

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>One Team, One Target - How the Future Students Office at University of Leicester work together to grow student numbers</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<b><i>Dan Flatt   Head of UK Student Recruitment and Widening Access   University of Leicester</i></b> <b><i>Felicity Lawrence  Head of Global Operations   University of Leicester</i></b>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Sarah Wiltshire</b>
<b>Reporter:</b>	<b>Ailsa Mackay</b>

<b>Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:</b>	Dan started as a student ambassador before moving to a role with the Student union. Student recruitment, partnerships and EU roles followed before moving into current role.  Felicity as Head of Global Operations, manages a variety of operations including scholarships, agent management and a full range of business systems to support the wider team.
<b>Overview/Aim of session:</b>	By the end of this session, attendees will have a comprehensive understanding of how the Future Students Office at the University of Leicester exemplifies effective collaboration and innovative strategies to drive student recruitment and growth.  The session will cover a detailed explanation of the structure and functions of each team (UK Student Recruitment and Outreach, Global Recruitment, Admissions and Applicant Experience, and the Global Operations Team) and how they work synergistically to achieve common targets. Real-world examples of successful collaborations and initiatives will be used to demonstrate how the team have increased student numbers, highlighting the tangible outcomes of their integrated approach.
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<b>Overview –</b> Discussion on how The Future Students Office is formed, how we work now, how the teams work together and what works. The Future Students Office is relatively new, inspired by Monash University in Australia and the session will cover how the One team, One target approach has helped the team refocus with a collaborative point of view.  <b>Background –</b>

Prior to the creation of the Future Students Office the structure was fragmented with different priorities. The workshops session will look at what came before, current structure overview, day to day working examples, outcomes and impact.

**What came before:**

Teams worked in silos- all separate including Admissions, International Office, Home, WP and Outreach. There may have been occasional meetings but often teams had conflicting or disconnected targets and there was limited collaboration and cross team communication. This resulted in inefficient processes with frequent duplication of work eg. two teams attending the same event. No single end to end view of the recruitment / prospective student journey resulted in fragmented decision making and ownership of key activities was unclear.

Each team had people doing the same processes but using different approaches. It was inefficient and had a negative affect on student journey but also impacted on how staff work and their own experiences of working at the University of Leicester eg. onboarding and HR.

**What the Future Student Office looks like now –**

At the heart of the FSO sits Global Operations. Feeding into the Global Operations team there is Admissions and Applicant experience, UK Recruitment, WP and International Student Recruitment. All the processes are determined and run by Global Ops team. This allows the other teams to focus on their core jobs – eg. admissions processing, to ensure that everything works as smoothly as possible. Oversight by Senior Management Team working together means a cohesive strategy can be developed and implemented. A practical example includes the ambassador scheme which now sits within Global Ops and can be used by any team eg. recruitment or outreach whilst removing the administrative and management tasks from officers.

**Other improvements include:**

Shared KPIs and objectives create unified recruitment and admissions targets across UK and international. Everyone is working to one 5 yr plan.

End to end applicant journey performance – from enquiry to enrolment. Communications are consistent and timely. Conversion rate improvements at key stages (enquiry – application – offer – firm – enrolment). Messaging has been designed with everyone to say right things and target right person at right time.

	<p>The Conversion pathway is now designed and planned, not ad-hoc. Previously, there were around 30 email addresses for prospective students to contact the university. Now all enquiries are funneled into one email address and managed by one enquiry team.</p> <p>Excellence standards have been introduced to improve student journey. eg SLAs for offer making and responding to enquiries externally and internally.</p> <p>Collaborative outreach and recruitment impact across all segments. Widening Participation and student recruitment activity has been brought together so that any recruitment work done is also mindful of WP requirements and any WP activity has to be seen as a pipeline to university recruitment.</p> <p>All activity is evaluated and needs to demonstrate a return on investment. The sector has no capacity to provide activity with no financial return. Eg. summer schools which were resource heavy and typically lead to less than 5 enrolments were dropped following evaluation of the data. Adoption of a much more data driven approach has led to greater clarity on decision making. Shared reporting dashboards with live data can be accessed by all staff and can be used to track from source, eg. event to open day booking to application to enrolment etc.</p> <p>Operational efficiency and reduced duplication of staff resources through joint processes and centralised management. This really helps teams to function efficiently as they know who to contact for a specific task eg. Raising POs. Previously there might have been 50 people doing the same thing across different teams.</p> <p>Financial sustainability – through improved applications and conversions the Future Students Team can prove income generation and financial sustainability. This also improves the business case for staffing, whilst working in a difficult HE environment.</p>
<b>Case Studies/Examples:</b>	<p><b>Day to day working example: Clearing</b></p> <p>Before – run by admissions in isolation with volunteers, minimal involvement from UK Student Recruitment team until results day. Limited coordination, slower responses and missed opportunities</p> <p>After – Admissions and applicant experience working closely with Global Ops (business systems) to design and optimise clearing processes in advance. UKSR and International Recruitment leads contributed to planning</p>

and forecasting to ensure resources match demand. Result: a university wide co-ordinated clearing call centre with clear focus on meeting targets and conversion. Academics involved. Real time communication on data and results created shared ownership and it felt really collaborative.

#### **Day to day working examples – Scholarships**

Before – no coherent institution wide scholarship strategy. Individual teams worked independently, the website was a mismatch of random scholarships. Inconsistent approach, no strategic overview of what trying to achieve, no reporting on effectiveness and minimal shared market insight.

Now – developed a clear scholarships strategy and policy aligned to university vision.

Cross collaboration to gather market insight and identify priorities to think about a holistic approach and not doubling up. Difficult for students to access information previously. A cohesive suite of scholarships was designed to support UK recruitment, international student recruitment, WP and Outreach and is easier to communicate to the right students. Removing niche scholarships enabled wider accessibility. There is now clear information on what you can apply for, how to apply and what you are getting.

There is also now clear governance and approval processes. Clear information on scholarship awarding ensures a fair and transparent process. Better tracking has allowed impact to be assessed properly and has allowed the team to also review and tweak to help meet WP targets and support more WP students.

#### **Day to day working example – Student recruitment activity**

Before – Student Recruitment and Widening Participation teams were separate but supported / duplicated efforts with the same schools. There were challenges with reporting and data - no single source of truth. This resulted in a lack of effective monitoring and reporting on ROI.

Now – Lead generation is the principal pillar of their strategy with clear objectives for the team. The Future Students Office uses Datafiltr to capture and manage their prospects / applicant pipeline. There is now close collaboration with recruitment marketing and the CRM team for communications plan and reporting.

The Future Students Office provides wide support for student recruitment activity – colleagues will help out at

	<p>busy times and major events eg UCAS. This allows UKSR team to also concentrate on other activity eg. developing relationships with schools. Also allows marketing teams to have a greater understanding of what works with banner design and prospective student interactions on stand. Power BI is used to provide a single source of truth and to share targets and results. This allows greater team accountability and demonstrates how much activity is being undertaken. Proving return on investment is important—increasing accountability and clear steer on future activity. Full reporting and evaluation – the FSO use cover sheets to record all activity undertaken. At the start of the year cover sheets are reviewed by the team to ask why are we doing this, evaluate effectiveness and make decisions on what activity to continue or tweak. This gives managers confidence and vindication to either continue or stop doing specific activity eg stopping summer schools. There is now a clear strategic overview of shared recruitment and access objectives between UK recruitment and WP.</p> <p><b>Outcomes and Impact</b></p> <p>Benefits to students and university staff – everything is clearer and more consistent.</p> <p>Staff have access to the right information at the right time. Fairer and more transparent scholarships and funding opportunities.</p> <p>Stronger targeting and support for underrepresented and priority groups.</p> <p>A more coordinated and effective recruitment approach for the university.</p> <p>Better use of resources through joined up planning and delivery eg. shared resources including banners, stands, tablecloths, ambassadors, finance support staff.</p> <p>Joined up planning and delivery based on data evidence.</p> <p>Improved conversion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better response times to enquiries</li> <li>Better offer to enrolment rate</li> <li>More offers and conversion at clearing</li> <li>Better tracking and evaluation</li> <li>Reduced duplication</li> <li>Shared, reliable data</li> </ul>
<b>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</b>	
<b>Questions and Answers:</b>	<p>Q – when set up a new structure, what was response from existing staff, how people responded to changes in how they work? A - First six months was tricky to navigate and has been a gradual process but once teams realised that</p>

	they were working towards a shared target it got much better quickly. There was some resistance from WP as change of focus to pipeline generation. These strategic changes meant that some jobs have changed quite a bit but they have strived to give team members their own projects that they are accountable for. So, the transition process has not been without challenges but has settled.
<b>SummaryKey takeaways:</b>	<p>The creation of the Future Students Office has led to a more strategic and evidence-led approach. Managers now have the tools/data and the confidence to make decisions - allowing earlier and more coordinated intervention in underperforming markets and greater flexibility to respond to changes in market. It also provides evidence to justify stopping activity and there is increased trust with senior stakeholders.</p> <p>The change in culture has also been positive and the team are more welcoming of adopting new processes and change.</p>