



University of Nottingham

21st Century University Provocations

Consultant's Report

November 2018

Introduction	3
Commentary.....	3
Method.....	5
Analysis.....	5
Organisational Strategies	6
Mission and Purpose	6
Governance and Structures	7
External Scrutiny.....	7
External Engagement.....	7
Strategic Priorities.....	8
Research.....	8
Student Expectations.....	9
Teaching and Learning Strategy.....	9
Course Structure & Curriculum	10
Assessment.....	10
Campus Culture.....	11
Strategic Enablers.....	11
Campus Spaces / environment	11
Infrastructure	12
Digital Innovation	12
Funding and Finance	12
Working practices.....	13
Staff Roles and Expectations.....	13
Recognition and Reward.....	14
Collaboration and Partnership.....	14
Group Specific Comments	15
Faculty of Arts	15
Faculty of Science.....	15
Faculty of Social Sciences	16
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.....	17
Faculty of Engineering.....	17
Professional Services (UK).....	18
China Campus.....	18
Malaysia Campus.....	19

Introduction

This report is a brief commentary on almost 3500 written comments submitted by 300+ University of Nottingham staff who attended (either in person or online) a series of “provocations” about “The 21st Century University” during November 2018.

We would like to thank all those who contributed and, especially, those colleagues who had the challenging task of processing written comment into typescript.

The report is not a definitive commentary; other readings and interpretations of the raw data are possible and recommended. All comments are on file as a structured dataset.

This has been the starting point for a *staff* conversation; students, collaborators and other University partners have not yet been engaged with and it is recommended that they are.

Finally, in order to respect the time and energy spent by colleagues in this process, it will be important for the University to acknowledge and respond to their contributions, particularly those that are critical of the status quo and those that make recommendations that may not be adopted (or visible) in the final strategic plan.

Commentary

There is a clear and consistent emphasis visible from the “wordle” images (see annex 1) on a few keywords: ‘research’ is the most frequently cited word in all areas; ‘teaching’, ‘students’, ‘learning’, ‘university’ and ‘need*’ are also prominent throughout. Some areas (Arts, Science, Social Sciences) mentioned ‘teaching’ more than ‘learning’; in Engineering, the balance was reversed (‘learning’ larger than ‘teaching’); professional services also mentioned ‘staff’, ‘people’ and ‘work’ more prominently than others.

* The word ‘need’ is curiously prominent; however, it most usually appears in phrases like “we need to”, ‘the university needs’ as an expression of suggested future development.

Although the conversation is about strategy, a significant amount of information gathered in this exercise relates to staff perceptions of the current position; about the University as it is now. This is understandable: if participants feel that they have not been routinely engaged with in the past, they will tend to use an opportunity like this to air more general concerns and not restrict themselves to the specific brief. It is important, therefore, that contributions are explicitly acknowledged and, where possible, answered specifically, in order to strengthen trust and engagement.

Information about now is, nevertheless, helpful in planning future direction. Discussions about the scale and scope of the University and its constituent parts, its internal cultures, its ambition, its sense of confidence, its infrastructure and its frustrations provide an important starting point for engagement in any future strategy.

Some of the views emerging about the status quo can help in setting the *tone* for a strategic plan, in particular the balance between aspiration and realism. For example, on the basis of the comments contained in this exercise, in which we can see widespread misgivings about the University's performance in the area of digital infrastructure, a predominantly aspiration-driven digital strategy may be more difficult to craft. It may therefore be prudent to develop a strategy that takes account of current obstacles as much as it focuses upon future aspirations.

Some of the commentary reflects the way in which questions were asked through these provocations. The underpinning argument in all the provocations was that the University is more than ever affected by its "authorising environment", which is defined as all those, external and internal to the University who may have a view on how it should be, have a voice to express that view and thereby the opportunity to enhance or inhibit the University's activities and reputation.

Most participants agreed with the proposition that the authorising environment is a key factor and consequently many focused their inputs on engaging more effectively with it. However, some provocations, for example those regarding teaching and research, were more contested and drew more nuanced, perhaps cautious, responses. For example, despite provocations challenging current ways of delivering learning and teaching, there seems, from the comments, to be a strong adherence to the value of face to face activity over blanket use of technology for teaching and learning.

There is also notable caution among respondents about chasing externally imposed KPI's (TEF, REF and NSS). In some of the commentary on the status quo, these metrics are clearly resented; in some of the suggestions put forward, it is proposed that the University withdraw from this kind of scrutiny altogether. It may be politically unrealistic to do so, but a university strategy that explicitly seeks to regard these metrics as outcomes (expressions of quality) rather than targets *per se*, would be distinctive in the current era.

A strong feature of the responses is the desire for a University strategy that is explicit about what the University community believes in; its values, its non-negotiables and its proposition to the societies in which it is embedded. These views would translate into a strategy that balances expressions of who we are (and wish to be) with statements about what we are going to do.

Method

The University began a series of peer to peer conversations about “The 21st Century University” in 2017. The third round of these conversations took the form of a series of “provocations”, externally facilitated by an associate of Advance-HE (one of the learning partners in the University’s Leadership and Management Academy). As the University began its new strategic planning round, it was agreed that this process might provide a model starting point for a staff conversation on the upcoming strategy.

The structure of the process was to target distinct audiences: the five faculties plus professional and operational staff in the UK, and academic and professional services staff on the campuses in China and Malaysia. Each session was held as a cabaret-style conference and participants were encouraged to work with people they did not know well, to give a diversity of perspective. For those who could not attend, an on-line version was prepared.

The provocations were themed as follows: three in common to all groups (Learning, Teaching & Assessment; Research & Knowledge Transfer and Campus Life) and one provocation that was specific to each group (and generated locally). The provocation slides and accompanying script are available on file.

Each provocation was introduced in turn by the facilitator. Groups then discussed their thoughts arising from the provocation and were also encouraged to write down their comments and ideas on blank postcards at their tables. The primary purpose of the postcards was to gather a rich written data set of opinions and suggested strategies; a secondary purpose of this technique is to allow quieter or marginalised voices to have an equal opportunity to contribute to the wider discussion. Not everyone is able to speak at once, but all have the opportunity to contribute in writing on any topic.

Some participants queried why we did not gather views electronically; our sense was that this might be less spontaneous and could introduce unhelpful barriers to participation. Others asked how the data were to be analysed and whether text mining and analytics approaches could be used; this remains a possibility but is not the approach taken in this analysis and commentary.

The postcards were collected and typed up; outputs were collated into a spreadsheet and categorised in various ways to enable analysis. This report is the first such analysis, prepared by the facilitator.

Analysis

The data generated by the provocation workshops were in three parts: the identifier of each group who participated, a number to denote the specific

provocation and the text itself submitted by participants. As the facilitator read through the comments, two further items were added: “Theme” and “Flag”. The “Flag” was merely to highlight specific comments that caught attention or seemed to sum up oft-repeated statements. The “Theme” column was generated iteratively. The title of each theme arose firstly from within the text itself and was then refined and shaped into clusters of broadly similar topics. In this way, the themes emerge from the text, rather than being imposed upon it.

The headings below are therefore based on the themes that arose from the text, divided into three broad categories: Organisational Strategies, Strategic Priorities and Enabling Strategies:

Organisational Strategies

Mission and Purpose

“We are a research-focused University; we develop and reward in both students and staff skills of enquiry and the pursuit of knowledge.”

The discussion here was about two fundamental questions: ‘What is a University?’ and ‘What kind of university are we?’

Many respondents wrote about “safe space”, a place to be unashamedly curious, a space in time and in society to devote to deep investigation. A space for conversation; a place of curiosity; an opportunity for personal and social development; a saturation of fine minds; an investment of time in deep learning and discovery; a place of economic and social innovation and development.

As to the kind of University Nottingham is (and could be), responses emphasised fundamental values over instrumental participation, for example, many recommended that all students should develop research skills and values, rather than student learning being seen (or structured and prioritised) separately from research activity.

The need for a strong university reputation was not questioned. However, the expression of reputation through current metrics attracted comments that reflected discomfort. Metrics can be seen as an expression of how the University is valued for the work that it does. However, rather than chase them as ends in themselves; some participants proposed that the University strategy be to embrace them as a critical reflection on the quality of its work, which itself should be the aim.

Similarly, the qualifications on offer to students could be seen as an expression of how individuals have developed and demonstrated their skills and knowledge with the University. It was suggested that the strategy be to encourage students not merely to chase qualifications as the goal; but to be the kind of university

where students are intrinsically motivated and where they embrace qualifications as a critical reflection on the quality of their work.

Governance and Structures

“It is not enough to generate a strategy, it is important to generate a strategy that can actually be implemented.”

There were comments on whether the University should be centralised, how power might be devolved to academic units, whether it has the right balance between academic and professional staff, top-down or bottom-up culture, whether decision making structures and processes were appropriate.

There were also comments about the size of the University and whether further growth would compromise quality (of people, services and infrastructure). A strategy that promotes an expansion of activity and volume (or one that proposes doing new things) would require commensurate investment in the capacity and infrastructure to support it.

The strategy might therefore include some commentary on *how* the University chooses to be structured and governed, how it wishes to develop and how it makes decisions as well as *what* these arrangements are intended to achieve.

External Scrutiny

“Redefine relationship with external scrutiny (REF); be true to ourselves”

There are some clear recommendations that the University should detach itself from certain forms of metric-based scrutiny (TEF, NSS, REF). This may be politically unrealistic, at least as a unilateral move, but does raise the strategic question as to how the University discusses and engages with these processes.

A strategy that chases these measures may be less palatable than one that works towards a culture in which these metrics are regarded as an endorsement of quality, rather than goals in themselves.

External Engagement

“Universities need to fly the flag for experts. Knowledge and experience is losing out to the current political climate, we need to champion evidence and challenge rubbish.”

There were many comments about the need to engage effectively with neighbours, partners, wider society and, in particular, with detractors.

Some comments indicated that the University should share its discoveries and enthusiasm with the world in which it is located, to invite the world to share in

the conversations it has about who we are and what we are discovering. A small example shared was a recent Faculty of Arts-led workshop on “Being Human” that drew together perspectives from different disciplines against a very broad question.

The strategy might explore how knowledge transfer, exchange and dissemination could be optimised, both with regard to the structured exploitation of intellectual property and to the wider leadership of social engagement with knowledge.

Strategic Priorities

Research

“We have a passion for research. Many academics could be paid more in industry-but passion and freedom keeps them working and engaging in research.”

“It is very difficult to predict future developments in scientific and technological research, even world-leading researchers do not have a crystal ball. If they cannot do it, administrators and bureaucrats certainly cannot!! Major developments often arise from small beginnings – the so-called Friday afternoon experiment. Ideas does not apply to huge long term goals like CERN, Nuclear Fusion, Big telescopes, NASA etc. MRI, grapheme, high temperature super-conductivity all started this way. Discovery of Exo-planets, lasers, the quantum Hall effect also emerged out of small scale research. Conclusion: The university should identify the best researchers and nurture them.”

The word ‘research’ was the most used item of vocabulary in all the consultation sessions. It is clearly a prominent consideration for staff at the University.

Amid detailed concerns about funding sources, metrics, quality and publications, there was a strong view that research remains vital to the identity of the University, to its reputation and to its success. Research intensity is part of the University’s distinctiveness in the higher education sector.

There was some specific commentary on the value (or otherwise) of having grand themes for research as opposed to a bottom-up, blue skies, fundamental approach (which many favour).

There were comments about how research activity is incentivised, recognised and rewarded, whether these arrangements are equitable, whether the polarisation of research and teaching activity is helpful and whether REF was an appropriate mechanism to drive research strategy.

There were comments about further internationalising research activity (and funding) specifically in China and Africa.

It was noted that dissemination to the external environment should be “as open as possible; as closed as necessary”

The University strategy will emphasise and reinforce the importance of research to its future and will propose areas of priority for enquiry and for investment in the planning period. It may also be useful to develop a strategy for setting these priorities, for effective decision-making and for the kind of flexibility that enables opportunism.

Student Expectations

“We could cope much better with student expectations. Student experience now does not prepare them well for the open-ended thinking needed at University. Can we better anticipate the skills they will need to develop those at the point they cover at the University, or when help them engage better with our teaching and to address their expectations. We have issues with generational differences and social differences that our predominantly white middle class staff are ill-prepared to deal with.”

The staff view of student expectations is that students would value more small group interaction in teaching and should develop research skills and interests as a natural part of the curriculum. There was little support for digital learning as a replacement for face-to-face, only as a complement to it.

Many comments were made about the need to support students’ career development, for example by providing more explicit skills support in the curriculum but also by engaging with graduates and fostering a sense of continued membership of the University beyond the course.

Whatever happens during the planning period to the balance and burden of student funding (between the individual and the State), student engagement with universities has become more transactional and explicitly mercantile. Whilst many comments in this particular conversation regret this development, the strategy will need to present a clear picture of the value to individuals and society of engagement in higher learning and the University’s “offer” in this space.

Untangling student expectations is challenging, as they are not uniform, nor always predictable. It may be prudent, rather than to second-guess these expectations, to propose a strategy that enables effective and continuous dialogue with students about their participation in University life and the means by which that would be achieved.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

“Consider what we teach, how we teach and how we support it so all staff are doing what they do best.”

Participants provided a rich set of contributions advocating change to learning teaching methods and arrangements.

Comments included: moving the balance of teaching practice from monologue (lecture) to dialogue (seminar); making research skills fundamental to student learning; involving students in research; valuing face-to-face over digital interaction and encouraging students to work from an interdisciplinary or problem-solving perspective, rather than in narrow subject silos.

In developing the University's Learning and Teaching strategy, it may be useful to have a more self-conscious, consistent and explicit set of principles underpinning teaching and learning but not necessarily a common set of practices or approaches, as these are often discipline-specific.

Course Structure & Curriculum

Some comments proposed broadening the curriculum (students taking more subjects as part of the degree structure or through a common foundation year). There was also focus on skills development (analysis, presentation, arguing, pitching, soft-skills) and a more explicit link between student learning and transferrable skills.

Current policy developments such as apprenticeships and 2-year degrees will require a strategic response. Looking more proactively and beyond current market pressures, respondents considered how the University might structure lifelong learning and offer part-time and CPD opportunities.

Advocates of a greater involvement of research in the curriculum noted the need for a more flexible approach to course approval and update to accommodate the dynamism of research activity.

The strategy might express some intent with regard to the University's educational propositions and the curricula that would underpin them. In particular as the boundaries of the curriculum are being questioned (education v skills; 'pure' degrees v apprenticeships; preparation for life v lifelong learning), some strategic clarity about the University's proposition in these areas may be useful, as would a recognition of the diversity of approaches required across the disciplines.

Assessment

Current methods of assessment are deep rooted (summative written assignments, either in-course or by examination, grade, credit, degree level and classification) and valued as currency by students, employers and society. Comments on this topic raised the question as to whether more assessment should be formative, whether current methods are sufficiently reliable (and

fraud-proof) and valid for 21st Century expectations. There was also comment on the amount of assessment that was necessary, a matter which is very likely to vary between disciplines but could be reviewed.

Regardless of whether the University makes fundamental changes to assessment (which some commentators advocated), it might be desirable to develop a strategy of being clear and self-confident about assessment practices (rather than merely aiming to be in-line with accepted practices).

Campus Culture

“A University has a well-established identity – both across physical space and across time (current students/graduates). Students and graduates alike are MEMBERS of a University”

This area of focus arose from a provocation about campus life and is distinct from considerations of physical space, buildings, infrastructure etc.. It is about the ethos of the University and how people might relate to one another on University territories (physical and virtual).

Participants wrote about spaces being safe, inspiring, inclusive and generating an atmosphere of curiosity, academic endeavour and well-being. Many comments referred to the need for campuses to have spaces where people can interact spontaneously and informally as the invitation to collaborate was seen as a strong purpose for a University environment. This includes not just staff and students but also partners, industry and the general public.

The strategy should give regard to this topic so that the way that campuses develop is both fit for purpose from a instrumental point of view (spaces where people can conduct the business and activity of University life) and from a holistic perspective (spaces that engage people as members of the University).

A number of comments recommended that the University be more confident in itself as it has good reason to be so. This might entail a more robust relationship with the external environment, whereby the University could do more to shape its own destiny, rather than merely respond to policy and external critique.

Strategic Enablers

Campus Spaces / environment

“We are fundamentally a physical community that needs the most appropriate spaces in which to thrive – student accommodation, teaching spaces, research environment, staff offices, learning spaces including libraries, natural environments”

In general, campus spaces were valued for their role in stimulating engagement and well-being; not all were regarded as fit for purpose in this regard, isolation (both personal and geographic) being key risks.

It is clear from comments that some campus spaces are highly valued and regarded as an asset to the university whereas others are not. Calls for investment in certain University spaces are strong.

The strategy in this area is likely to require some long term masterplanning and a process for prioritising campus development.

Infrastructure

“We could address the basic operational efficiency of the University to give stakeholders a better experience of studying/working here”

Lack of effective infrastructure was commented upon widely, especially, but not exclusively digital infrastructure. Strategically, this suggests the need for clear decisions about how much to invest in basic systems, processes, facilities and equipment; how to prioritise development and maintenance and the impact of any planned growth on operational capacity.

As mentioned above, some concern was raised about the relationship between ambitions for growth and the capacity of the University to meet the additional demand. Any planning process supporting the new strategy would need to take account of the infrastructural implications of strategies for growth, development and expansion.

Digital Innovation

“We could push the University to move ahead and adopt new generation technology that is intuitive.”

Many (but not all) comments strongly defended face to face over digital interaction. Others raised concern about currently poor infrastructure and systems.

Nevertheless, a digital strategy needs to be developed to meet both the possibilities of 21st Century technology and the associated expectations, which cannot be ignored.

A digital strategy may be a challenge to develop and implement, unless it engages with staff concerns and results in innovations that are “irresistibly convenient”.

Funding and Finance

Many of the comments in this area were about cross-subsidy (of teaching and research; academic posts and infrastructure; academic and professional roles; different academic disciplines and methods of delivery). A strategy of financial transparency would need to be matched with a clear set of principles around wider value and activity funding.

Other comments were about how to raise money, especially for research studentships, and sought a strategy of activity-focused philanthropy (rather than infrastructure-focused).

The University's financial strategy is obviously a critical factor in its sustainability and success. There is currently considerable turbulence around income streams in UK HE along with a number of significant uncertainties. Turbulence in wider UK policy, in turn, affects the university's capacity to plan at a global level.

Whilst individual staff concerns are perhaps inevitably parochial, the University's financial strategy might usefully be framed in as transparent manner as can be achieved.

Working practices

Many comments spoke of a need to collaborate, to understand roles better, spend more time face to face, to have access to information about who does what (and who can help). There were also comments about process inefficiency, "red tape" and fire-fighting.

A strategy to implement new ways of working would need to be inclusive (i.e. not limited to administrative activity) and encouraging of collaborative activity.

Staff Roles and Expectations

"We could enhance staff experience as well as the student experience"

"roles are fluid but structure of university personnel is rigid"

Many respondents wrote about the tensions between different roles (research and teaching; academic and administrative; corporate leadership and peer group; job families), sometimes within individuals, sometimes between them.

Workload is also an issue and the tension created by a system of open expectations. Individualism rather than teamwork was also noted.

The strategy might seek to generate a set of fundamental principles around mission and purpose that could enable people to prioritise effectively.

Recognition and Reward

“Could we change how we measure success?”

There was discussion of asymmetry in how roles are valued, different career paths for different job families, individual rather than team reward.

Reward and recognition is both explicitly structured (e.g. via promotion criteria) and implicit (in the assumptions about what people regard as priority activity). There is a risk that reward and recognition are not fully aligned with the kinds of activity required in a 21st Century university.

A recognition strategy might review both explicit and implicit attitudes to valuing work. This might align these processes and assumptions more closely with University culture, mission and purpose and might manifest in interpersonal behaviours as much as it would through processes and procedures.

Collaboration and Partnership

“Mutually beneficial partnerships; works when both parties see the benefit”

There were many comments on the need for collaboration and partnership: between disciplines, between researchers, between job families and functions, with alumni, with industrial and professional partners, with the public, with policy makers, with the cities in which the University is located.

Whilst accepting this need for collaboration, some respondents highlighted that any expectation of collaborative behaviour would need to be matched by commensurate recognition. It was noted that structural boundaries and implicit value and reward systems often cast collaboration into the category of desirable but non-core activity.

The strategy might consider the value of this activity to the University and the means by which it will be incentivised and recognised in job roles and expectations.

Group Specific Comments

Faculty of Arts

How can the Arts & Humanities make themselves central to the University's mission in the 21st Century? How can they work with STEM subjects to ensure that our teaching and research responds to the multi, inter, and trans-disciplinary challenges of the modern world?

The question posed to colleagues in Arts reflected a University view that STEM subjects should be a priority for partnerships. Many of the comments challenged the idea that only STEM subjects should be the object of partnership activity. The view was expressed that Arts and Humanities disciplines should not merely *serve* other disciplines but draw from others to enrich themselves.

Participants suggested that Arts and Humanities should more clearly state their value to the 21st Century. There were also questions raised about how to value Arts and Humanities Research given the relatively low levels of grant income and infrastructure required to sustain it (compared to other disciplines) and a suggestion that REF was contrary to the interests (and ideals) of the disciplines. There was focus on how to inspire and engage students in research.

There was discussion of the range of actual and possible assessment practices and the suggestion that a review could be useful.

In terms of student employability, career relevant skills arising from the study of Arts and Humanities could be more clearly articulated, evidenced and structured into the curriculum.

A strategy for the Faculty of Arts might therefore usefully contain clear intent on engagement and clarity of value as well as internal mechanisms to develop learning and teaching practice.

"We could open up thinking about what arts and humanities skills are for the 21st century and how this can connect with multi-skilled needs in the cultural and creative economy."

Faculty of Science

How can the Faculty secure financial sustainability as funding sources become more competitive and funding per student may decline?

Most of the responses to this specific challenge focused on efficiency gains, particularly in purchasing and administration. These comments were balanced to a degree by calls for more support and some centralisation of activity (marketing, employability, PR).

In wider comments, several participants suggested changing the curriculum to accommodate employability and life skills for students, possibly as a centralised offer.

There was strong enthusiasm for more and better appointed social space.

There were comments about shaping student expectations rather than second-guessing or reacting to them. Some of this is about marketing; some about pastoral care; some about the learning environment.

There was discussion of the need for bottom-up fundamental research rather than top-down commercially-driven research, challenging dependence on research councils and beacons.

Some called for wider and more innovative partnerships, including the notion of a symbiotic relationship with industry whereby it would invest to learn about and participate in innovation. Global partnerships were also raised, including academic exchanges, and closer links with overseas campuses.

Faculty of Social Sciences

What is unique about Nottingham social sciences and what are the common threads across the faculty?

What does this mean in terms of the further development our inter disciplinary activities and connectivity across the University?

A theme of better integrated communities ran through many of the comments, along with a plea for diversity of approaches as opposed to one-size-fits-all. This applies as much to research as to teaching and learning.

Responses highlight the tension in a multi-disciplinary faculty between identity, diversity and a desire for collaborative activity. Most recommended interdependence over homogeneity.

Several suggestions focused on student interdisciplinarity through wider subject choice and joint projects.

The relationship between spaces and learning innovation was noted; spaces are configured to encourage monologue and re-organising furniture in communal teaching spaces can be a barrier to changing delivery methods.

"No to metrics/Yes to values."

"We could do more to challenge the narrative around employability and commoditisation, by not foregrounding this information/perspective in marketing and teaching and unread foregrounding education and learning much more."

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

How does our Estate and Infrastructure enable / inhibit our capacity to take opportunities? (Re-inventing the use of the Estate and infrastructure for modern practices in education and research)

There was evident discomfort with the current buildings, infrastructure, facilities and location and a desire for spaces that enable connectivity, innovation in learning and are positive for the reputation of the Faculty and University. Several comments highlighted a negative effect of the physical environment on staff and student well-being.

There were also calls for more decentralisation of decision-making and consequent self-determination for the Faculty. Alongside this were calls for more 'intelligent' centralisation of processes and infrastructure.

Beyond the specific provocation for this group, there was more interest than elsewhere in the development of learning technologies and changes to assessment and curriculum to meet skills needs. This may be a reflection of the nature of the disciplines in the Faculty.

"We could set the expectation rules at the start of the learning. What is University? You will be doing things differently than A-levels because we are training you not only to survive but thrive in the work environment. (A place that will change a place where you do not need to pass exams, a place where you will face challenges). University should put an emphasis on we are here to train students to think, to be resilient, to be proactive, to be creative. We have to "undo" the damage from A-levels."

Faculty of Engineering

How big should we be? How do we reach the size we need to be?

Comments focused on the balance between size and quality with a clearly identified risks of diluting standards by growing too large without commensurate infrastructure and of not attracting a student intake of sufficient quality.

Beyond the specific question, responses here were positive about developing new forms of learning and teaching and developing graduate skills, for example, through degree apprenticeships.

There were also comments about the campus being a safe space for the development of community, for collaboration and for public engagement.

“To what extent does increase in size impact on quality? We should only be ‘bigger’ if we can provide all the support & facilities staff and students need and we can continue to improve quality of experience and achievement.”

Professional Services (UK)

How can we work together effectively with all colleagues across the University to take the opportunities that we face?

There was a strong appetite for more collaborative activity, trust, mutual respect and parity of status across all job families, a clearer directory of staff roles, better infrastructure and better use of existing technologies.

There was recognition of the need for better project and change management, agile working and process review, listening and communication, more emphasis on face to face encounters.

Several comments focused on cultural change, particularly with regard to attitudes to risk and mutual trust.

“Ask the staff who are doing the job on the ground how the job can be improved. They have the detailed information”

China Campus

People strategy - current plans, challenges and future strategy

Most comments focused on raising the profile of UNCC and perceptions of quality, among staff, students and external partners, on raising the value to people, including local communities and international partners, of being engaged with the University in China.

For students, there were comments about developing learning styles, embedding transferrable skills in the curriculum, including providing placements and real-world case studies.

These responses were the most strongly in favour across the University of developing the use of technology to interact with students.

There was also concern to develop research capability, capacity, quality and dissemination. It was also suggested that UoN as a whole leverage research funding from China.

“Better leverage the benefits of global university by using technology to share resources such as online lectures and courses.”

“Build good corporate culture and values. It is the most important factor for staff retention.”

Malaysia Campus

“How can we ensure that the University of Nottingham Malaysia is financially sustainable?”

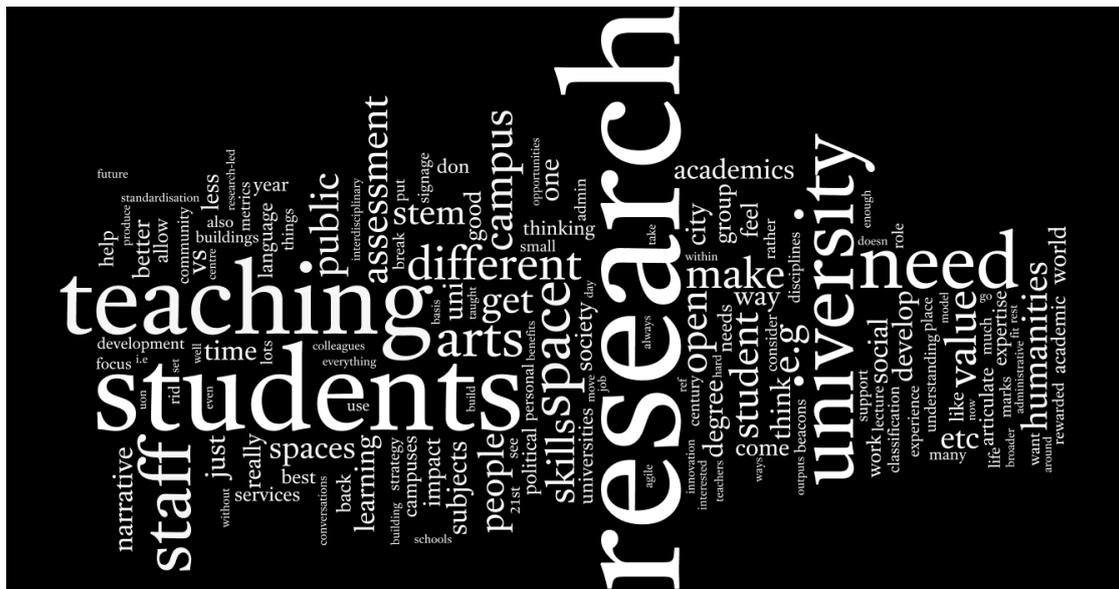
Comments included ideas around both more student recruitment and diversifying income (including commercial activity through lets and advertising) combined with better financial planning, awareness, skill and practice on the campus.

Several comments focused on diversifying sources of research funding and promoting partnership and engagement beyond current levels. More widely, there were numerous comments about using technology to complement face to face in learning, teaching and assessment and diversifying approaches to pedagogy. There were also comments about the value on ethos of the University.

“.. education should emphasize producing people who are ‘human’ with solid communication skills, ability to do what is right, good/bad for all. Knowledge, facts and information will be available everywhere (digital accessible)”

“A university is a place where people gathered physically to not only learn about a syllabus, but at the same time learn how to interact with other peers, friends. This is a place for people to acquire now soft skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, innovative thinking.”

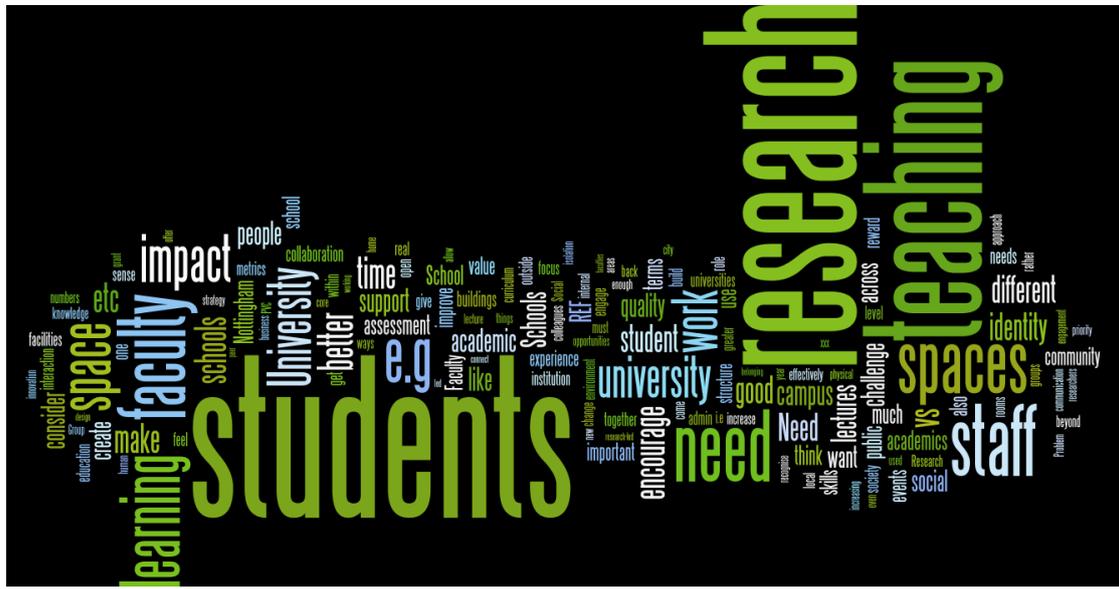
Alastair Work
Key Associate
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Faculty of Arts



Faculty of Engineering



Faculty of Social Sciences

