

Wise Wales Annual Report

2013/14

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Wise Wales: Background

Wise Wales was originally known as the Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE), a project which aimed to share and enhance the best practice surrounding student engagement approaches in Wales, as well as learning from student engagement practitioners from across the nation and beyond. The initiative eventually underwent a change in name in 2013 to reflect the evolution of the mission statement: to achieve meaningful partnership between educators, students' unions and students across Wales.

The Wise Wales initiative is a cross-sector collaboration, whose partners include:

- National Union of Students in Wales (NUS Wales)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
- Universities Wales (UW)
- Higher Education Academy (HEA)
- Colleges Wales/Colegau Cymru
- Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (joined 2013/14)

Wise Wales, by its very nature, promotes the empowerment of students across Wales in engaging with the structures and processes which enable them to actively shape and enhance the quality of their academic experiences.

Historically, activities carried out within the Wise Wales project were focused upon incorporating three main principles:

Valuing Feedback

Ensuring students understand their feedback is taken seriously and - more importantly - acted upon, as well as ensuring there are plenty of meaningful opportunities for students to inform their institutions' practice.

Harnessing Expertise

Acknowledging the impossibility of being able to assume what kind of conditions students want and need to flourish at university; appreciating that students are the experts of their own experiences.

Working in Partnership

Creating an authentic dialogue between a given institution and its student body, which enables both parties to take meaningful steps towards academic quality enhancement – together.

However, the evolution of the name from WISE to Wise Wales in 2013 actively reflected the project partners' will to shift the focus from student engagement onto driving forward a partnership agenda. The project was therefore, and is, referred to as Wise Wales.

Wise Wales 2013/14: Headlines

<p>The launch of the inaugural Partnership for Wales conference, attended by over 55 representatives from the Welsh, English and Scottish higher education sectors, comprising students, sabbatical officers, students' union staff and university staff members.</p>
<p>The Wise Wales online hub was officially launched; a central resource for information and support for those invested in student engagement and partnership. The website currently includes 24 downloadable resources, from training packages to case studies, guidance documents to UK-wide literature. This bank of resources is predicted to grow measurably over the course of 2014/15 and will support practitioners all over Wales in championing the student voice.</p>
<p>Sessions were delivered on partnership at the Swansea University Students' Union and the Aberystwyth University Students' Union course rep conferences respectively. Also, sessions were delivered at the 2014 WIDAR Conference, and partnership was debated on a devolved nations panel at the annual QAA conference. Wise Wales also facilitated a training day for Welsh HE stakeholders around using the NSS effectively, delivered by representatives of The Student Engagement Partnership.</p>
<p>Specific and detailed guidance to assist those undertaking the task of creating an Annual Quality Report was developed and disseminated to students' unions across Wales.</p>
<p>Mapping exercise of every Welsh higher education students' union completed and compiled with recommendations.</p>
<p>Funding secured from Welsh Government to equip Wise Wales in <i>delivering</i> the partnership agenda into the further education sector.</p>
<p>The Wise Wales Staff Network was created with the aim of encouraging those working within student engagement and partnership to share ideas, best practice and challenges. Its membership comprises thirteen representatives from eight institutions and students' unions.</p>

Wise Wales outputs to agreed targets

The 2013/14 project proposal outlined 11 agreed outputs for NUS Wales to work against. Below details the progress achieved working towards each of these outputs.

Last year's annual report noted unions and institutions were resistant to participate in standalone events due to travel, cost and timing issues. Throughout 2013/14 there seemed to be a much more enthusiastic inclination to participate, but once again cost was a repeated obstacle. The recommendations that will be made in this report will take this into consideration as there is great scope for increasing participation in Wise Wales activity when operational factors are addressed.

1. Organise a Course Representative Conference with the aim of training staff within unions and institutions who are responsible for course representative systems, as well as training this year's cohort of course representatives.

The third annual course representative conference took place on 25 February 2014 at the Catrin Finch centre at Glyndwr University, Wrexham. There were 31 sign-ups in the run up to the event, however on the day itself only 15 delegates from 6 institutions arrived, which was extremely disconcerting. Upon investigating it became apparent that the reason for the steep attrition rate was primarily down to unions and institutional representatives pledging to attend without confirming access to transport or funding for transport. Many claimed afterwards that had the event been in one of the southern regions of Wales, or even mid-Wales, they would have been able to attend. The original plan was to host the conference in the Cardiff area, however it was felt that this would isolate members based in the north, as standalone events are already perceived to be very Cardiff-centric, which is how it came to occur in Wrexham.

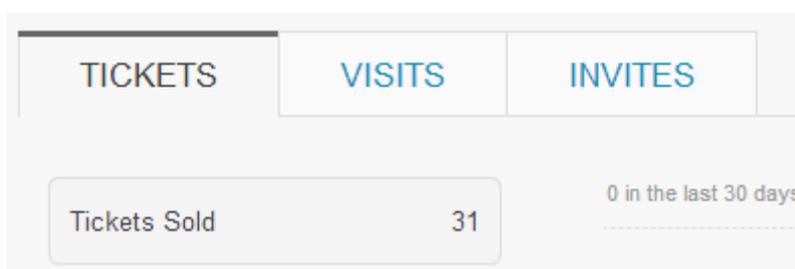


Fig. 1 Screenshot from the event page dashboard

Participants hailed from Bangor University, Glyndwr University, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, University of South Wales, Swansea University and the Open University, along with representatives from their respective students' unions, guilds and students' associations. It is particularly worth noting the attendance of the two members of the Open University's Students' Association; the previous academic year was the first to see them participate in any form of Wise Wales or NUS Wales training, and it is therefore extremely encouraging that they went to great lengths to continue to do so.

Though attendance numbers were small, those who did participate commended the quality of the day. The workshops presented were diverse and engaging, offering perspectives on measuring impact, putting quality into action through annual quality reports, the various roles we all have to play in creating a culture of partnership, how to overcome obstacles faced within academic representation and student-led teaching awards. Attendees also experienced an opening speech from the then NUS Wales president, Stephanie Lloyd,

as well as a stimulating keynote from the then Vice President Higher Education, Rachel Wenstone on the evolution of education.

The feedback received was extremely interesting, as the diluted number of attendees drastically changed the dynamic of a typical course representative conference. Overall feedback was exceedingly positive.

- The total proportion of attendees who provided feedback was 92%
- The average rating of the overall event was 8.6/10
- 100% of attendees who provided feedback said they would recommend the event to their colleagues.

Qualitatively, the feedback reflected that attendees, overall, felt positively towards the content delivered on the day. Participants felt that the best aspects overall were:

- Using the UK Quality Code to inform and inspire course rep training as well as campaigning
- Learning to measure impact and investigate the ways in which impact can manifest itself
- Discussing the benefits of student-led teaching awards (SLTAs) and how they contribute to partnership working
- Sharing best practice and solving commonly faced challenges as a group
- Networking

When asked which aspects of the day attendees found least useful, just over 50% wrote down 'not applicable' which was extremely reassuring. Those who did leave a comment all said that they felt the plenary was a little too future-focused and they would have preferred it to address the issues they are facing locally and nationally in the here and now. They also said that it is difficult working towards solving long term issues as a sabbatical officer, as the lifespan of their role is typically so short.

Some of the answers to the question "What else would you like to see included in future events?" included:

- "It would be good to have a session [on] how to represent minority groups"
- "How to effectively engage with students"
- "More [tangible] examples on how to measure impact"

When given the opportunity to add further comments, participants left further positive comments, including:

- "All very positive. I enjoyed the relaxed discussion atmosphere"
- "Very informative and useful"
- "Great! Smaller groups meant there were really fruitful discussions!"

Impact

During the conference registration, attendees were asked to fill out a short questionnaire which included the three questions found below in fig. 2. They were then asked to repeat the questionnaire at the end of the event; the purpose of this was to gauge if the conference itself would have an immediate impact on the way attendees felt towards partnership and their capabilities of identifying partnership, and subsequently furthering the partnership agenda.

The results were as follows:

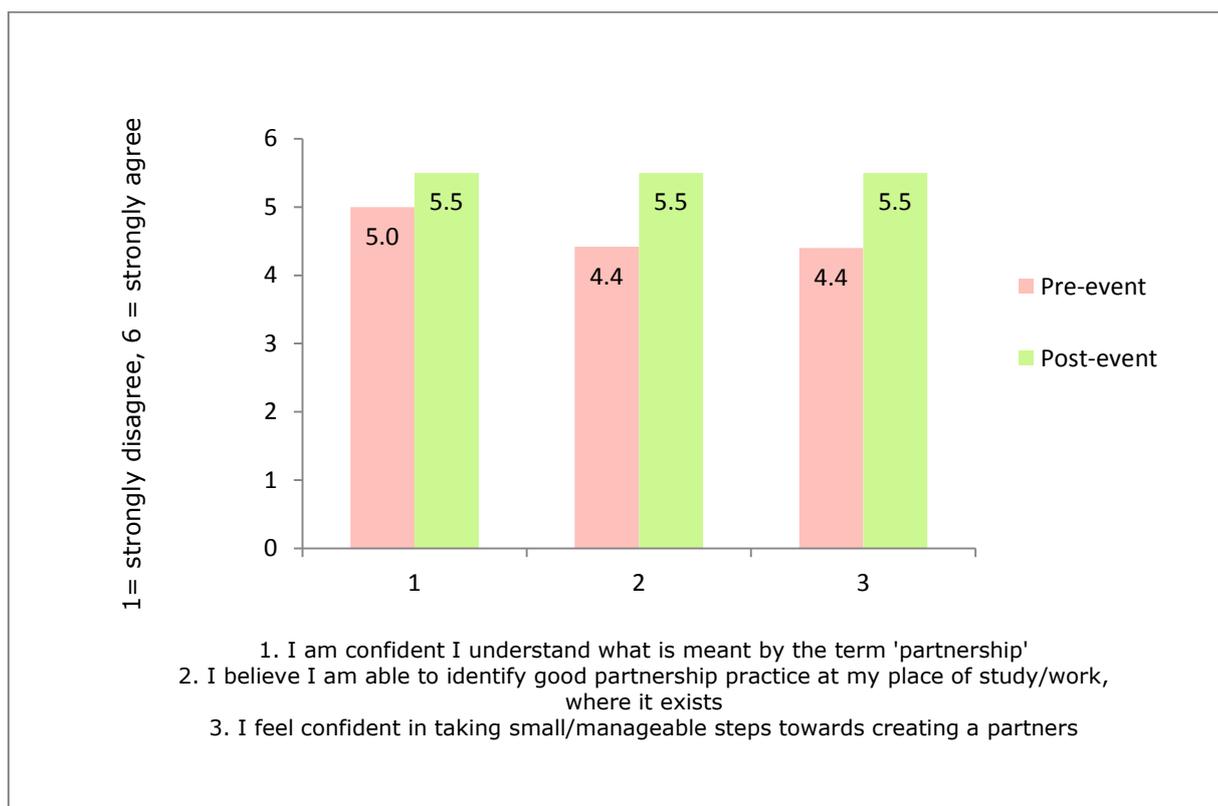


Fig. 2 The impact of the event on attendees’ perceptions of partnership

On average, attendees felt more confident in their understanding of partnership working, felt more able to identify good partnership practice at their place of study or work, and demonstrated increased confidence in taking small steps towards creating a partnership culture within their own context.

Five months after the Course Representative Conference, further measures were taken to assess the ongoing impact of the event (see Appendix 1). The aforementioned questions used to assess the immediate impact of the conference were repeated to garner a longer term picture of attendees’ feelings towards partnership working; the survey was also furnished with further complementary questions which assessed the various ways in which their behaviour may have been influenced by the event.

The quantitative results indicated participants continued to strongly agree with the previously mentioned original statements, demonstrating confidence in understanding the meaning of partnership, providing qualitative examples of best practice and asserting a confidence in continuing to take steps towards a partnership culture.

Qualitative responses pertaining to attendees’ attitudes and behaviour after attending the conference included:

- “As a College Rep, partnership to me is working together as students from different disciplines with the university to make bigger changes. I feel this has been successful, and has improved since attending the conference.”
- “Since the conference, I have increased my engagement with the course representation processes at Swansea, including attending many University-level meetings.”

- “The 2014 [Course Representative] Conference, as with the previous two, has the power to change University and Student’s Union policies regarding proper representation for students and partnership between the two.”
- “It [the conference] has allowed me to encourage more students to engage.”
- “We are trying to design new projects and working with the university to involve students in direct feedback and design of curricula.”

The impact survey ended with the question: *Can you foresee a time in the future when universities and their respective student bodies can work together in partnership to create the best possible student experience?* Each respondent said ‘Yes’.

Recommendations

Based on delegates’ feedback, some clear recommendations have emerged.

There was an overall feeling that delegates would prefer to engage in learning exercises using fewer theoretical examples and more real-life case studies, specific to the Welsh context. This is something that was incorporated into the session delivered by the Wise Wales Development Officer, but seemed to be absent from some of the other workshops. There was also a need for more diversity amongst the workshop and plenary content; had there been space available, it would have been ideal to address effective use of the NSS and also how to engage students from typically underrepresented communities. For future reference, a venue with a greater number of breakout rooms might be preferable.

It is worth noting that the average score for satisfaction of the venue facilities was higher than the average score for the venue location. It is therefore recommended that the next conference be held in a southern location in Wales, with funds set aside to assist those based in the north who would wish to attend, but might come up against travel/financial obstacles. Funds can be saved by negotiating venue hire with member unions of NUS Wales, rather than hiring a university venue, as was the case for this conference. Operationally, the attendance of the 2014 conference could have been improved by implementing a refundable financial deposit scheme, in order to deter attrition.

It would also be wise to maintain themes within the content of the day, ensuring that the needs of course representatives and sabbatical officers as well as staff members are properly catered for. This was trialled during this year’s conference, based on the recommendations of the 2012/13 Wise Wales report, to great success - assessed through positive oral and written feedback. Creating a greater variety of opportunities for students’ union staff members to engage with Wise Wales should be a priority for the next academic year, as cohorts of students pass through education transiently, whereas there are authentic opportunities to create a truly sustainable partnership culture by working closely with staff members.

2. Hosting an Introduction to Partnership conference for institutional and students’ union staff, as well as sabbatical officers, with a view to embedding the understanding of sustainable partnership and encourage joint working.

This conference, entitled ‘Partnership for Wales’, was held on 2 June 2014 at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay. It was attended by over 55 delegates in Wales, from Aberystwyth University and Students’ Union, Bangor Students’ Union, Cardiff University and Students’ Union, Cardiff Metropolitan University, the Open University and Students’ Association, the University of South Wales and its students’ union, Swansea University and Students’ Union, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and even Cardiff and Vale College.

The day's workshops were delivered by presenters hailing from Wales, (Wise Wales, Bangor University and Students' Union and Cardiff University and Students' Union), Scotland (sparqs) and England (University of Lincoln, University of Exeter, Birmingham City University and Students' Union, the Quality Assurance Agency, and NUS UK). Presenters delivered a variety of stimulating sessions and plenaries, covering topics including:

- A debating exercise around the students-as-partners model
- Using evidence-based feedback to improve student reps' effectiveness
- Delivering an institution-wide approach to student engagement
- Case studies: Student Academic Partners Scheme at Birmingham City University and Students' Union, as well as Student Engagement and Partnership at Bangor University and Students' Union
- Working in partnership with departments to ensure strong representation structures
- What partnership looks like in action as well as overcoming obstacles collectively
- Chapter B5 of the UK Quality Code and how to use it.



Fig. 3 'Partnership for Wales'

The day was very positively received by delegates, with many expressing so verbally on the day, as well as formally within the feedback documents.

The quantitative feedback noted that:

- The average score reflecting delegates' overall satisfaction was 8.3/10
- 100% of delegates who provided feedback said they would recommend the event to a colleague
- Delegates understanding of partnership, ability to identify good partnership practice, and confidence in taking steps towards partnership increased

The quantitative feedback featured comments describing the event as 'friendly and engaging', 'great', 'informative' and 'enlightening', as well as noting particular praise for the sessions delivered by Dan Derricott of University of Lincoln, Karl Hobley of QAA, as well as the Wise Wales session. Other comments included:

- "Very useful in the areas of quality and representation."
- "An enjoyable day reminding myself of my priorities - students! Politics in the workplace can tend to dominate and distract from that fact."
- "Very interesting with lots of useful discussion. Very well organised."
- "Really enjoyed my day, very eye-opening."

Recommendations

Whilst the feedback was predominantly positive, delegates did suggest some recommendations for enhancing the event next year. These included:

- Providing more time for networking, possibly by cutting down the number of sessions available to attend
- Increasing the number of Welsh institutions/students' unions presenting; through both verbal and written feedback, it became clear that delegates enjoyed sessions which utilised real-life case studies to communicate their message
- Whilst there were three sessions delivered by Welsh students' unions and institutions, and a keynote speaker delivering a message ground in a Welsh perspective, some delegates felt that the event could only benefit by engaging even more Welsh presenters to come and share their partnership experiences.

Impact

As with the Course Representative Conference 2014, during the conference registration, attendees were asked to fill out a short questionnaire which included the three questions found below in Fig. 4 (where the results can be seen). They were then asked to repeat the questionnaire at the end of the event to gauge if the conference itself would have an immediate impact on the way attendees felt towards partnership.

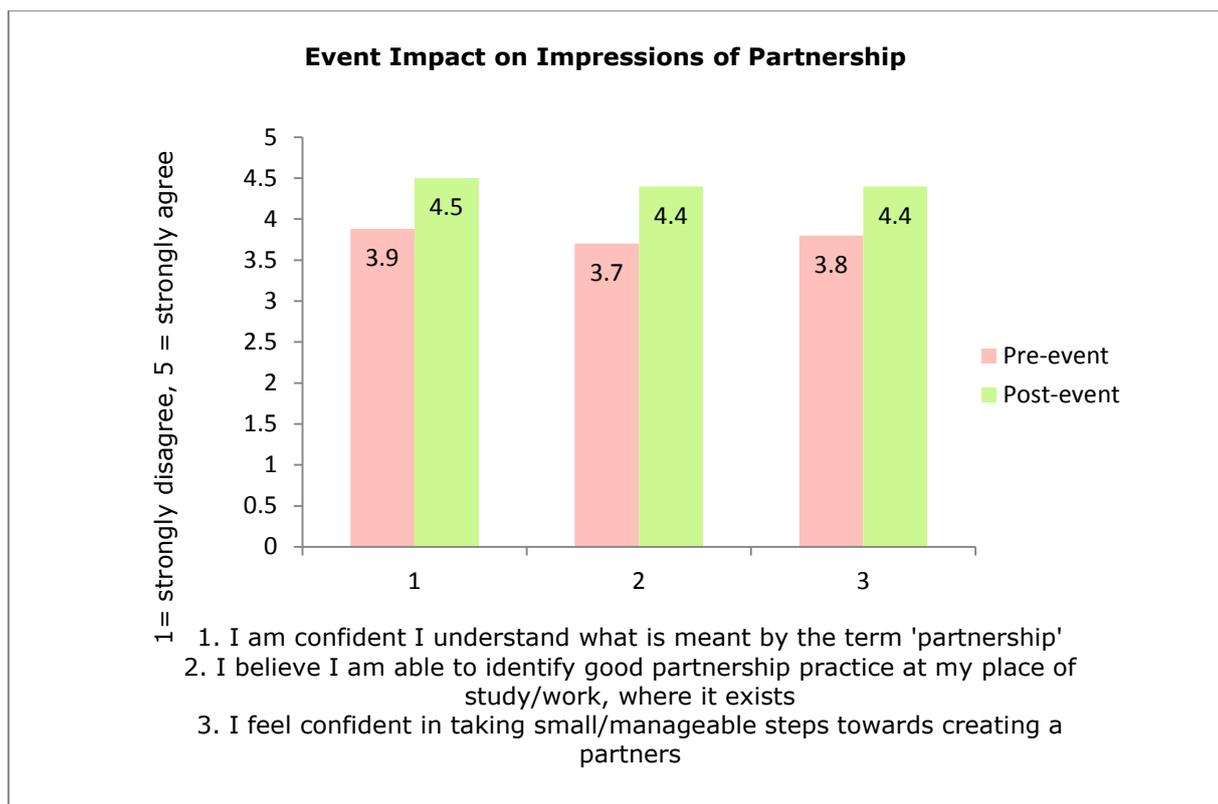


Fig.4 'Partnership for Wales' conference: event impact

On average, after the event, attendees felt more confident in their understanding of partnership working, felt more able to identify good partnership practice at their place of study or work, and demonstrated increased confidence in taking small steps towards creating a partnership culture within their own context.

In terms of examining the longer term impact of the event, the plan is to allow four months to elapse before distributing the impact survey, found in Appendix 2, to attendees of the conference. This will allow us to collect and analyse data in October and November 2014, ready to inform planning for next year's conference, as well as the ways in which we can continue to support students' unions and institutions in Wales. It is predicted that higher management within Welsh universities who attended will have experienced an increased level of communication with student representatives on the subject of partnership and of working to improve the student experience together.

Informally, through conversations with attendees from this conference it has so far been possible to discern at the very least, a degree of improvement in their engagement with the concept of partnership and empowering the student voice. One attendee from Cardiff University – who, when upon initially meeting the Wise Wales Development Officer, described how his department very much viewed students as customers for which they provided a service - responded, "I learnt so much from you regarding student partnership, and it has reshaped how I approach my work."

Recommendations

- Increase the number of Wales-based presenters, keeping in line with the case-study approach
- Allow dedicated time for networking (at least 30 minutes)

3. Subsidise Welsh students' unions to attend NUS UK's flagship event, Education and Representation

This three day course, considered to be a summer-training essential, has become something of a staple in the calendars of UK sabbatical officers, and for the second year running Wise Wales has subsidised Welsh attendance. In July 2014, the beginning of the academic year 2014/15, sabbatical officers and staff from four Welsh students' unions attended the event: Cardiff, Swansea, Bangor, and Aberystwyth. The president and vice-president of Glyndwr University Students' Guild attempted to register, but were placed on a waiting list due to oversubscription from other students' unions across the UK. This is something that will need to be addressed with the NUS UK events team, for future reference, to ensure fair participation from Welsh delegates. Representatives from University of South Wales Students' Union were disappointed to miss out, but felt that even in spite of the Wise Wales bursary, that it was not a financially viable option for them. Representatives from University of Wales Trinity Saint David Students' Union echoed this opinion, instead deciding to use their resources to send their sabbatical officers to NUS UK's Lead and Change course, as well as the NUS Wales training at Y Talwrn.

For those who did attend, they engaged with the course content extremely well and verbal feedback from delegates of Welsh organisations was extremely positive. It might be prudent to organise specific feedback forms for Welsh delegates, in order to be able to disaggregate their quantitative feedback from other delegates' from around the UK. For those Welsh delegates who were attending the course for a second year running, they were emphatically positive about the quality of the sessions tailored to meet their needs as experienced sabbatical officers.

A session designed to enable Welsh delegates to network with one another, as well as with delegates from other devolved nations, promised to be a successful addition to this year's course, however it was met with mixed reviews. The networking session immediately followed a plenary on NUS UK's general election strategy, and as a result this subject dominated the conversation. Whilst some delegates were very much engaged, it became apparent through their verbal feedback, that others had not been expecting such a linear discussion.

Impact

An opportunity was taken, during the Course Representative Conference 2014, to discuss the Education and Representation course with those present who had attended, in order to obtain an idea of the longer-term impact of their participation. As not all officers who had attended the NUS UK course were present at the Course Representative Conference 2014, separate conversations were set up throughout the year to ascertain the impact. The responses were consistently positive; all attendees felt that the course had benefited them in their personal development journeys and all expressed a willingness to attend again (where applicable), as well as recommending the course to those who would eventually come to succeed them.

Recommendations

Ensure representatives from Welsh students' unions understand that it is a typically oversubscribed course and that early registration is vital
Liaise with NUS UK's events team in order to assign specific feedback forms to Welsh delegates so that we might understand their experiences in greater depth

Keep the 'nations networking' session, but aim to work to a flexible agenda, with someone chairing the discussion

Follow up attendees with an impact survey at the 2015 Course Representative Conference.

4. Mapping current partnership work by examining course rep systems across Wales.

A mapping exercise was completed through a combination of surveys to unions, union visits and telephone calls. We produced a series of headline figures and recommendations based on the mapping exercise. The headlines, based on the data available, were:

- There were in Wales at least 3539 course reps in 2013/14
- Of which, 1567 received some form of training
- Of the 9 institutions included, 8 used tiered course rep structures
- 4 of those 6 students' unions, not taking part in the QAA Institutional Review process, produced an annual quality report
- 7 of those 9 students' unions had held some form of student-led teaching awards (SLTAs).

Our current understanding was previously that without intervention there would be 4 out of what was then 12 students' unions (pre-mergers) completing an annual quality report in 13/14; this number is a result of the fact that three institutions went through the institutional review (IR) process in 13/14 and so did not complete annual quality reports. After the mergers, four out of six students' unions not taking part in the IR process completed an AQR with the support of the Wise Wales Development Officer. Glyndwr University Students' Guild, one of the collective student bodies who were unable to complete an AQR did demonstrate considerable enthusiasm and began preparations to create one - with a view to harnessing the student voice to effect change. Unforeseeable circumstances dictated that the Guild's resources were required elsewhere, which is why they didn't manage to complete the document. The only students' union, therefore, not able to make considerable efforts to engage with the process of completing an AQR was that of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, who accepted an initial meeting and demonstrated AQR buy-in, but failed to respond to further emails and telephone calls from the Wise Wales Development officer. Considerable efforts will need to be made in the 2014/15 academic year to re-engage with this students' union.

At the time of the mapping exercise 8 out of 9 institutions and students' unions had at least one dedicated staff member to support the academic representation system as well as the communications between said students' unions and their respective institutions. Unfortunately this number of overall staff retained after the various mergers is significantly less now, but at least two students' unions have been recruiting multiple academic representation coordinators ready for the 2014/15 academic year, which is incredibly promising.

The mapping exercise showed a definite trend in most institutions having formalised representation structures with dedicated staff, annual statements and SLTAs. Support was put into place throughout the year to support the students' unions currently not operating their representation systems in this manner, but whilst engagement was at times strong (e.g. both unions participated in Wise Wales' conferences and attended one-to-one support meetings) the aforementioned representation systems have seen only minor improvements. It is important to appreciate the difficulty in enacting large-scale changes over the course of a sabbatical officer's term, and Wise Wales needs to ensure that it works with staff members where possible to enable sustainable improvements.

Following on from the recommendations from the 2012/13 Wise Wales Officer, examples of practical partnership were collected and collated throughout the year, some of which can now be found on the Wise Wales online hub. Other collected examples have been used to inspire training materials, i.e. the partnership case study card sorting game, disseminated across various events, including the Course Representative Conference 2014, Partnership for Wales 2014, and WIDAR 2014.

Recommendations

- There seems to be a correlation between the number of dedicated staff members whose role involves supporting the student voice and empowering the representation system and the overall perceived level of engagement by the students' union in taking steps to understand and embed partnership. Whereas there have already been steps taken to increase the number of support staff across several institutions and students' unions, Wise Wales recommends that unions make every effort to work with their respective institutions to increase staff support where possible, and should endeavour to facilitate this.
- Annual quality reports are becoming an increasingly popular tool to facilitate conversations between students' unions and institutions; Wise Wales has clearly seen this year that the buy-in for creating these documents is definitely present amongst students' unions, and with the right support and guidance, they can complete effective AQRs. Whilst it is unfortunate that Glyndwr University Students' Guild experienced all manner of difficulties throughout the 13/14 academic year, it is important that Wise Wales continues to provide them with bespoke support. They are on course to demonstrate vast improvement in championing the student voice, but they need committed, regular, tailored support. Due to the autonomous working manners of many of the other Welsh students' unions in carrying out an AQR project, Wise Wales can spare the time to devote further resources to struggling members, whilst offering slightly more tangential support to those more confident in completing the process.
- Unlike the academic year 12/13, the 13/14 action plan did not include train-the-trainer programmes or intensive course representative training (with the exception of the Course Representative Conference, a stand-alone, one-day event). The fact that 44% of the total course representatives in Wales received some form of training is promising, given the difficulties caused by merging institutions and the absence of dedicated Wise Wales training days. In order to improve this number, several representatives from a range of students' unions have expressed a desire for there to be a formal Wise Wales training package which can be hosted online to ensure as many students have access to it as possible. Whilst steps have been taking to create basic training packages and activities on the Wise Wales hub by the current Development Officer, it would be ideal for Wise Wales to pursue the development of a more sophisticated training framework to be implemented across Wales.

These recommendations have been, and will be, disseminated and promoted to institutions at events including the 2014 Course Rep Conference and upcoming 2015 conference, through the online Wise Wales online hub and through the 2015 'Partnership for Wales' conference.

5. Create a staff network for those working within the student engagement and partnership areas, both students' union and institution focused, encouraging them to share ideas, best practice and challenges.

The concept of providing space for staff working within student engagement and partnership to network has been incorporated informally into both of this academic year's main events, namely the Course Representative Conference and the 'Partnership for Wales' event. For both of these events in the future, as well as any other appropriate events hosted by the Wise Wales partners, it is recommended to embed

designated sessions for this to occur, not only providing a physical space for practitioners to share ideas and challenges, but to enhance the quality of said events.

In August 2014, an official network was set up to facilitate the sharing of best practice, as well as complementing the physical networking spaces that will factor into a range of future Wise Wales events. This network primarily operates as an online group, communicating via email. Each member has been categorised into a Welsh region (see Appendix 3) and it is planned that the Wise Wales Student Partnership Consultants for the 2014/15 academic year will use the opportunities available when visiting certain locations to meet up with, where possible, members of the network also based in that region. The aim of this is to promote a sense of community between staff members based in close proximity, as well as minimising the time and cost involved in lengthy travel. When a Wise Wales Student Partnership Consultant meets with regional network members, the idea is to then communicate back to the wider network via email, the topics of discussion. This method of communication will accompany the ongoing discussions taking place online.

The response from members when responding to the network invite was extremely positive, and whilst it is too soon to measure the impact of the network, it is clear that this is something that practitioners genuinely want to engage with and use to facilitate their own work. Invitation responses included:

- "Delighted to be included in the network. It's an excellent idea and, as you say, doesn't need to be anything over complicated. I am happy to take part in any way at all, via e-mail contributions or regional meetings."
- "Great idea, thanks for the invite!"

Recommendations

- Ensure that Wise Wales Student Partnership Consultants meet in person with a range of regional representatives, at least bi-annually, taking advantage of every opportunity where staff are likely to be in the same place at the same time, i.e. the 'Partnership for Wales' conference 2015
- Join up the 2014/15 Wise Wales objective of showcasing a monthly example of best practice with the staff network by harnessing their ongoing experiences in order to inform it.

6. Create an online information hub providing an array of practical support materials for those working within student engagement and partnership.

The Wise Wales online hub was launched at the beginning of October 2014; its aim is to act as a central resource for information about student engagement and partnership in Wales, as well as providing an array of practical support for students' union and university staff working within that area. The impact is intended to manifest itself through practitioners across Wales sharing their experiences, discussing and debating topical issues and utilising the resources on offer to enhance their representation structures, or at the very least be inspired to begin a dialogue with Wise Wales about the range of support on offer.

The core content of the hub splits into roughly two categories: 'Current Projects' and 'Training and Resources'. The Current Projects section of the site holds all of the Wise Wales objectives as detailed in the annual action plan, split up into individual categories. Within each category, users can find links to learn more about the work on that particular initiative, as well a number of downloadable resources to facilitate their involvement. The 'Training and Resources' tab is a much more practical section, offering a more

extensive range of complementary training and guidance documents for users to download, to equip themselves with the knowledge of how to do things like carry out a course representative training workshop when you have no experience, or conducting training activities which stimulate thought and debate, allowing participants to engage in role play and challenge the status quo. These resources also include work carried out by students' unions across Wales, enabling the hub to act as a national platform for best practice. There are currently 24 downloadable resources for users to access - a number that exceeds the original target, set by the previous NUS Wales Policy and Public Affairs Manager, of 15 downloadable resources; we expect this number will grow considerably over time.

Other sections of the website include a news page for up-to-date articles detailing Wise Wales' progress and activities, as well as a 'Thinking and Practice' section for users to access - as well as share - practical and theoretical material on the subject of student engagement and partnership. The 'Your Say' page is dedicated to encouraging users to submit their own questions and discussion topics; the website tone as a whole is intended to make our stakeholders feel warmly invited into a nation-wide conversation. The remainder of the website - the homepage, events page and 'About Us' page - serves to provide users with a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Wise Wales, its core values, and its mission statement.

The reaction to the launch of the website has been extremely positive, with many commenting on the user-friendly interface and interesting content. It is expected that creating such a useful communication pathway between Wise Wales and its stakeholders will be invaluable in promoting its work and achievements.

Recommendations

- Throughout 2014/15, Student Partnership Consultants should aim to upload at least one new downloadable resource per month, whether that's a training supplement, workshop, a case study or a best practice article.
- Those responsible for managing the website should be prepared to adapt it according to the responses of its primary users.
- Impact measures should be taken at the end of 2014/15 to ascertain how effective the hub has been in affecting stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours towards partnership working.
- Several students' union and university staff members across Wales have expressed a firm desire for Wise Wales to develop a sophisticated training package for academic representatives that can be housed on the hub, to enable atypical studies, such as those responsible for younger or vulnerable people, part-time and long-distance students to engage with the representative processes in place. There is a strong feeling across many students' unions that they want to ensure as many different communities of students are represented as possible - and have the chance to become partners in their education - but feel overwhelmed by the task of addressing this innovatively and effectively.

7. Develop the capacity for all HE students' unions to undertake Annual Quality Reports (AQRs).

For the academic year 2013/14 a total of seven HE students' unions in Wales completed either an Annual Quality Report (AQR) or a Student Written Submission (SWS) for the QAA review process.

AQR	SWS
Aberystwyth University Students' Union	Cardiff Metropolitan Students' Union

Bangor University Students' Union	Cardiff University Students' Union
University of South Wales Students' Union	Swansea University Students' Union
University of Wales Trinity Saint David ¹	

It is worth noting that Glyndwr University Students' Guild had every intention of completing an AQR and had engaged in several meetings with the Wise Wales Development Officer – in person, via email, and on the phone – in order to initiate data collection and form a basic structure of the document. This process was interrupted by the ongoing issues involved in supporting Glyndwr University's international students, and an executive decision was made to allow Glyndwr University Students' Guild to focus their time and resources upon attending to this more pressing matter.

There is a notable disparity between some students' unions in Wales and their capability - as well as autonomy - in completing an AQR, which is something the future Student Partnership Consultants of the Wise Wales project will need to consider when supporting students' unions. For example, Aberystwyth and Bangor University Students' Unions opted to work closely with the institutional and union staff available to them to create their AQRs, preferring to work autonomously and engage with Wise Wales in other ways. The quality of their AQRs was of a high standard and their documents will prove to be excellent examples of good practice to other students' unions across Wales. Other students' unions accepted the offer of support from Wise Wales enthusiastically, including those aligned with University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Glyndwr University. University of South Wales preferred to engage with Wise Wales more peripherally, accepting the AQR guidance created by the Development Officer, but preferring to use it to facilitate their relatively autonomous creation of the document. Unfortunately the only students' union to not produce (or begin to produce) an AQR was the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Students' Union. A commitment was made by the then president of the students' union to undertake the project, who was also as a result, the recipient of a selection of Wise Wales resources designed to facilitate the creation of the document. Support meetings were set up and subsequently cancelled by the president, followed by increasingly sparse communication on the overall part of the students' union, to the point where phoning would consistently lead to a voicemail. The then president subsequently departed and was replaced with a newly elected president, though still the problems in communication persist.

The students' union of University of Wales Trinity Saint David have by far travelled the greatest distance in terms of working to enhance student engagement and partnership practice and will soon complete their AQR. During the academic year 2013/14, sabbatical officers, along with the Pro Vice Chancellor of Student Experience undertook a project where they formulated a strategy of partnership working across several areas of the student experience, to ensure enhancement would take place. This document included suggestions from the student body for improvement, and recommendations of the ways in which they could work with the university to enact change. The students' union was initially reluctant to take on the task of developing a formal AQR, but when the new Education and Representation Manager was appointed and keen to support this notion, the idea became much less daunting and far more attainable. With the support of the Wise Wales Development Officer they are now working to complete a retrospective AQR, collecting archived evidence and harnessing the hard work they had already carried out in furthering the partnership agenda in 2013/14.

¹ With the exception of University of Wales Trinity Saint David Students' Union, who are in the process of completing their Annual Quality Report retrospectively, based on evidence collected during the 2013/14 academic year.

Each students' union which deigned to produce an AQR in 2013/14 has bought into, and demonstrated a commitment to ensuring it becomes an annual assignment which bodes well for the sustainability of a culture of partnership.

Regarding the impact of these AQRs, the very process of enacting change within university practice and policy can be lengthy and so the plan is to distribute the survey (found in Appendix 4) at the end of the autumn term within the 2014/15 academic year to allow time for changes to take place. Where students' unions give their permission, AQRs will be showcased on the Wise Wales website to promote the sharing of best practice.

Recommendations

- Ensure students' unions in Wales are supported to clearly demonstrate the evidence they have collected to reinforce their ideas for change
- Work closely with students' unions which have demonstrated a need for in-depth, tailored support, and continue to provide peripheral assistance to those who are completing AQRs to a consistently high standard
- Adapt the guidance document where necessary to reflect the changing nature of the Welsh higher education sector
- Address the issues in communicating with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and acquire their buy-in of the notion of AQRs; if this proves too challenging, undertake a sensitive mediation between Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Students' Union and University of South Wales Students' Union to try and facilitate the creation of a joint AQR which reflects the independent nature of each institution.

8. Produce an annual summary of student engagement to replace the Wise Wales action plan

The summary of the partnership and student engagement activity from 2013/14 was completed with contributions from every partner organisation within the Wise Wales steering group. The report is expected to be published on the newly launched Wise Wales hub, as well as being disseminated by the Wise Wales partners on their respective websites. It will serve to reinforce the collaborative and strength-in-unity approach Wise Wales takes in embedding partnership, to higher education stakeholders.

9. Represent Wise Wales at various events and conferences, including running workshops at these events

Wise Wales has so far formally presented and delivered partnership material at:

- NUS UK's Education and Representation 2013: four-day tutoring
- Swansea University Students' Union Course Rep Conference: plenary and workshop
- Aberystwyth University Students' Union Course Rep Conference: plenary and workshop
- Wise Wales Course Representative Conference 2014: workshops
- HEA Future Directions Conference: workshop
- Wise Wales 'Partnership for Wales' conference 2014: workshops
- QAA Annual Conference 2014: panel debate amongst representatives from the devolved UK nations
- NUS UK Education and Representation 2014: three-day co-tutoring

- WIDAR Conference 2014: workshop
- Cardiff University's Student Engagement Conference 2014: pending, invite to deliver a guest plenary

Wise Wales has also been present at other sector events, with a view to networking and promoting the project's mission statement and brand. These include:

- NUS UK Course Representative Conference 2014
- TSEP and QAA's Student Engagement and Partnership Conference 2014
- NUS Wales' summer officer training programme 'Y Talwrn'

10. Explore funding bid potential

Wise Wales submitted a proposal with a view to securing funds from the HEA to develop a research project which would explore the operation and impact of two schemes both operating on partnership principles, specifically the Learner Innovation Grants (LIG) of University of South Wales and the Cardiff Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (CUROP) at Cardiff University. Both schemes enable students to gain experience of designing and developing projects which involve positively influencing change in the student experience. This has fostered a student-partnership environment and is enabling change in learning, teaching and research developments while also providing students with valuable experience, enhancing their future employability opportunities. Wise Wales, in collaboration with Cardiff University and University of South Wales, proposed to pilot the aforementioned strategies across other institutions in Wales, employing students to help drive the project.

Unfortunately the outcome of the bid was never released due to the organisational changes taking place across the HEA.

Recommendations

- Continue to seek out further funding to expand upon the work of Wise Wales, paying particular attention to opportunities for working in collaboration with student engagement and partnership practitioners across the Welsh sector
- Designing projects and schemes (alone, or in sole collaboration with institutional representatives) in order to benefit students in Wales can sometimes render said initiatives a little prescriptive; endeavour to harness the student voice to inform all funding bids.

11. Explore funding for FE inclusion within Wise Wales

This was undertaken by the Policy and Public Affairs Manager at the time, and carried out successfully, securing Welsh Government funding to facilitate a Wise Wales further education partnership agenda, to commence at the start of the 2014/15 academic year.

Recommendations

- Develop and empower representative voice of students in further education to support and embed quality improvement and enhancement through training sessions

- The training materials and delivery should fully enable further education learners to be partners in the future planning and self-assessment of their institutions, in line with the Welsh Government's 'Learner Voice Strategy Guidance', as well as use the outcomes of the Learner Voice Wales survey

Additional Activity

- The Wise Wales Development Officer worked in collaboration with The Student Engagement Partnership to host a NSS training day for staff and officers across Wales to learn how to utilise their institution's results to support student-led change. This was attended by 19 sabbatical officers and staff members working within partnership and student engagement, across Wales. Attendees reported that they felt much more confident in harnessing NSS results as an evidence base after the event.
- The project provided strategic support to several students' unions at different points throughout the year in improving course representative training, particularly Swansea University Students' Union.
- Wise Wales was represented on a number of sector committees, including the HEA Learner Journeys and Students as Partners work-strands, as well as the HEA Future Directions conference planning committee.
- The HEA Wales Future Directions work-strand 'Students as Partners' (SaP) has evolved into a consultative body to enable the Future Directions work-strand leaders to use the student voice to inform and influence their work, as a means of contributing to a culture of partnership in Wales. Due to the restructure of HEA Wales over the 2013/14 academic year, and the unfortunate sudden absence of any administrative support from HEA Wales for the SaP, the administration of the network has been subsumed into Wise Wales' scheme of work. The network is comprised of two student chairs, as well as one sabbatical officer and one student representative from each higher education institution. Discussions are intended to be held primarily online, with infrequent face to face meetings.

Recommendations

Over the academic year 2014/15, NUS Wales will enable Wise Wales to build upon the work carried out in its formative years. Throughout this report are a range of recommendations including those around enhancing the mapping exercise, the 2015 course representative conference, the Partnership for Wales 2015 conference, and the evolution and development of the supporting materials available on the Wise Wales website. We would also recommend that:

- The Wise Wales project continues to maximise links with The Student Engagement and Partnership initiative in NUS UK to ensure, where possible, duplication is avoided and resources shared
- Wise Wales holds the second Partnership for Wales conference targeted at officers, union staff and institutional staff to further develop the partnership agenda across Wales
- The partners of Wise Wales should work together to update the Statement for Partnership in Welsh Higher Education, developing innovative ways to ensure it both reaches and benefits its desired audience, and gains the national recognition it deserves
- Consider building 'partnership in further education' sessions into the second Partnership for Wales conference, to reflect Wise Wales' evolution in supporting the learner voice within the post 16 education sector.

Other activities to be carried out by Wise Wales in 2014/15 include:

- A 2015 Course Representative Conference to be held in February 2015
- Academic representation training programmes to be carried out within Welsh further education colleges
- Continuing to subsidise unions to attend NUS' Education and Representation course
- Expanding the mapping exercise, further elaborating upon the partnership practice taking place across Wales
- Providing further support to unions undertaking annual quality reports, especially those with few or no staff supporting sabbatical officers
- Further investigating the impact of student charters and HEFCW funding guidance in order to develop a longitudinal overview of their effectiveness, which may influence the Wise Wales scheme of work in the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Course representative conference impact survey 2013/14

I am confident I understand what is meant by the term 'partnership' between my institution and students' union.

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

Please briefly summarise what partnership working now means to you. (Is it achievable? What might it look like?) If possible, please give examples of where you feel this happens at your place of study/work:

I feel confident in taking steps (small or large) towards creating a culture of partnership within my own place of study/work?

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

How has your attitude towards partnership working changed since attending this event?

What effect has this had on the way you engage with the course representation processes at your place of study/work?

What is your proudest achievement in your role as a course rep/sabbatical officer/staff member (please delete as applicable) since attending the Course Representative Conference?

Please use this space to add any further comments regarding the impact of the Wise Wales Course Representative Conference 2014, or notes regarding your general experiences and attitudes towards student engagement and partnership after attending.

Can you foresee a time in the future when universities and their respective student bodies can work together in partnership to create the best possible student experience?

Yes No

**Thank you for taking the time to help us understand the impact our events have.
As ever, for more information or support within student engagement and partnership activity,
please contact Alex (alex.butterworth@nus-wales.org.uk)**

Appendix 2: Partnership for Wales impact survey 2013/14

I am confident I understand what is meant by the term 'partnership' between an institution and students' union.

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

Please briefly summarise what partnership working now means to you. (Is it achievable? What might it look like?) If possible, please give examples of where you feel this happens at your place of study/work:

I feel confident in taking steps (small or large) towards creating a culture of partnership within my own place of study/work?

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

How has your attitude towards partnership working changed since attending this event?

What effect has this had on the way you engage with the student engagement and partnership processes at your place of study/work?

What is your proudest achievement in your role since attending the Partnership for Wales event?

Please use this space to add any further comments regarding the impact of the Wise Wales Partnership for Wales Conference 2014, or notes regarding your general experiences and attitudes towards student engagement and partnership after attending.

Can you foresee a time in the future when universities and their respective student bodies can work together in partnership to create the best possible student experience?

Yes No

**Thank you for taking the time to help us understand the impact our events have.
As ever, for more information or support within student engagement and partnership activity,
please contact Alex (alex.butterworth@nus-wales.org.uk)**

Appendix 3: Initial membership list for the Wise Wales Staff Network

Name	Role	Institution or Students' Union	Location	Region
Sam Reynolds	Representation and Experience Co-ordinator	Aberystwyth University	Aberystwyth	West
John Glasby	CEO	Aberystwyth University Students' Union	Aberystwyth	West
Danielle Barnard	Academic Representation Unit Co-ordinator	Bangor University Students' Union	Bangor	North West
Rebecca Jones	Course Representative Co-ordinator	Bangor University Students' Union	Bangor	North West
Jo Caulfield	Student Engagement Officer	Bangor University	Bangor	North West
Rhys Dart	Union Direction	Bangor University Students' Union	Bangor	North West
Bethan Foweraker	Student Voice Officer	Cardiff University	Cardiff	South East
Dan Palmer	CEO	Cardiff University Students' Union	Cardiff	South East
Brian Weir	Head of Student Services/CEO SU	Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	Cardiff	South East
Denize McIntyre	Senior Project Officer (Student Experience)	University of South Wales	Trefforest	South East
Matt Hurst	Representation, Campaigns and Research Co-ordinator	Swansea University Students' Union	Swansea	South
Felicity Wagstaff	Academic Registry and Course Rep Liaison	Swansea University Students' Union	Swansea	South
Estelle Hart	Education and Representation Manager	University of Wales Trinity Saint David &	Swansea	South
Sian Evans	Student Engagement Coordinator	Cardiff Metropolitan University	Cardiff	South

Appendix 4: Annual Quality Report Impact Survey 2013/14

Student representatives feel confident that the university appropriately acknowledged, reviewed and respected the recommendations made by the student body within the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

I am confident that creating the ASR for the purpose of highlighting areas for improvement and commending best practice within the university has, either directly or indirectly benefited the wider student experience.

Not at all Confident **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** *Extremely confident*

In what ways have the students' union and university worked together to address the issues raised in last year's Annual Quality Report?

What kind of constructive criticism (positive and negative) did the university have for the student-led AQR (if any)?

What are you most proud of achieving as a result of sharing the ASR with the university?

Please use this space to add any further comments regarding the impact of your Annual Quality Report, or notes regarding your general experiences and attitudes towards student engagement and partnership after creating it.

Thank you for taking the time to help us understand the impact of Annual Student Reports.

As ever, for more information or support within student engagement and partnership activity, please contact Alex (alex.butterworth@nus-wales.org.uk)

Appendix 5: Summary of the Wise Wales Partners' Student Engagement and Partnership Activity

Wise Wales Student Engagement and Partnership: Summary

With the achievements of 2012/13 proudly in its wake, Wise Wales has continued to progress from strength to strength. The project is the leading cross-sector student engagement and partnership initiative in Wales, wearing the title deservedly after another successful year of achievements.

One of the highlights of 2013/14 was the launch of the Statement for Partnership in Higher Education, a document which serves to facilitate a dialogue between students, students' unions and institutions on the ways in which they can work together in partnership and achieve that common goal: enhancing the student experience.

Another defining success of the year comes in the form of the inaugural Partnership for Wales conference, an event that attracted over 55 delegates from across Wales and saw authentic, lively discussion and debate on the direction that partnership working will take in the future. It is expected that this event will become an annual staple in the diaries of those working within the student engagement and partnership agendas across the nation.

The work carried out in achieving the set priorities for Wise Wales in the 2013/14 academic year has been a result of a tremendous effort on the part of all of the partners committed to driving forward this initiative. This work comes in many forms, both collaboratively and through individual organisations, and we would like to share some of our partners' achievements.

Higher Education Academy Wales

Students as Partners is a core strand of the HEA's Future Directions quality enhancement programme in Wales. The Students as Partners network was launched at the HEA's Future Directions conference, 2-3 April 2014, and consists of student representatives from institutions across Wales, as well as key sector agencies. The network and will be used by all three of the new Future Directions work strands (Learner Journeys, Inspiring Teaching, and Distinctive Graduates) to gather student views, opinion and guidance, avoiding the need for each strand to separately develop different partnerships with students. The network will be chaired by two students Cari Davies, Cardiff University, and Jacob Ellis, Aberystwyth University, during 2014-15.

The first Students as Partners network meeting took place on 11 July 2014 at the University of South Wales, which brought together newly appointed members of the network from institutions across Wales, with representatives from the Future Directions Steering Group (FDSG), and each of the work strand leaders. It was a lively and successful event, which featured interactive sessions from each of the work strand leaders and built strong links to enable the network to support the work strands as they take their work forward."

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

The impact of our engagement with Wise Wales can be seen across a wide range of the work we carried out in the past year. In 2013/14 HEFCW carried out a review of the impact of the guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation W14/04HE. As a consequence of this review we published W14/06HE: Revised guidance on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation and W14/05HE: Revised guidance on the development of student charters. These circulars revised both sets of guidance to make them more useful to students, student unions, and institutions. Circular W14/06HE also referenced and disseminated the Wise Wales partnership statement. We have also increased the emphasis on students as partners within revisions and updates of policy documents, e.g. W14/31HE: Revised Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology (ELTT) strategy and W14/08HE: Strategic Approach to the Student Experience 2013/14 to 2015/16, which serves to illustrate the importance we place on partnership across our work.

Universities Wales

Universities Wales is committed to working with students as partners, and engages in a wide range of initiatives to work towards embedding this practice across the sector. One example is the 'Study in Wales' project, which is developing an overarching international brand for Welsh universities. Students have been involved from the project's inception, including contributing to the development of the key messages, and steering the development of the brand. Working in partnership with international students has been, and continues to be, a core value of this project. Another example of this approach is through our committee structure. The Universities Wales Learning and Teaching Advisory Group helps to embed partnership working right across Wales, via high profile initiatives, for example, the Future Directions quality enhancement programme, and the development of the new Higher Education Review process.

Quality Assurance Agency

QAA has committed to continue to support student engagement work in Wales and as such, is funding Wise Wales on a programme of work throughout 2014/15. They have further supported this work by delivering a session at the Wise Partnership for Wales conference and presenting at the sector briefings for Institutional Review Wales (IRW). Following the recent move to the HER Wales process, QAA have created a "Wales Survival Guide Lead Student Representatives", which will be available from 2014/15 onwards. The student engagement team also piloted the student engagement advisers scheme in England in 2013/14 to support institutions less comfortable going through the HER process, which was subsequently open to Wales. Furthermore, QAA have regularly showcased the excellent work on student engagement in Wales by featuring positive case studies in their monthly newsletter 'ENGAGE'.

ColegauCymru

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

In accordance with the key theme outlined in the National Academic Plan, Partnership with Students, the Coleg has established a number of structures to ensure that the principle of partnership with students is

central to its activities, and to ensure that the partnership is effectively and actively developed. Again this year, a number of student representatives have been elected members of various internal and national committees. Students have seven seats on the Coleg's Academic Board, and undergraduate representatives are elected on a regional basis.

Student representatives have also been elected members of subject panels, providing students with an opportunity to contribute towards Welsh medium provision planning at a national level. Students have also contributed regularly to the activities of the Coleg's branches within the universities through forums, social events and working with the branch officer to set up frameworks to ensure Welsh language students are represented within student union structures. To that end, a national student forum has been established. The Coleg continues to offer training for all student representatives; a structure which was set up through NUS Wales's support. The training enhances the representatives' skills and prepares them to participate on committees and in meetings. The training also includes an introduction to the work of the Coleg and the higher education sector in Wales.

NUS Wales

The Wise Wales initiative, operating from within NUS Wales, has demonstrated a dearth of activity within student engagement and partnership for the academic year 2013/14. Activities have included hosting the 2014 course Representative Conference at Glyndwr University, attended by representatives from six institutions and students' unions across Wales. Impact measures carried out after the conference have indicated that it positively influenced delegates' attitudes towards and behaviours regarding partnership.

June 2014 also saw the inaugural Partnership for Wales conference, which brought together over 55 delegates from across the nation to come together and discuss, learn about, and share real experiences of the ways that partnership currently manifests itself, as well as debate the shape it might take in the future.

This academic year also saw the launch of the Wise Wales Staff Network, a predominantly online-based community of staff and practitioners working within the realms of student engagement and partnership, brought together to discuss and debate the ways in which partnership working can be enhanced. The network membership currently comprises 13 representatives from eight higher education institutions and students' unions across Wales; a number that is predicated to grow in time as the network establishes itself as a staple communication platform.

Wise Wales also provided support for students' unions in Wales completing their annual quality reports (AQRs) in order to help maximise the effectiveness of the collective student voice. These reports are annual, bite-sized, evidence based documents which reflect the changing state of students' experiences and are used to develop a dialogue for change with the institution. Four students' unions, not undergoing the Higher Education Review, completed AQRs which are being, and will be used to shape students' experiences throughout 2014/15.

The Wise Wales online hub was launched in October 2014, a central resource for all information, support and training materials pertaining to student engagement and partnership activity in Wales. The hub offers users the chance to submit case studies of best practice, begin discussions and debates, as well as offering a selection of material that can be downloaded and used to directly encourage students and staff members to engage with the concept of partnership working and take steps towards achieving it. The site is currently home to 24 downloadable resources for students, staff and practitioners across Wales; a number that is expected to grow measurably over the next academic year.

Due to the initiative's close proximity to NUS Wales' scheme of work, Wise Wales has also been provided with a range of opportunities and events to disseminate its core values, as well as the work it has carried out. These include attending NUS UK's flagship summer training event, Education and Representation 2014, where the then Development Officer was able to co-tutor across a variety of sessions, as well as take part in a devolved nations networking exercise. The initiative also subsidised representatives from four Welsh students' unions to facilitate their participation the sophisticated and valuable residential.

Wise Wales also collaborated with NUS UK to deliver a highly successful training event aimed at helping student representatives and staff to use the National Student Survey to effectively support the running of representation systems, as well as campaigns championing the student voice. This event was attended by staff and officers from five institutions and students' unions across Wales. Wise Wales was also present at the QAA's annual conference, to disseminate Wales' approaches towards student engagement and partnership, in a debate involving representatives from each devolved UK nation. The session was attended by around forty attendees from around the UK, who were receptive to the values and impact of Wise Wales.

Wise Wales looks forward to its scheme of work for the 2014/15 academic year and expects to continue making strides in embedding a student engagement and partnership culture across the Welsh further and higher education sectors. To keep up to date with the work of Wise Wales, please visit www.wisewales.org.uk.

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