

<b>Session Title:</b>	1.2 The Oxford-Zero Gravity partnership in digital access: Keeping a human touch in the digital world
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	Matt Williams (Jesus College) Alex O'Connor (Zero Gravity)
<b>Chair:</b>	Vicky Bannerman
<b>Reporter:</b>	Susie Kilburn

<b>Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:</b>	<p><b>Alex</b> – Head of Education Partnerships  <b>Matt</b> – Dual role as Academic (Politics) and Access at Jesus College</p> <p>Zero Gravity: Tech platform widening access and social mobility, supporting 25,000+ students and 900 partner schools. Students (mainly Y12) access livestreams, pathways, and mentoring. Jesus College focuses on access work in Wales, especially IMD 1 &amp; 2.</p>
<b>Overview/Aim of session:</b>	Exploring how to maintain a human touch in digital outreach, sharing reflections from the first year of the Oxford–Zero Gravity partnership.
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<p><b>Background:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus College has a regional focus for access work (particularly Wales) and focus on IMD 1 and 2.</li> </ul> <p><b>Problem:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Struggles to attract support and talent from rural and coastal Wales.</li> <li>White working class boys especially underrepresented at Oxford.</li> <li>Welsh applicants fail to see people like them success in applications</li> <li>Limited exposure to Oxford students and staff leaves space for myth-making</li> <li>Prospective applicants fear leaving Wales, and question the utility of HE</li> <li>Oxford struggles to attract and support from rural and coastal Wales.</li> </ul> <p><b>Solution:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to &gt;25,000 WP students via ZG -</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Partner with 900 schools across UK</li> <li>3. Directly challenge myth-making and make contact in physically remote locations</li> <li>4. Tie-ins with employers and businesses and make the case for talent mobility</li> <li>5. Change hearts and support minds from rural coastal Wales</li> </ol> <p><b>Reflections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are/ought to be digital outreach KPIs?</li> <li>- Pedagogy/andragogy – teaching children v learning as adults. Get them to do the work e.g. marking personal statements</li> <li>- How to give them something different than what they can get from just ‘googling’? Exclusivity is key to engagement</li> <li>- Keep the human touch – less edited content. Show that realness and vulnerability.</li> </ul> <p><b>Looking Forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How can learners practice skills in a passive environment (e.g. engaging with webinars)</li> <li>- How do we avoid just speaking to self-selected audiences, and not shifting any dials?</li> <li>- What are the costs/benefits of digital access?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case Studies/Examples:</b></p>	<p><b>Initial Digital Contact:</b> Putting Oxford presentation (online). For example, Matt delivers a Myth-Busting session to students challenging who goes to Oxford.</p> <p><b>Mentoring:</b> We then set them up with mentors at Oxford to meet on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Important for the university to be open and vulnerable to audiences which can be difficult to achieve online.</p> <p><b>24-25 Results</b>  2016 students total  Female: 67.708%  Male: 31.647%  Non-Binary: 0.645%</p>

<p><b>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</b></p>	<p><b>First Discussion – Problems:</b></p> <p>Subject challenges:          One university Medicine and Healthcare- especially important to increase recruitment from rural and coastal – as lack of doctors in these areas. More difficult to access experience.          Financial restrictions on universities to support fully</p> <p>Different challenges across institutions.</p> <p>Trying to reach schools geographically can be challenging, as well as making sure these students are also represented.</p> <p><b>Second Discussion – Digital KPIs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficult to track students and getting students to attend online webinars is difficult</li> <li>- Thinks about <i>how</i> you are going to measure and what's important.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary/Key takeaways:</b></p>	<p>Digital outreach widens access but must remain human-centered. Authenticity and interactivity drive engagement. KPIs need careful definition. Digital access must address regional disadvantage and work on addressing self-selection.</p>