

## HELOA Partnerships Team Annual Report 2021

### Strategic priorities and team composition

The Partnerships Team focus on delivering various elements of the HELOA Strategic Plan:

#### Strategic priority

*Maintain and grow meaningful partnerships with third-party organisations at national and Group level.*

#### Strategic goals

Our strategic goals and the progress made on them this cycle can be found within the 'Overview of activities 2021 against strategic goals' section.

#### The team comprises of:

- Jack Clare (University of Wolverhampton): UK Vice-Chair
- Fiona Curry (University of Central Lancashire): UK Partnerships Manager (Non-Commercial)
- Elliot Newstead (University of Leicester): Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS)
- Alice Stonehouse (King's College London) UK Partnerships Manager (Commercial)

#### Overview of activities 2021 against strategic goals

The Partnerships Team have overseen a significant number of developments and achievements over the past year. Below is a summary of key activity undertaken from January 2021 - January 2022 and plans moving forwards.

1. *We will have a clear engagement plan in place with our core partners (e.g. UCAS, SLC & TSRG) to maintain, enhance and grow key collaborative working relationships.*  
*Responsible: Partnerships.*

- UCAS:
  - o MoU has been agreed and signed with plans for member engagement activities in the New Year. Key areas of focus include joint communications, collaboration and review on policy, operational working groups and representation

- Contribution to key UCAS reports and developments including Access Programme, Apply 2022 and 'Where next?' report
  - Substantial developments within UCAS Events Working Group and further development of Product Development group, overseen by Elliot and supported by the hard work and contributions from working group reps. Key updates and developments from these working groups can be found in Appendix A
  - **SLC:**
    - Our MoU has recently been reviewed by Fiona and the wider Partnerships Team and UKC to ensure we have clear, relevant and deliverable aims for collaborative working for the year ahead
    - Regular review and catch-up meetings with SLC in place. Fiona has overseen the maintenance and development of a strong working relationship with SLC
    - Collaborative work with Training Team to ensure collaborative training events and activities are as useful and engaging as possible for HELOA membership and SLC
  - **The Student Room Group:**
    - MoU re-signed in early 2021 and will be reviewed annually in the upcoming review shortly
    - Step change in engagement this cycle with good representation in training events and activities and information & insight sharing through membership comms
    - Alice has overseen the maintenance and development of a close working relationship with TSRG to continue to enhance this partnership
- 2. Our members will be at the heart of our work with partners and will:**
- i) **have both awareness and understanding of the types of partnerships HELOA has, the benefits they provide for all members and how they can feed into these partnerships. Responsible: Partnerships, Communications, Groups**
  - ii) **have the ability to communicate the work of our partnerships and specific partners within the membership and their internal and external stakeholders. Responsible: Partnerships**
  - ii) **have the opportunity to play a role in the development of partnerships at group and national level. Responsible: Partnerships, Groups**

**3. Our work with partners will raise the profile of HELOA as an organisation externally and will create opportunities for networking, training and development for our members. Responsible: Partnerships, Training**

The Partnerships Team have worked hard this year to engage members and facilitate contribution and conversation through various initiatives pertinent to priority issues within the sector including:

- Member led consultation responses to [PQA](#) and assessments and the awarding of grades for summer 2021 including interactive webinars and a panel session with key stakeholders from partner organisations
- Member engagement webinars and activity on supporting pre-entry transition to university, culminating in a member driven [article for Wonkhe](#)
- Sharing of relevant insights with members from engagement with partners including student sentiment updates from The Student Room Group and key updates from UCAS and SLC.
- Close collaborative working with the Training and Comms teams on the above

The work of the UCAS events working group and product development group have been worked through with members at national and group level with regular feedback and engagement with UCAS group reps and members. There have also been opportunities for members to engage with SLC representatives at group meetings.

Our commercial partnerships have provided a robust income stream for the organisation which in turn helps to subsidise and support training and networking opportunities for members. As of writing this report in 2021 a total of £22,025 of revenue has been generated. This represents a 24.67% increase on last year (£17,660) at a challenging time through COVID lockdown.

Commercial partnerships have been expanded significantly this year with a full communications plan mapped out with a package of marketing opportunities alongside sponsorship income generated for NPC, PDC and National Conference.

We have also started our work in developing group level partnerships with initial meetings and paperwork drafted with the Welsh group chair and Coleg Cymraeg, to develop a tailored partnership offering for Welsh members.

4. As a national representative of HELOA, the Chair has regular engagement with key partners and affiliated organisations.

Verbal update at AGM

#### **Other activities 2021-2022**

The Partnerships Team has also undertaken a great deal of work in addition to growing core relationships with external organisations. Below provides a brief overview of this work:

- Partnerships Manager (Commercial) role was recruited to with Alice joining the team, developing our commercial partnership offering and building a strong relationship with The Student Room Group
- The Partnerships Team have attended stakeholder groups for qualifications awarding bodies and regulators, Ofqual, OCR and Pearsons.
- IDP Connect: long standing relationship with IDP connect. Renewal of seat on Home Advisory Group, led on by Fiona, allowing HELOA a voice in developments of student focused services (CUG, WhatUni etc.).
- UniTasterDays Teachers' Guide: members were again offered the opportunity to write editorial for the annual Teachers' Guide, now in the fifth year of this relationship.
- Wonkhe: Fiona has overseen the development of a positive working relationship with Wonkhe, who regularly seek our opinion on key policy changes/ updates within the sector and we crafted a member led article on student transition as mentioned earlier.

#### **Developments for 2022-23**

- Continue to drive forwards developments linked to Partnerships goals within the strategic plan, including group level partnerships, member engagement and profile raising activity
- Development and review of partnerships with key organisations (e.g. UCAS) and development of partnerships with more organisations
- Continued engagement with members on key sector level updates/issues and review and development of partnerships to ensure ongoing benefits for the membership
- Further enhancement of commercial partnerships to provide a robust income stream for the organisation, enabling further subsidised training and development opportunities for members

**Jack Clare**  
UK Vice-Chair

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**Alice Stonehouse**

UK Partnerships Manager (Commercial)

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**Fiona Curry**

UK Partnerships Manager (non-commercial)

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**Elliot Newstead**

Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS)

January 2022

## Appendix A- Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS) Report 2021-22

### HELOA/UCAS Events Working Group

With a calendar year of physical exhibitions, once again, disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic, the focus of the Events Working Group in the early part of 2021 primarily circled around the virtual events space.

With a platform change from iVent to ON24, a greater content-rich experience has been delivered for students, however I think we'd all agree we're still not quite there in replicating the organic conversations with students in this virtual space than we all are used to when face to face.

With a look ahead to 2022, from a virtual outlook, the priority of the working group will be to drill down further into the data to better understand a) the expectations of students (and schools) for the UCAS Discovery online events and b) the outcomes for students and exhibitors from an experience and ROI point of view.

Progressing through the summer months, attention firmly turned towards the much anticipated return of face to face events with the Autumn delivery of Create Your Future and planning for the Spring/Summer 2022 in-person calendar from both a strategic and operational perspective.

Early indications are very positive, with schools and colleges booking spaces at the 2022 exhibitions and encouraging student figures for Create Your Future, and I call on HELOA colleagues to work collaboratively with your Group representative and UCAS to ensure we deliver the best experience possible for students across the country throughout 2022.

I'd like to round off this section with a huge thank you to working group colleagues. You continue to be huge credits to your institutions, your Groups and HELOA as a whole with your commitment to the role and enthusiasm to ensure we drive exhibitions forward. Particular thanks (and congratulations!) go out to Ellie Wharfe, Manchester Metropolitan University, for her incredible work as both the NW/NI group representative and the Group Secretary over the past few years. Good luck with your new arrival!

### **HELOA/UCAS Product Development Group**

Positive steps have continued with the HELOA/UCAS Product Development Group with the formalisation of the HELOA roles with role descriptors and elections taking place in Groups who, previously, did not have a representative. A big thank you to all group representatives, your continued commitment to ensuring the collective HELOA voice is embedded into future UCAS products and services for students and teachers.

One particular highlight was the Group participating in a pilot of the new UCAS Apply system ahead of its public launch to ensure the product was fit for purpose. A real, tangible example of where HELOA members can help shape key UCAS developments.

Looking ahead to 2022, one of the key priorities for the group will be to consolidate a new process for the 'Preparation for HE' section on the UCAS application form. Watch this space!

I'd like to conclude with a massive thank you to colleagues at UCAS for their continual support over the year. I'd encourage HELOA members at the Conference to engage with the UCAS stand in the Business Exhibition to hear about some of the exciting developments on the horizon as well as discussing individual institution requirements and conversations.