
Students' voice

What would you want from
the University of Tomorrow?

Summer 2017



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What would you want from the University of Tomorrow?



How will the global market for higher education change in the next decade? How will new technologies transform the way universities operate? What will effective strategy and governance models look like in future?

The UK higher education sector is currently focused on responding to a rapidly changing policy agenda, the potential impact of Brexit and changing demands from students. There has therefore been less space for higher education leaders to pause for breath to consider and plan for their longer term future. Yet, the higher education institutions of ten years' time will look radically different to the universities of today.

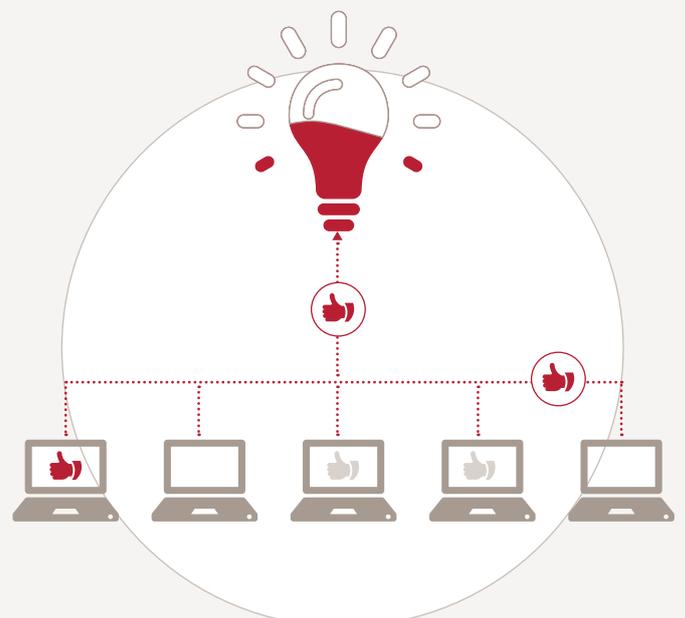
Over the next 12 months PwC's Government & Public Services Higher Education team is collaborating with the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) on a campaign to help universities think about the future by focusing on three key areas: internationalisation, technology and the role of governance and leadership in strategic planning. We will be consulting a variety of stakeholders and leaders in the Higher Education space, starting with the students themselves to give us vital insight as we explore these themes.

In the summer of 2017, we took the opportunity to ask our student interns the question "*Reflecting on your experience of higher education and university, what would you want from the university of tomorrow?*" and challenged them to work together to bring their ideas to life.

Using our 'One' crowdsourcing platform, 370 interns took part and generated 125 ideas and more than 1,000 comments and suggestions. The top 12 ideas based on online votes and feedback were presented at two Dragons' Den-style events and a winner was selected at each. The judging panels comprised industry experts and our own Higher Education specialists.

The One platform

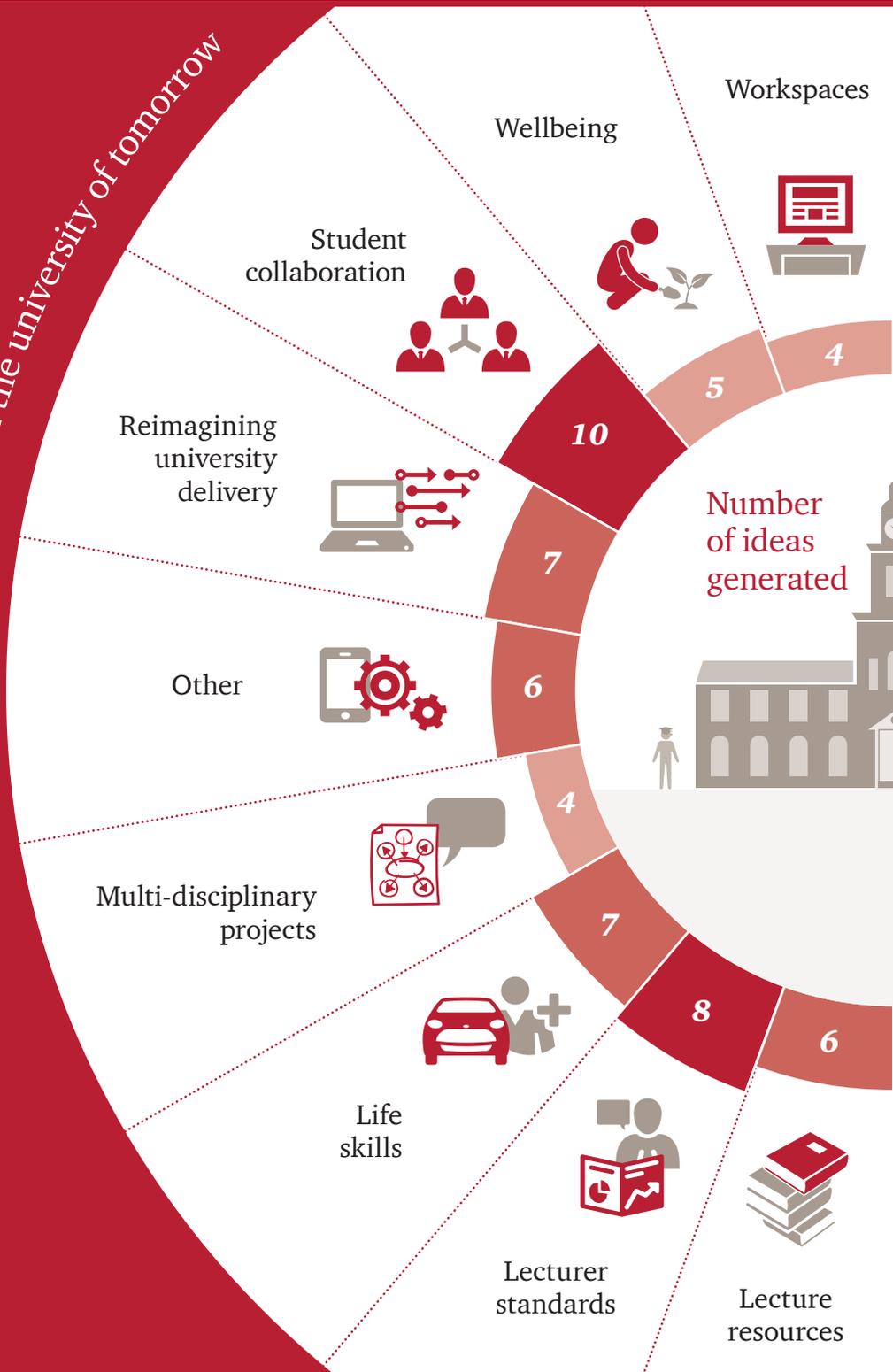
One is a crowdsourcing service which enables people to come together digitally. Focused around an operational or strategic issue we enable a community to have a voice – creating, improving and voting on each others ideas. This ideation and validation provides decision-makers with an informed choice of how to solve issues and maximise opportunities.



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What would you want from the University of Tomorrow?

Areas identified to transform the university of tomorrow



Key Statistics

125
Ideas

1473
Comments

2491
Votes

23,547
Views



Potential solutions



50% of the student's ideas identified Technology enabled solutions



44% of students' ideas proposed a shift in the strategy and governance of universities

Emerging themes

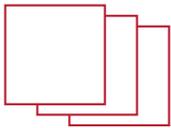
After the initial crowdsourcing process was closed, the following themes emerged when we categorised all of the ideas the students had posted on the One platform and compared them with the types of solutions they had proposed.



Technology

Of particular interest was our student interns' willingness to use technology to solve the problems they identified. The use of technology has become second nature to them whether this be for studying, socialising or even banking. They realise the importance of technology and understand its potential impact within the coming years. This was highlighted in the students' comments on the platform.

What the students said: *"Artificial intelligence is rapidly developing and I believe that universities should adapt to the age of technology and start using AI to give their students a better learning experience."*



Transparency

Another key theme was a shift in their perception of themselves as customers to being stakeholders in their own education looking to influence the strategic direction of their universities as well as get value for money.

What the students said: *"Students are kept in the dark with where the university spends their money, so they struggle to see the value of their investment."*



The importance of place

Many of the interns recognised the importance of making a positive impact in their local communities, using their local area as a source of inspiration for their ideas and another way to add value to their degrees and employability after graduation.

What the students said: *"Universities are very large institutions that have a great impact on their local community. I would like the university of tomorrow to have a comprehensive sustainability strategy that acknowledges the institution's responsibility to wider society and increases its resilience in the current uncertain economic and political climate."*



Collaboration

The interns were enthusiastic about finding different opportunities to work together across multiple disciplines as another way to enhance their degree courses and broaden their horizons.

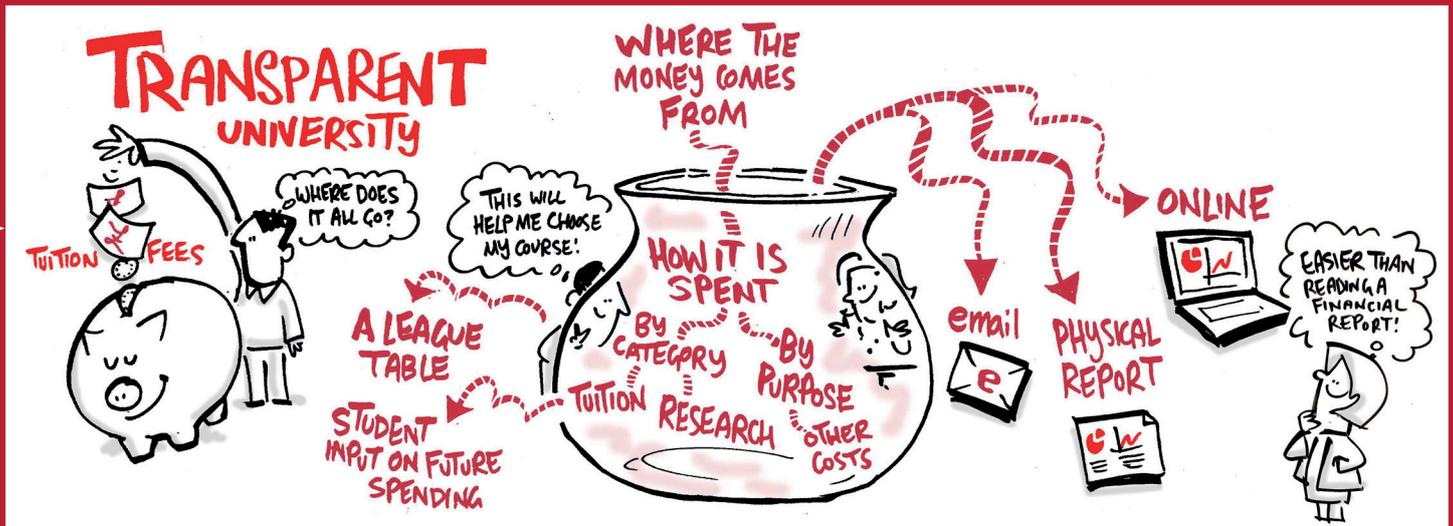
What the students said: *"There's a huge diversity in degree subjects and competencies, but most of us have never had the opportunity to interact with anyone beyond the remit of our own degree course in a work setting. My proposal would be to develop projects across disciplines, to develop our skills before entering the world of work."*



Wellbeing

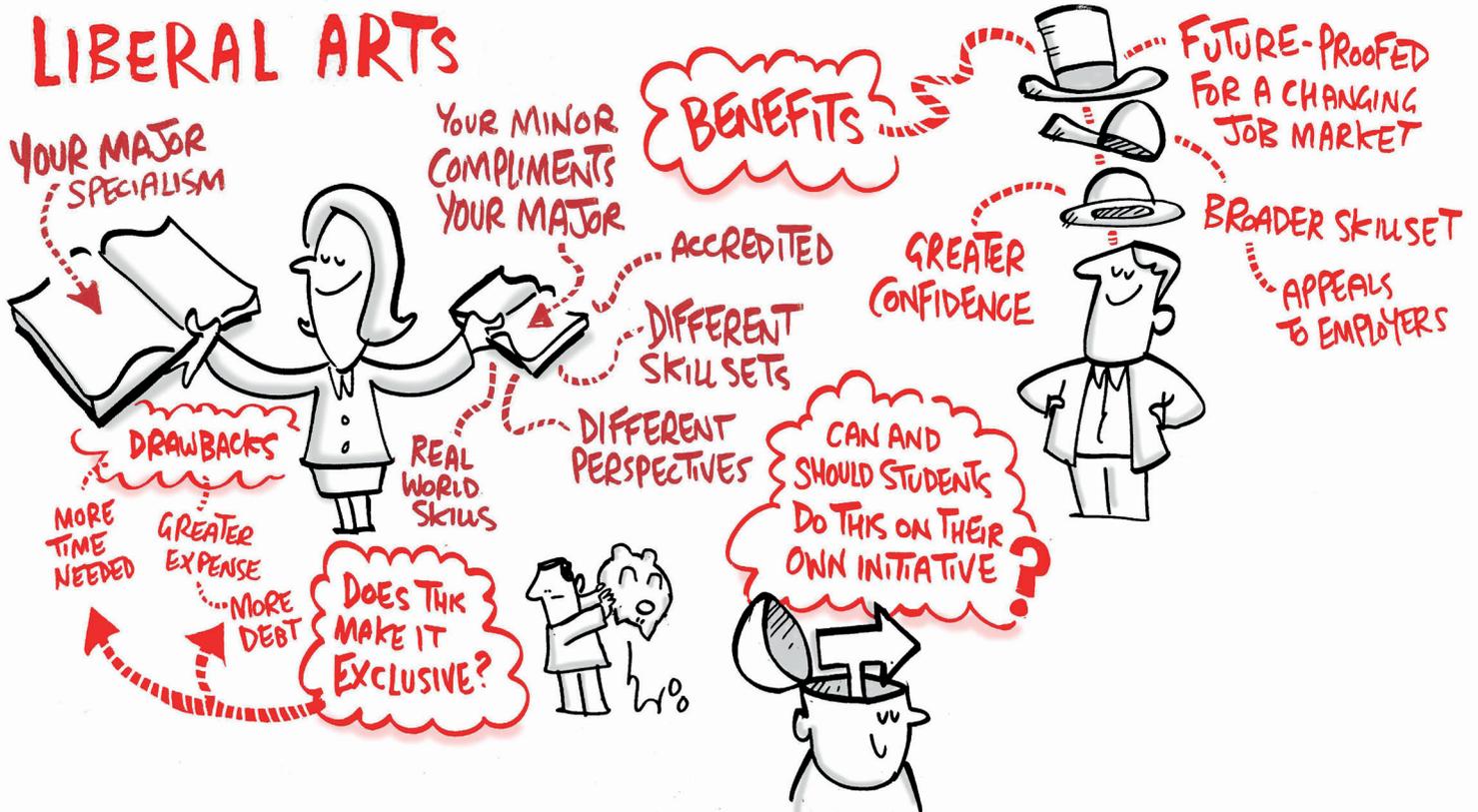
The awareness and desire to support their fellow students on issues beyond academics that impact student life, from mental health to housing was a feature of the challenge. These were tackled with mainly technology enabled proposals, which also highlighted the creativity they believe is required to make a difference.

What the students said: *"Student welfare should be at the heart of the 'University of Tomorrow'."*



The winners

The finalists pitched their ideas showing how they could help our firm and our clients drive efficiency in technology, learning and development, life and wellbeing, and employability. Ideas were judged on commerciality, creativity, practicality and return on investment, together with the overall quality of their presentation.



The winning idea at the first event was a team inspired by the US-Liberal Arts system, proposing that students could apply for a specific degree at a university but could also select the Liberal Arts pathway, taking some modules from other courses during their first year.

The winning idea at the second event was for an app that helps students find suitable rental accommodation in a way that benefits the students, landlords and their university.



What our judges said

“The intern challenge is so valuable because it puts the voice of students at the heart of debates about the future of higher education. I was struck by the diversity of the responses, which covered everything from institutional governance to course design. This reflects the ability of the participants, the growing diversity of higher education and the difficulties inherent in predicting the future. I was also very impressed by how the presentations focused on optimistic, practical and implementable ideas for tackling the challenges that were identified.”

Nick Hillman, Director, Higher Education Policy Institute



“Our interns’ presentations were very impressive and focused on the things of most importance to today’s student experience.”
“They gave us valuable insights into the changing demands of university life - from student well-being and mental health to getting affordable and suitable housing, and from course design to a better understanding how universities are spending their tuition fees.”

Tina Hallett, Leader of Industry for Government & Public Services, PwC



“It was extremely interesting to hear recent students assess the pain points within the higher education system - and impressive that each group focused on a different area. Our university system is world class - but there is still a lot of opportunity to make it better, and exciting to hear from so many young people with the energy and appetite to do that.”

Ian Koxvold, Education Strategy Leader, PwC



Notes

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