

Editorial

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Student Futures Manifesto Edition

This student edition presents the student reports from the Student Futures Manifesto. In 2022 the University of Lincoln was one of 20 institutions to sign up to the UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission launched the New Student Futures Manifesto (SFM) report <https://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/A-Student-Futures-Manifesto-Final-Report-of-the-Student-Futures-Commission.pdf>.

This project was developed in partnership with the Students' Union, with a team of staff and students to build the sense of belonging at University of Lincoln. This project was part of a wider Higher Education approach to proactively respond to some of the challenges students may face in their student experience following the Pandemic, such as sense of belonging, student journey, community, and changes to physical spaces, among others. With a focus on three main themes (teaching and learning; student experience and wellbeing and employability) the Commission announced their approach as "*a call to action for universities and students to co-produce a Student Futures Manifesto*" (2022: 4). The focus on building a sense of belonging was aligned to the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Strategy at the University, being a core project as part of the Sense of Belonging Strand.

Student as Producer model

Importantly, Student as Producer held a core place in the Student Futures Manifesto project at Lincoln. This teaching and learning model has proven itself at Lincoln to be impactful and meaningful through its multi-disciplinary approach. As the model embedded a decade ago by Professor Mike Neary '*Student as producer: research-engaged teaching, an institutional strategy*' (2010 to 2013), Student as Producer (SaP) 2.0 is the current institutional commitment to further embed partnerships into learning. This revised model focuses upon supporting students and staff institutionally through a range of collaborative engagement and co-created opportunities. SaP 2.0 is a model being developed as one of four primary strands of work of the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (TLSE) Strategy under the Sense of Belonging strand.

SaP 2.0 is more than one vehicle of student engagement, but it represents a holistic approach to enhancing student experiences. In the development of SaP 2.0 core principles were adopted from Neary's model, all framed within a broader sense of belonging to facilitate the valued role of students as part of the learning community. The role for students is one which focuses upon them being active participators and engaged learners, through reciprocity, collaboration, empowerment, active learning,

co-production and partnership between staff and students. It is indeed under this foundation that the Student Futures Manifesto project was established at the University of Lincoln and will continue with plans for phase two.

Development of the project

The co-created project developed recommendations as tangible actions that would evaluate the impact the pandemic had on the Higher Education experience, addressing changes that could be made over the coming five years.

Recommendations were developed by students alongside the six core themes of the UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission Student Futures Manifesto.

1. Support for students before they reach university
2. An induction into university life for each year of study
3. Support for mental health and wellbeing
4. A clear outline of the teaching students will receive and the necessary tools to access it
5. Activities inside and outside the curriculum that build skills, networks and communities
6. A clear pathway towards graduate outcomes

Role for students

The project team followed the principles of Student as Producer to include students in the research team through roles of student consultants. The students were paired with staff mentors to work across a 7-month duration (December 2022 - June 2023). The timing was designed to work with the university calendar and assessment periods and holidays.

Students were recruited through an application process, with interviews conducted in December 2022 with The Vice President Education, The Dean of Teaching and Learning, a student recruiter and the academic representation manager. Successful students were assigned to one of the core themes, based upon their areas of interest and experience.

To support the development of the student consultants in this role, the SU provided support and training including:

- Manifesto documentation training
- Role requirements training
- The role of the partnership between the University, SU and consultants training
- Written skills training

Each student consultant was provided with a handbook for the project, outlining key information on training, dates/timelines and information about staff mentors. Student consultants further received a financial stipend for their time as student consultants.

Student consultants conducted research with their peers on their theme, which was finalised in the creation of six individual reports. These reports outlined key recommendations for the University to consider as part of the manifesto.

Methodology for the project consisted of a survey and focus group of their peers. Results of this staged process set the foundations for the reports and supported individual recommendations from the student consultants. A working group oversaw the student consultants progress during the project, chaired by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, with The Vice President Education, SU Staff, student consultants and staff mentors collectively working together to ensure development of the project.

The Student Consultants' recommendations importantly represent our institutional commitment to supporting students and enhancing the wider student experience, through meaningful student engagement and co-creation roles. Given our legacy with Student as Producer it was integral that the university joined in this collective response alongside other providers. The student created actions were closely aligned with One Community [One Community](#), and the strategy 2023-27 [UoL Strategy 2023-27](#). In sum, this co-created project represented a timely commitment to positively contribute to the enhancement of wider student experiences and further build a sense of belonging and community at the university.

Recommendations

Theme 1: Support for students before they reach university

- Summer Micro-Credentials
- Hubs
- Open/Offer-Holder Day Structure

Theme 2: An induction into university life for each year of study

- Creating Opportunities for Inter-Year Conversations
- Providing a Wider Range of Signposting during Welcome Week
- Offering Extra-Curricular Opportunities to Explore Campus

Theme 3: Support for mental health and wellbeing

- Mental Health self-certification for extensions
- Communication channels
- Information on Wellbeing support in Welcome Week

Theme 4: A clear outline of the teaching students will receive and the necessary tools to access it

- Clarity of teaching methods
"How" and "when" student find information about teaching methods

- Level of preparedness for Teaching methods and how it aids learning experience

Theme 5: Activities inside and outside the curriculum that build skills, networks and communities

- Increasing student participation via use of incentives
- Student curriculum groups
- More exposure of opportunities within the curriculum that help build skills, networks, and communities

Theme 6: A clear pathway towards graduate outcomes

- Micro-Credentials
- Integrations
- Engagement

Student Futures Manifesto reports

This edition of IMPact showcases some of the meaningful co-created student outputs. These reports were part of a project which was student centred from the design to the launch. These student reports represent the hidden voices that can only be realised from such partnerships work, by listening to peers and interpreted by students. Significantly, these reports set the context for recommendations to be acted upon in bespoke ways to enhance the wider student experience.

The reports outline a summary of the student consultants' reports. Presenting an overview of their understanding of the theme and exploring the insights from data collected to present the final recommendations. This project was incredibly important for the development of the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Strategy at the university, as part of the Sense of Belonging Strand, and for the continued development of SaP 2.0.

This special Student Futures Manifesto edition celebrates the hard work, resilience, and commitment of the student consultants. We are honoured to have been part of the project and pleased to provide a platform to 'shine a light' on some of the good practice between the university in partnership with the Students' Union. Such projects (please refer to the SFM webpage for more details on the project <https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/studentfuturesmanifesto/>) further provide an insight into the possibilities for future co-creation projects between staff and students.

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