

University Alliance

Annual Report

2012-13

About University Alliance

University Alliance brings together 23 innovative and enterprising universities from across the UK to tackle the big issues facing universities, people and the economy. Our aim is to help build a strong future for UK universities by creating a constructive and positive space for debate and new ideas.

Alliance universities are leading an innovative approach to creating entrepreneurial teaching, learning and research environments in partnership with industry and the professions. Together, they tell a compelling story about the role of universities in equipping people, organisations and communities to create new knowledge and new futures.

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Introduction



Over the past 12 months we have seen the reputation and reach of University Alliance increase significantly within the sector, Whitehall and beyond. The position we have developed as a solutions-focused organisation has enabled us to influence government policy to the benefit of our members and the wider sector. This Annual Report brings together some highlights from the past year and demonstrates our impact on higher education policy.

Our key priority in the past year has been to take a step back and look at the long-term vision for our universities and society.

The **university_vision** project has enabled us to communicate the necessities of taking a long-term view of present issues in higher education if we are to meet the needs of our ever changing economy. This project increased our profile amongst audiences we have not traditionally targeted and has led to us generating significant income through sponsorship and consultancy work. The next stage of this project, **uni_funding**, will look at how we can ensure our funding system is able to support the future needs of the UK. We have launched our key principles for any future funding system and will be progressing with the project in 2013-14.

Other reports and events have worked to promote the value of Alliance universities and tackle misconception of our part of the sector. **Start-up: a story**, which launched at the Houses of Parliament, demonstrated the huge role universities are playing in supporting entrepreneurial students and activity. This project included a toolkit to provide practical information for budding entrepreneurs as well as clear policy asks for politicians to ensure that the success of Alliance universities can be championed and followed.

Growing Global Graduates brought together employability case studies from each of our universities and found high levels of satisfaction amongst international students with the employment support they get from Alliance universities. In addition, to our project work we have also responded to various consultations, Government announcements and negative media stories. This has also been a successful year in terms of influence on Government reviews. Two Alliance board members, Professor Wendy Purcell from Plymouth University and Professor Graham Henderson from Teesside University acted as Expert Advisers to the Witty Review. We have been highly commended for our high quality responses to the Witty and Growth Review teams and we have also successfully lobbied the Department for Education on the issue of school destination data.

While we continue to have a constructive, solutions-focused approach, we are increasingly taking the role of a critical friend to Government and policy makers. This is to ensure decisions are made with the interest of the wider sector, not just a selective number of universities. We have established ourselves as leaders in the sector and have developed a collaborative approach on many of our programmes of work to ensure greater impact and to promote the work of Alliance universities to influential stakeholders.

We should celebrate a truly successful year for University Alliance. Having successfully incorporated, we have evolved as an organisation with a new Directors Group, led

by Professor Steve West, an expanded staff team and new member institutions. We have also expanded our international reach with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN). This innovative collaboration with the ATN is already having a positive impact on our reputation in the UK as well as building bridges between our two countries that will be key to ensuring our position as leading, global players in the international higher education market.

While we should celebrate a job well done we should not underestimate the challenges that lie ahead. If universities are to remain central to growth and the life and wellbeing of our society, we must work hard to champion the value of universities and the need for a new sustainable way of funding higher education. I look forward to working with you over the year ahead.

Libby Hackett, Chief Executive | University Alliance

University Alliance brings together 23 innovative and enterprising universities from across the UK to tackle the big issues facing universities, people and the economy. A list of members can be found on page 28 of this document.

Influencing Key Decision-Makers

Government and Parliament

A major focus of University Alliance is to build and maintain strong, constructive relationships with key decision-makers within Government and Parliament. We keep this focus at the core of what we do, helping us prioritise when and what we say and do. We will always try to do what we can behind closed doors rather than creating headlines.

We have regular meetings with key decision-makers in Government and Parliament from across the political spectrum.

Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills



We have worked to maintain our relationship with Dr Cable throughout the year. As well as working closely with his special advisors to ensure he is informed on Alliance issues, he also spoke at the launch of our Start-up: a story event in April 2013.

David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science



University Alliance remains a trusted adviser to the Minister. We have quarterly meetings with David Willetts where we raise issues of concern and propose policy changes. Our relationship with David Willetts has resulted in a number of policy changes in areas such as school destination data and research funding.

Shabana Mahmood MP, Shadow Minister of State for Higher Education



We have become trusted advisers to Shabana Mahmood MP and have worked successfully in briefing her on a number of key policy areas. We ran a private workshop with Shabana at the Labour Party Conference and hold quarterly catch-up meetings with her.

Other key relationships include:

- **Chuka Umana MP**, Shadow Business Secretary – we are in close contact with him, providing briefings on key policy matters and working with his special advisers.
- **Paul Uppal MP**, PPS to David Willetts MP and member of the No.10 Policy Unit – we are in frequent communication with Paul Uppal MP and meet with him on a quarterly basis. Of considerable interest to Paul is our work on uni_funding.
- **Nick Hillman**, Special Adviser to David Willetts MP – we have a close relationship with Nick and communicate with him regularly in an informal advisory capacity.
- **Roberta Blackman-Woods MP**, Chair of the Universities APPG- we have a constructive relationship with Roberta and have worked with her to engage with the APPG.
- **Paul Blomfield MP**, BIS Select Committee – Paul sponsored our Start-up parliamentary reception and is a supportive friend of University Alliance. We meet with him on a quarterly basis.
- **John Denham MP**, PPS to Ed Miliband MP – we continue to have a close relationship with John Denham who continues to have a keen interest in higher education policy.
- **Tessa Munt MP**, PPS to Vince Cable MP
- **Andrew Miller MP**, Science and Technology Select Committee
- **Robin Walker MP**
- **Rob Wilson MP**
- **Roberta Blackman-Woods MP**
- **Ann McKechin MP**
- **Caroline Dinéage MP**
- **Baroness Maddock**

School destination data

We met with the Department for Education and David Willetts on the use of data to measure schools on the number of pupils they are sending to Russell Group institutions. These changes were introduced in the summer of 2012 and we were concerned that a system is being created where membership of the Russell Group is being used as a proxy measure of excellence. In a letter to us, Michael Gove MP said that the data was “experimental” and that they were “considering an alternative”. We succeeded in a change of policy with the inclusion of a ‘top third of institutions’ based on tariff entry measure. We are continuing to lobby DfE to improve their measure for school destination data as well as broadening their view of social mobility.

Consultation responses

We take a strategic approach to consultation responses. Where we have a distinct position or where Alliance institutions have a particular response to a consultation we will submit evidence. We balance our submissions with raising awareness of Alliance institutions and offering solutions to the policy question being asked.

Listed below are the responses we have made during the year:

- Submission to the Heseltine Review (August 2012)
- Response to IPPR future of HE submission (September 2012)
- Response to Ofqual consultation on A-level reform (September 2012)
- Response to University Challenge: How Higher Education can advance social mobility (April 2013)
- Independent Review by Sir Andrew Witty of Universities and Growth (May 2013)
- Student number controls and teaching funding, consultation on arrangements for 2013-14 and beyond (June 2013)
- Spending review response (June 2013)

The Witty Review

Consultancy & Contract Research

This map uses data sources to help capture university interaction with SMEs through their provision of consultancy and contract research.

SMEs are particularly important because it is through increasing their engagement that we see the biggest growth.

The volume of these interactions also shows the value that businesses place on the help of experts.

• 140,000 consultancy and research contracts since 2008

• Country has held over 30,000 contracts since 2008

Top 20 for Consultancy & Contract Research (Number with SME's since 2008)

1. Coventry University (36,310)
2. The University of Liverpool (29,542)
3. SPAC (19,946)
4. The Queen's University of Belfast (13,742)
5. The University of Bath (13,605)
6. Leeds Metropolitan University (13,605)
7. The University of Central Lancashire (12,744)
8. Cardiff University (12,739)
9. The University of Lancaster (12,600)
10. The University of Northampton (12,565)
11. The University of Wolverhampton (12,512)
12. The University of Bristol (12,138)
13. University of Exeter (12,037)
14. Queen Mary University of London (11,427)
15. The University of South Wales (11,320)
16. Cardiff Metropolitan University (11,145)
17. The University of Cambridge (11,141)
18. University of Derby (11,112)
19. Bangor/Imperial Vale University (10,641)
20. The University of Newcastle (9,991)



Our response to the Witty Review pulled together case studies from Alliance universities and evidence we have on university-business collaboration from past reports. As well as submitting a response we have been liaising closely with the Review team to provide support where possible. We have sent over additional information on the economic impact of individual Alliance universities.

A key part of this engagement has been to move their focus on from research-intensive institutions and activity to the wider role of innovation and collaboration taking place right across the sector, and generally in Alliance universities.

The Witty team confirmed they will be publishing new 'heat maps' and analysis that we provided to them, which will reference us, in the final Witty Report. Our new heat maps provide a much broader range of indicators to help build a better picture of the role universities play in driving growth. The aim was to reduce the emphasis of the original heat maps in the Interim Report that just looked at traditional indicators such historic research income (and, more importantly, to avoid any conclusions that might flow from this emphasis).

Spending review

A particular focus for us was to gather evidence for the June Spending Review. In order to mitigate the impact on universities and Alliance universities in particular, we concentrated on five key areas; research funding, teacher funding, capital funding, student numbers and widening participation. The outcome of the Spending Review was positive for the financing of higher education and widening participation.

Party Conferences 2012: The future of higher education



Our focus at the autumn 2012 Party Conferences was on the future of higher education. We gave MPs a first-hand look at our university_vision scenarios and ran a series of fringe events looking at the future of the sector.



These events brought together key decision-makers, those with an interest in higher education, the economy and the wider commentariat. Our aim was to discuss a vision for the UK economy that goes further than the recent growth strategy and better outlines the important role universities play in the UK economy and society.

The events were run in partnership with NUS and GuildHE and hosted by IPPR and Policy Exchange. We had a high turnout at all of our fringe events and also held a constructive workshop at Labour Party Conference with a number of key Labour figures including Shabana Mahmood MP, Adrian Bailey MP and Lord Stevenson. Professor Steve West used the conferences to promote the university_vision work and stressed that the sector needed to pull together to create its own vision for the future.



Conservative Party Conference fringe event	Liberal Democrat Party Conference fringe event	Labour Party Conference fringe event
<i>Speakers:</i>	<i>Speakers:</i>	<i>Speakers:</i>
Rt Hon David Willetts MP	Rt Hon Vince Cable MP	Shabana Mahmood MP, Shadow Minister of State for HE
Prof. Steve West, Vice- Chancellor, University of the West of England	Prof. Wendy Purcell, Vice- Chancellor, Plymouth University	Prof. Steve West, Vice- Chancellor, University of the West of England
Liam Burns, National President, NUS	Liam Burns, National President, NUS	Liam Burns, National President, NUS
Prof. David Green, Vice- Chancellor, University of Worcester	Prof. Joy Carter, Vice- Chancellor, Winchester University	Prof. David Green, Vice- Chancellor, University of Worcester
(Chair) Lucy Lee, Head of Education, Policy Exchange	(Chair) Nick Pearce, Director, IPPR	(Chair) Nick Pearce, Director, IPPR

Government Officials

The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and other government departments, see University Alliance as a sensible and solutions-focused voice of the sector.

We have good links with key officials across Government, both at a senior level and with those leading on specific policy areas. Our focus is primarily on the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Number 10 Downing Street; and the Treasury. Throughout 2012-2013 we held regular meetings with:

- Deputy Director, Policy Unit, Number 10
- Head of HE, HM Treasury
- BIS, Director General, Higher Education
- BIS Higher Education
- BIS Growth Team
- BIS Finance Team
- BIS Communications Team

Extensive contacts with stakeholders

In addition to working closely with Government Officials, we maintain a very close working relationship across the sector. We hold regular keep-in-touch meetings with a number of respected and important sector bodies.

We have regular meetings and regular contact with HEFCE: Sir Alan Langlands (Chief Executive) and David Sweeney (Director – Research, Innovation and Skills). We also have good quality, regular communication with other members of the HEFCE team including the REF, HEIF and postgraduate teams.

Central to all of our work is the core value of partnership and collaboration. We know that our efforts will always be more productive when we join with others to share knowledge and profile to get our messages more widely heard. We work particularly closely with the following organisations:

- Universities UK
- NUS
- Design Council
- Technology Strategy Board
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
- British Council
- GuildHE
- HEPI
- NACUE
- Policy Exchange
- IPPR
- CentreForum
- Work Foundation

In addition to these organisations, we have close links with the following:

- Government-related bodies (QAA, UCAS, OFFA, UKCES, NESTA, OIA, HESA)
- Sector-wide groups (UCEA, HEA, JISC, ECU, International Unit, Europe Unit))
- Research Councils
- External bodies (Royal Societies, British Council, Design Council, Science Council, AGR)
- Think tanks (IFS, Demos, CEE, Reform, Sutton Trust, CSJ, JRF)
- Professional and statutory bodies (General Medical Council, General Dental Council, Institute for Biomedical Science, British Psychological Society)
- Other mission groups (Russell Group, 1994 Group, Million+)

Business and the professions

Building closer links with businesses and the professions is a priority for University Alliance.

A particular focus for us was to engage with business on our university_vision and uni_funding projects. We also engaged with them on our response to the Witty Review. These presented us an opportunity to engage businesses in our work and raise our profile as a group representing business facing universities.

As well as these direct links with businesses we continue to foster close engagement with representative bodies including CBI, Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses and the British Chambers of Commerce.

Another significant focus for us has been to source sponsorship in order to finance projects. This year we have received income from HP, UNITE, NACUE, GuildHE and The Education Foundation.

We have also continued to build on relationships with colleagues at the Technology Strategy Board: the new CEO of the Connected Digital Economy Catapult, Neil Crockett presented at the board meeting in March and we have been working closely with Iain Gray to develop relationships for the forthcoming year.

International work

Australia



In March 2013 the Chair, Professor Steve West and Chief Executive, Libby Hackett, went on a research trip to Australia. The two main objectives of the visit were to look in detail at the Australian higher education funding model and to sign an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Australian Technology Network (ATN).

As well as visits to the University of Technology in Sydney, RMIT University in Melbourne and Macquarie University in New South Wales, all members of the ATN, the visit included meetings with the shadow universities minister, Brett Mason; the head of the Australian equivalent of Hefce and the QAA (TEQSA); and senior civil servants who have overseen the design and implementation of the Australian HE funding system. Libby also met with a range of HE policy and funding experts from a number of Australian universities including ANU and Melbourne.

The MoU with the ATN was signed by Libby and Steve with the ATN Chair, Professor Peter Coaldrake, Vice-Chancellor of the Queensland University of Technology and Vicki Thomson, Executive Director of the ATN. The purpose of the MoU is to establish a framework for mutual policy discussion, the exploration of university-to-university partnership and to share expertise. The signing received good media coverage in both Australia and the UK and continues to generate positive interest amongst key stakeholders.

Dubai



Our publication “Growing global graduates: UK universities equipping graduates for the future” explored the impact of globalisation, technological advances, shifts in consumer demand and demographic changes on global labour markets.

We launched this publication in March at the British Council’s ‘Going Global’ conference in Dubai. Going Global has been run annually since 2004 and brings together leading international stakeholders from tertiary education at a forum which fosters cultural relations and brings an international dimension to education. The international regard and reputation of Going Global made it a perfect platform to showcase the leading work of University Alliance members.

During the conference University Alliance hosted a panel discussion looking at the future vision for Higher Education. The panel was chaired by Professor Pamela Gillies, Vice Chancellor and Principal of Glasgow Caledonian University, and featured Carl Lygo, Group CEO and Principal of BPP University College and Libby Hackett, Chief Executive of University Alliance. Building on last year’s scenarios work we explored the potential issues and challenges facing universities in the future and asked big questions about how and where universities need to position themselves to deliver the knowledge, networks and communities we need.

The event was well received and has opened up numerous links, particularly with the British Council which was one of the key objectives of this project. With the project’s focus on employability, the British Council now see University Alliance as the ‘go-to’ group of universities on employability issues. Since the Dubai conference we have:

1. been approached by the British Council to discuss proposals they have made for University Alliance to develop an employability programme to be adopted by institutions in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly Egypt, in order to help improve the employability of their graduates;
2. been approached by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau with a proposal to develop a programme with University Alliance/Alliance universities to help improve the employability of the students they have sent to study in the UK when they go back to Saudi;
3. participated in a British Council conference and visit to China with their Ministry of Education’s National Centre for Education Development and Research about developments in higher education policy (including regional strategies and arrangements for research collaborations).

China

Emily Thomas, Head of Policy, joined a British delegation to China to represent the UK HE sector. As part of the trip, Emily visited a selection of universities and was pleased to see that half of them already had partnerships with University Alliance institutions.

In terms of the themes that emerged from the university visits, the conference and the meeting with the Ministry, the three that most resonated with the UK debate that University Alliance is engaged in were:

1. The role of universities in driving economic performance through graduates and courses (human capital)
2. Convergence versus diversity in the HE sector
3. Regional economic growth and universities

Overall the trip was very informative and is playing an important role in the development of University Alliance’s international strategy.

Policy themes at a glance

During 2012-13 we established four main policy themes as an umbrella for all of our projects. These are:

- **The Future of Higher Education**
- **Employability and Enterprise**
- **Regional Economic Growth**
- **Social Mobility**

The future of higher education

The landscape of higher education has changed dramatically in the past decade. There have been many debates, discussions and decisions made but few have been led by the sector itself. Our work on the future of higher education attempts to place University Alliance at the central of this debate. We need to be shaping these discussions so that decision makers are aware of the need to address the needs of a changing economy.

university_vision

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Steve West



During 2012 we worked with experts from across the country to explore four extreme scenarios and consider what each might mean for universities. These challenging visions we developed for our sector were not intended to predict the future, rather to provoke discussion and get us thinking about the social and economic role we want our universities to play in our country's future. We launched the four scenarios in November 2012.

We continued to build on the November launch by running various workshops for colleagues and stakeholders. This provided useful collateral for building on and creating new useful working relationships and led to some additional sponsorship funding from UNITE.

Key activities and outcomes:

Futures workshop

University of Hertfordshire

We held a workshop with stakeholders from Hertfordshire and the surrounding region, using the uni_vision scenarios to address questions around regional economic growth and collaboration. Group discussions during the university-vision workshop elicited views on university-business collaboration in the region that could be fed into the Witty Review.

Attendees included UEA, OU, Cambridge, Essex, Cranfield and Bedfordshire Universities, and BIS

Unite workshops

The heart of student living



Working with UNITE we held a number of workshops using the uni_vision scenarios to look at what the future holds for higher education and for student accommodation. This was very successful and we have since been working with UNITE to agree future activities around some of the issues raised in the workshops including engaging PWC and KPMG, NUS and UUK's Long Term Strategy Network

uni_funding

A UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE proposal

uni_funding:
A vision for higher education funding



Following the research trip to Australia in March 2013, work was begun to develop a proposal for an alternative funding system that is fit for the long-term future of higher education. We began exploring the potential for a return to a UK wide system for student finance and support and produced a one-page document to take to key lobbying meetings as a starting point. This work is set to continue into 2013-14 with a series of workshops being developed.

Our nine principles have been launched which provided a taster for the projects. This has succeeded in getting a high level of interest within the sector and beyond.

Employability and enterprise

There is a growing and persistent narrative that the value of a university degree has fallen as the media focus on apparent high levels of graduate unemployment or underemployment. Government is also very concerned by the high unemployment levels and is keen to understand how universities are working to help their graduates gain employment. This is an area where Alliance universities are particularly innovative and engaged.

Growing Global Graduates

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Pamela Gillies



Our report, “UK universities growing global graduates”, which was launched in March at the British Council Going Global conference in Dubai, explored employability from an international student perspective. It looked at why Alliance universities are so effective at equipping students for long-term employability and why students are choosing to study at them. This project used employability related figures from i-graduate’s International Student Barometer to demonstrate that Alliance universities are the destination of choice for international students whose top priority is getting a good job.

This work supported the cause, that we and the wider sector share, around ensuring that the UK truly is an ‘open economy’. International students place huge importance on getting a good job and being able to work in the UK after they graduate. Post-study work in the UK needs to be more than a possibility for the lucky few. It should be an attractive and feasible option for more of our highly motivated graduates. The benefits to getting this right reach far beyond the students and universities involved, affecting the UK’s international competitiveness, economy and society.

Key activities and outcomes:

Launch event

March 2013
Going Global, Dubai

The launch was held at the British Council’s annual Going Global conference in Dubai. This year’s theme was employability so it was a good fit for the project and gave us the opportunity to highlight Alliance strengths and how our universities are leading on the employability agenda to an international audience.

Relationship building and profile raising

This project has resulted in new opportunities with the British Council and has raised the profile of Alliance universities, and their strengths around employability on an international stage as well as in the UK with, for example, the International Unit.

Regional Economic Growth

Too often universities are portrayed as institutions which sit outside their regions and communities, whilst the important economic growth role that they play in increasing the innovative activity in their locality is often overlooked. Regional economic growth outside London is a particular concern for government as described in the recent Heseltine Report. As leaders in the business-engagement agenda, Alliance universities are supporting innovation and growth at local, regional and international level.

This research pillar builds on many great previous University Alliance reports and we will find new ways of emphasising the vital research and innovation activity that Alliance universities are playing in making the UK an economic success.

Start-up: a story

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Quintin McKellar



In April 2013, we launched “Start-up: a story”, in partnership with NACUE.

This project celebrated Alliance graduates who had turned their business ideas into reality. Through the start-up stories of ten Alliance graduates, the project highlighted the role of

entrepreneurial graduates in creating jobs and driving innovation and growth across all regions of the UK. The stories demonstrated the work Alliance universities are doing to encourage, support and enable students and graduates to start-up businesses and succeed.

The project is also a tool, including practical advice about how to make start-ups a success, enabling the project to also reach those looking to start-up a business or move their business on to the next stage.

Key activities and outcomes:

Printed publication and online ‘toolkit’

A printed and online ‘toolkit’ which included short ‘tasters’ of the stories along with top tips and helpful links featured in an eye-catching fold out leaflet, and the full stories with additional top tips and links online. It served to highlight the key ways which universities are central to the enterprise agenda and outlined policy recommendations around how Government and universities can continue to improve support for entrepreneurship and enterprise.

Parliamentary launch event

A Parliamentary launch reception held at the Terrace Pavilion in the House of Commons, in partnership with Nacue with Vince Cable as the main speaker. The launch pulled together the graduates featured in the project, government, business and those involved in the enterprise and entrepreneurship space.



Impact

This report and launch enabled us to demonstrate the scale and expertise in entrepreneurship support and provision at our universities. As a result we have increased our contacts in this area, raised awareness of the scale of graduate entrepreneurship and its contribution to growth and jobs, and linked Alliance universities strongly to this agenda in the minds of those in Government.

Other projects in this area include the support of our design sector through our 'Design&' project with the Design Council and led by Julius Weinberg, which demonstrates how design is addressing the big challenges and providing graduates with fulfilling and successful employment.

Design&

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Julius Weinberg



The aim of this project is to raise the profile of design (research, education and professional practice) as a key contributor to innovation in the UK.

Through this work we want to demonstrate how the design education and research at Alliance universities is an essential part of creating successful graduates, jobs, growth, society and the economy. Drawing on a long

and rich history, Alliance universities have significant strengths in design education and research and as such University Alliance is well placed to lead the exploration of these themes.

In order to achieve this we are focusing on three strands of work:

To demonstrate the value and role of design research:

We have been working with members to collate examples of design research at Alliance universities that is focused on solving society's big challenges (e.g. around health, crime, energy). These will form part of a policy report and will enable us to highlight to Government how supporting design research aligns with their stated priorities.

To highlight the value of design education:

We have been drawing on the expertise and experiences of Alliance design educators to show how design education is equipping graduates to be catalysts of innovation in their future careers. This will form another part of the policy report.

To highlight the importance of design education for nurturing and training British designers:

We are working with a film maker to create a set of short films focusing on the stories of alumni from our member universities who have gone on to great things within design. This will also act as a tool we can use to inspire students and young people to study and take up careers in design.

Partnerships:



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

We are partnering with the **Design Council** for this project and have been working with them to collate background information around the value of design to the UK economy. They will also be designing the final report for us.

We produced a mini-report to set the project out on paper. This led to productive meetings with the **Intellectual Property Office** who have since agreed to provide funding for the project.

We have also continued to build relationships with others within the design industry including Sir John Sorrell and the Sorrell Foundation who we will work with particularly around disseminating the short inspirational films to young people interested in design.

Sustaining the spread of excellence

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Andrew Wathey

Finally, we have produced a publication, 'Sustaining the spread of excellence' which champions the value of funding research excellence.



This briefing has not been widely publicised as we will be using this only if any further moves to research concentration are made.

Social Mobility

Lead Vice Chancellor: Professor Mary Stuart

In our strand of work on social mobility we have aimed to demonstrate the added value that Alliance institutions provide to their students, offering a transformative experience to many and, as such, to illustrate the fact that social mobility is about more than getting bright, poor young people into research-intensive universities. Through this work we hope to highlight how Alliance universities contribute to a healthy economy and society both nationally and in their region.

To meet these objectives we have undertaken a number of activities:

Key activities and outcomes:

Set up of a WP network with representatives from across Alliance Universities

The network met for the first time in April 2013 and was hosted by UWE Bristol. We discussed project plans and shared challenges and best practice. The network will meet again in early 2014.

Building relationships

We have worked hard to build strong relationships with WP and social mobility stakeholders in government, business and the third sector in order to change hearts and minds. We have undertaken regular networking to expand our sphere of influence, we have created a summary document with facts and figures and case around WP and HE which have been a powerful tool when speaking to stakeholders. We have worked hard to identify and convert UA Ambassadors in organisations from the Prince's Trust to the Creative Director of Ogilvy, Rory Sutherland, who has agreed to provide a supportive quote for one of our projects.

We are also continuing to build up a wide network of contacts and potential partners including, so far, with the Prince's Trust, CBI, The Social Mobility Foundation, Lloyds Scholars, Ogilvy, HEFCE, OFFA, IntoUniversity, Nation Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB, formerly CIHE), Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Which? HEA, Professions for Good, Institute of Education, Teach First, QAA, Laser, the Sutton Trust, UpReach, Co-op Academies, Ark Schools, and the Department for Education social mobility lead.

Schools	As part of our social mobility work and our application to gain charitable status we have offered schools in the Westminster area the opportunity for a senior member of our team to talk to staff or students from year 10 upwards about going to university and the choices that might involve. The aim is to provide clear and impartial advice and guidance as well as information on student finance and support available. Feedback from schools has been positive.
Paper presentation at the National Educational Opportunities Network (NEON) summer symposium, June 2013	Members of the team were present at the NEON symposium in June where we presented a research paper on 21st century barriers to social mobility in higher education. We received positive feedback from the organisers and participants and the paper will be used as the introduction to the symposium publication due out in October 2013.
Comprehensive spending review	We collated evidence for the CSR in keeping with our strong narrative about our universities' work in social mobility. This helped to feed in to the success in retaining the vast majority of WP funding. We also had an op-ed published in the Huffington Post on these issues.
Press and Communications	We have drafted and placed several comment and rebuttal pieces in press and publications.

Communications

Our communications strategy supports our core business by increasing the reach and visibility of University Alliance. We have built many more partnerships and links with key organisations, implemented a successful programme of events and have increased our media presence. Alongside this we have developed our internal communication to ensure that colleagues across Alliance institutions are kept up-to-date and engaged with our work as well as informed about sector developments.

Events

Events are a key way for us to engage with a wide audience and raise the profile of University Alliance. We pride ourselves in running interactive, friendly and well organised events. These are solutions-focused and include a diverse and interesting set of speakers. We ensure that delegates receive a positive experience pre, during and post event. There are always opportunities for delegates to be involved in discussions and we carefully maintain relationships after the events. The main events we have run this year are:

- Growing Global Graduates launch, March 2013
- Start-up: a story launch with Rt Hon Vince Cable MP, April 2013
- Social mobility workshop, May 2013
- Uni_vision workshops, various
- University Alliance Summit, June 2013

Digital

www.unialliance.ac.uk

The University Alliance website provides us with an opportunity to promote the work of Alliance universities, our organisational priorities and allows us to communicate a clear and distinct voice for us within the sector. The main focus of our site is providing fresh content through blogs from University Alliance staff, Vice-Chancellors and supportive organisations in addition to thought provoking and evidence based projects.

The key projects which have featured on our website in 2012-13 have been:

- [uni_funding](#)
- [Start-up: a story](#)
- [university_vision](#)
- [Growing global graduates](#)
- [Design thinking space](#)

During 2012-13 we had 41,715 visits to the site, this is a 20% increase on the figures for 2011-12 and an 110% increase on figures for 2010-11.

We also operate a popular Twitter account which enables us to communicate with ease to supporters and a wider audience. The account is used on a daily basis and has led to us developing new links with influential stakeholders and international organisations.

The number of Twitter users who are following our account (@unialliance) has more than doubled in a year. This has increased from 3,052 to 6,142.

Media

Relationships with journalists and broadcasters are being strengthened with the Alliance being increasingly regarded as a key voice amongst education press. This relationship building is an important part of our work and we have seen a sharp increase in the number of press calls received and media coverage. This year, University Alliance has featured on BBC News, Sky News and in the Telegraph, The Guardian, Financial Times, Evening Standard, Times Higher Education as well as internationally in the Australian and the India Times. A full list can be found on the [news](#) section of our website.

Here is a selection of our most significant and influential media appearances:

The Guardian – UK higher education: why the current numbers don't add up

June 2013

Libby Hackett discusses how our international competitors are expanding their higher education and asks why this is not the case for the UK.

THE – 'Split system on public-private lines, says University Alliance'

June 2013

THE reported on our uni_funding work and our moves to work collaboratively with the sector and build consensus across amongst students, employers and in the corridors of power.

BBC Radio 4, You&Yours - School destination data

March 2013

Libby Hackett explains why the decision to publish data on the number of pupils schools are sending to Russell Group universities is detrimental to students.

The Guardian: Should students be encouraged to set their sights on Russell Group universities?

February 2013

Sophie Cousens, a graduate of Plymouth University and part of our Student Stories project, tells of her experience of advice and guidance at school.



THE – 'Heif concentration provokes mission group ire'

September 2012

Libby Hackett welcomed additional investment in research funding but opposed the creeping research concentration.

The Australian - Alliance seeks global connection

March 2013

Professor Steve West spoke to The Australian on the alliance between ATN and University Alliance.

Guardian - Cabinet reshuffle: continuity at a time of great change

September 2012

Writing in the Guardian, Libby Hackett welcomed news that David Willetts was to stay on as Minister of State for Universities and Science.

THE - We'll put best foot forward – and boot in if we have to

August 2012

Upon taking up his role as Chair of University Alliance, Professor Steve West spoke of his ambitions and concerns for the sector.

Internal Communications

A key part of our communications strategy is to ensure that colleagues at University Alliance and Alliance universities are fully abreast of developments in the sector and also our priorities for the year. This enables us to increase the profile of our organisation, our capacity and also our ability to monitor and respond to important developments.

Monthly bulletin

A monthly bulletin is sent out to colleagues at Alliance universities and the central office. This provides a summary of our projects, key meetings, sector news and any call outs for case studies and information. This bulletin is sent out to around 300 individuals and has received a 5.2% increase in open rate and has a 0.5% unsubscribe rate.

Daily media digest

A daily digest of the main higher education news is sent to Vice-Chancellors and central staff. This is a concise summary which aims to inform individuals of the key stories in the sector. This is sent to around 30 individuals.

Communications network

The communications network meets on a thrice-yearly basis and brings together Heads of Communication from Alliance universities. This is a networking opportunity but it also serves as a sounding board for University Alliance projects and events. Andy Carter, previously Director of Communications and Development at Northumbria University, stepped down as Chair of the group in January 2013. He was replaced by Michael Lavery, Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment at Teesside University.

Internal Affairs

Membership



The growing reputation and strength of the Alliance was further confirmed with a high number of applications to join including a strong application, and subsequent admittance, of the University of Greenwich in April 2013.

In Spring 2013 the University of Wales, Newport and the University of Glamorgan merged to form the University of South Wales led by Professor Julie Lydon.

In July 2013 the Open University decided not to renew their membership. Steve West commented that “The Open University is a great institution doing exciting things, particularly online, but it is a different kind of institution from the rest of the sector. We look forward to continuing to work with them on delivering wider participation and innovative solutions for higher education.”

The 23 members of University Alliance as of 1 August 2013 are:

- Bournemouth University
- University of Bradford
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- Coventry University
- De Montfort University
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- University of Greenwich
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Huddersfield
- Kingston University
- University of Lincoln
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Northumbria University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Plymouth University
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Salford
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of South Wales
- Teesside University
- University of the West of England

Board member policy areas

To help us maintain a watching brief across the policy landscape lead Vice-Chancellors have been assigned to each of the policy areas we focus on. In 2012-13, they included:

- **Student experience and public information** - Janet Beer
- **Teacher Education** - John Brooks
- **Fees and student finance** - John Craven
- **Pensions** - Bob Cryan
- **International engagement** - Pamela Gillies
- **Business collaboration and inward investment** - Neil Gorman
- **Innovation** - Martin Hall
- **Pensions** - Julie Lydon
- **Visa regulations and UKBA** - Quintin McKellar
- **Regional economies and enterprise** - Wendy Purcell
- **Opposition** - Dominic Shellard
- **Social Mobility** - Mary Stuart
- **Research** - Andrew Wathey
- **Health** - Steve West
- **Design** - Julius Weinberg

Farewells and congratulations

Retirements:

2012-13 saw two Alliance Vice Chancellors retire from their posts: Professor Mark Cleary from the University of Bradford and founding Chair of University Alliance, Professor John Craven from Portsmouth University. We wish them both every success and an enjoyable transition into retirement.

Appointments:

We would like to congratulate Professor Wendy Purcell, Vice-Chancellor and President of Plymouth University, who was appointed as the higher education representative on the Board at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in July 2013. Wendy is a great advocate for the whole sector, and in particular for those universities with a focus on widening participation and increasing economic growth through their work with business. Her expertise will help to ensure that government and higher education institutions work together to do all they can to support a strong and vibrant UK economy.

In July 2013 it was also announced that Professor Madeleine Atkins from Coventry University was appointed as the new Chief Executive of HEFCE. We are delighted with this appointment and would like to congratulate Madeleine and wish her the best of luck in this new role which will begin in January 2014.

Board Meetings

The Alliance board come together four times a year in order to discuss issues to do with the organisation, current and new project ideas as well as sector developments.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>External guests</i>
Thursday 4 October 2012	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, London	Sir Alan Langlands , Chief Executive, HEFCE Delegation from the Australian Technology Network (ATN)
Thursday 6 December 2012	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, London	Nick Hillman , Special Adviser to David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Skills
Thursday 7 March 2013	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, London	Neil Crockett , Chief Executive Officer, Connected Digital Economy Catapult
Wednesday 12 Thursday 13 June 2013	University of Portsmouth	Mark Pullen , Director, the Witty Review Team, BIS Mark Leach , Special Adviser to Shabana Mahmood MP, Shadow Minister of State for Higher Education

University Alliance Internal Networks

As well as our quarterly board meetings with Vice Chancellors we host several networks who meet throughout the year. These networks include:

- PVCs Research and Innovation
- PVCs Teaching and Learning
- Policy Advisers
- Heads of Communications

These networks provide a useful forum for sharing ideas and best practice as well as keeping colleagues informed and involved with our projects and lobbying work.

University Alliance Summit

As part of our emphasis on engaging more with our internal networks, this year saw the launch of our first University Alliance summit in June 2013. The event pulled together four Alliance networks – PVC (Research), PVC (Learning and Teaching), Communications and Policy Advisors and was kindly hosted by Professor Dominic Shellard at De Montfort

University, Leicester. The aim of this day-long conference was to bring together senior representatives from Alliance universities to extend our engagement with our members and enable them to feed into our ongoing work to influence Westminster and Whitehall. It was a wonderful opportunity to ensure that we are effectively harnessing the expertise of our colleagues within Alliance universities as well as communicating the value of the work we are undertaking to generate a sense of shared endeavour towards common goals.

University visits

Because we acknowledge the fantastic value in getting out and seeing what our universities are doing we have been able to have visited the following institutions in the past year:

- De Montfort University
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Greenwich
- Kingston University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Open University
- Plymouth University
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Salford
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of the West of England

As part of some of these visits, we have run two separate university_vision future scenario sessions, one at Kingston University with their SMT, and one at Hertfordshire together with representatives from LEPs and other universities in the region.

University Alliance central office

Following board approval in the previous year, the process of incorporation was completed in January 2013, with University Alliance becoming a company limited by guarantee as a subsidiary of UH Holdings Ltd with Subscriber Members maintaining control of the company.

Alongside incorporation, the company relocated to new offices at 49 Whitehall in December 2012 allowing them more space and flexibility for external meetings and an expanding team.

As of 1 August 2013 the University Alliance central office team was structured as follows:

Chief Executive	Libby Hackett, Chief Executive
Organisational support	Louisa Carpenter, Operations Manager Van Le, Administrative Assistant (intern)
Policy and projects	Emily Thomas, Head of Policy (maternity cover) Naomi Weir, Senior Policy Analyst Daisy Hooper, Policy and Projects Manager (Social Mobility, WP & Future Strategies) Faye Twine, Policy and Projects Manager (Research & Innovation)
Communications and public affairs	Sam Jones, Head of Communications Andrew Henry, Communications Manager

Staff Changes

In November 2012: **Van Le** was appointed as our first University Alliance intern. The internship programme is intended to be an annual opportunity for a recent graduate to expand their skills and experience. Van joined from Manchester Metropolitan University where she was a graduate in Chemistry. She became a Research Assistant at the Science Museum after graduating, then took part in the MMU Internship Scheme.

In December 2012: **Emily Thomas** joined the team as maternity cover for Liz Shutt's role as Head of Policy. Emily is a former advisor to Treasury and Lord Sainsbury and was the founding Director of innovation firm, Aequitas Consulting Ltd, where she led the uni_vision project. She is also currently an Associate at NESTA.

Faye Twine joined the team as Policy and Projects Manager (Research & Innovation) from the UK's private security industry regulator where she was a policy adviser.

Daisy Hooper joined from Aequitas Consulting, an innovative public policy and public service transformation consultancy and has a wealth of public policy and project management experience from the public, private and third sector, having worked at Southwark Council, the British Institute in Eastern Africa, based in Nairobi, at the Social Market Foundation think tank.

