

Enterprise

Our Enterprise Journey 2008-2010

University of Plymouth
the enterprise university



Introduction

As an ambitious, world-class university, the University of Plymouth embraces change in the furtherance of its mission. Tracing its roots back to 1862 as a School of Navigation, the University has grown in both impact and reputation. Recognised as a centre of excellence in teaching and learning, with some 30,000 students, it has developed world-class research in key areas and plays a major role in civic and regional leadership.



Early in 2008, building on its strong heritage of teaching and research, the University undertook a self-reflective review of the strengths and approaches that distinguished its offering from other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the sector. The working group drawn from the Senior Management Team summarised the approach as enterprise-driven, innovative and transformational with an unmatched offer in terms of its far-reaching community activity. From the outset it was recognised that the engagement, enthusiasm and innovation of both the staff and students across the portfolio of academic and professional areas was very strong. It was also clear that the University had not fully celebrated its positioning and the excellent contribution of its people.



As the working group reported on the enterprise direction:

It allows us to signal our intent to get more closely involved with the economy and with society. Its defining characteristic is that it demands a demonstrable connectedness or engagement with a broad range of societal concerns and issues; economic, social, cultural and environmental.

It is part of the contribution the University can make with its business, social and educational partners through higher level learning in response to the challenges faced by society.

Capturing this innovation and connectivity in approach was summarised in the aspiration – to be '*the* enterprise university' and was the beginning of articulating the University's new strategic vision. This was captured in the Vice-Chancellor's first staff address.

More than just spin-out companies

At Plymouth, while the concept of enterprise embraces traditional activities such as spin-out companies and consultation for industry, it extends far beyond to capture social enterprise, innovation in practice, research, invention and an enterprising mindset and culture. The University is the largest provider of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) in the South West, but in a region of SMEs and socially-driven enterprises, the key feature was innovation and creating an environment for cultural change. Enterprise is about being responsive to customer need, looking for solutions to those difficult-to-answer questions and acknowledging the impact a University can make in a region and beyond.

The aims of our enterprise mission are to:

- work in partnership to lead the economic, social and cultural development of the region, play an active role in the community, encourage volunteering and develop our students as responsible global citizens
- champion innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity across the City and region
- undertake world-class research of high-impact to society and the economy
- further enhance the employment opportunities for our graduates
- use our scholarship to influence regional, national and international decision-makers

- continue to develop expertise in ethical business practices and social enterprise skills
- build a more sustainable future for the University by diversifying income streams

KTP associate Charlie Fowler at Zoefitig



Making a positive impact

It is increasingly acknowledged that universities contribute a great deal to their regions as well as nationally and internationally as engines of economic growth and champions of social cohesion. Universities contribute some £60 billion to the economy and provide direct employment for over 800,000 people. This is larger than either the pharmaceutical or aircraft industries – the knowledge business is big business.

At Plymouth, our mission is to recognise this impact; to become much more interlinked with society and our communities, to meet the needs of business, the professions, the public sector and individuals, becoming better attuned to the priorities of the region and beyond.

Making change happen

The realisation of our heritage and explicit recognition of an enterprise-led approach needed champions, people passionate about the University and an understanding of the changes this more deliberate and overt approach would have. A team of academics and professional staff were selected to participate in a 2008/09 Change Academy project, a national scheme operated by the Leadership Foundation (LF) and the Higher Education Academy to support organisational change projects. The University Change Academy team, supported and mentored during the process by staff of the LF, set out a very clear objective:

// to help staff understand the mission and help identify their contribution. **//**

Showcasing excellence

In the summer of 2008, a new section of the staff intranet was developed to highlight good practice and answer staff questions. This was followed by the production of a DVD, showcasing examples of an enterprise-led approach. Although there was an initial framework definition for enterprise around being confident, open to new opportunities, building on strengths in teaching, learning and research, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, working in partnership and unlocking talent, it was important that University staff also had an opportunity to develop what this approach would mean to them in their work. The Enterprise DVD was launched at the Vice-Chancellor's inauguration in November 2008.

The team developed an action plan with key themes including:

- Clarity of vision, values and our enterprise ethos
- Developing strategy and leadership
- Promoting understanding and communications
- Engaging our stakeholders
- Showcasing and celebrating our excellence and good practice
- Ensuring our planning, processes and systems enable our mission



This was then made available to staff on the website and has since been showcased at all major internal and external events and distributed to key stakeholders. The success of the first DVD and the rate at which the University's enterprise mission has developed has since seen the production of both a follow-up showcase Enterprise DVD as well as a Student Enterprise DVD.

A benchmark staff survey was carried out towards the end of 2008 to establish University staff's awareness of the enterprise mission at this early stage. This showed that 87% were already aware, over half rated their understanding as **'good'** or **'very good'** and when asked **'what does enterprise mean to you?'**, the most frequent answer was **'being creative and innovating'**.

Shaping enterprise from the inside

In December 2008, the University's Senior Management Team began discussions around the subject of what kind of leadership was needed to enable enterprise. A framework based on six core areas was developed based on values and behaviours associated with the mission; *problem solving, planning and briefing, coaching and developing others, building relationships and influencing, team work and team development, determination and drive for performance*. A tailored leadership programme was developed by the Centre of Leadership and Organizational Excellence and offered to all senior staff. The training is currently in the process of being rolled out across the whole University so that there is a common language and vision shared by leaders at all levels.

Café forum discussion sessions were launched in January 2009 to give University staff an opportunity to input into the development of the enterprise mission. These sessions provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, listen to others, discuss experiences and share innovations. These conversations were summarised and reported to the Senior Management Team to consider and inform decision-making. The sessions proved so popular that they have continued as a monthly

activity covering such topics as *social enterprise, school partnership, research excellence, internationalisation, branding and community engagement*. The café forum sessions also helped shape the University's new strategic plan 'Embedding enterprise', getting staff input and ideas on the draft versions, complementing a whole institution consultation on the website. The final document was launched at a celebratory café forum event in November 2009.

The spring term of 2009 saw the University continue its development of enterprise activity. The Enterprise Enablers scheme was established, empowering staff to act as a catalyst for change and help the University further embed the enterprise mission through the promotion of enterprise at local level. The scheme has been the power behind new University-wide initiatives such as Health & Wellbeing Week, which invited staff to **'imagine, create and take a risk'**, get out of their comfort zone and take part in a range of stress-busting activities including meditation, creative writing, complementary therapy and even office aerobics. Today there are over 60 Enterprise Enablers across all levels and areas of the University.



Café Forum



The Health & Wellbeing Week

Enterprise in action

The Flux competition and Sell2Plymouth



The inaugural Vice-Chancellor's Research and Enterprise Conference was launched to demonstrate that enterprise was key to the University's world-class research agenda. The University was also proud to host the national final of the leading student entrepreneurship 'Flux' competition, and the 'Embedding Enterprise in Higher Education Conference'. These events saw the University welcome over 200 students, and 40 universities and businesses from across the UK.

The spring term also brought success through the Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF). The government awarded the University nearly half a million pounds to enable it to support local businesses and individuals. This money was matched pound-for-pound by the University to create 'Enterprise Solutions', a high-profile gateway into the University, which has in just under a year assisted 750 businesses and over 1,600 individuals. The Sell2Plymouth initiative was launched, encouraging small businesses to bid for contracts within the public service sector in Plymouth. Sell2Plymouth has been nominated for two leading Higher Education Awards.

The enterprise ethos is about empowering people and celebrating their success. The Vice-Chancellor's Enterprise Awards were launched in 2009 to recognise achievements and reward outstanding results. These awards will become firmly established as an annual showcase event in Plymouth to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution and achievements of staff, students, community and business partners towards establishing Plymouth as *the* enterprise university.

In 2009, the University was chosen to lead Plymouth's 2009 bid in the national Enterprising Britain competition. The University's performance saw it clinch the regional title for the second year running and represent the South West in the national finals. As a double celebration, the University was also delighted to support one of its alumni in another national enterprise competition, as industrial designer, Oliver Blackwell was shortlisted from thousands for the British Airways Great Britons Award and was named Daily Mail Designer of the Year.

Alongside this success, the first edition of the University's new flagship Enterprise Magazine was created, with over 8,000 copies now published every six months. This publication was another opportunity for the University to showcase talent and expertise and acknowledge its partners.



The Gateway employability centre.

The importance of partnership

Many landmark developments would follow as 2010 approached.

The University of Plymouth and Tamar Science Park won the contract to manage the Pool Innovation Centre (PIC) – the first of its kind in the county of Cornwall. A pioneering £12 million development, PIC will provide business incubation space for both existing and start-up companies.

Plymouth's position as a global centre of excellence for science, innovation and marine energy research received a major boost with the announcement of a £25 million investment plan led by the University, Plymouth City Council and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), to build new facilities and to transform the way world-leading research in the city is turned into commercial success. The plans include a new marine building for the University, housing state-of-the-art research facilities including new wave tank testing equipment that will be unique in the UK.

The University also played a leading partnership role in the creation of a new community garden for the City. The City Jigsaw Garden is a major city centre project that embraces issues of sustainability, regeneration and social and cultural inclusion. The project is being created by a city partnership and is an inspirational example of what can be achieved when our community comes together in a shared vision.

It is partnership successes such as these that led Lord Mandelson to praise the University's collaborative approach to effecting economic transformation through its enterprise agenda. The comments were made at the launch of the government's new strategy for economic growth, with Lord Mandelson citing several examples of where the University of Plymouth has been involved in major projects in the South West.

Plymouth continued to gain national recognition as the University was chosen to lead a ground-breaking HEFCE research project to better understand the

new market space that the enterprise agenda is creating for the Higher Education sector – and develop the business models needed to engage with for social and economic benefit. The 18-month transformational project will build upon the University's pedigree of championing innovation and its success in helping to lead economic transformation in the South West during the recession. The team at Plymouth, working in conjunction with colleagues at Teesside University, will initially examine how 133 HEIs in England and Wales are currently approaching enterprise, and get a clearer understanding of the importance and successful models of partnerships and alliances.

City Jigsaw Garden



Supporting the next business generation

Students are at the heart of everything we do – as a university, they are our lifeblood and the reason for our existence. The enterprise mission is about supporting their ambitions and as it gathers strength and momentum, so too have the opportunities for our students and graduates. The University's flagship business incubation facility Formation Zone has supported a number of graduate businesses and has reached full capacity in just a year and a half. Its success has led to the launch of a second STEM incubation hub, Formation 2.0. Another of the ways in which we are working to assist our graduates and their prospects is the University's new employability centre Gateway, which in

just two months of being opened has hosted over 3,000 visits by students, graduates, employers, members of the public and representatives from community groups. The University also this year won a £400,000 bid from HEFCE to generate graduate jobs in the region through internships. We were awarded 250 places, the largest number in the region and our students now have an outstanding opportunity to experience the workplace alongside their volunteering in the region. Since then our Enterprise Solutions team has been working at full capacity to find and place graduates in positions in the South West – and they have now passed a milestone of 50, with another 70 in the pipeline.



The next chapter...

The University of Plymouth is an established university firmly connected to people and place, now with global reach and impact through its teaching, learning and research activities. From the very outset of our enterprise mission, we have been driven by the societal impact of our work. The University is developing exciting plans that embrace social enterprise and promote the importance of these skills. The University is leading initiatives with other universities, private companies and the third sector.

For the University of Plymouth, social enterprise is a natural progression of an enterprise-led approach. As the UK's top Green University according to People & Planet, the University has an excellent reputation in sustainability and environmental awareness, and intends to use its expertise to further develop the opportunities, knowledge and skills for students, staff and the community. With an emphasis upon an 'ethical skills set', our approach to economic success and corresponding positive social impact has the potential to be an extremely powerful agent of change in the region – and beyond. It is hard to believe that all of this has happened in less than two short years – a blink of an eye in the University's long history. But this is just an evolutionally step, building on what has gone before. In another two years, we will be celebrating our 150 year anniversary and we hope that by then, this journey will have taken us to many more exciting places. This will be a time to reflect on our history but also to look to the future, ensuring we create a lasting legacy for our community. While we were defined by the sea and exploration in the past, we will be defined by a different type of discovery in the future – we will be defined by enterprise that delivers innovation.

Facts and Figures

- The University of Plymouth is a top 50 UK research university with 80% of research judged in the RAE 2008 as being of international repute and the 'most improved' university.
- Plymouth is the UK's top green university according to the People & Planet's 2010 Green League. It is also the top overall performer in the league's history.
- A recent report commissioned by HSBC predicted that Plymouth will become a Robotics hub in the future business landscape of the UK.
- The University is a partner in the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry (PCMD), treating 500 people per day across the South West region.
- Over 12,000 students benefit from placement opportunities each year.
- The University is a leader in knowledge transfer and the largest provider of KTP in the South-West region.
- The University has one of the largest Marine Institutes in Europe and is building a world-class £18m marine facility which will house state-of-the-art research facilities, including the UK's most advanced wave tank testing equipment.
- The University is the leading Higher Education provider in Cornwall as a founding partner of Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) and its vibrant network of 17 FE colleges delivering high-quality HE locally from Penzance to Bristol.
- The University supports an estimated 4,540 FTE jobs in the UK, of which 2,560 are FTE posts directly employed by the University.
- The University contributes £87m to the local economy through expenditure on goods and services.
- The University supplies 82% of the graduates to meet replacement demand in Plymouth and 20% in the South West.
- The majority of organisations that engaged with the University of Plymouth stated that their interactions with the University were 'critically' or 'very important' to their performance.
- University of Plymouth research contributed approximately £10m to regional GVA growth over a five year period.
- The University has almost 1,400 student volunteers, running around 16 student led community projects within the local community. Over a six year period, students and staff have contributed 9,534.5 hours to volunteering activity.
- A total of 2,298 community representatives, including local residents, have participated in community events on campus.
- The University has, through the Economic Challenge Investment Fund, helped 750 businesses and 1,600 individuals.
- Nearly £1.7m in contracts has been tendered for by local companies as a result of the sell2plymouth initiative, of which 85% has been awarded to Plymouth businesses.
- The University is a key partner in projects such as the Pool Innovation Centre in Cornwall, and the Plymouth Science and Innovation Programme, which are focussed on creating jobs businesses and economic success based on higher level skills and enterprise.