

Accessible Excellence:

Mainstreaming Widening Participation at Aston University

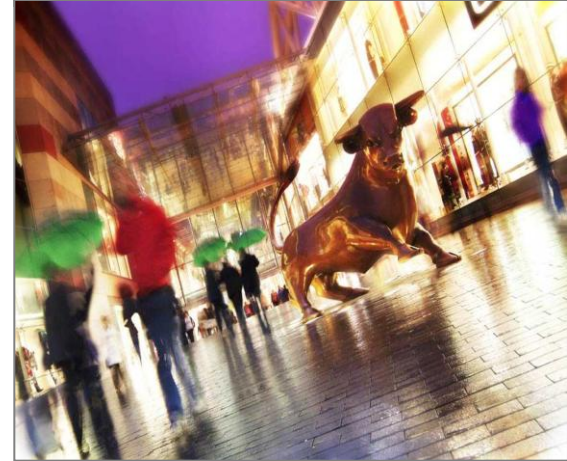
Amanda Ingleby, Strategic Adviser for Widening Participation



Aston University
Birmingham

Aston University

- Founded in 1895; University since 1966
- >9,000 students
- Strong industrial links and sandwich placements
- Strategies priorities: research, teaching and community engagement
- Top 10% of universities for graduate employment
- Continuation rate of 93.6%



Aston Students

91% state school

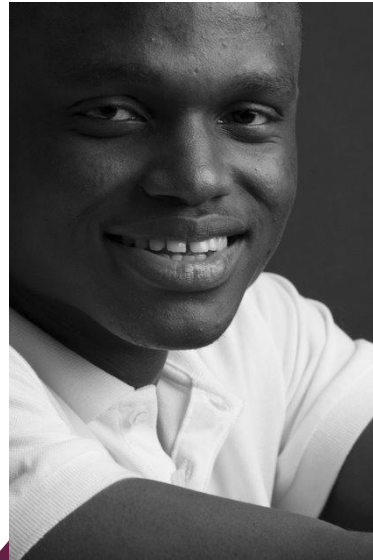
58% ethnic minorities

15% mature and LPN

37% lower socio-economic groups

6.4% non-completion

82% graduates in
employment

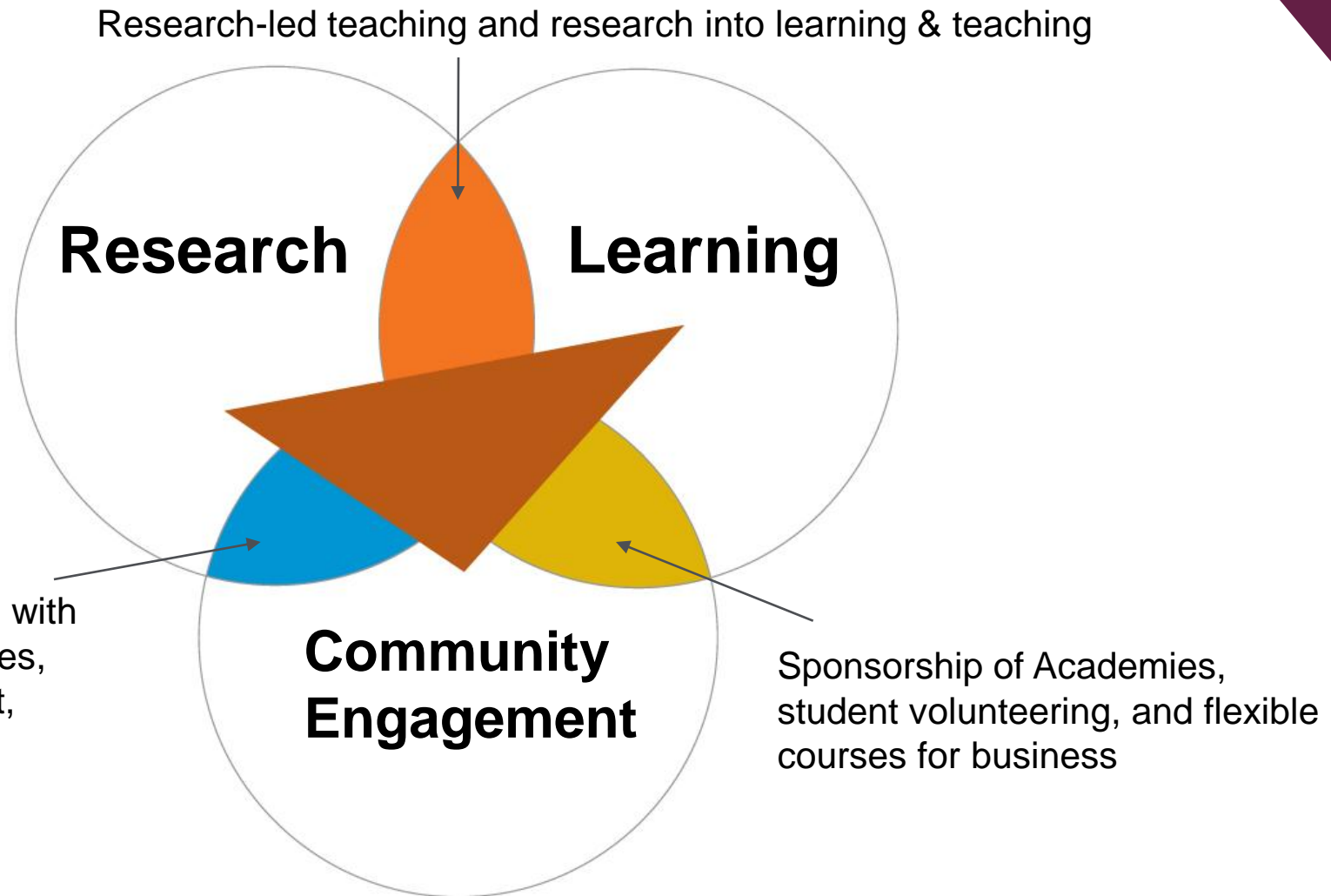


Embedding widening participation: a 10 year journey

- 1999 ➔ Setting up and an early focus upon schools liaison and outreach
- 2002 ➔ Investigating student needs and project activity
- 2005 ➔ Embedding: a focus upon strategic and institution-wide activity
- 2008 ➔ Sustaining – a focus upon inclusivity and student success



Aston's balanced mission



Values and Policies

Values

- Valuing and respecting diversity and success for all irrespective of background

Learning and Teaching

- Curriculum design and delivery to support the needs of a diverse student population
- Equality and enhancement of an inclusive learning environment

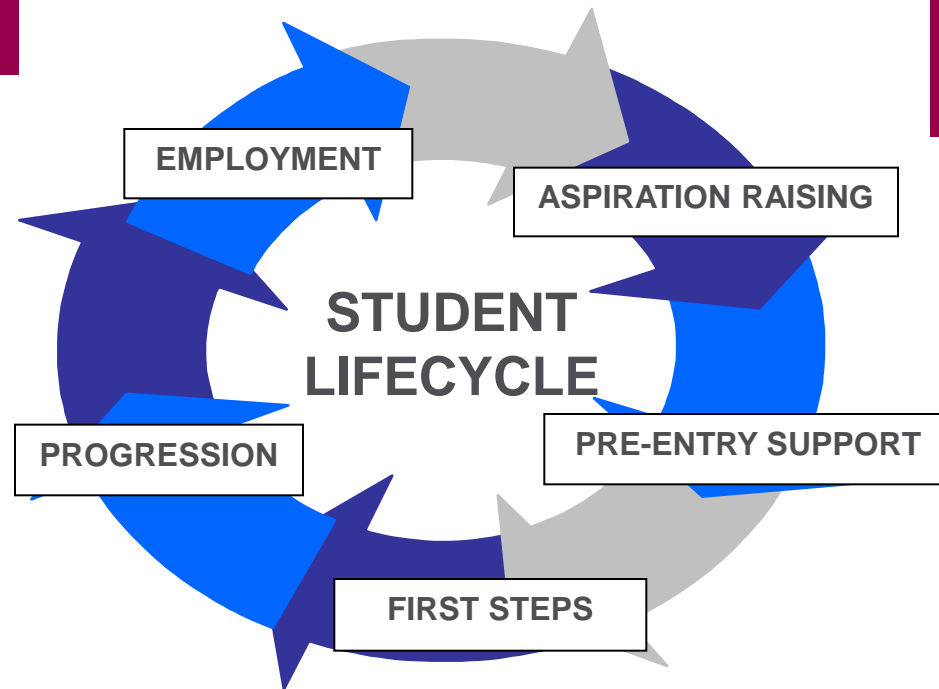
Employability

- Enhance employability of all students
- Prepare diverse student population for global workplace
- Placement preparation and peer mentoring

Principles: Student lifecycle approach

Employability

Outreach and
community
engagement



Curriculum and Learning Development

Practice: Coverage

Marketing

- Schools and Colleges Liaison, including Outreach Office
- Aimhigher and Excellence Challenge
- Careers

Central services

- Registry and Planning
- Students' Guild
- Aston Student Advice Point

CLIPP

- Learning and Development Centre
- Learner Enhancement Team
- Learning and Teaching Research Team (Strategic Adviser for WP)

Schools

Practice



- ▶ Inclusive practice
- ▶ Staff and student development
- ▶ Learner Development Centre
- ▶ Peer Mentoring
- ▶ Support for mature students





Enabling Factors

- Top level strategic commitment
- Institutional research and evaluation
- Full student lifecycle approach
- Starting small
- Linking projects to institutional objectives
- Staff training and development
- Working with partners



Challenges

- Funding
- Challenging the deficit model
- Reaching all staff





Indicators of Success

- Access and Retention Performance Indicators
- Institutional data relating to:
 - student progression
 - student achievement
 - student satisfaction

Future Plans

- Ongoing institutional research eg retention, peer mentoring
- Ongoing monitoring of impact (WP Strategic Statement)

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