

# Welcome to the January 2021 *in partnership*

In this month's edition of In Partnership we focus on our January Connect Benefit Series theme of rethinking delivery models for quality higher education for all. We also focus on decolonising the curriculum, the Collaborative Development Fund, and upcoming member events.

There is still time to provide feedback on In Partnership to ensure it continues to meet your needs. Share your thoughts by [completing this short survey](#).

*As always we welcome your feedback. Please contact your Head of Membership with any ideas or content you would like featured.*



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in  
partnership

Keeping our  
members updated  
with the latest from  
Advance HE

January 2021

AdvanceHE



# Connect Benefit Series



## Connect Benefit Series December

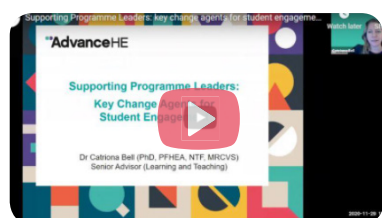
In December, our Connect Benefit Series focused on student engagement. Students' sense of belonging is developed through engaging and socially constructed learning experiences; this is a challenge that is further emphasised on a physically distanced campus. On 9 December we hosted a webinar which explored our new toolkit [#52etc](#) – designed to support and develop teaching practice and enhance student engagement.

All colleagues at Advance HE member institutions can access a recording of the webinar and download [#52etc](#), as well as access all other outputs on this theme. [Find out more about our December Connect Benefit Series.](#)

### Coffee break screencasts

Watch these short videos focusing on supporting programme leaders

[Watch the webinar recording](#)



## January Connect Benefit Series – Rethinking delivery models for quality higher education for all

As a colleague at an Advance HE member institution, our Connect Benefit Series is available to you as part of your institution's membership. The series runs throughout the membership year, focusing on specific themes each month. The series comprises outputs including webinars, publications and blogs.

January's theme will look at the key issues of quality, flexibility and accessibility from the perspectives of the HEI and the student to understand the tensions around what is best for student success and how HEIs can meet changing needs of society and employer and what is best for the sustainability of the institution.

### Reshaping HE for the future

In this new blog, Dr Kay Hack, Advance HE Principal Adviser (Learning and Teaching), introduces the January theme and explores why HE institutions need to enhance their capacity to deliver flexible and resilient education systems.

[Read more](#)

### Webinar - 27 January

#### Higher education for the future – a digital perspective

Our three guest contributors [Vangelis Tsiligkiris](#), Principal Lecturer, Nottingham Business School, [Laura Czerniewicz](#), Professor, University of Cape Town and [Mark Birkin](#), Professor of Spatial Analysis and Policy, University of Leeds have recorded videos their thoughts and views on Reshaping higher education for the future.

This discursive webinar will be shaped from questions and thoughts around these [videos](#), which webinar attendees can [submit](#) beforehand.

[Find out more and book your place](#)

### Leadership through a digital lens

In this new blog, Professor Lawrie Phipps reflects on what we have learnt over the past year from having technology front and centre of HE, asking how we ensure that we do not adopt a techno-solutionist approach but look at our goals through a digital lens.

[Read more](#)

[Find out more](#)



# Member Benefits and Opportunities

## Collaborative Development Fund – application deadline extension

Our Collaborative Development Fund is an Advance HE member benefit launched in October with the aim of supporting the development of our members by addressing key sector challenges together. The fund is available to our global member base, comprising three projects under the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion in governance, education and strategy and culture, with funding of between £20,000 - £35,000 available per project. The collaborative projects aim to harness the knowledge, experience and innovative capabilities of our members in order to address current challenges within the HE sector.

Following feedback from the sector on the current pressures facing institutions, we have made the decision to extend the application deadline to 29 Jan 2021.

 [Find out more and apply](#)



## Positive trends for the postgraduate taught experience despite challenges in 2020

More than 120 institutions have signed up for Advance HE's student surveys package in 2021, which includes the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and UK Engagement Survey. The surveys will be running from February to May for PRES and February to June for UKES and PTES.

All three surveys have undergone a comprehensive consultation process, backed up by independent cognitive testing with students, in order to ensure the content evolves to reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the student experience.

This year, as a new feature in UKES, we will be including a section assessing student's view of their own employability attributes, which has been developed directly from Advance HE's framework for embedding employability. This provides the opportunity to assess and benchmark how employability is being embedded at undergraduate level.

To enquire about taking part in this year's surveys please contact [surveys@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:surveys@advance-he.ac.uk).

We are currently inviting proposals for Surveys and Insights Conference 2021: Adapting to challenging times that consider themes such as 'Measuring the quality of learning' and 'Supporting students'. The deadline for submissions is 28 January 2021.

[Find out more](#)

## Working with Jisc to provide a digital lens to your strategy

Institutions, large and small, are today having to be strategically responsive to a multitude of external and internal factors, some of which can be forecast whilst others are hard if not impossible to predict. Covid-19 has put strategy into sharp focus, stress testing existing strategies in changing environments, and in some cases rewriting them entirely.

Through working together, Advance HE and Jisc can combine our expertise to provide all encompassing support for your strategy development. Rather than encouraging a separate digital strategy we encourage technology to be considered across all strategies.

Jisc provide a digital lens to our strategy work. This puts technology as a core consideration for institutions when developing their strategies, for example, the use of technology in teaching and learning, with issues highlighted by the current climate, or how it can be used to achieve less obvious goals such as those in sustainability strategies.

 [Find out more](#)

# Learning and Teaching

## Making MOOCs go further: utilising MOOCs in teaching and learning

For our January Connect Member Benefit theme, **Rethinking Higher Education**, Kate Borthwick, Principal Enterprise Fellow, University of Southampton, explores the value of MOOCs to enhance teaching and the student experience and contribution to other aspects of the University's core business, including research, enterprise, internationalisation.

At the University of Southampton (UoS), we have been creating Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) since 2012 and are proud to have been one of Futurelearn's founding partners. From the outset of our involvement with MOOCs, we have sought to experiment with how they might support and contribute to all aspects of University life and business including research, enterprise, internationalisation, and of course, education.

When a new MOOC is proposed – usually as part of a strategy to engage a public audience with a particular topic of research and teaching – course teams are supported to think about how the MOOC might be utilised to serve other strategic purposes. It has become an integral part of the planning and approval process to explain how course materials will contribute to teaching and learning at UoS.

### MOOCs in teaching and learning – what we do

We make use of the different MOOCs that we have created in a variety of ways to support teaching and learning. At a basic level, this entails the simple re-use of digital assets created for the MOOC (videos, multimedia activities etc) as resources in teaching. These are made available through our University VLE as embedded elements in relevant course programmes.

## Supporting f2f learning in blended mode

Some MOOCs are embedded into module teaching either as a blended component aligning to the class-based curriculum or as a piece of extended learning. For example, the MOOC 'Developing Your Research Project' is blended into a 2nd Year, class-based research methods course for Archaeology students and has been used in the past with other cohorts. The MOOC 'English as a Medium of Instruction for Academics' (EMI) is run alongside a PGT module with the same topic and assessed tasks are linked to it.

### Preparation for study

Our MOOCs are often recommended to prospective students as preparation for study at the University, e.g. 'Exploring our Ocean' is timed to align with University open days and applicants to relevant courses are encouraged to take it.

During the COVID pandemic, we have run one of our MOOCs (Understanding Language: learning and teaching) in a bespoke, adapted format for our incoming international PGT and iPHD students in Applied Linguistics. It is acting as a preparation course for the topic material and also for life at Southampton.

### Training grounds for our students

Postgraduate students are involved in creating content for MOOCs and tutoring. Working on a MOOC offers opportunities to learn how to create open, digital content for a public audience and how to engage diverse online audiences with research ideas both through effective content presentation and through tutor presence.

## Work with colleagues in other institutions

We work with colleagues in other educational settings to use our open courses and content. This is often a case of giving permission to download/use certain MOOC digital assets (e.g. videos etc). We also have a long-running relationship with colleagues at Coventry University to run the MOOC, 'Understanding Language: learning and teaching' alongside a PGT module in Applied Linguistics. It is used in teaching there as part of a project to blend MOOCs into English Language teacher training.

### Why is this important to us?

While MOOCs are often conceived as primarily outreach and engagement activities, they also offer inspiring community learning experiences.

 [Read more](#)

### Connect Benefit Series

The Connect Benefit Series is an Advance HE member benefit and is open to colleagues at Advance HE member institutions.

[Find out more](#)

## Learning and Teaching continued

### Going solo? Mining the learning gaps in a pandemic: a view from the UK

Michael Mansfield, London South Bank University, Anthony Mansfield, University of East London and Michael Thacker, London South Bank University explore the challenges of a commitment to flexible learning opportunities and implementing new ways of working from staff, students and providers.

The relationship of teaching, research and academic citizenship are some the core purposes of higher education. The core activities for higher education academics, professional support services and students are in the midst of one of the most challenging environments in recent times. Higher education providers have had to embrace, rapidly upskill, learn and experiment with online and hybrid teaching and learning platforms – all while maintaining and enhancing high quality curriculums and outcomes for students. One learning and teaching challenge is to maintain focus on the principle that students are much more than simply ‘consumers of education’. Higher education providers, in collaboration with students, have a responsibility to deliver research informed education platforms fostering independent thinking, lifelong learning and positive impact to society. This requires a commitment to flexible learning opportunities and implementing new ways of working from staff, students and providers. This is not without its challenges.

Fostering lifelong learning and independent thinking are not new positions for higher education. Higher education providers, government, regulatory bodies, academics and students have grappled with this on many occasions in recent history. A notable example was the Industrial Strategy released towards the end of 2017. The strategy asserted the need for the United Kingdom to foster ‘career-long learning’ and how the government would seek to

‘embed a culture of learning throughout working lives’. The Industrial Strategy alongside the Government Office for Science’s ‘Future of Skills & Lifelong Learning’ publication both argued that lifelong learning was crucial for increasing productivity in the United Kingdom. Both publications, furthermore, viewed higher education – alongside further education – as a critical driver for lifelong-learning in the UK economy.

Before the pandemic, regulation of the sector had a method of assessing the impact of higher education with a developing triumvirate of assessment frameworks: Research Exercise Framework (REF), Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), and the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF). Of course, the REF is the more established member of the trio, but TEF and KEF are advancing. In TEF, the Office for Students sought to evaluate the excellence of teaching at universities and colleges.

In 2017, the Department for Education published the TEF specification in which they articulated an assessment criteria. The framework stipulated that teaching quality, learning environment, and student outcomes and learning gain as the main ‘aspects’ each with their criterion. According to the specification, teaching quality should foster course design and assessment that stretches ‘students to develop independence’, and learning environment should hold the resources to encourage the ‘development of independent study and research skills’. Many have questioned whether the TEF actually measures teaching excellence – its intended purpose. We can posit that the pursuit of skills and productivity is the underlying cause for the importance placed on graduate outcomes in the TEF, described in the framework as highly-skilled

employment. However, it cannot be denied that the assessment framework has elevated the profile of teaching excellence within institutions, an intended aim of the TEF.

Considering the rapidly evolving education landscape, however, these core purposes appear under strain. At the start of the first national lockdown, the National Union of Students (NUS) surveyed nearly 10,000 students on the impact of Covid-19. The NUS survey revealed that 74% of surveyed students were concerned about the impact that Covid-19 was having on their final qualification. The survey reveals the strain the pandemic had placed on those students on a degree with a placement element in which 77% of 2770 respondents were concerned that there would be a negative impact. For higher education staff, even before the pandemic it was clear that their wellbeing was impacted negatively. In fact, publications from Higher Education Policy Institute and Wellcome Trust underscored the difficult culture, the high workload and ongoing stress that academics were experiencing, which are fit-for-purpose for their chosen careers...

 [Read more](#)

#### Call for papers

The call for papers for Advance HE’s Teaching and Learning Conference 2021: Teaching in the Spotlight: What is the Future for HE Curricula? is now open until 22 January 2021.

[Find out more](#)



# Leadership and Development

## “I would have been less successful if I hadn’t been on Aurora”

### Aurora: Advance HE’s leadership development initiative for women

Rosie Fean from the University of Greenwich completed the Aurora programme in 2017/18. Since then she has chaired the university’s staff Women’s Network and moved into change management and communications. We spoke to her to gauge the impact of the programme on her career.

“I did Aurora in 2017/2018, and I loved it.”

Rosie has worked in professional services and project management for most of her career, working in the private sector until she joined the University of Greenwich in 2013, and while she has always had a feminist attitude, it took the Aurora programme to bring out a confidence to become a leader in her institution. She said that one of the key lessons from the programme was recognising where your values are the same as your institution’s and where they are different.

“My mum’s a feminist so I was brought up with that kind of



foundation and a lot of the content in the first session was introductory. Other people found it a really inspiring experience but I kind of felt like I knew it already.

“That isn’t a criticism of the programme, everyone will take

different things from it, but it wasn’t until the second or third session when I really appreciated how useful it would be for me. The session that I absolutely loved was where you work out your values and align them to the university or organisational values. There were a couple of moments in that that made me feel like I was really on to something.

“Aligning your values to your organisation’s values is key in your career because why would you want to work somewhere with values that contradict your own? More generally it was really good to be able to network with other people and other groups you wouldn’t ordinarily have the chance to.”

She also says that preparation for Aurora is vital, and credits her own human resources (HR) department for the fantastic work they do with participants before they even get on the programme.

“Our HR team is really good at preparing people to go on Aurora, especially Anna Radley, our Organisation Development & Engagement Manager, who co-ordinates it all. She puts a lot of effort into getting people organised and ready for it. What she does that is particularly successful is getting everybody together to meet up before the programme and speak to alumni of Aurora to share top tips.

“One of those tips is to make sure you sit on a table away from people from your own institution, but also with people who are facing the same issues as you. So use the attendee and Role Model lists shared before the sessions and look out for people who you might want to connect with.”

A key personal takeaway from the programme for Rosie was an appreciation that she was ‘seeking connection with people and the wider institution’, and without seeking that out herself it would never happen. She credits this realisation with her career progression since completing

the programme.

“One of the things my Aurora mentor said to me was that I was really seeking connection, and that really struck me. Since then I have moved more into change management and communications, and I also chair the Directorate staff social committee as well, because I realised I’m not going to achieve the connection I’m looking for unless I create it myself.

“I wouldn’t have put myself forward as Chair of the Women’s Network had I not been on Aurora, or I might have done it begrudgingly but not as willingly as I did. It was also helpful in preparing me for conversations with my managers about my ‘move’ from Project to Change Management. Without Aurora, I think I would have gone about it in a less collaborative way. It’s definitely taught me tactics and techniques and encouraged me to select what works for me from other leaders’ toolkits.”

“I’m lucky in that I work in a really positive team in equality terms, but at the same time other people are not having the same experience. It’s about intersectionality for me as well and making sure that we all work towards the same objective; equality of opportunity, regardless of how you identify.

“Gender equality is not a problem specific to higher education, but there are problems specific to higher education. It’s really important to get women together to talk about that in a safe space because then you realise that you’re not alone and can build up strength to be able to deal with it.”

[Find out more about Aurora](#)

**The Women in HE Conference 2021 will consider the key challenges in achieving step change across HE in relation to all gender equality issues through exploration across a range of themes relating to women in HE**

[Find out more and book your place](#)

## Leadership and Development continued

### Making sponsorship a two-way street

One year on and after successfully completing the [Advance HE Diversifying Leadership programme](#), Oxford Brookes University Enterprise Support Director Lydiah Igweh shares her thoughts on 'Making sponsorship a two-way street'.

I've had multiple mentors over the years, especially whilst running and scaling successful businesses, many of them are now some of my closest friends. Each offered me an optimistic yet challenging perspective on life and achieving success. When I started Advance HE's [Diversifying Leadership Programme](#) back in 2019, I was not sure what to expect.

However, I was sure that the programme would enable me to have space and time to understand the barriers faced by aspiring Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) leaders in higher education. To explore power and influence themes, demystifying leadership, cultural identity, and cultural capital, increasing your visibility and authentic leadership. To me, this was empowering, and I vowed to make the most of the opportunity.

A vital component of the programme was finding a sponsor. Admittedly coming into the programme I was unsure about the sponsor's role and the real value of one until I read the [DL Sponsor Toolkit](#).

The toolkit defines a sponsor's role as a senior leader within your organisation; in my case, Oxford Brookes University, that commits to passing on knowledge and advice similarly to mentors. The sponsor uses their seniority and organisational capital to actively advocate and 'open doors' to promote their protégés' careers.

It also explains that establishing a positive and productive cross-cultural sponsor protégés relationship is so rewarding yet challenging.

One year on I can honestly say taking part in the programme was one of the best experiences and decisions I've made since working in higher education.

The simple fact of the matter is that my sponsor Professor Anne-Marie Kilday – AM for short – is without a doubt, the best sponsor I could have asked for. She has demonstrated an empathic understanding of the specific issues faced by BAME early-career leaders.

She has empowered me to confidently challenge those issues and change the narrative, thus creating my own story. She has championed my work and me personally internally at Oxford Brookes University and beyond.

I remember my first meeting with AM. It was evident from the get-go that we mutually felt a sense of value creation, openness and accountability and agreed to these principles being the very foundation of our sponsorship relationship.

We agreed to challenge each other and work collaboratively to tackle BAME leaders' under-representation in UK higher education, starting with myself and my position at Oxford Brookes University.

One of the first questions AM asked me was 'What do you want to achieve?' In my reply, I expressed that I was capable, qualified and understood my worth, that I wished to reach my full potential. That I wanted to be recognised and rewarded for my efforts. I wanted a senior position in the institution to create change and for my voice to be heard.

AM understood my aspirations and believed I could achieve this at Oxford Brookes and beyond. She created a 'safe space' to talk through my challenges and opportunities and actively opened doors to support my leadership ambitions.

For example, she invited me to present my work at the Senior Management Conference, involved me in developing the University's 2035 strategy with particular emphasis on Enterprise Education and regularly

contributed and championed new and existing initiatives to enhance enterprise both in the curriculum and extra-curricular.

All of which are just to name a few examples but significantly paved the way for promotion from Enterprise Support Manager to Enterprise Support Director within one year of starting and completing the programme.

AM encouraged me to celebrate my achievements and to inspire others to develop their full potential. She often says that I too inspire her and make her proud. The truth is we have both come a long way from our first conversation. At the heart of our two-way relationship was creating change and fostering opportunities for BAME staff aspiring to be leaders in higher education, starting with me.

During the programme, I became Chair for the University's BAME Staff Network, which directly works with the University's Race Equality Steering Group chaired by Anne-Marie to develop the institutional Race Equality Action Plan.

Together we've listened to and learned of BAME staff's experiences and developed short and long term objectives that aim to provide career progression opportunities, improved recruitment and selection processes, safe spaces for transparency on harassment and bullying, and well-being of BAME Staff.

We understand this is a journey but were moving in the right direction with a unified approach.

Sponsorship is a two-way street, the relationship, however, evolves organically. Because of this organic bond between sponsor and protégé, both parties become friends. It's inevitable.

**Diversifying Leadership explores themes of power and influence, demystifying leadership, cultural identity and cultural capital, increasing your visibility and authentic leadership.**  
[Find out more and book your place](#)

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## Cultural competency, racial trauma and decolonising the curriculum

We are pleased to present the third episode in a series of video interviews exploring equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education through the eyes of Black male staff and students.

Originally launched during Black History Month 2020, each of the three episodes is produced and hosted by Nathan Ghann, EDI Associate at Advance HE and Director at The Educate Group, and features a guest of African-Caribbean heritage who is working to advance race equality in higher education.

In this episode, [Dave S.P. Thomas](#) from the University of Kent joins Nathan in this episode to discuss cultural competency, racial trauma and decolonising the curriculum. Dave is an Occupational Therapist and Public Health Specialist, with a remit in Social Justice. He is currently reading for a PhD in Higher Education and his research is focused on the impact of Westernised ontologies, epistemologies and pedagogy and in shaping educational trajectories, achievements and interests for racially minoritised students in higher education. Dave is a diversity and inclusion practitioner at the University of Kent where he works as a Student Success and Attainment Manager.



Watch the first video in the series [Can we decolonise the sciences?](#) - in conversation with Daniel Akinbosedo, PhD Student and Doctoral Tutor in Biochemistry at the University of Sussex.

The second episode features [Dr Winston Morgan](#), Reader in Toxicology and Clinical Biochemistry at the University of East London. Dr Morgan talks to Nathan about [academic privilege, teaching through bias and the impact of Covid-19 on Black Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) communities](#).

### Services to support Race Equality

With tackling racism high on the higher education agenda, and with the understandably increasing scrutiny from students, staff and regulatory bodies, we have a focused offer on race equality.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of our values as an organisation and provide the framework for the work that we do with our members and clients. We can help you remove barriers to education, employment and success, so that higher education can reach its full potential, and your diverse staff and students can benefit equally from the opportunities it affords.

[Find out more](#)

## Tackling structural race inequality in higher education

[Understanding structural inequality: theory, evidence, data and storytelling](#) is one of the four strands that are part of our initiative on 'Tackling structural race inequality in HE'.

This strand explores the concepts of structural race inequality, and how different understandings about equality might impact the way in which we take action. It will highlight work and knowledge within the sector (and beyond) and critically reflect on issues such as use of data (including categorisation), the strength of story, and how discourses can enable or harm understandings.

At part of this work, Advance HE's Jess Moody considers our understandings of structural racism and how these understandings influence the way we approach and measure change. [Read Jess's blog here](#). On 22 January, we hosted a webinar comprising stimulus talks, conversation and Q&A with our panel of practitioners and researchers as we explore the different ways the higher education sector, institutions and individuals are discussing and understanding structural racism.

[Find out more](#)

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# Governance

## Lord Simon Woolley: “When I think of governors, I cannot tell you how important your role is to the wellbeing of society”

Advance HE CEO Alison Johns introduced Lord Woolley to delegates at our Governance Conference 2020 by demonstrating the impact he has already had on the way Advance HE is run and the progress made on race equality: “We have started staff equality monitoring, committed to the Race Equality Charter, created an action group, begun race awareness training for all staff and a new ‘leading race’ post has been created. We also now have a separate budget for race equality and have appointed Paul Millar to advise us on the subject. Without Simon’s challenge this wouldn’t have happened so quickly.

**“Governance is absolutely key to the nature and character of higher education and what it can offer society.”**

Simon then shared his experiences which have made him realise the impact education has on society: “I’m an activist, I wake up in the morning and think I can change the world. Changing the world seems so possible at the moment. We are having conversations that would have been impossible six months ago, let alone putting things into practice, so what Advance HE are doing is unbelievable.

“I was doing well at 21, I bought a flat which many young people can’t do now, but I still felt inferior because I wasn’t educated. I left my job to do an access course and it was the most life-changing and yet disappointing thing I’ve ever done.

**“My biggest disappointment was the feeling that the people who had access to all this education didn’t necessarily come out better people. Some were still racist, others mean spirited, many looked down on women as inferior. The values I expected from the books we’d read were not there in abundance.**

“Think about this for second. The role of HE governors to shape what comes out of their institution is almost like parenting; ethics, values, caring for our society. Therefore, I want you to have that Martin Luther King spirit. To be a warrior of social justice.”

Simon then said that while the global pandemic and ensuing crisis had shone a light on deep seated inequalities in our society, it was also an unprecedented opportunity for real and lasting change.

“This pandemic has affected everyone, but Black and minority ethnic communities have been hardest hit. Jobs, housing and education divides have all been exposed and sadly exacerbated.

“There are too many negative things that happen in our society to Black and brown people; Africans and Asians. The question is, ‘What are we going to do about it?’ Out of this awfulness, what we’re presented with, is the most wonderful opportunity. An opportunity to be honest, to be visionaries and to be transformative. The first step towards transformation, is for us to be leaders.



**“**Now is the time for us to really put our foot on the equality and equity gas. It’s a shame it’s taken such pain to put issues like this on the map, but if we have transformative change from it, I’ll take that.”

He then made it clear that leaders and governors, not just in higher education but society as a whole, have a great responsibility and privilege to drive progress.

“When I think of governors, I cannot tell you how important your role is to the wellbeing of society. Yes, day-to-day there are challenges, not least with Covid-19, but can I implore you to be the visionaries and leaders that you deserve to be. For all of us, 2020 has been a year like no other, we thank our lucky stars that dreadful things haven’t happened to us or our families. But if we can’t make the biggest changes in our lifetime now, then when? If not us, then who?

“To be clear: It’s not just about having Black and brown faces in high places. It’s about having people from all different backgrounds with lived experiences, so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.”

Alison then went through some of the questions from delegates starting with how institutions can reach and recruit ethnically diverse talent.

Simon said: **“You have to be brave, bold and on the front foot. Tell them that those coming to your institution can make their institutions more dynamic, more creative. But even more than that though, if you want to attract diversity you must be diverse yourself, talk the talk but also walk the walk.”**

 [Find out more about governance services](#)

## Governance continued

### ‘I just need to get this past the Board!’: a chance to do the leader-governor dance differently

As both Vietnam and Myanmar higher education sectors move towards institutional autonomy there is opportunity to establish governance that is optimally integrated within the university, while agile- and judicious-enough for the times we are in. Jo Chaffer, Advance HE suggests diversity is the answer.

**Some scene setting:** As noted, both Myanmar and Vietnam are in the midst of legal, policy and structural shifts away from centralised control of their higher education sectors, albeit at slightly different points.

**Shape-shifting at pace and scale:** Whilst there is plenty of talent and expertise in the academic aspects of leadership there is a recognition of the need to develop organisational and financial leadership capacity within institutions as these responsibilities transition from their respective agencies.

And this is not just about being confident and able to lead day-to-day business. The need now is to transform existing institutional structures, systems and culture to those demanded of the modern university in a marketised and fast-moving operating environment that meets the needs of a dramatically increasing student body. The challenges are immense: create a university charter, constitution, mission and values, devise a strategy for transformation and success, source new income streams, build effective management and keep your people with you through all this to keep delivering, widening and improving the student experience, creating knowledge and engaging with the wider world; all of this, at the same time as establishing new institutional leadership and governance structures.

**At the tipping point – risk and governance:** There is an acute awareness of the risks and exposure that accompany the immanent loosening of the existing systems of control

and the much longed for, and much needed, shift towards institutional, financial and academic autonomy. Good governance is perceived to be the guardian against these threats. The vision for exactly what good governance might look like, how it will be empowered and also accountable, how it will support leadership is still being developed. In Myanmar, the national governance architecture has some shape with the key agency, NAQAC matured and framing much of the policy and regulatory environment. The national road map, articulating the change steps for the first batch of universities to attain autonomy, is yet to be fully ratified, but the sense of what revitalised Myanmar Higher Education looks and feels like, is clear.

**The time is now:** This is the opportunity to develop institutional governance the Myanmar Way, evolving hand-in-hand with leadership with common purpose, values and tempo. Similarly, for Vietnam, which also has only a small percentage of universities granted some degree of autonomy. Critically, there is good support from respective governments, funders and agencies such as the British Council, the Open Society and Universities Wales in terms of expertise and finance.

**The best we can be is...?** So, what are the questions to consider, the lessons to be drawn from other countries and particularly the deep understanding we have of the UK sector? Free from legacy models, with constitutions yet to be drawn up and a still evolving legal and policy framework, what could ‘fit for the future’ leadership-governance look like?


#### **How do we create and maintain diversity: diversity in thinking, in representation and in our relationships?**

This question is, firstly, about the people who become governors – to set up governing boards that are really of the communities the university sits within and that form it. People from our neighbourhoods, our employer networks, our student bodies, our arts communities: people who not only have skills and expertise, but think differently-enough from each other and from our leadership teams to have the spirited, critical and open conversations necessary to provide the checks, balances and creative insights to drive

wholesome strategic thinking and direction. This requires some deep thinking about who to recruit, where to find them and how to ensure open and fair processes which actively enable diverse candidates to be considered and appointed. The corollary to this question of course is not who the university wants, but why any of these good folk would actually want to get into governance? What would motivate them? And would their motivation align with that of the university? Recruitment is therefore not just about fair process, but clear communication about the purpose and values of both the institute and the governance body itself.

The second point around diversity of thinking is partly answered by the diversity of ‘who’. It’s also answered in the final point around the diversity of ‘how’. ‘How’ refers to building diversity into ‘how we interact’. It’s about creating structures and systems for governors and leaders to have multiple different types of interactions and catalysts to build many and different types of relationships. This might mean creating scheduled spaces for informal conversations; matrices of temporary committees providing agile and judicious guidance on contemporary issues and opportunities; reverse-mentoring and of course the various essential, deep-focus structures such as committees for audit, finance, risk etc. There are many options for how, how often and how well we communicate and for what end. I suggest the key is to change the shapes and relationships often-enough so that we both match the pace of change in the operating and policy environment and prevent ossification of these vital relationships into un-attentive and unhelpful habits of protocols.

So that senior leaders are not heard uttering phrases such as, ‘I just need to get this past the Board’, because the Board is not ‘other’. Because Board-leadership relationships are robust, respectful, open and multi-faceted. Because the leadership-governance relationship drives a culture of support balanced with challenge. Because leadership and governance are working as one towards building high-quality, high-integrity, autonomous higher education institutes.

 [Find out more](#)

# International Spotlight

## Slovenian institution in collaboration with Advance HE to develop staff leadership skills

Staff at the University of Ljubljana have completed the second of three Leadership Development Programmes, delivered by Advance HE. The university identified leadership development and capacity building as a key strategic priority for 2020 and engaged Advance HE to design and deliver a programme of CPD aimed at supporting academic staff to acquire and develop key leadership attributes.

The programme was designed to support colleagues at the university with the emphasis of the programme focused on future leadership, reinforcing Advance HE's belief that leadership can be demonstrated at any level and is value-driven not hierarchical in nature. The programme was designed for those working in leadership positions across the institution, including Heads of Departments, Deans, Assistant Deans and Programme leaders.

During the programme participants shared their experiences of being a leader and the particular challenges that they face in their roles. They developed a shared understanding of the crucial knowledge, skills and experiences that characterise effective and successful leadership, specifically with a focus on their context, whilst also acquiring skills not usually found in academic development programmes. Participants also explored different leadership models and were encouraged to think about how they might be applied to different situations.

A spokesperson from the university said:

“ The University of Ljubljana is striving for quality assurance in all fields of its work. We are aware that it is important to equip member faculty management staff and study programme leaders with necessary skills to be able to successfully manage various projects and tackle challenges as they arise.

We believe that with tailored workshop programme designed by Advance HE, they will be able to carry out their responsibilities more systematically and with more confidence.”

The programme has had some fantastic feedback from the participants with Assistant Professor Dr. Franc Dimc, Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport, particularly appreciating the networking opportunities. He said: “The workshop was very useful because I am now able to perceive problems more easily and also react to them better, maybe more lastingly. I am grateful to the organizers for a new network of like-minded people and companions with similar challenges.”

## Changing higher education from the middle out

Jo Chaffer, Advance HE Key Global Associate, shares reflections from the Uzbekistan Change Academy teams who are transforming Teaching & Learning in their home institutes

Over the last year Advance HE has been working with British Council and the Ministry for Higher, Secondary and Specialised Education (MHSSE) in Uzbekistan to support higher education on its journey towards autonomy.

This has been a three stranded programme: firstly, working with the Ministry team informing, advising and guiding on sector reforms; secondly with the examinations and other existing agencies involved in managing and measuring quality and lastly with university teams in our Change Academy.

The nine universities competed for places in this year-long intervention and support programme designed to catalyse innovation in all aspects of creating quality education. Teams of academics, administrators and students with the support of a senior leader, join forces to design and deliver Change Projects in their HEI – applying, testing and adapting the learning from our input sessions.

“ Despite the pandemic and all the stresses and strains it has brought, the teams are starting to see the fruits of their labours – and they are very good!

We are so impressed with the work of our Uzbek Change Academy teams who are transforming Teaching & Learning in their home institutes, with very little resource but a huge dose of passion, commitment and smarts.

This [video](#) shows how a small team at Navoi SPI have create a whole new Centre to change how they train teachers.”



# new content + publications

## 2020: a year in review

Alison Johns, Advance HE Chief Executive, looks back at 2020 and highlights just some of our work during this most challenging of years.

[Read more](#)

## My Fellowship story

“It is good practice to layer evidence of impact” – Dr Kate Cuthbert, Senior Academic Practice Consultant, Nottingham Trent University, discusses the path to Principal Fellowship.

[Read more](#)



## ‘All in this together’

Dr. Abeer Hassan, Reader in Accounting, School of Business and Creative Industries, University of the West of Scotland, reflects on how integrated thinking at micro and macro levels have helped the sector respond to the Covid-19 crisis, focussing on the experience and examples from her own institution.

[Find out more](#)



## “Fellowship gives our staff an identity in higher education”

Over the past four years University Centre South Devon (UCSD) have developed a fellowship programme which seeks to build confidence in their academic staff as higher education (HE) teachers in a further education (FE) setting. We spoke to Alastair Wilson and Andrea Gaion to find out the impact the programme has had at the centre.

[Find out more](#)

## Advance HE CEO Alison Johns: “The future will be around People, Pedagogy and Performance”

The Pak-UK Education Gateway is a partnership between the Higher Education Commission and British Council in Pakistan which aims to deepen relations between the higher education sectors of Pakistan and the UK.

[Find out more](#)



## Putting 110,000 examinations online – how are we doing?

The Covid-19 pandemic made it impossible for University of London students to take their summer 2020 examinations in local examination centres around the world. In response, we moved 110,000 exams online for 35,000 students. Evaluating the experience for students, staff and our systems is revealing some insights into the future of online examinations.

[Find out more](#)

## Balancing tensions

Professor Sally Bradley introduces a new virtual workshop identifying impactful and effective pedagogic practices for a volatile post Covid-19 world.

[Read more](#)

## Juggling the virtual balls as a programme leader

Student engagement is the December theme of our Connect Benefit Series. In this blog, Dr Sarah Naylor, Senior Lecturer at the University of Derby and a Senior Fellow, shares her thoughts on surviving and thriving as a programme leader in these challenging times.

[Read more](#)



# Dates for the diary

## Conferences + Events

### Writing retreats

Following a flexible format to cater to the needs of those attending, our [Principal and Senior Fellow Writing Retreats](#) (WR) involve group discussions and 1:1 expert advice and guidance about completing your fellowship application. Find out more about our upcoming [Senior Fellow Retreat on 24 March](#) and our [Principal Fellow Retreat on 25 March 2021](#).

### STEM Conference 2021: Rethinking STEM Higher Education

28 January 2021 - Virtual

Under the overarching theme of Rethinking STEM Higher Education, the 2021 STEM conference will provide an opportunity to reflect on, learn from, and further progress our responses to the Covid-19 crisis and to ensure that our approaches to STEM education are more resilient.

We are pleased to share that we will be joined by Professor Elena Rodríguez Falcón, President and CEO at New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering as a key note speaker. View our full programme to find out more.

[Secure your place](#)

### Surveys & Insights Conference 2021

10 February 2021 - Virtual

The call for papers for Surveys & Insights Conference 2021: Adapting to challenging times is now open until 28 January 2021.

We welcome submissions from practitioners, academics, market research professionals, student experience specialists, and policymakers.

Submissions taking either a strategic or a practical approach are welcome, as are submissions from organisations based within or working for the higher education sector.

[Find out more](#)

### Teaching and Learning Conference 2021

#### Call for papers

6-8 July 2021 - Virtual

The call for papers for Teaching and Learning Conference 2021: Teaching in the Spotlight: What is the Future for HE Curricula? is now open until 22 January 2021.

Proposals are sought against any of the seven thematic areas above, across all disciplines. They can be discipline focused, interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary in nature.

[Find out more](#)



[Find out more about conferences and events](#)

# Dates for the diary

## Development Programmes

### Spotlight Series for Senior Strategic Leaders

28 January 2021, 4 March and 30 March

The Spotlight Series has been designed to be three short, half-day, impactful online workshops, as stimulus for development and collective engagement. Each online workshop will focus on one of three topical core challenge areas: strategic, complex change and digital.

In this video, Doug Parkin, Principal Advisor for Leadership and Management at Advance HE, introduces the first in the Spotlight Series focusing on strategy: mastering the pivot and being strategic.

[Find out more](#)

### Research Team Leadership in Changing Times

Starts 27 January 2021

Effective leadership is critical to the success of any team. Research Team Leadership in Changing Times is a two-day online course designed to develop your skills as a research team leader with particular reference to supporting research leaders and their teams in these changing times.

[Find out more](#)

### Leading Virtual and Disconnected Teams

Starts 9 February 2021

Leading Virtual and Disconnected Teams has been designed in response to these challenging times and has been developed to support colleagues to take stock of their team or departmental leadership and review their approach to influencing in a virtual world.

[Find out more](#)

### Leading Departments

Starts 21 April 2021

The programme is designed for Heads of Department, Heads of Service, Heads of School.

You will be at an early stage in your role as head of department, service or school, but may have had previous experience of leading or managing teams or units. You will either have an academic background and be leading a teaching, research or knowledge transfer department or have a professional service background and be leading an administrative or a professional service, for example, student support services, information technology service, marketing, or campus services.

[Find out more](#)

### Top Management Programme for Higher Education

April and October 2021

With the next cohort of Advance HE's Top Management Programme for Higher Education on the horizon, we spoke to the programme directors to discuss the importance of high quality leadership in difficult times.

The application deadline for TMP 47 is 1700 GMT on 26 February 2021.



[Find out more](#)

[Find out more about our development programmes](#)