HOW TO CARRY OUT YOUR OWN STUDENT PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

CARRYING OUT YOUR OWN PROJECT CREATES THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR SKILL SET. THIS CAN INCLUDE ORGANISATION, LEADERSHIP, CREATIVITY, AND INITIATIVE. DEVELOPING THESE SKILLS NOT ONLY HELPS YOU IN GENERAL, BUT IS ALSO HIGHLY REGARDED BY EMPLOYERS.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

WITH YOUR OWN PROJECT, YOU CAN FOCUS ON AN AREA OR PROBLEM YOU FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT, AND REALLY HAVE AN IMPACT. WHY CARRY OUT A STUDENT LED PROJECT?

ENJOYMENT!

YOUR OWN STUDENT PROJECT CAN BE HUGELY REWARDING TO CARRY OUT, AND HELP IMPROVE YOUR STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

SHAPING YOUR STUDENT EXPERIENCE

ULTIMATELY, IT'S YOUR UNIVERSITY. RUNNING YOUR OWN PROJECT HELPS YOU SHAPE IT IN THE WAY YOU WANT!



FOR EXAMPLE, **RAWKUS: RETHINKING WASTE** WAS STARTED IN 2013 BY A GROUP OF STUDENT VOLUNTEERS. IT AIMS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BY COLLECTING UNUSED STUDENT FOOD AND DONATING IT TO CHARITIES AROUND COVENTRY AND LEAMINGTON.

GETTING STARTED

WHAT TO DO A PROJECT ON

BEFORE STARTING YOUR OWN PROJECT AT UNIVERSITY, YOU NEED TO HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT YOUR PROJECT IS ABOUT AND WHAT IT WANTS TO ACHIEVE. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE PRACTICALITIES OF YOUR ORIGINAL CONCEPT MAY HAVE TO ADAPT ONCE YOU START TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT, BUT IT WILL HELP ENORMOUSLY IF YOU HAVE A VISION FROM THE START. TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS, YOU MAY WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR PROJECT;

• HAVE YOU GOT A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT YOU WANT THE PROJECT TO ACHIEVE?

-IS THERE AN END GOAL, OR IS THIS AN ONGOING LEGACY YOU WANT TO START UP? HAVING AN IDEA OF THE END RESULT CAN HELP SHAPE THE NATURE OF THE INITIAL PLANNING AND STEPS TAKEN THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT.

-How willing are you to change this end goal? The likelihood is that your INITIAL IDEA WILL HAVE TO CHANGE ALONG THE WAY TO SOME DEGREE, SO IT MAY HELP TO KNOW FROM THE OFFSET WHAT YOU'RE WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON, AND WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

• IS THE IDEA FEASIBLE AND REALISTIC?

-You need to consider from the start whether this is something that can actually be achieved. To so, you may want to think about overall timescale, cost etc. from the beginning (although these will be thought about later in More detail)

• DO ENOUGH PEOPLE SEEM INTERESTED IN THE IDEA?

-IT HELPS TO KNOW FROM THE START WHETHER THIS IS A PROJECT THAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN AND WILLING TO HELP WITH, PARTICULARLY IF THE PROJECT IS LARGE SCALE AND WILL NEED TO INVOLVE A LOT OF PEOPLE -YOU MAY WANT TO FLOAT THE IDEA TO DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE YOU KNOW BEFORE STARTING; THIS IS ALSO A GOOD WAY TO GATHER POINTS YOU MAY NOT HAVE CONSIDERED BEFORE YOU START

• HAVE OTHER PEOPLE GOT SIMILAR IDEAS YOU COULD POTENTIALLY JOIN WITH?

-You might find out from floating your idea that there are other people with similar concepts you can join up with

-TO FIND THIS OUT, IT MIGHT HELP TO TALK TO THOSE WHO ARE IN SOME WAY CONNECTED TO YOUR GENERAL IDEA I.E. IF YOU PROJECT IS ABOUT MAKING SOMETHING, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO TALK TO THOSE IN WMG (WARWICK MANUFACTURING GROUP)

• WHAT TIME FRAME WILL BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT?

-As students, you'll often only be at university for 3-4 years, and so need to consider how long your proposed project will take and the implications of this i.e. if it were to take longer than you have at university, are there others who would be willing to take it over?

-Additionally, you need to consider the work that needs to be completed within a certain time frame, keeping in mind other commitments you and others working on the project will have i.e. degree work, sports, jobs etc.

ALTHOUGH THESE ISSUES WILL BE DEALT WITH IN GREATER DETAIL THROUGHOUT THE HANDBOOK, THEY NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FROM THE BEGINNING IN ORDER TO CATCH ANY IMMEDIATE OR OBVIOUS OBSTACLES TO CARRYING OUT YOUR PROJECT.

INITIAL PLANNING

GATHERING A TEAM

ALTHOUGH EACH PROJECT WILL REQUIRE DIFFERENT THINGS FROM A TEAM, THERE ARE SOME GENERAL POINTS YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER;

- IDEALLY YOU SHOULD HAVE 2-3 PEOPLE LEADING THE PROJECT, PARTICULARLY IF ITS AIMS ARE LARGE SCALE. 1 PERSON ALONE MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BALANCE A PROJECT WITH OTHER COMMITMENTS
- FIND PEOPLE WHO ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT AND IT'S AIMS, RATHER THAN JUST AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE
- The best way to find people to work on the project is to use who you know to connect with people you otherwise wouldn't meet; essentially, networking. It can be really useful to do something as simple as going for a quick coffee with someone from a completely different department to you. Small meetings such as these provide valuable connections, and perhaps an alternative perspective on your project. It's also helpful to get one or two senior figures within the university on your side, in order to help things move along.

WHO YOU NEED

- ✓ 2-3 PEOPLE LEADING THE PROJECT WHO CAN KEEP TRACK OF THE PROJECT AND HOW IT WILL ACHIEVE THE DESIRED END GOAL
- ✓ 1-2 PEOPLE WELL PLACED WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY, WHO CAN HELP THINGS MOVE FORWARD
- ✓ PEOPLE WITH SKILLS THAT CAN BE ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC ROLES SURROUNDING THE PRACTICALITIES SURROUNDING THE PROJECT I.E. SOMEONE TO FIND THE FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT, SOMEONE TO DESIGN THE BRANDING AND SOCIALISING OF THE PROJECT

 ✓ A RANGE OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS AROUND THE UNIVERSITY IN ORDER TO GAIN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT SKILL SETS. FOR EXAMPLE...

WARWICK NEST

This student led project is a collaborative, student-led project to build a low carbon building made out of straw bales, on campus. Despite being started and led by Warwick 'Engineers without Borders' society, the project now involves numerous groups including;

- ESTATES
- IATL (INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING)
- AN EXTERNAL ARCHITECT

DEADLINES

INEVITABLY, THERE WILL BE OTHER COMMITMENTS YOU'LL NEED TO FOCUS ON WHILST CARRYING OUT YOUR PROJECT. BECAUSE OF THIS, AND THE FACT THAT YOUR TIME AT UNIVERSITY IS LIMITED, YOU NEED TO SET REALISTIC DEADLINES WITHIN YOUR PROJECT TO MAKE SURE THINGS ARE GETTING DONE. THESE CAN INCLUDE THE MORE OBVIOUS ONES SUCH AS FUNDING APPLICATIONS OR PRESENTATIONS TO PEOPLE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY, BUT ALSO ONES JUST SET FOR THE SAKE OF KEEPING ON TRACK. SO FOR EXAMPLE, A PLAN COULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS;

PLAN: (IF YOU WERE STARTING A PROJECT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR)

OCTOBER -> BEGINNING OF THE YEAR SO MOST PEOPLE WILL BE BUSY/CONDUCT INITIAL RESEARCH AND THINK ABOUT THE IDEA/SEE IF ANYONE HAS HAD SIMILAR IDEAS. DEADLINE: BY THE END OF THE MONTH, HAVE A GENERAL IDEA AND VISION.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER -> START TO BECOME MORE PRACTICAL ABOUT THE PROJECT/CONSIDER WHO YOU WANT WORKING ON THE PROJECT/HOW FEASIBLE THE IDEA IS/WHAT SORT OF TIMESCALE WILL BE NEEDED/ENQUIRE ABOUT FUNDING APPLICATIONS. **DEADLINE:** BY THE END OF DECEMBER, HAVE A MORE PRACTICAL PLAN IN PLACE WITH PEOPLE ASSIGNED TO THEIR VARIOUS JOBS/SEND OFF ANY NECESSARY FUNDING APPLICATIONS

JANUARY-> SEND OFF ANY REMAINING FUNDING APPLICATIONS/WORK ON THE DESIGNS NEEDED FOR BRANDING AND SOCIALISING THE IDEA. DEADLINE: BY THE END OF JANUARY, HAVE ALL FUNDING APPLICATIONS SENT OFF AND A FIRST DRAFT OF THE IMAGE BEHIND YOUR PROJECT

ETC.

LEGACY

BECAUSE YOUR TIME AT UNIVERSITY IS LIMITED, AND LARGE SCALE PROJECTS MAY NEED SEVERAL YEARS TO COMPLETE, THINK ABOUT WHAT SORT OF LEGACY YOU WANT YOUR PROJECT TO HAVE IN THE LONG RUN. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS IT HELPS TO HAVE A RANGE OF PEOPLE WORKING AND HELPING WITH THE PROJECT, AS YOU CAN HOPEFULLY BE SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR INITIAL IDEA WILL STILL BE WORKED ON AFTER YOU LEAVE UNIVERSITY.

IN ADDITION TO AN END GOAL, YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE PROCESS OF THE PROJECT AND IF YOU'VE LEARNT, OR DONE ANYTHING THAT COULD HELP FUTURE SIMILAR PROJECTS. FOR EXAMPLE...

WARWICK NEST

THE NEST PROJECT FOR EXAMPLE, AIMS TO BUILD A LOW CARBON BUILDING ON CAMPUS AS ITS END RESULT, BUT ALONG THE WAY HAS EXPANDED INTO A LARGER GOAL OF IMPROVING STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THEIR LEARNING EXPERIENCE. THIS HAS EMERGED FROM HOW THE PROJECT AIMS NOT ONLY TO HAVE HAD STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN AND CREATION OF THE BUILDING, BUT TO HAVE THEM USE THE BUILDING IN A STUDENT CENTRED WAY ONCE BUILT.

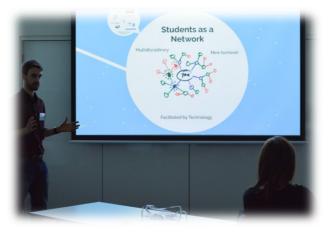
GETTING THE IDEA

OUT THERE

SOCIALISING THE PROJECT

A GOOD WAY TO GATHER INTEREST IN YOUR PROJECT AND POSSIBLY ADVERTISE TO POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IS TO SOCIALISE YOUR PROJECT VIA DIFFERENT NETWORKS. THIS INCLUDES SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS SUCH AS FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM ETC., WHERE

YOU CAN SHARE YOU PROJECT WITH OTHERS OR DOCUMENT ITS PROCESS EFFECTIVELY. IT CAN ALSO BE A GOOD WAY TO REACH OUT TO PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH THE PROJECT. ADDITIONALLY YOU CAN SOCIALISE THE IDEA THROUGH PRESENTATIONS AT VARIOUS EVENTS THAT ARE CONNECTED TO YOUR IDEA, A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO FIND LIKEMINDED PEOPLE WHO MAY WANT TO



CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR PROJECT. FOR EXAMPLE, IN **2016** WARWICK **NEST** PRESENTED THEIR PROJECT AT THE **IATL** SHOWCASE THAT FOCUSED ON 'RESHAPING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT'

BRANDING

IN ORDER TO SOCIALISE EFFECTIVELY, IT ALSO HELPS TO HAVE A BRAND IMAGE FOR YOUR PROJECT. THIS WILL HELP IT BECOME RECOGNISABLE TO PEOPLE AND SPREAD THE MESSAGE/GOAL YOU'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE. FOR EXAMPLE, WITH REGARDS TO **RAWKUS** BRANDING...



THE BRAND IS SIMPLE, BUT THE COLOUR SCHEME AND RECYCLING SYMBOL HELP CONVEY THE IMPORTANCE THE PROJECT PUTS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND WASTE REDUCTION

HOW CAN THE

UNIVERSITY HELP?

THE UNIVERSITY CAN HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR PROJECT GOALS IN NUMEROUS WAYS, FROM INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS AND PEOPLE, TO THE MORE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION. ALTHOUGH THE HELP YOU RECEIVE NEEDS TO BE BALANCED WITH RETAINING THE ORIGINAL GOALS AND CREATIVITY OF THE PROJECT, THE RESOURCES OF THE UNIVERSITY ARE INVALUABLE TO ANY STUDENT LED PROJECT.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS TO HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT, IT MAY BE USEFUL TO UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY AS A WHOLE;

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- 1. CHANCELLOR -> THE CEREMONIAL HEAD OF THE UNIVERSITY WHO REPRESENTS AND PROMOTES THE INTERESTS AND VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY
- 2. VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT-> OVERALL HEAD OF THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY
- 3. PROVOST-> LEADS ACADEMIC STRATEGY AND PUTS THE PRIORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY INTO PRACTICE
- 4. REGISTRAR-> HEAD OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGY FOR THE UNIVERSITY
- 5. GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR-> OVERSEES THE FINANCIAL STRATEGY OF THE UNIVERSITY
- 6. PRO-VICE-CHANCELLORS-> CARRIES OUT WORK DELEGATED FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR AND THE PROVOST

7. CHAIRS OF FACULTY BOARDS-> ELECTED CHAIRS WHO REPRESENT THE 4 FACULTIES ON CAMPUS (SCIENCES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, ARTS AND MEDICINE)

THE STUDENT UNION

Alongside the official management structure, the SU also takes part in institutional decision making. It exists as a completely separate body to the official university, and receives a grant from the university each year in order to run. Its administration is 7 sabbatical officers elected yearly by the students. As the student body representative, the SU are well placed to help with student led projects particularly those that help improve student life.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The University offers numerous funding opportunities that your project might be eligible for. When thinking about funding however, keep in mind that many of these opportunities have application processes you will need to factor into your overall project plan and time scale. It is also important to make sure you have a well-defined and clear vision for what you want to achieve. This way, you'll be more convincing and specific when trying to convince people to financially support your project.

Some of the main funding opportunities for projects that the university offers include;

• THE OPPORTUNITY FUND

This offers bursaries from £100- £1000 to support societies or projects that help enrich students experience at university by helping them develop various skills. This has included funding projects to help students learn new skills, and equipment for sorts clubs, in the past.

• IATLS STUDENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

IATL OFFERS SEVERAL DIFFERENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES COVERING A RANGE OF SUMS FOR PROJECTS THAT FALL UNDER THE AREAS OF RESEARCH, COLLABORATION AND PERFORMANCE;

- STUDENT AS PRODUCER (COLLABORATION) FUND THIS SUPPORTS PROJECTS THAT HAVE A LEVEL OF COLLABORATION AT THEIR CORE, WHETHER BETWEEN STUDENTS AND STAFF, OR BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY. THE MAXIMUM PER PROJECT IS £2000.
- STUDENT AS PRODUCER (PERFORMANCE) FUND THIS SUPPORTS PERFORMANCE PROJECTS, FUNDING THINGS SUCH AS CREATING PLAYS OR SCRIPTS. THE MAXIMUM PER PROJECT IS £500.
- → Performance Festival Bursaries This supports student performances outside of the University, such as Those within festivals for example. The maximum per project is £500.
- → STUDENT AS PRODUCER (RESEARCH) FUND THIS SUPPORTS MORE ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE NOT PART OF A STUDENT'S COURSE. THE MAXIMUM PER PROJECT IS £1000.

• SU FUNDING

THE SU OFFERS SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDING, WHICH ANYONE CAN APPLY FOR PROVIDED THEIR PROJECT AFFECTS STUDENTS;

- → THE PROJECT FUND UP TO £4000
- → THE CAMPAIGNS FUND UP TO £3000
- → THE SU ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FUND UP TO £5000

• THE LORD ROOTES MEMORIAL FUND

THE FUND OFFERS £100-£3000 AND AIMS TO FUND PROJECTS THAT SHOW ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY. IT ALSO PLACES EMPHASIS ON THE USE OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCES. FUNDS RANGE FROM £100-£3000.

IN THE CASE OF ALL AVAILABLE FUNDS, THERE IS AN_APPLICATION PROCESS AND A DEADLINE YOU MUST APPLY BY. BECAUSE OF THIS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO START LOOKING AT FUNDING AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE BUT AFTER YOU HAVE FINALISED A CLEAR IDEA OF WHERE YOUR PROJECT'S GOING. ADDITIONALLY, MOST PROJECTS WILL FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO START THEIR MORE PRACTICAL ASPECTS WITHOUT THE FUNDING SECURED AND IN PLACE. SO THIS IS AN AREA THAT NEEDS CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION EARLY ON IN A PROJECT, WHETHER YOU RECEIVE FUNDING FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY.

SOCIETIES

WITH OVER 250 DIFFERENT SOCIETIES CURRENTLY ON CAMPUS, YOUR PROJECT CAN BENEFIT FROM WORKING WITH OTHERS WHO MIGHT SHARE A SIMILAR GOAL AND VISION. WARWICK NEST FOR EXAMPLE, WAS STARTED WITHIN ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS, AND HAS EXPANDED THROUGHOUT ITS PROCESS TO ENCOMPASS ORE GROUPS.

STAFF AND DEPARTMENTS

FOR A LOT OF PROJECTS, STAFF AND DEPARTMENTS WILL PROBABLY BE ONE OF THE EASIEST RESOURCES TO UTILISE, PARTICULARLY IF YOUR PROJECT IS RELATED TO YOUR OWN DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, IT'S IDEAL IF YOU CAN MAKE CONTACTS WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS THAT MAY HAVE RESOURCES OR EXPERTISE YOUR PROJECT COULD BENEFIT FROM.

THE ACADEMIC STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY COMPROMISES 4 ACADEMIC FACULTIES (ARTS, MEDICINE, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SCIENCE). WITHIN THESE 4 FACULTIES ARE 30 ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS (AS WELL AS 55 RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES)

GENERAL ADVICE

As well as the practicalities and planning, here are some general pieces of advice that may be useful throughout you project;

1. NETWORKING

THROUGHOUT YOUR PROJECT AIM TO MEET, AND MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. EVEN SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS A HALF AN HOUR COFFEE MEETING CAN REALLY HELP YOUR PROJECTS, IN WAYS YOU MAY NOT HAVE EVEN CONSIDERED!

2. REFLECTING

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROJECT FROM THE START, ESPECIALLY WHAT WAS EASIER/HARDER ETC. THIS CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR PROJECT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS AND MAKE LIFE EASIER AS YOU GO ALONG.

3. PRESERVING

ALTHOUGH YOU WILL ALMOST DEFINITELY HAVE TO CHANGE AND ADAPT, KEEP IN MIND THAT IT IS YOUR PROJECT! STICK WITH WHAT YOU FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT ACHIEVING, PROVIDED IT IS REALISTIC ENOUGH TO GO THROUGH WITH