

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Times Higher Education award winning Strategic Leadership Programme addressing the complex challenges facing higher education and sustaining a high performing university.

In the context of a rapidly changing global education environment a Russell Group University wished to instil a post-heroic model of leadership that created leadership at all levels as a response to external complexity. The Strategic Leadership Programme blended academic and professional service leaders and made actual organisational issues, problems and opportunities the core learning material.

Action learning sets formed around various organisational problems and opportunities. These ran throughout and beyond the formal sessions producing insight and potential solutions. The programme was based around four core modules; The Strategic Context, Knowledge of Self, Alignment and Engagement and Building High Performing Teams. Over a period of seven years the programme has helped to build a community of connected strategic leaders.

In 2009, the Strategic Leadership Programme won a national award at the annual Times Higher Education awards ceremony in the category of 'Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development'.

BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS DEPARTMENT

Times Higher Education award winning leadership programme focused on improving the strategic management of academic departments framed around a model of world-class excellence.

Elementa Leadership has developed and delivered a Collaborative Leadership Programme for a Russell Group University which seeks to improve the strategic management of academic departments framed around a model of world-class excellence.

The Collaborative Leadership Programme involves applying a tailored diagnostic framework developed from research into the concept of the world-class university. This included gathering qualitative and quantitative data and subsequently producing a detailed diagnostic report which identifies core strengths and weaknesses for each participating department. The diagnostic report acts as a catalyst to generate strategic conversations and bring together the department management group through a process of action planning to identify a small number of priorities to address and an action plan to deliver these.

A feature of the Collaborative Leadership Programme is that a number of department management teams come together in the process to learn together and work on shared issues taking a 'critical friend' role. This has been key in supporting departmental management teams to connect as part of a wider university community.

In 2014, this leadership programme won the 'Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development' award at the annual Times Higher Education awards ceremony.

ENGAGED STRATEGIC PLANNING

A whole system strategic planning process and approach for strategy engagement and cultural change following a merger of academic departments.

Elementa Leadership developed and delivered a whole system engaged strategic planning process and approach to achieve a legitimised new strategic plan and a realignment of culture. Following a merger of three departments, Elementa Leadership supported the management team of a School of Health Sciences to sharpen and clarify a world-class aspiration and develop a plan and culture capable of realising this.

LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

Equipping managers and leaders to deliver a new strategic aspiration and contribute to identifying current issues, future challenges and practical solutions.

Elementa Leadership co-created a process for developing managers and leaders to support the Vice-Chancellors vision of building 'One University'. Within the context of a University wide strategic change programme a series of leadership and management development opportunities were designed to enable managers from across the University to come together and better understand the University's strengths and how to build on these and to help the institution identify current issues, future challenges and develop practical solutions.

ENGAGING FOR BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND ORGANISATION DESIGN

Delivering a better student experience, cost efficiencies and cultural shift through a business process improvement and organisation design approach based on engagement and collaboration.

Elementa Leadership was commissioned to support the delivery of key strategic priorities identified in the University's strategic plan. The outcomes that the University wanted to achieve were for a better student experience, cost efficiencies and a cultural shift such that people would become more student centric and commercially focused. There was also a desire to reduce any 'them and us' tensions that could inhibit effective collaboration between academic and administrative communities.

Elementa Leadership developed an approach to deliver business process improvement and organisation design which was based on cross-university collaboration and wide stakeholder engagement. This approach allowed a clearer view of the complexity and interdependencies

involved and allowed the learning achieved in one stage to inform the next. The programme involved large group 'whole system business process' events with a range of stakeholders groups including staff at all levels and business functions, students and trade union representatives and the development of business process project groups. The engagement and collaboration across the university throughout the programme culminated with leaner structures being embedded into practice and new customer focused processes implemented.

ENGAGED STRATEGIC PLANNING

Developing a legitimate well understood new strategy with clear priorities capable of successful implementation.

Elementa Leadership supported and worked with a head of a faculty to successfully deliver a five year strategic plan for the faculty, through a strategy development process which ensured the active engagement of all staff and stakeholders. The plan set out clear priorities that achieved wide legitimacy. A new organisation design was created to align with and support the delivery of the university strategic plan.

REVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Research into the efficiency and effectiveness of a University keen to identify areas for cost improvement and revenue enhancement. Mapping and diagnosing the organisational culture of a university to better understand the culture required for continued success.

Elementa Leadership undertook a research project to provide evidence and analysis to support a newly established Effectiveness and Efficiency Group to fulfil its terms of reference. The research sought to uncover areas for cost improvement and revenue enhancement as well as identify inefficiencies and potential barriers to more effective and efficient practices. A significant and impactful part of the research was the deployment of a cultural diagnostic instrument to try and better understand the sub-cultures and behaviours that are a part of how the University acts and behaves. This provided an opportunity to register views of the culture required for continued success.

REVIEW OF ACADEMIC WORKING PRACTICES

A review of academic working practices and facilitation of the top team in implementing the recommendations.

An extensive and wide ranging review of academic working practices was commissioned by a university's Human Resources department. Elementa Leadership carried out this research which looked at practices which were either enabling or inhibiting effective future organisational performance. This included a focus on management structures, work loading arrangements, quality of communication and engagement and bureaucracy. The review

adopted a qualitative approach, using a combination of focus groups, small group and one to one interviews as the primary data gathering methods. This data was triangulated through desk research which analysed a range of corporate data provided by the University. A detailed report identified the inhibitors and enablers of academic working practices that emerged from the data gathered and made recommendations to enable enhanced academic as well as organisational performance. Subsequent work with the top team helped to clarify the areas for improvement.

TOP TEAM DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

An approach to support a professional services top team to become a more integrated and joined up group capable of making effective decisions and taking actions in the context of intensifying global competition.

The Registrar of the University wanted to develop a more integrated and joined up Professional Services Directors Group that could apply a high quality inclusive dialogue and produce effective decisions and actions on behalf of the wider University.

Elementa Leadership developed and delivered an innovative top team development programme set in a context of intensifying global competition in higher education accounting for 'the world beyond the University' as a source of opportunity and learning. The first phase of the programme involved Elementa Leadership conducting research into the current state of professional services at the University. The subsequent findings and report provided an evidence base to frame improvement actions. In particular the report flagged the need for a different and more productive relationship with academic units.

The second phase of the programme consisted of team workshops bringing together the Professional Services Directors Group members to consider and develop a shared purpose (particularly located around the student experience) that took into account the corporate needs and success of the University as a whole. These workshops also encouraged the Professional Services Directors Group to take an outward looking perspective, being curious about and learning from the University's strategic environment to help inform and create the conditions in which the University can continue to be successful.

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Leadership Development tailored for academic leaders to develop their practice, learn together and take forward the strategic aims of the University.

A Russell Group university wished to provide its academic leaders with strategic job roles an opportunity to develop skills and knowledge to take the University forward in line with the strategic aims of the University. With a strong emphasis on reflection and transfer of learning

to day to day leadership and management practice the Academic Leadership Programme was underpinned by Elementa Leadership's model of *Bridge-Building Leadership*.

Participants on the Academic Leadership Programme were supported through comprehensive diagnostic instruments including 360° feedback, a series of workshops focusing on 'Strategic Planning in the HE Context', 'Leading Teams and Leading Across Boundaries', 'Leading the Challenges of Change Engagement and Resilience', 'Influencing Others and Negotiating for Results in the Academic Environment' and 'Working with the International Community' and one to one executive coaching. The programme integrates models of excellence in HE from across the globe and world renowned HE experts support the learning of the group. The blend of learning opportunities has met the needs of participants with many valued outcomes delivered.

ENGAGED STRATEGIC PLANNING THROUGH SCENARIO PLANNING

A scenario planning approach facilitated for a University that wished to achieve input into the strategic planning process with a wide range of people with knowledge, experience and expertise to model four possible futures for the University and from this finalise the new strategy and way forward.

There was a requirement to promote strategic thinking and support effective strategic planning by modelling possible futures for the University. Elementa Leadership devised and delivered a process which included briefing the top team, bringing together data and horizon scanning, a scenario planning workshop which included a wide range of participants who had knowledge and expertise and experience to develop a possible four possible futures for the University. Elementa Leadership then collated and analysed all the meeting and workshop outcomes and the resulting report fed into the drafting and then finalising the strategic plan. The process aimed to foster engagement and ownership into the resulting University plan.

TOP TEAM DEVELOPMENT FOR UNIVERSITY SERVICES

A top team development approach for a group of professional services senior managers to build a stronger collective and collaborative way of working. The approach aimed to break down functional silos and thereby producing better solutions for customers, partners and stakeholders.

The broad aim of the Top Team Development Programme for the University Services Directorate was to build a stronger collective and collaborative approach to leadership across University Services, with the focus and *raison d'être* directly drawn from the University's strategic aims. The programme encouraged an increased number of University Services staff to take leadership roles in response to the challenges and opportunities arising from a forward looking strategy implementation. The leadership development programme sought to break

down functional silos that could inhibit necessary cross-boundary collaboration and produce better solutions for customers, partners and stakeholders.

TOP TEAM DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIOR LEADERS

A top team development programme for senior leaders of post-1992 University to enable the successful implementation of a newly directed strategic plan.

A development programme was delivered by Elementa Leadership at the request of the Vice-Chancellor of a post-1992 university to enable the top team to take forward an ambitious strategic plan.

The initial phases of the programme consisted of collecting an organisation wide view of the performance of the senior team which included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and with the senior team themselves. This was supplemented by evidence gathered through observing the senior team at times when it worked together as an intact group. The processes such as communication and decision making were observed. The report made recommendations on what the senior team needed to do differently and better in order to be more effective as a strategic leadership team. A process for individuals to better understand their own leadership behaviours and challenges was put in place consisting of a 360° feedback and the Hogan Development Survey. The programme consisted of a series of executive coaching session whilst team coaching workshops sought to address the aim for the senior team to take an outward looking perspective with Elementa Leadership presenting case study materials from leading universities across the world for consideration and to bring in best practice models for learning.

At the end of the programme a further evaluation phase repeated the initial diagnostic research into team performance which mapped the changes that had taken place and the extent to which the senior team had achieved the desired outcomes.



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ABOUT ELEMENTA LEADERSHIP

Elementa Leadership is a specialist leadership and organisation development consultancy with cross-sectoral international experience, focused on UK higher education. We are currently working at strategic level with universities that cover the all HE mission groups. We are committed to the future of UK higher education as central to the development of both a better society and a better economy.

www.elementaleadership.co.uk

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like more information about our approach and services please get in touch.

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OUR SERVICES INCLUDE

Engaged Strategic Planning for Higher Education
Strategic alignment and engagement

Building the Agile Top Team
Developing an integrated and collaborative top team

Bridge-Building Leadership
Developing leadership to better connect the university, enabling an agile response to a changing world