our boxes
- All projects will have some need to use systems but not all are taking them to ISS

Statement:

We have effective platforms and processes to support the dissemination of our strategic and operational plans for BCE

Strengths

- This is emerging and within a year we should have in place
- A real mix of activities in terms of maturity – some are experimental and still to prove their worth
- We have set some institutional objectives but want to build this from bottom up. Therefore the dissemination should be easy by following the route up

Weaknesses

- CRM is not effective – there is no way of finding out whether others are talking to those that I need to

Areas for Improvement

- We need to have ways of prioritising work – there are some difficult choices to be made

Comments

- Mapping across the institution will show parallels and opportunities for other Schools and disciplines

Statement:

Our strategic plan for BCE is based on robust, up to date market intelligence and information

Strengths

- Currently working on the development of a Strategic Positioning Review. We need to decide who the audience are and how to reach them and tell them that we want to engage with them
- There is some good practice within the Museums

Weaknesses

- There is some lack of self-esteem within the university
- This is terribly patchy – some areas have no ideas of these factors whilst some are still trying to decide what kind of institution we are

Areas for Improvement

- We need to create aspirations as international institutional business areas, rather than celebrate our international expertise – this could already be changing
- We need to balance the missions – Civic / International. However they do not need to be in conflict.
- We need to generate an image of the university as strong in both regional and international work. As an example, New York is an international city yet has strong civic pride. It is important that one doesn't harm the other.

Comments

Statement:

We take steps to improve our strategic and operational plans for BCE

Strengths

Weaknesses

- We are too quick to say “We’re a university and therefore it’s difficult”

Areas for Improvement

Comments

- How do people engage with the strategic process?
- Consultative forums don't engage with all. It's representative but not effective. Is IT the answer? We have an Intranet but cannot force people to look or engage.
- This is very difficult *anywhere*
- People *have* picked up on the word 'Civic' whether they like it or not.

- Is it unreasonable though to expect people to know what the university is about?
- There is good and bad practice in PR including internal PR

2. Process & Business Systems

Grade: 3

Statement:

Our BCE activities are targeted at delivering the products and services that the customers want

Strengths

- Within individual teams, yes, including the most successful research teams. Those who don't do this don't survive long

Weaknesses

- We have difficulties sometimes in identifying demand – the customer does not always know what they want
- There's a temptation sometimes to offer what already exists.

Areas for Improvement

- We need to place value on time spent on Engagement as we do to time spent in Research

Comments

- We wouldn't have courses to run without Engagement
- Offering what already exists is more realistic than having to build our own capacity
- Most of Engagement is embedded within Research or Teaching & Learning. Some can stand alone, e.g. the museums, but if we do not use these as a source of work we are the poorer for it

Statement:

We build and manage strong relationships with employers, and the community

Strengths

- We have many mechanisms for Engagement – the days of '*asking the wacky inventor*' are long gone
- We hold seminars on how to do business with us – feedback shows that these are effective
- We have multiple local (internally) ways of getting feedback and these probably do need to be both multiple and local
- Formal complaints procedure
- We have a *Teachers' Toolkit* of web resources for teachers in schools to use to raise aspirations

Weaknesses

- We are not always good at making ourselves open to some local communities. We are good with formal identities such as schools and PCTs, but less so with informal community groups

Areas for Improvement

- Develop resources for Youth Workers along the lines of the *Teachers' Toolkit* to raise aspirations amongst the region's youths.

Comments

- We had a debate on Web2.0 Social Networking and whether we should have a formal presence on Facebook. We decided we should not, as it raised similar perceptions to the '*dancing dad*'. Businesses in particular are more willing to pick up a phone. However, if students or others wanted to set up a page and invite a lecturer to take part, we would encourage that.

Statement:

Our BCE processes are integrated within our normal ways of working

Strengths

- Marketing are very switched on – the Marketing Forum of 50 people is drawn from all over the university
- In ISS all team members look for advantages in the community when recruiting for projects

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

Our BCE processes are managed to achieve agreed quality and service delivery standards

Strengths

- ISO 9001 in Commercial Department
- The Library has the Charter Mark
- A lot of business-facing teams have recognised standards
- Internal knowledge management
- CRMs for certain things e.g. Alumni

Weaknesses

- There is no 'mega' system. But would that even be feasible? Would, for instance, a cross-institutional CRM system work?

Areas for Improvement

- We need to find a way of holding a single version of core data but allow it to be accessed by localised systems meeting individual needs to ensure all can be pulled together

Comments

- It feels as if there is some way to go, though there are pockets of good practice

3. Partnerships & Resources

Grade: 3

Statement:

We manage our partnerships with other institutions/organisations

Strengths

- The first three bullet points:
 - We understand our role in the supply chains and partnerships we are part of
 - We have robust processes for sharing knowledge and information with our partners
 - We encourage mutual development through our partnerships
- At an institutional level we are gaining an increasingly sophisticated understanding of where we sit in the perceptions of regional funders such as One North East and the RDA.
- Regular monthly meetings with Newcastle City Council leaders and similar being established with Gateshead and through them to North East groups.
- Some KPIs applicable to the strategic make-or-break partnerships capable of high impact on the university

Weaknesses

- The fourth bullet point (*'we establish performance measures to monitor our activities with partners'*) we do informally and subject to human frailties
- There are constraints in terms of being at the mercy of funding organisations such as the Training & Development Agency and DCSF
- The weakest area is the lack of agreed institutional performance measures, though is that even possible – or desirable?

Areas for Improvement

Comments

- The big challenge is that partner organisations have people at all levels, talking to university staff at all levels. There is a huge potential for wasting time if you attempt to gather feedback
- The *Universities of the North East* group provides a way of managing a lot of regional level partnerships

Statement:

We proactively manage our ideas and knowledge

Strengths

- "Yes!"

Weaknesses

- There are CRM type issues – though this is not thought to be a huge issue in terms of the many-to-many relationships. *'It hasn't been a problem but it could be managed better'*

Areas for Improvement

- Branding needs to be improved

Comments

Statement:

We plan our use of partnerships to support our strategic and operational plans

Strengths

- A strategic objective for Engagement is that we will have strategic partnerships – therefore we consciously go out to manage these

Weaknesses

- Resource limitations means that we can only do the above for the strategic partnerships and not so much for individual schools or employers such as Nissan

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

We regularly review our partnerships and resources to see that they are working effectively

Strengths

- For strategic partners

Weaknesses

- For strategic partners only

Areas for Improvement

Comments

4. Roles & Skills

Grade: 3 overall but with a wide range internally

Statement:

We identify the roles and skills we need to develop and implement our BCE plans

Strengths

- Yes, the Beacons are addressing this through PDR

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

- We need to foster and harness middle managers

Comments

- We are keen to find and exploit people with the right abilities

Statement:

We have a structured people plan and staff development policy

Strengths

- The 'Preparing for Commerce' initiative is working well
- An Engagement Survey has been undertaken to provide a solid body of information from all Schools to map to objectives and will allow us to seek case studies of good practice
- We have started talks on changing the promotional criteria to include Engagement

Weaknesses

- It is hard to find a platform for working with middle managers as the VC has a lot to say to that audience

Areas for Improvement

- Work being done on workload models may have a positive effect
- Engagement at HoS level is moving towards recognition of need
- Faculties have a key role to play in communications. We need work with each faculty to exploit already existing channels

Comments

Statement:

We regularly review our management and organisational structure to see that they are working effectively

Strengths

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

We apply what we learn to perform more effectively

Strengths

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

5. Customer Perceptions & Key Performance Results

The grading system for Sections 5 and 6 relate to how many of the quoted examples in the workbook are presently used in the organisation against each statement:

1 = None, 2 = Some, 3 = Many, 4 = All

Grade: 3-4 (in terms of how we capture data rather than the quality of perceptions)

Statement:

We have a range of methods to measure customer perceptions

Grade: Bulk of Enterprise work = 1, Some CPD work would score 3-4

Strengths

- We do use all of the methods quoted as examples, though not always across the board
- We have robust methods for capturing student perception

Weaknesses

- Methods used across various projects is more patchy, though some is dictated by funders

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

We have a number of internal measures to show what we are achieving for our customers

Strengths

- Complaints Procedure
- Professional Development Review (PDR), university-wide scheme
- All of the quoted examples are used

Weaknesses

- Not all of the quoted examples are used all of the time

Areas for Improvement

- Enhance systematic collection of this data

Comments

- Are results used or do we collect to tick boxes?

Statement:

Our results show positive trends over a number of years

Strengths

- Would grade individually as 4 – all KPIs show positive trends except for museum visitor numbers and that is because they have been temporarily closed
- We benchmark against a comparative set of universities

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

We can identify and explain areas of good and poor performance

Strengths

- Complaints (or lack of) are testers
- If problems arise that are outside our sphere we would alert whoever needed to know
- A video survey of people in the street has shown surprisingly positive feedback. People are proud of the university but identified a need to know better how to use it
- We have some global reputations – for stem cell research and for dentistry

Weaknesses

- We tend not to carry out form surveys

Areas for Improvement

Comments

- Engagement is a vehicle for increasing positive perceptions

6. Key Performance Results

Grade: 3.5

Statement:

We have a range of performance measures which show how we are performing in relation to BCE activities

Strengths

- We can give chapter and verse on the volume of new business

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

- We have just started measuring what part of turnover we spend on Engagement.

Statement:

Our performance in BCE activity over the last three years shows positive trends

Strengths

- We have a traffic light system of Red, Red/Amber, Amber and Green for our major areas of work. Engagement is standing at Green

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

- We are looking to find ways of measuring some of the less tangible but possibly more important indicators. However this can be very costly to gather

Comments

Statement:

We check how our performance in BCE activities compares to other institutions

Strengths

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments

Statement:

We can identify and explain areas of good and poor performance

Strengths

Weaknesses

Areas for Improvement

Comments