

Inclusive institutions enabling and supporting culture change

Capstone report July 2022

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Preface

In 2021-22, funding was available to Advance HE members in the form of our Collaborative Development Fund. The collaborative projects aim to harness the knowledge, experience and innovative capabilities of our members in order to address current challenges within the higher education (HE) sector.

Funding for this project, Inclusive institutions enabling and supporting culture change, was awarded to the following institutions (CDF institutions) and this report draws on their insights and experiences:

- Deakin University (Deakin) – ***A day in the Life*** - [project and outputs](#)
- University of Salford (Salford) – ***Inclusive structures driving transformational change*** - [project and outputs](#)
- Imperial College London (lead) and University of Reading (Imperial and Reading) – ***Supporting the Identity Development of Underrepresented Students (SIDUS)*** - [project and outputs](#)

Kingston University - (Kingston, the project lead), Anglia Ruskin University, Birmingham City University, Teesside University, University of Brighton, University of Hertfordshire (Anglia Ruskin, Birmingham City, Teesside, Brighton, Hertfordshire) on behalf of the University Alliance (the University Alliance) – ***Developing best practice in engaging students to enable and support inclusive cultural change in HEIs*** - [project and outputs](#)

Specific extracts from the work of the CDF institutions are shown in blue boxes.
More general references to their work are included in the text.

Acknowledgments

Kim would like to thank all those involved in the creation of this report. In particular, the CDF universities and many Advance HE Colleagues, particularly, Cindy Vallance, Jess Moody, Hannah Fromageau, Anne Rowan, Nick Skeet, marketing and membership colleagues, for constructive and supportive content development.

1. Introduction

The principal aim of the [2021-22 Collaborative Development Fund](#) (CDF) project, reflected in this capstone report, is to collate and understand a range of techniques, approaches and lessons learned from members' current work to transform, enable and support an inclusive culture and ways of working.

Previous work under the Advance HE Connect member benefit theme (Ansell and Trezona, 2021) '[Transforming Organisations from Student to Board](#)' considered three ingredients for transforming organisations:

- + co-creation, clarity and shared **understanding** of the vision
- + authentic and inclusive conversations and two-way **communication**, recognising the centrality of dialogue to support transformation
- + joined-up, **inclusive and collaborative** implementation, in which everyone involved feels a part of and takes responsibility for.

To build on this previous work, in December 2021 Advance HE asked its members to explore how inclusivity as a strategic enabler for culture change operates in higher education (HE). By commissioning a deeper exploration of actual practices and experiences from which members can learn, it sought to understand which approaches, tools and techniques work in which contexts.

Issues about HE culture appear in the education media – and even tabloid media – on a weekly, if not daily, basis. They range from freedom of speech, toxic research environments and academic bullying to wellbeing, tackling racism, sexual harassment and much more. The media narrative about HE culture sits alongside a recent emphasis on the importance of culture for HE governing bodies, for example the 2022 Camm review of Welsh Universities made a number of culture related recommendations, but in particular 'Welsh universities may want to consider collectively or individually commissioning a review of organisational culture', and 'All governing bodies should consider and report on culture in their organisation at least annually', which recognises the dual role of the governing body of itself and of the institution.

Understanding that institutional culture influences an organisation's ability to be innovative internally, and its agility to respond to external change, is critical to organisational sustainability. Furthermore, addressing the barriers that limit access and belonging, and particularly removing barriers to engaging marginalised groups, can only be achieved and sustained through an inclusive institution with a culture that is well aligned to its purpose, values and goals.

In particular, this CDF project has reinforced the 2021 work. A sense of inclusion and belonging attracts students and talented people, and enables the whole organisation to be sustainable and to thrive. It demonstrates that those institutions who go beyond a tactical

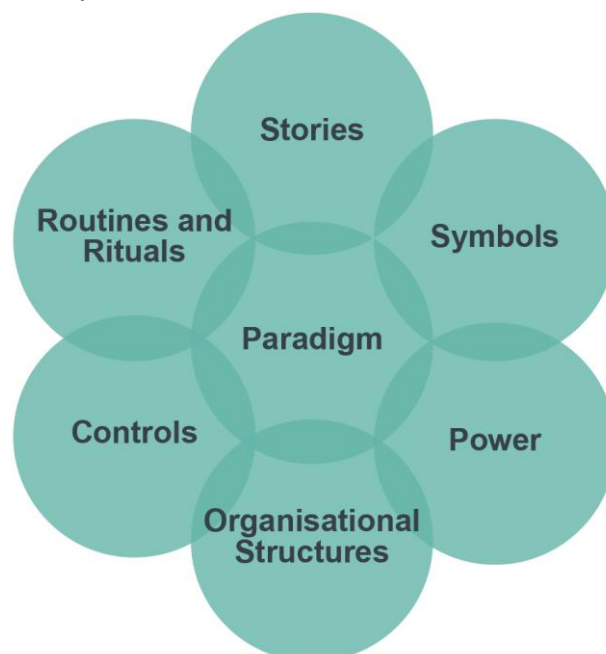
and transactional series of activities – taking a more strategic and holistic approach with all staff and students – are having some success in creating a lasting sense of belonging and embedding more inclusive cultures.

This report considers the key strategic themes of future vision, organisational context, learning and challenges in enabling and supporting culture change through the lens of inclusivity. It highlights findings from each of the four CDF universities – and more can be found about each of the [individual projects](#) online – providing Advance HE members with an evidence base of potential solutions, lessons learned and recommendations to inform future work.

2. Vision for success

The academic literature on the subject of culture and ‘inclusive culture’ is extensive. There is limited agreement about its definition, how it should be assessed or evaluated, or indeed how you create or change it. Many, for example Edgar Schein (Schein, 2004) and Geert Hofstede (Hofstede Insights, 2020), clearly link organisational values to the manifestation of culture.

From values, we know that organisations encourage behaviours: Glasgow Caledonian University (nd) is one of many. The intention is that behaviours work alongside organisational symbols, systems and processes, structures, and narratives or stories, which in turn create the culture. Models such as the Johnson and Scholes cultural web articulate how these elements come together to create the organisational paradigm or culture. (*Exploring Corporate Strategy*). The Johnson and Scholes cultural web also offers us a way to take a holistic approach to consider where we are now and where we want to be (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).



So, the question for our CDF institutions is: how do institutions drive behaviours which are grounded in the organisational values, in order to create an environment in which everyone can contribute, creating a sense of belonging and aligning with the purpose and vision of the organisation? For Reading and the UA, the holistic nature of the endeavour was uppermost in their thinking.

Reading

As a university and as a department, a collective and holistic effort, with central and local initiatives, is needed to create and sustain cultures of inclusivity.

UA

Programmes should be key components in the delivery of institutional priorities and should be embedded within institutional governance

Another great example of this was the Imperial initiative to dovetail its [SIDUS](#) (Supporting the Identity Development of Underrepresented Students) project with the existing 'I-Explore' cross-curricular modules which all Imperial students are required to take in either the second or third year of their undergraduate degree. The discussion about imposter syndrome aligned well with the critical approach to role models they were encouraging in I-Explore. It helped students to:

- + understand what they were experiencing and to sit with the uncomfortable feelings they experienced
- + recognise that this was a common phenomenon, shared by their peers and teaching staff.

For Deakin the vision for success was clearly linked to changing behaviours in line with its values.

Deakin

The project seeks to empower the Deakin community to become custodians of culture by equipping them with a language and an attitude that is actionable and aligns to the kind of institutional values we hold dear.

Better articulating and visioning what ‘good’ looks like was an important starting point when the University of Leicester started developing its new strategy in 2020. Part of agreeing a positive culture of challenge and calling out discourse or behaviours which do not support the desired state was an essential component of this and included the provision of safe spaces for such challenge. (Kim Ansell, Blog, Integrated thinking – improving diversity and inclusion from Student to Board, 2020)

To understand and articulate what success looks like we must explore ‘context and strategy’ which will be unique to each organisation. We further explore outcomes, evidence and lessons learned in sections 5 and 6 of this report.

3. Context and strategy

The context of any institution is unique and multifaceted. It is also important in relation to culture because they are the levers that an organisation will use or respond to in times of change. Asking yourself a number of key questions will help to frame your context, from which you will develop your strategy:

- + What do we stand for? Our values, ethics, principles, beliefs
- + Where are we going? Our vision, hopes and ambitions
- + What do we do? Our mission/purpose
- + Who do we do it for and where? Our stakeholders
- + How do we get there? Objectives, plans, priorities
- + What are the risks? Internally and externally, what may impact our mission/purpose and plans?
- + What do we need? What resources do we have: financial, people, estates and social capital (relationships/partnerships)?
- + How will we know if we are successful? Our KPIs, evidence and desired outcomes.

Understanding context helps reveal the complexity of any situation and offers nuance from which to frame conversations about change. “Seek first to understand, then to be understood” (Covey, 1989).

Yosso (2005) prompts us to consider which culture(s) are deemed ‘norm’ and of ‘value’ (and by whom) in any educational context.

Salford found that understanding context was really important in terms of implementing an organisation-wide strategy within four different schools.

Salford

Different schools or faculties will have their own subculture, but whole university character will play a part in any understanding of context as well as national and international factors.

The CDF institutions particularly mentioned the importance of conversation in understanding and framing context. Some conversations cut across organisational reporting lines and between different professional groups – for example, about ways of working, use of resources, strategic approaches or priorities. They can be conversations between board and executives, cross-faculty/school/department or between academic and professional service leaders. Regardless of whether a conversation is between two people or whole teams, transforming those conversations can have an impact on the whole institution.

Conversations with and between students are equally important. Through the development and instigation of transformative conversations with students, within both ontological and epistemological spheres, students are afforded the opportunity to “reconsider the ways we make sense of the world, and our revised understandings inform subsequent decisions we make and actions we take” (Wilcox, 2009).

Imperial and Reading found that having a ‘conversation starter’ to approach a difficult and/or complex topic was welcomed.

“I recently used the imposter syndrome conversation starter with a group of students, and they fed back how useful it was to realise other people felt the same as they did and to share strategies for addressing it.”

Imperial case study

Conversations which help to better understand context are informed by an exploration of how issues of privilege, power, diversity and bias can impact on the way we communicate. They can be a key part of understanding context from which to build authentic and positive relationships, acknowledge diversity, respect lived experiences, address unacceptable behaviour and help staff and students navigate their way through issues of diversity and inclusion (Advance HE, Transformative Conversations Framework, 2021).

Drawing on counter storytelling as an analytical framework (Solórzano and Yosso, 2003) we asked Deakin University to reflect on how it welcomes or responds to narratives which directly challenge its understanding of the culture(s) or context, particularly from those experiencing exclusion.

Deakin

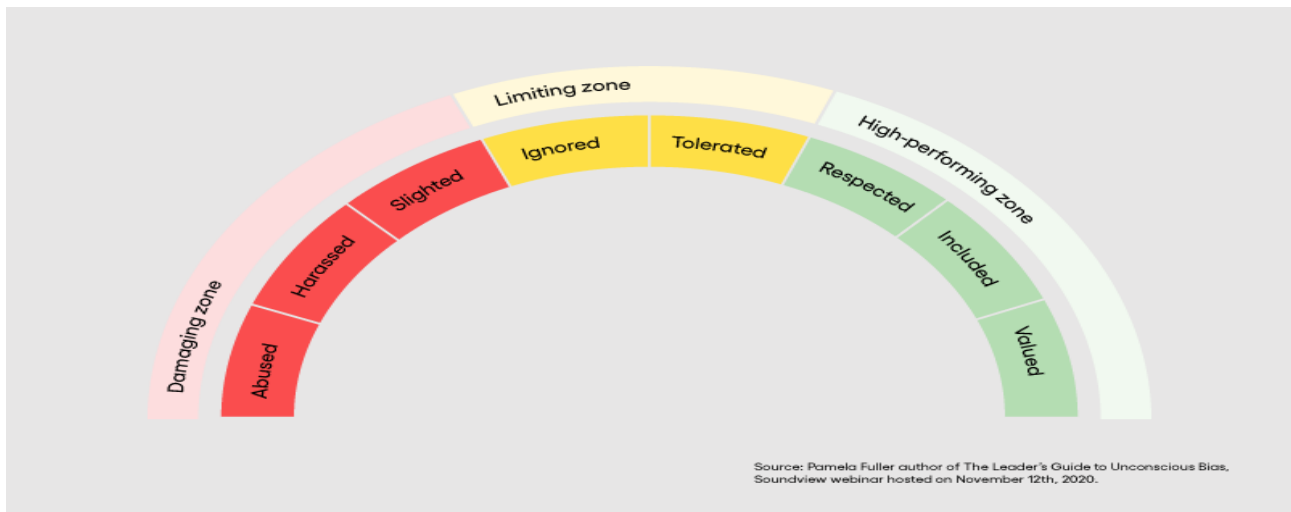
We want everyone to feel encouraged to speak up and share their diverse experiences, ideas and perspectives in a place where they feel empowered to challenge ideas and contribute to new processes, flexible ways of studying and working, and make a positive impact for the whole community. Diversity, equity and inclusion have a strong presence in the university, which has been a reputation we have consciously built over time by consistently connecting with all levels, faculties, and areas of the university. We actively listen to people in the Deakin community who come forward with lived-experience examples of scenarios they have faced, both positive and negative. The feedback we hear comes from multiple avenues – whether that be through formalised surveys, ad hoc interactions through networking opportunities in the university, or through de identified or identified emails – there is no one way that we receive the information, and it is this approach that allows for people to not feel confined to one way of reaching out. We understand that there are a number of challenges and barriers that groups of people with protected attributes face. With this knowledge, we welcome open communication and honest feedback for the purpose of making the university holistically more inclusive and better equipped to support all who are a part of the Deakin community. We have committed to building the inclusive leadership capability of all Deakin leaders so that students and staff feel a strong sense of belonging in our community and are empowered to achieve success.

The UA work also highlights that conversations and genuine dialogue are key to co-creating culture between students and staff. Particularly noting that ‘transactional’ dialogue does not offer the context needed to move the dial on culture.

4. Drivers for change

4.1 Behaviours and belonging

With respect to culture there are two important aspects of behaviour – understanding it and changing it. Pamela Fuller, author of *The Leader’s Guide to Unconscious Bias*, reminds us that behaviours lead to impact and outcomes, noting that significant damage is done when people are ignored. Regardless of conscious, implicit or unconscious intent of any behaviour, a leader must focus on understanding the impact and outcomes of different behaviours.



Source: Pamela Fuller, author of *The Leader's Guide to Unconscious Bias*: webinar hosted November 2020

Kim Ansell and Mark Trezona (2021) also found that inclusive behaviours created engagement, ownership and better outcomes, [transforming organisations from student to board](#): *reflective guide* offered the following contribution from a sector wide padlet exercise:

Consider what happens when organisations leave people behind

"I automatically stop trying when I feel unwanted or left out. I won't reach out to you if it's not mutual. I don't beg."

ANON

Some of the contributors to our #visioningthe padlet offered this contribution about being left behind:



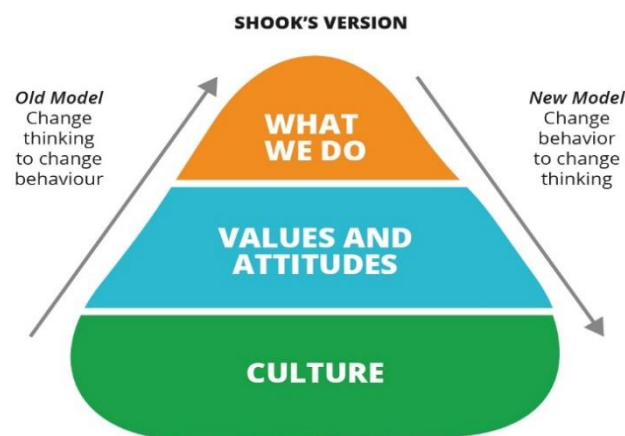
The starting premise for the UA project was that programmes need to 'speak to' and 'connect with' the disconnected and disenfranchised. Some of the principles that UA drew on in their project include:

- + Student engagement, defined by students' involvement in activities that are connected to their learning, **can improve their outcomes, as well as positively shape the function of universities** (Krause and Armitage, 2014).

- + Institutional cultures are important factors in relation to the attainment of students, **with institutional practices operating to maintain and extend the educational advantage of some** student groups by legitimating an institutional habitus which claims to represent all but undermines other lived realities (UUK, 2019).

It is important to remember that behaviours can be understood in different ways, or have different impact. This can be due to a variety of cultural norms, aspects of neurodiversity, accessibility or the nature of different relationships within and across hierarchies. For example, non-verbal communication such as nodding does not necessarily mean agreement. It could, for example, denote listening.

Simply telling people to behave differently is unlikely to ignite change in the way that demonstrating behaviours will. Barry O'Reilly (O'Reilly and Sarvas, 2017) explored this concept through highlighting that culture starts from our behaviour and that demonstrating rather than telling changes peoples thinking.



The CDF institutions explored and found strong links between behaviours and outcomes.

Salford

The 10 Salford Behaviours (connecting, inspiring, evolving, achieving, enabling, learning, deciding, co-creating, aligning, daring) are designed to underpin cultural transformation, talent recognition and career enhancement across our institution. Therefore, exploring the impact of the Behaviours 'in action' and the dynamic interplay during implementation of ESS (Enabling Student Success) was crucial to our understanding of inclusive cultural change.

The University of Salford concluded that the more positive the overall culture, and the closer it is to Salford Behaviours, the more positive its ESS Strategy ‘felt’ to staff. By linking behaviours to the achievement of their common purpose, they were able to better envision, enhancing organisational effectiveness and cohesion.

Deakin University used behavioural competencies as a call to action. It sought to develop action-oriented empathy for the circumstances that people find themselves in, which they themselves may not directly relate to. The goal following an establishment of awareness is to provide individuals with the knowledge, confidence and skills/behavioural models to intervene.¹

Deakin

The power of this approach to enacting belonging is that it requires all in our Deakin community to be prepared to put themselves in levels of discomfort for someone they may not know.

Before enactment there is recognition – the A Day in the Life immersive experience aims to equip staff and students with the ability to firstly identify instances of Victimisation, Sexual harassment and discrimination. By illustrating this at 1:1 human scale, we bring to life these experiences and behaviours that are deemed unsafe in the workplace (under Australian law). We then demonstrate ways one might intervene on behalf of another person who is experiencing discriminatory behaviour.

Reflecting on the Deakin use of the term ‘belonging’ and how it is enacted:

“Belonging is about emotional attachment, feeling at ‘home’, feeling safe and an act of self-identification or the identification by others.”

Yuval-Davis (2006)

Cindy Vallance, Advance HE, also reflects, in her blog (Vallance, 2020), that belonging in its simplest form can mean “an affinity for a place or situation.” It can also mean “the feeling of being accepted and approved by a group or by society as a whole”.

Both ways of framing belonging acknowledge the personal, cultural, relational and environmental entanglements that constitute belonging. *A Day in the Life* directly addresses the collective ownership involved in building a culture of belonging as well as the actions individuals can take to enact belonging in their everyday lives. Deakin goes on to advocate

¹ In its report, Deakin uses the term ‘victim’ with reference to the legal definition of victimisation, how they respond and their legal obligations – which are important factors in how the culture change initiatives such as the iBelong project are designed and implemented.

for personal empowerment and collective ownership capable of building and maintaining a culture of belonging.

4.2 Partnerships and collaboration

Some important challenges have emerged in recent Advance HE consultancy assignments that reveal a lack of engagement, ownership and agency around culture change. For example, centralisation of professional support can disrupt the culture of a faculty or school, and impact colleagues' personal sense of collegiality and control. We have observed that when a sense of ownership becomes fragmented, colleagues do not feel empowered to address challenges and often marginalised groups became even more marginalised.

Relationships are guided by values of partnership that Alison Cook-Sather, Catherine Bovill, Peter Felten (Wiley 2014), describe as respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility, noting:

“These qualities of relationship emerge when we are able to bring insights into discussions about learning and teaching practice in meaningful ways – ways that make learning and teaching more engaging for students and ourselves.”

Periods of significant growth can upset the culture of a faculty, school or whole institution. Growing from a small, close-knit community, able to operate by consensus, to a much larger group, means that many need to rethink their engagement and collaborative decision-making processes and principles, ensuring that all voices are heard and that silos are not being created. The pandemic has enabled some to engage more² but it has also marginalised many voices and tested partnership models of working and cross organisation collaboration.

There are some current and related debates about staff student partnerships which reference diluting the work and labour of marginalised staff and students, and scholarship issues. These question whether such partnerships can ever truly be 'equitable' or authentic, and the importance of avoiding 'lip-service'. The Imperial and Reading experience brings some of this out, and the forthcoming Advance HE literature review on Student Engagement as Partners will explicitly link to what can be learned from students as partners, as part of the student success framework review.

² It was noted by the Disabled Student Commission (DSC) that disabled students felt that the pandemic allowed them to engage and interact with programme and institution, and removed barriers to accessibility. www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/disability-equality-higher-education/disabled-students-commission.

Imperial

While unequal power relationships exist between staff and students, by employing transparent, accountable working practices we tried to create a less hierarchical dynamic to facilitate a genuine partnership model of working.

Reading

Using Whitmore, J, Coaching for performance (2017) 'GROW – Goal, Reality, Opportunity, Way-forward' method of problem solving, we arrived at the 'Inclusion Consultants' pilot, a paid student-staff initiative that employs representatives of each academic school.

Salford

Four postgraduate teaching/research assistants (GTA's) were formally recruited from the pool of students enrolled on Salford's ACP (Academic Citizenship Programme). This was selected as the recruitment route primarily to draw on a rich pool of skills and, secondly, to provide the GTAs with portfolio evidence to construct individual narratives leading to applications for Advance HE Associate Fellow.

University Alliance

Programmes which facilitated partnership and co-creation, but with an intentional focus on inclusive practice, also supported culture change (e.g., Teesside's Student Researchers).

UA also concluded that programmes should move beyond partnership and be truly co-created with the students, advocating that they must evolve from student consultation and be created with and by students.

While there are likely to be some circumstances where the increase in virtual working and use of technology, particularly in the last two years, has aided collaboration and partnership working (for example, many international research collaborations), it is also true that in many cases it has exacerbated silo working. In our consultancy work we heard particularly of new staff not being able to make sense of processes, procedures, ways of working and building a general sense of 'who does what'. Deakin noted:

"It is widely recognised that universities are traditionally not designed for an interconnected approach to working, decision making or teaching and learning, and virtual and technological working exacerbating gaps in connectivity."

Professor Tan Eng Chye, President of the University of Singapore, recently reflected on the need for more integrated thinking and working, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic (Tan, 2020).

Deakin University

Projects such as this reveal the necessity of breaking down the siloes to make a move toward important research outputs that can potentially create sustainable organisational culture change.

In particular, a university partnership with its students' union is critical, as the University of West London (UWL) attests. Its recent success in the UK's National Student Survey (NSS) is testament to a consistent approach to listening, engaging and better understanding the relationship between staff and students, and the needs and aspirations of its specific demographic of students.

Neil Henderson, Director of HR at UWL, argued in 2020 that it is:

“Part of a sustained and cultural approach to EDI which permeates the Board, staff and students and which relies on a valued and sustained partnership with the students' union (SU).”

“This approach requires a significant change in mind-set for some, but a holistic approach needs to be taken, determined by the vision for the organisation, to foster and embed the most important things that the university wants to achieve.”

Chuchu Nwagu, UWL student voice coordinator,
UWL students' union, 2020

4.3 Student outcomes

As the student population of most universities includes increasing numbers of students from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage, mature students, students with disabilities, international students and students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, Dr Anna M Kelly and Dr Lisa Padden, University College Dublin (University for All 2018) suggest that:

“Inclusion is not an add-on, and it should be at the heart of a university's mission in achieving excellence in education and scholarship.”

University for All documents a whole-institution initiative undertaken by University College Dublin to move student access, participation and success from the margins to the mainstream. The paper offers insights into this change journey, and outlines the lessons learnt and challenges encountered.

The UA work explicitly starts from the premise that exclusive cultures have a detrimental effect on student outcomes and the CDF institutions were all driven by the desire and vision to improve student outcomes. This meant that using all the levers available to them, through collaboration, consultation and listening to the student voice, were uppermost in creating an inclusive culture that supported those student outcomes. Wong, B and Chiu, YLT (2021), argue that in universities:

“Implicit rules and practices can breed inequalities, especially by social class, where more/less privileged students operate with different resources and dispositions to navigate their higher education journeys.”

For Salford, the vision was linked to its ESS framework, and for the University Alliance institutions there were strong drivers to reduce the degree awarding gap (UUK and NUS, 2019); for example, the University of Hertfordshire’s BAME Student Advocate programme³ was formed out of strong commitment to address the UK ethnicity awarding gap. Similarly, the University of Brighton’s Inclusive Practice Partnerships Scheme developed as part of the university’s commitment to reduce differential outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and meet targets set out in their Access and Participation Plan (APP) and the Race Equality Charter (REC) Action Plan. Kingston University’s Inclusive Curriculum Consultants programme was also developed as a part of a whole institution approach to reduce the BAME attainment gap.

Advance HE has observed a desire for universities in and beyond the CDF group to improve staff understanding of, and confidence in, building inclusive environments for teaching and learning, inclusive curricula and adopting more culturally responsive learning and teaching practices.

Imperial

Our approach was to develop a meaningful partnership model of working with students, valuing their skills, experience, and ideas, rather than merely consulting with students.

³ We recognise that language and terminology relating to racialised identity and ethnicity can be limiting and contested in different contexts. Language used here reflects the university chosen language at the time of setting up the programme.

5. Outcomes

“Environmental, social and economic sustainability as a holistic concept is becoming an ever higher priority on our agendas. For example, the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, ‘Peace, justice and strong institutions’, talks of building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. These types of commitments require us to transform what we do and how we do it better, rather than simply trying to be a bigger or more profitable version of ourselves.”

Ansell and Trezona (2021), (United Nations, 2015-22)

Deakin

Deakin is a signatory to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. The goals of good health and wellbeing, quality and education and gender equality particularly resonate. We know that a positive and inclusive workplace is conducive to the health and wellbeing of all our employees. It encourages social connectedness and a sense of belonging, reducing discrimination, prejudice and harassment.

The CDF institutions have found that their work on inclusivity as an enabler for culture change can support more sustainable strategic aims, and that approaches are not just about tackling and rectifying exclusion but the creation of systems of equity and belonging for all, which enhance overall organisational wellbeing. It may be useful for institutions to consider whether the framing of culture through an inclusivity lens is useful, asking fundamental questions, such as:

- + Who does it serve?
- + What are the risks?
- + Can the institution ever be equitable or fully inclusive?

The CDF institutions highlighted the importance of working in partnership, breaking down silos and respecting difference in order to support inclusive cultures and to enable reach and quality of engagement.

Imperial and Reading

Our staff partners were often enthusiastic about sharing and using our materials because they filled a gap in provision; addressing common emotional and social topics that students raised in meetings with staff who support students.

In the Imperial experience, partnership working was compelling for other university colleagues and stakeholders. New colleagues who saw the SIDUS [materials](#) during Imperial's Festival of Learning and Teaching, created more opportunities to include and embed their resources in their induction planning for the next academic year. Encouraged by the evidenced success of this approach, Imperial will integrate conversations about how staff can address student imposter syndrome and share their experiences supporting staff to be more effective role models.

Ultimately, higher education is about people, and few would disagree that people, (students, staff, governors and partners) are a university's greatest asset. It is an organisation's assets that allow it to create value and achieve its vision, mission and outcomes.

6. Lessons learned

6.1 Collaboration and care

The CDF institutions' experience suggests that, overall, enabling and supporting a more inclusive culture is activated by the collaboration and goodwill of many stakeholders coming together – working together towards the vision of a greater good. That vision and purpose is all important and provides the anchor point from which stakeholders coalesce and collaborate. Once this is in place, having a vision of what success looks like allows evidence-based, local interventions to help translate larger university and sector-wide strategies into meaningful culture change.

For sustainable impact, there needs to be movement towards shared and collective ownership of promoting an inclusive culture at any institution, beyond those with responsibility or vested interests in these issues. It is important to emphasise and support the motto that it is everyone's responsibility to build and promote an inclusive culture.

Reading

In my experience, the key to creating an inclusive culture within higher education is to listen to students and staff, respond directly to their needs and, most importantly, move into action. We need to focus on this being everyone's responsibility, regardless of job role or personal connection, and recognising that we all have a part to play.

The need to provide additional care and support mechanisms was recognised by several UA partners in relation to the significant emotional and sometimes triggering, labour involved, particularly in working on inclusive agendas. Kingston's *Inclusive Curriculum Consultants Programme* plan to explore this further and introduce the concept of 'radical care' in supporting students on their journey in the programme. Radical Self-care is the assertion that you have the responsibility to take care of yourself first before attempting to take care of others. Governance and visibility of reporting

The Board and senior executive team are key stakeholders in enabling a more inclusive culture. Ensuring that the programme's reporting line is embedded in the standard governance structure of the institution is critical; for example, the BAME Student Advocates at the University of Hertfordshire report to the Education and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board, as well as within updates to Race Equality Charter Mark Self-Assessment Team meetings.

Leaders of organisational transformation need to adopt a range of approaches to promote the vision, purpose and priorities, in order to raise profile and to enhance visibility.

6.2 Use of technology

New technologies hold enormous potential to augment existing practices of cultural inclusion, but Deakin learned that they can also limit the scope of the project, take more time and require the development of skills and languages to support this kind of work. They reflected that enthusiasm for creating immersive experiences must be tempered with a respect for the realities of production, the quality of output expected and the results produced.

6.3 Time and resource

The recognition of time demands was important to the CDF institutions. At Imperial and Reading, student partners can help translate educational research into accessible, meaningful resources for students and facilitate 'bottom-up' distribution of materials, but genuine student-staff partnership models require sufficient funding, time and institutional support to value the work and facilitate implementation and 'buy-in' across a university. At Salford, research surfaced that culture change across four schools was incremental. The amount of time taken to effect culture change was highly dependent on subcultures and

whether those schools were already pre-disposed to change through other, previous transformations. This suggests that if change is on the agenda and being done well, the ongoing propensity for change is higher: factors such as trust and confidence were seen to enable a sense of community and belonging, contribute to an ability to think more creatively and openly about responses to change, and therefore empower staff with more autonomy and freedom.

Overall, staff who support students need sufficient time, training and tailored resources to facilitate their work, particularly around the emotional and social elements of student life. Issues such as belonging, imposter syndrome, mental health and wellbeing, micro aggressions and competitive academic cultures must be addressed as collective issues in partnership with students. These are all important concepts which have been explored further in the individual projects and conceptualised in their particular contexts.

6.4 The learning loop

Finally, Deakin warns:

“Be wary of ‘preaching to the converted’. There are legitimate questions and concerns about how to mainstream inclusion and move beyond those who are already engaged in the topic. Different stakeholders of the university, especially senior staff, will need greater engagement and meaningful support to initiatives that promote inclusivity, to ensure the long-term sustainability of this work.”

Margaret Heffernan in her book *Beyond Measure* (2015) suggests:

“Make the most of mistakes. All teams and individuals make mistakes. Ensure that your teams and organisation learn from mistakes by being open about what went wrong and share the learning.”

Several UA partners noted that with hindsight that they would have led their narrative with the values and principles of their programmes. For example, the University of Hertfordshire’s Student Technology Mentors Team noted that they would have begun with a focus on partnership to ensure that the students understand that they are partners in this role; at the outset, investing more time empowering students, building their confidence, and listening to the ideas on what was working and not working. This, they argue, has been ‘learnt over time through trial and error’.

7. Conclusions

All of the CDF institutions have recognised that continually exploring new ways of working are essential to effect sustainable culture change.

“Equality is being invited into the room, diversity is getting a seat at the table, inclusion is sharing your views and being heard. Inclusive leadership enables all of this to happen.”

Charlotte Sweeney and Fleur Bothwick, (Inclusive Leadership 2016)

The key successful ingredients experienced by the CDF institutions are summarised by the UA as:

- + authentic and intentional, being purposeful in their intention and bringing the voices of marginalised voices to life
- + empowering, with relevant training, guidance and support for staff and students
- + embedded, holistic and aligned to strategic priorities, with a vision of what success looks and feels like
- + visible with clear governance, planning and reporting in place.

“From the perspective of a governing body – which must provide scrutiny, strategic oversight and hold the executive to account – transparency about roles and responsibilities as well as clear communication is essential to support effective decision making”.

Ansell, K and Work, A (From student to Board: responsibility, accountability and decision making Blog 2020)

It was noted by the CDF institutions that evaluation of work to transform, enable and support an inclusive culture and ways of working is a challenge. It requires the ingredients outlined above and an outcomes focus. Credible and consistent reporting is the tool with which an organisation can demonstrate transparency and accountability and an articulation of how decisions and actions are leading to outcomes.

The CDF institutions also recognised that, as well as embedding changes to institutional culture into strategic thinking, it also requires commitments and resources to develop and sustain momentum. For many, this important work has been and is being done by staff often working above their capacity and disproportionately by those in underrepresented or marginalised groups. It is important for culture change work to be properly and equitably recognised and appreciated in workload management and allocation.

Deakin

For sustainable impact, there needs to be movement towards shared and collective ownership towards promoting an inclusive culture at the institution, beyond only those with responsibility or vested interests in these issues. It is important to emphasise and support the motto that it is everyone's responsibility to build and promote an inclusive culture

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