



WINNERS

Thursday 21 June 2012

Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London

THE

**LEADERSHIP &
MANAGEMENT
AWARDS 2012**

In association with

**Leadership
Foundation**
for Higher Education



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INTRODUCTION

When we said last year that we were experiencing a period of uncertainty for the sector, we probably all hoped that things would be looking up by the time of the *Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards 2012*.

In truth, the challenges remain very real, and with the introduction of higher tuition fees just a few months away, the work of the professional staff who keep our universities working so smoothly will be more important than ever.

So the sector should take great reassurance from the extraordinary examples of creativity, commitment and sheer hard work that we have heard about tonight.

With universities having to reassess what they do in every sphere, it is fitting that the winner of this year's top award, Queen Margaret University, has turned its fortunes round through a combination of inspirational leadership and support from the institution's entire staff. The judges were also very impressed with the other contenders, particularly Northumbria University, which has a brilliant story to tell about engagement with its community.

It just remains for me to offer hearty congratulations to all our winners, and all those who made it on to the shortlist, and to thank our panel of judges, without whose considerable expertise and enthusiasm these awards would not be possible.

John Gill, Editor, *Times Higher Education*

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JUDGES

Chris Cobb, chief operating officer and university secretary, University of London

Cary Cooper, distinguished professor of organisational psychology and health, Lancaster University, and chair of the Academy of Social Sciences

Liesl Elder, director of development, University of Oxford

Jane Embley, director of human resources, Northumbria University, and vice-chair of Universities Human Resources

Patrick Finch, bursar and director of estates, University of Bristol

Philip Graham, business alliance manager, Research and Enterprise Directorate, Queen's University Belfast

Christopher Hallas, director of student affairs, University of Greenwich, and chair, Association of University Administrators

Geoff Hope-Terry, former chair, Universities UK Strategic Procurement Group for Higher Education

Maja Maricevic, head of higher education, British Library

Joanna Newman, director, UK Higher Education International Unit

Hari Punchihewa, deputy chief executive and finance director, University of Derby

Ken Sloan, registrar, University of Warwick

Andrew West, director of student services, University of Sheffield, and chair of AMOSSHE, the student services organisation

Ewart Wooldridge, founder and chief executive, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education



OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Queen Margaret University

Queen Margaret University's financial turnaround and the "charismatic leadership" style of its principal and vice-chancellor, Petra Wend, were among the factors that impressed the judges.

In three years, the Edinburgh institution has been transformed. Its relocation in 2007 to a new campus, although necessary, created severe financial pressures, resulting in substantial deficits, low staff morale and fears about the future.

Led by Professor Wend since 2009, the management team has remedied the situation by overseeing an institutional restructure, updating governance mechanisms, tightening financial controls and delivering a "refreshing" vision and mission.

As a result, the goals the university set for 2015 have already been realised – including achieving a financial surplus in

the latest set of accounts, a year ahead of the scheduled break-even point – and the university has also attracted its largest donation ever, more than £500,000.

Remarkably, Queen Margaret made all the changes without provoking industrial action or negative press coverage.

Judging panel member Ewart Wooldridge, founder and chief executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, said Queen Margaret's "rich narrative" of change "was underpinned by hard evidence of success, including elevating the university to 14th place in the UK (third in Scotland) for student applications per undergraduate place".

"The principal's charismatic leadership style displayed a profound understanding of engagement, not just with her leadership and management team but across the whole staff and wider stakeholder community. It has genuinely been a team effort," he added.



OUTSTANDING UNIVERSITY FUNDRAISING TEAM

Queen's University Belfast

This year, Queen's University Belfast has raised more than £3.5 million for a new graduate and executive education centre at its Riddel Hall site.

The judges admired the way in which the university had managed not only to raise an impressive sum but also to link the project to its own aims and to Northern Ireland's strategy to retain more highly skilled graduates and improve its business leadership.

The centre includes a leadership institute and a trading room, which trains students for a career in financial services or technology.

To raise money, Sir Peter Gregson, the president and vice-chancellor, hosted several events in the City of London – a source of funds the university had previously tapped only rarely – which led to gifts totalling £850,000.

Queen's also approached 20 local businesses to become members of the Riddel Hall Founders' Club, with the aim of raising funds and improving links with graduate employers in the region. A total of 24 businesses have now contributed £1.4 million to the project, and the Institute of Directors Belfast has relocated to the hall.

The Riddel Hall campaign was not the only philanthropic success Queen's enjoyed over the year – in total, the university raised £8.8 million in cash and pledges.

Judges found the focus on building ever-stronger links with the local business community to be a key aspect of the institution's impressive performance for the financial year.

By employing a systematic approach with a distinctive beginning, middle and end, the team displayed impressive organisation and quantitative evidence of exceptional achievement, the judges said.



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE/TRANSFER INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

London School of Economics and Political Science

Academics at the London School of Economics and Political Science have reached beyond the usual comfort zone of academia to pick up this year's award.

The LSE's blog infrastructure initiative has enabled academics to share their expertise online, increasing access to research and the visibility of its applications in society.

Two blogs were particularly popular. "British Politics and Policy at LSE" – begun in March 2010 in time for the last general election – is now the highest-ranked university blog in the UK and the second most-read blog in economics.

Meanwhile, the "Impact of Social Sciences" blog – originally created to disseminate research from a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England – has become a forum for debate on digital scholarship, government policy and publishing

models, with around 5,000 visitors a month.

The recipe of a range of academic contributions, careful editing to ensure accessibility and avid promotion through social media has led to success in the form of further funding for two new blogs that were launched this year: "European Politics and Policy" and "LSE Review of Books".

Philip Graham, business alliance manager at Queen's University Belfast and one of the judges, said the LSE group had illustrated that knowledge exchange can be much wider than technology transfer.

"Their high-quality blog highlights real and important issues," he said.

"The comments and debates it generates influence stakeholders and policymakers in a much more subtle and powerful way than traditional lobbying.

"This is a real example of how social scientists do have, and can demonstrate, real impact."



OUTSTANDING HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM

Swansea University

Swansea University has seen a high level of buy-in to its new Performance Enabling Programme thanks to an unprecedented level of engagement with academics and unions.

The scheme seeks to link personal performance to corporate objectives via a series of individual key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to publications, grant applications, PhD students, student satisfaction, student outcomes and student retention.

The scheme was devised by a senior staff member with a background in the private sector.

Initially, members of staff were sceptical about the use of KPIs. However, attitudes softened after a huge effort to engage them, which included 180 meetings between unions, management and staff.

Another 86 “cultural change” sessions were held with staff, and 98 per cent of

senior line managers have been trained in “leadership coaching skills”.

The programme resulted in 79 per cent of professional development reviews being completed in the first year of the new programme, compared with 25 per cent previously. Meanwhile, 68 per cent of staff think the quality of review has improved.

The university believes the programme will “challenge” staff performance over the next five years, “better equipping them and the university to attain strategic objectives in a demanding educational environment”.

According to the judges, the Swansea team displayed evidence of real improvement, impressing the judges with its systematic approach and the development of an innovative framework making communications both easier and more efficient.

It has “gone somewhere others have not gone before”, and in doing so has become a great example to the rest of the sector, they added.



OUTSTANDING REGISTRY TEAM

Canterbury Christ Church University

In recent years, Canterbury Christ Church University has pushed through a rapid programme of institutional growth. This has meant a doubling of student numbers during a period of changing and increasing demands from the government, professional bodies and students alike.

The registry team has played a central role in this by modernising administrative processes across the board.

It has therefore been able to make a significant contribution to Canterbury Christ Church's strategic plans, while enhancing the student experience and continuing to provide essential services to staff.

An electronic call-logging system, for example, now handles hundreds of student requests each month, with more than 96 per cent of them answered within the deadlines set out in a service-level agreement.

An automatic system for the issue and

distribution of student smart cards and for activating computer accounts provides earlier access to a wide range of facilities.

An online pre-registration process has also streamlined the face-to-face student registration process, with waiting times reduced from two hours in 2008 to an average of 20 minutes in 2011. Students and parents alike have been vocal in their praise of this.

Crucial to the whole process has been the creation of separate registry offices within different faculties, enabling the team to provide a much more embedded and responsible service without losing the benefits of centralisation.

For judge Ken Sloan, registrar at the University of Warwick, "the Canterbury entry demonstrated real breadth and depth of innovation across the entire registry team", which "made it stand out above the other submissions".



OUTSTANDING DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Plymouth University

The judges noted that the category was hard fought and the winner – Plymouth University – had beaten stiff competition from the other contenders.

But it was the “can do” philosophy of the institution’s placement and partnership administration team that saw it emerge triumphant.

The team’s energy and commitment to enhancing the student, mentor and employer experience resulted in the university building vibrant relationships with regional and national stakeholders.

During a period of major flux in the education and health sectors, the team still managed successfully to conclude a two-year project culminating in the introduction of a valuable resource that prepares students and employers for placement learning.

It now offers students a comprehensive introduction and induction service to more

than 3,000 placements, while their employers can have instant access to useful information about them.

The team’s effective communication with stakeholders also led to the development of the Poppi (Plymouth Online Practice Placement Information) portal, which allows users to share information on best practice.

Other higher education institutions now regularly call on the team for advice, and the judges noted that it was a “model that can be transferred to and shared” with other institutions.

The team’s work has also resulted in improvements to curricula and placement pedagogy and has fostered a sense of community with those who contribute to workplace learning across the NHS, education and beyond.

Consequently, the team is routinely praised by the regional commissioner of NHS programmes and clinical services for its innovative and collaborative approach.



OUTSTANDING LIBRARY TEAM

University of Leicester

The creation of the new £36 million David Wilson Library at the University of Leicester offered a perfect opportunity to re-envision, rather than just relocate, the services on offer.

The team spent months gathering and analysing data, talking to students, academics and library staff, visiting other libraries and even considering what might be learned from, for example, self-service provision in supermarkets.

The key conclusions were that users wanted a library that looked the part and operated equally smoothly in physical and virtual modes, combining inspiring vistas with nooks and crannies, and traditional furniture with new technology.

Notable innovations included 24-hour opening, the introduction of a cafe, lockers and a bookshop, and the use of self-service booking to eliminate queues.

For Maja Maricevic, head of higher education at the British Library and one of the judges, the project offered “a leading example of how to successfully remodel and combine on-site and online library services”.

Along with “doing a stunning job in extending and remodelling their buildings”, the team had taken on “a double challenge to respond to their student and staff needs in both physical and virtual environments” and had managed to achieve “a dramatic parallel improvement in the usage of both their physical collections and their web resources”.

OUTSTANDING ESTATES TEAM

Harper Adams University College

Not only has Harper Adams University College led the way in creating a green campus, but its 12-strong estates team has overseen a 40 per cent expansion of facilities during the past six years.

The judges noted that the successful delivery of £21 million worth of capital projects “demonstrates just what can be achieved with dedication, innovation and a strong team spirit”.

The college is now carbon neutral four times over and is three-quarters self-sufficient in electricity, due to a biomass-powered combined heat and power unit and an anaerobic digestion plant.

Solar panels power electric recycled-waste collection vehicles, and the institution has met the Carbon Trust Standard on cutting carbon.

Demand for energy has been addressed as well as supply, with the college achieving a

17 per cent reduction in energy consumption per student.

Disruption to protected species’ habitats has been minimised during the expansion, and two buildings have been awarded a gold standard for sustainable development – the BREEAM Excellent award.

The programme of green innovation means the estates team now gives advice, workshops and seminars to other higher education institutions, local colleges and students hoping to learn from such a pioneering group.

“Harper Adams has become known in recent years as a centre for environmental innovation, but that is clearly underpinned by a strong all-round estates performance,” the judges said.

This all-round performance “leads to a sense that the quality of the estate makes a real difference to the experience of staff and students at the college”, they concluded.



OUTSTANDING STUDENT ADMISSIONS TEAM

Lancaster University

The outstanding work of Lancaster University's postgraduate admissions team caught the eye of the judges.

At the start of 2009-10, responsibility for these admissions was devolved to the university's three faculties, eliminating the need to process applications both centrally and at faculty level.

Faculty admissions officers liaised with programme directors to develop clear policies for each programme, enabling more faculty autonomy when selecting students.

Towards the end of 2009, Lancaster also set up a postgraduate admissions portal, which allowed the entire admissions process to be integrated into a single online system.

Applications were made online, with supporting evidence submitted and offers made through the same system.

This was then refined later in 2009-10 to allow access to application information throughout the process, thereby reducing processing times.

The system has also allowed Lancaster to exploit the portal as a marketing resource, with the university sending out regular messages and information to potential students during the process.

By keeping students "warm" in this way, the university hopes to improve its success rate in translating offers into acceptances – something that could be rolled out into undergraduate admissions in future years.

Ken Sloan, registrar at the University of Warwick and one of the judges, said: "The submission focused on developments and changes the team made in its approach to postgraduate admissions, all made during a time of institutional change.

"This showed them to be exceptional."



ICT INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

Loughborough University

A new model of ICT infrastructure provision pioneered by Loughborough University could save the higher education sector hundreds of millions of pounds.

Facing a choice between the high upfront costs of refurbishing its 40-year-old data centre and the risk inherent in moving its IT capacity to external “clouds”, the university instead devised a “hybrid cloud” – this consists of local clouds based at “mini-pods” at opposite ends of Loughborough’s campus.

The competitive tendering facilitated by this approach yielded estimated savings of around £1 million. The university also saved £2 million by avoiding the need to refurbish its data centre.

More than 200 university servers now run on the local cloud, saving more than £500,000 in IT revenue costs so far. The university’s annual power costs have also

fallen by £100,000, and its annual carbon output has been reduced by 600 tonnes.

In the longer term, the university hopes to derive its IT infrastructure services via JANET – UK higher education’s national IT network. The university demonstrated the feasibility of such a model last summer and envisages adopting it within four to five years.

One of the judges, Chris Cobb, chief operating officer and university secretary at the University of London, said Loughborough had met a challenge that many universities face.

“The hybrid cloud extends the life of existing infrastructure while at the same time enabling a transition towards full cloud-based hosting,” he said.

“The mini-pod approach has bought the university time, resilience and confidence as well as reducing energy consumption and running costs. It’s an excellent model that’s transferable to others.”

OUTSTANDING STUDENT SERVICES TEAM

Anglia Ruskin University

Given the task of becoming “champions of the student experience and upholders of the student charter”, Anglia Ruskin University’s student services team has improved support for students in almost all areas of university life.

After the appointment of a new director two years ago, the unit was rebranded, focusing on the simple concept of promoting “student services”.

Central to its mission was to make the team more accessible: service names were made clearer; single contact numbers and emails introduced; and “iCentres” used to create truly interactive points for student queries.

The unit also improved its student drop-in service, while it actively sought out student problems through the introduction of its Tell Us scheme, in which people were encouraged to use text messages, emails and social networks to communicate with the university.

Anglia Ruskin’s team also took responsibility for the university’s student charter, which was overhauled. In addition, 86 per cent of students said the unit’s induction programmes were helpful.

Meanwhile, it launched the Student Satisfaction Improvement Group – a monthly meeting involving a deputy vice-chancellor, senior faculty, support service managers and student union representatives – to promote ideas from all parts of the university.

One of the judges, Andrew West, director of student services at the University of Sheffield and chair of AMOSSHE, said Anglia Ruskin had submitted an “impressively strategic entry with clear evidence of a planned approach to improvement across a wide range of student services”, as well as “very good levels of engagement and feedback from users”.

“It is excellent to see a strong vision translated into a practical programme creating a positive impact within the whole student experience,” he added.



OUTSTANDING FINANCE TEAM

University of West London

Delivery of a significant surplus at the University of West London after several years of deficit earned its finance team this award.

The team implemented a new financial strategy to achieve a sustainable position, which led to investment in the student experience and removal of the university from the Higher Education Funding Council for England's list of institutions deemed "at higher risk".

The institution – formerly Thames Valley University – can now boast that it was in the top quartile of the sector in the 2010-11 financial results, after achieving a surplus of 8.4 per cent of income, compared with a 7.3 per cent deficit in 2009-10.

Among the measures introduced was the instigation of a joined-up planning process that directly linked the academic agenda to financial targets.

A key component of the strategy was to set a series of financial metrics and ensure that they were met. This meant that the team had to deliver strong financial leadership as well as communicate the metrics to every level of the university.

The team worked with academic and professional staff to agree all budgets in detail, especially staff budgets.

One of the judges, Hari Punchedewa, deputy chief executive and finance director at the University of Derby, said the West London team had "supported the radical restructure the university had to go through recently".

"As part of this, the staff cost base was significantly reduced and specific investments were made in improving the overall student experience.

"These achievements have set a good platform for them to become a stronger and more sustainable institution."

OUTSTANDING MARKETING/ COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham's MarComms team has a strategic goal to enhance the reputation of the institution "so we are consistently recognised as a leading global university".

In 2010-11, it delivered an integrated marketing and communications campaign to enhance the reputation of the university's research locally, nationally and internationally. A number of initiatives were launched including the Birmingham Heroes campaign, which featured academics leading research in areas ranging from new cancer treatments to tackling harmful pollutants.

The team also carried out extensive research and revamped its media relations approach in four ways: engaging with more broadcasters alongside the press; focusing international efforts in four countries; highlighting research with a global impact; and concentrating on building relationships with distinct groups of national science, education, social affairs and health journalists.

Birmingham's national media coverage grew by the equivalent of £10 million in advertising, to £37 million, while, internationally, media coverage grew from 100 articles to 600 in high-impact publications.

By engaging with the public and policy-makers through events and online, the team developed a programme to engage with influential people and the community about the university's research.

"Birmingham's novel approach to global branding excited the judges," said Cary Cooper, distinguished professor of organisational psychology and health at Lancaster University and chair of the Academy of Social Sciences.

"Their Birmingham Heroes campaign – showing how [the university] has made a difference in health, resolving international conflicts and much more – reached more than 12 million people.

"In addition, the Birmingham Policy Commissions bring together leading politicians, policymakers and global figures to explore relevant topical issues of our time."

Award sponsored by *Communications Management*



OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

University of East London

The University of East London's winning international strategy did not focus just on recruiting students from abroad – it also gave its homegrown students a chance to see the world.

At the heart of UEL's Transformation for Excellence strategy is its Going Global bursary scheme, which gives students the chance to travel, linked to their studies, whether for a few days or a whole semester.

Launched in 2010 with 90 bursaries, the university plans to open up the scheme to 500 students a year by 2015.

Schools and students alike have used the bursaries to great effect.

The Royal Docks Business School developed a Global Scholars exchange programme alongside a module dedicated to interdisciplinary working and international contexts.

Meanwhile, one student worked with two UEL schools and the website www.opendemocracy.net to organise

a series of events about the Arab Spring.

The university also used its focus on international collaboration to introduce a popular programme of foreign language, interpreting and intercultural proficiency training for students, after a nine-year absence.

The institution has worked on reaching out to new partner organisations abroad, particularly in emerging economies such as India. One such alliance with a major Indian company will allow UEL to build the International India Centre at the university's Docklands campus.

The judges were impressed by the number of "distinct threads" running through the global reach theme of the strategy, with a range of university departments fully involved and throwing their weight behind the programme.

The judges also considered the target of 500 students by 2015 under the Going Global bursary scheme to be eminently achievable, building on its success so far in helping to give students incentives to study abroad.



OUTSTANDING PROCUREMENT TEAM

Bangor University

Bangor University's entry was deemed a "high-calibre, all-round" performance by the judges due to its proactive and innovative approach.

The procurement process at the university is managed through a decentralised model whereby all the departments in the institution carry out their own purchasing supported by a central team.

This has enabled the university to make "significant progress" in saving money through more efficient procurement, leading it to achieve savings of up to 8 per cent over three years.

The central procurement team has also led a drive to improve competitive tendering in a number of ways. These included a training programme for staff to enable them to carry out the process effectively.

Meanwhile, the director of procurement

formed a development group of lead staff in the institution so that detailed guidance on the best ways to achieve savings could be communicated to colleagues.

One judge, Geoff Hope-Terry, former chair of the Universities UK Strategic Procurement Group for Higher Education, said there had "once again" been a high standard of entry from the procurement community, "demonstrating the added value that this discipline continues to deliver".

"The 2012 winners show how a strong and effective procurement team can continue to increase financial benefits from their activities, releasing growing amounts of funds to support the academic endeavour," he added.

"At the same time, they have been proactive on the extremely important collaboration agenda and brought some great innovation to their engagement with stakeholders, both internal and external."

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