



**University of  
Nottingham**  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

# University Strategy Consultation

Questions from town hall meetings

***The questions and answers from these town halls have been fed into the overall results for the Green Paper consultation***

## Sutton Bonington campus town hall meeting – 22 March 2019

1. Read green paper, very consultative. Colleagues are sceptical about how genuinely consultative the process has been. How can we report this back to them?
2. Internationalisation is limited for us, this needs to be broader than two countries.
  - Globalisation – what didn't come up encouraging staff here need a structure for lifelong learning.
  - Staff need to acquire new skills and information. This is not coming across.
3. What external input has been sought into the process?
4. I like the civic piece of the strategy. How does that impact Sutton Bonington? How do we engage with the workforce and the marketplace?
  - Sutton Bonington plays an important part of the agenda.
  - Issue is that some people think more students result in more problems for the local community.
5. Regarding the new Lincoln Medical School and its link with Nottingham, how do we value students as change agents?
  - Issue of trust is very important with students. How are you going to value the comments that are made and how will we feedback this to students?
6. If you can't include all the feedback in the strategy, please say you couldn't do it because..... just be clear and acknowledge themes.
7. Some accommodation is only taken by students and that needs to be changed.
8. In terms of our interactions with the city, we pay a workspace levy. Can we invest that in the local community here?
9. Do we have a commercial strategy for wealth creation from our research?

- We need more communications in this area.
10. Things are different at the Students' Union in Sutton Bonington. We need to think about whether things will work here, not just in Nottingham.
11. The EDI work that [text redacted] is very useful.
- We need to capture where we need to be different and where we need to be the same.
  - Tell us how we need to support the diversity. We need to recognise where we need to do things differently.
12. I teach in the Arts Foundation. How do we combine a whole university perspective for my area which is shared by all of us?
- Stakeholders do not have a clear view about what is distinctive about the University. What is distinctive?
13. Were students invited to the meeting? Students should still be in teaching.
14. What is special about our graduates and those that leave us, sporting achievements etc.?
15. It's good to see the word 'radical', what is going to happen with the ideas? How will that work in practice?
16. Having reviewed page 11 of the Green Paper consultation document, there seems to be a barrier between different staff at the University. What are your thoughts on overcoming this and how can we enact such a change?
17. One of the major problems is the there is a lack of transparency. We need to think 'how transparent are we?' Senior leaders have information but this is not seen by other staff. In the past we were introduced to UEB and managerial staff but we didn't see them or our previous VC. You need more transparent so we can talk to you.
- The Sutton Bonington and Nottingham campuses do not communicate well with each other.
  - We are known as an 'agricultural college' but we're not this anymore. Can we do something to change this?
18. From my perspective, the University has appeared to have no appreciation for Sutton Bonington. It has been stressful. I think things have changed a lot since then. These old issues are now

being addressed. Thanks for the changing attitude in the past few years and please let it continue.

- We need to be ready for next year's freshers intake in the vet school.

*30 comments/questions received from 18 colleagues*

## Jubilee campus town hall meeting – 10 April 2019

1. In relation to Augar, discussions have taken place in Faculties, School etc. that courses may be closed to balance the books. Where will these decisions be made?
2. Are we taking views from the broader public to get their views of the new strategy?
  - Perhaps we should contact parents and schools?
3. I did a PhD later in life. I have set up an advisory group. We are focussed on the REF and we do not really have the structure to think about the community. You cannot blame Academics for the civic impacts if that is not how their performance management system works.
4. You highlighted we have low levels of debt but is there no appetite for looking at bonds or loans.
  - Will we be look at any bold ambitions?
5. In the Mission Statement part of the Green Paper it states that we have not succeeded in attracting student that have higher prior attainment levels. What do we know about why students have decided to go elsewhere?
6. The University needs to build long-term relationships with students, not just a short-term transactional relationships.

Student presentation:

- We give identity, belonging and ownership to students but this stops after a student leaves the University. More can be done in addition to CARO.
  - There are three values that can anchor us with the student:
    - o the passion within the students and unleash their potential
    - o integration between the body, soul and spirit
    - o Collaborative community
7. We have started a project to see how we can build a stronger relationship with our alumni.
  8. I have heard that we are a single University with three different operating models in three different countries. This doesn't give the consistent experience to our students and there will be differences in the data between the campuses. Will we have more integrated operating models between our campuses?
  9. How has it been agreed that we should have a two-page strategy?
    - It is important to ensure we don't miss any key messages.

10. I like that there are an enduring set of values and principles. Do we know what makes the University of Nottingham unique, do you know what this is and can we contribute towards it?
11. Will the strategy be another five-year strategy?
12. How do we know if we've arrived at the desired state at the checkpoints for the new strategy?
13. I recognise the University in being international and research led. I have heard of the term being used 'cash cow' for generating money from students. This is demeaning. We need to change this and if we do then there may be more opportunities that come to us.
- A University of scale could do a lot more to inspire students.
14. We need to do more work to bring the campuses together into one University, including the communities in which the campuses are.
15. An increased focus is given on wellbeing, engagement and EDI in the Green Paper for staff and students. Will we commit to objectives and KPIs for these?
16. I think we should focus on the curriculum and the overall vision of it. The curriculum should be different to other universities and should be related to the academic field.
- A change has taken place with the reform of the Faculties and the creation of Student Services. International and Exchange students fall through the gaps of the digital infrastructure and the processes we set up.
17. We now talk about the University as a local organisation but we're not talking about it as being a regional organisation. I think the data points towards us being a regional organisation e.g. out Postgraduate students are from the region. Have we explored the region?
18. We are giving you general feedback from a variety of positions, but will you consider using the expertise of Academics for the strategy? The University consults well in a general way but we could use the expertise of Academics that specialise in this area.
- This will also help to build better relationships at the University so there is less of a 'them and us' feeling.
19. As of today, do you know what we are not good at?
- In some departments we have the latest software and great staff, in other departments they are only using spreadsheets and they are only as good as the spreadsheet.
20. In terms of getting further engagement from outside the University, I worked with the Widening Participation Group where students engaged with the Nottingham community. This worked well as we learnt from the community and they learnt what students were working on.
- I am a previous student of the University too and have received contact from the University about what my experience has been since I graduated, perhaps we should do this in a different way now.
  - In terms of our global aspect, as a student I worked with students from Ningbo on the 2+2 programme. At the time it was difficult for students from the UK, China and other international students to come together as our learning styles and cultures were different.

Having more of a global contact with other campuses such as buddying or video links may help to create more of a community.

- This strategy will bring a culture and learning change for students and staff. Will there be additional staffing to support the culture to help us get the ambition we want?

21. There is also the perspective of being a parent, will we capture that perspective too?
22. We have many Chinese students on the Jubilee campus. Is this part of the strategy? Is it intentional or is it incidental?
23. There has been no mention of Postgraduate students in the Green Paper. It's difficult to respond to this as it only relates to Undergraduate students.

*37 comments/questions received from 23 colleagues*

## University Park campus town hall meeting – 16 April 2019

1. There needs to be more scrutiny on legacy projects. I was brought in to do the reporting for research.
  - I found out about the research board and other projects that are in progress. I would like to see more financial reporting in the research strategy.
  - Does the University have a habit of focussing on new projects and forgetting about projects that may be incurring costs?
2. There are people protesting about the environment in London at the moment. Is it worth putting the environment into our strategy? Can we lead on this? There are lots of changes that can be made immediately.
  - We can use solar panels
  - We can review the chemicals we use in our toilets
3. We need to think strategically about how we grow the services to support our students. If we have good support for our students then we retain those students. We need to be a lot more joined up and strategic.
4. It's important that students don't lose the connection between staff and their School. As an Admissions Tutor, Project Transform really damaged us. I would like Admissions to be put in reverse rather than driven forwards.
  - If a student has an enquiry about Admissions, the contact central Admissions. They then contact me, I give them advice and then they contact the student at which point we may have lost that student.
5. I have not seen a mention of staff health and wellbeing. I would like to see this prioritised.

6. Valuing our partnerships has taken a huge nosedive. The support and experience that we give to international students needs to be addressed. I see this a lot more as I work in Languages.
  - It seems that globalisation for us means intake number. The experience we give to incoming students is different to what we give to outgoing students.
  
7. We may need to have a better balance between student quantity and quality.
  - We also need a better balance between our teaching time and our research time.
  - I teach an optional Masters course in Industrial Economics. 95% of my students don't have any background in this topic. I know they are hardworking but you would expect them to know some of the information so we can teach them more advanced perspectives.
  - Student engagement is very low in the Business School. We need to have something to encourage them to come to classes and be engaged. Colleagues tell me that in a class of 200 we only get 50 to 60 students that actually attend. I think this affects everyone's motivation and learning.
  - It is difficult to cover for staff that are conducting research. The staff-student ratio is not favourable for this. We are losing many good research active colleagues and we don't want to lose them. This is a big challenge in the time of REF.
  
8. We are all very differently established in our markets. Do you think we can have one strategy that will go across all our campuses, or do you feel they will be appropriately nuanced?
  
9. Regarding system change and listening to colleagues, staff did say that systems were not going to work and no one listened. It would be appreciated if their experience of running these systems is heard.
  - It's really important not to lose personal contact and personal buy-in. We send emails to generic email addresses, but we all go the extra mile for individuals. We require the name of someone that we can talk to and we only want to have that conversation once.
  
10. You said that one of the aims is to come up with something distinctive about the University and this is difficult as all universities want to be excellent at teaching, research etc. In the next stage of the strategy, will there be an opportunity to pull some of these things through and test them?
  - We've heard about the environment, for me it would be about widening participation. I'm sure there will be things that will come out about what could be distinctive about Nottingham.
  
11. These questionnaires typify this gap between senior management and Academics. We all held great hopes when the new management came in, and we know you are doing your best. Please get that dialogue going. Come and have coffee with us some time just to see what the challenges are. You have a great opportunity and a great University. I hope you will fulfil the promise that you all made when the new management came in.
  - You mentioned the link between time, research and funding. When I started in 1976 if you wrote a good project you were guaranteed funding. It's much more competitive now. If we are to be world-class and get good scores for REF, it requires a lot of time and thought from Academics to get their ideas together and write fantastic papers. In Physics and Astronomy colleagues are not getting that time because they bow down to bureaucracy. I think this is because we have a very large management structure now. There is a lot of stuff coming down from management and initiatives that we don't get the time to do world-class research and get the money in that we want.

- Think about giving us the time to do quality teaching and quality research. If you could reduce the amount of bureaucracy that would help us enormously.
12. One small change that we could make is to ban the use of the word 'excellence'. Let's strive for mediocrity. Every university talks about excellence in teaching, research and learning. What else are we going to do?
- We should concentrate on getting critical thinking for students and how we will make ourselves different.
13. Can you clarify how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be integrated into the strategy?
- You have said there is going to be a major driver and there will be a separate EDI plan. There are huge challenges that the University repeatedly refuses to address about one of the countries where we have a campus where it is illegal to be gay or transgender, and where it is unsafe to be queer. How are we going to address those kinds of things and have EDI at the forefront of the University strategy?
  - Where does EDI sit within this? How do we make sure EDI is not a separate policy that is just for Nottingham?
14. It's important to be clear in the strategy about what we're not going to do. The strategy may be so broad that it might be everything to everyone and not give us a real direction which is what we really need.
15. In relation to our civic role, I think there is less pride about the University from people that live in Nottingham. I think this is because there is less clarity around what we do. I would focus on communicating the value of the University and doing that in different ways. We can do that in the media but also opening up the University and inviting groups of people into the University. I think we need to contact employers, schools and so on.
16. We would like to see more time to interact and engage with students as individuals rather than numbers or part of an income stream. Is this something that we can make distinctive about Nottingham? How can we convince those students that they will be treated and seen as individuals, and encourage to learn as individuals?
- We need to deal less with the trickles of bureaucratic demands.
17. What is the collaboration plan with Nottingham Trent University?
18. What I think I am observing, and I am really pleased to see it, is a bit of a shift when we talk about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion from seeing this as a problem to an opportunity for us to be engaged with. We need to look at celebrating differences and the many benefits that we get as a result of this.
19. Students get their marks from BlueCastle but due to this this they do not engage with their Personal Tutor about their results and they deal with the system instead. I think this is an unintended consequence.
20. You've mentioned a few times 'lean' and 'efficient', this doesn't cover the hidden costs. The hidden costs of centralising everything shows there is a lack of connection with the students and



this is particularly important in Admissions. If we lose a few students through Admissions that cost could be made up with an in-house Admissions administrator which is the same person that would be the same point-of-contact for the student.

21. What makes us distinctive should be something that staff and students value. It would be good to get an understanding why people currently come to work/study at the University, which we could build on.
  - There is also no shame in learning from our competition. We need to be really clear about seeing who our competitors are in all three countries and seeing what we admire about them.
22. Is there any way that we can look at the structure of the University and how it is managed? This might free up some time for the Academics.
23. We have been advertising a level 5 post in Law and many senior lecturers or professors have applied. They have said they want to come here as they say this is a research-active University and they can't be research-active elsewhere. These comments about bureaucracy and giving people space are incredibly important and would make an enormous difference.

*42 comments/questions received from 20 colleagues*