

Widening Participation at LIPA

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LIPA

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Who we are

- Co-founded in 1996 by Sir Paul McCartney and Mark Featherstone-Witty
- To encourage creativity across eight honours degree programmes
- Small specialist institution with just over 700 students
- Subjects:
 - Acting
 - Community Drama
 - Dance
 - Music
 - Music, Theatre and Entertainment Management
 - Sound Technology
 - Theatre performance design/technology

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Widening participation at LIPA

- Key goal - maintain and develop inclusive recruitment of talented students
- Give students opportunities to develop and thrive regardless of background

Whole institution focus

- WP became a focus in last 5 years
- Initial strategy in 2006
- Revised in-depth strategy in 2008
- New strategy focuses on:
 - Whole institution focus
 - Departments working together
 - Breaking down barriers
 - Supporting progression

WP Policies and practices

- We want all students regardless of background, who have the talent, to have the chance to succeed in performing arts
- To succeed students need raw talent and access to:
 - High quality training
 - Skills development
 - Experience of theatre and culture
- These often require finances, commitment, family support and confidence

Social and cultural capital

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds may have raw talent but may lack social and cultural capital
- Developed through access to:
 - Networks
 - Reading
 - Cultural experiences
 - Knowledge of those around us
 - Access to education/skills

A strategy to develop capital

- Students need access to certain amounts of cultural and social capital in order to progress in to the current Higher Education system.
 - Dominated by traditional students with large reserves of cultural/social capital
- We have therefore developed a strategy to help harness students talents and develop their abilities, whilst developing our institution to accept the differences in students

Our Strategy

- Widening participation strategy 2008-2011
 - Partnerships
 - Staff connection
 - Skills development
 - 4 colleges
 - Associate schools and progression programme
 - 12 schools
 - Staff and student connection
 - Summer schools (Aimhigher and HEFCE)
 - Profile Raising
 - National organisations
 - Working with community groups
 - Disaffected youth and unengaged communities

Coverage and Engagement

- Small institution
- Resource intensive courses
- Lack of spaces and time during term
- Creative use of space during summer
- Staff engaged where they can
- Use talented graduates
- Careful negotiation

Challenges

- Competition

- 5000 applications for 220 places
- 3475 people invited to audition/interview
- How do we support non-traditional students through a complex and demanding process and come out of it successful?
- Balance between raw talent and preparation

Challenges

- **Balancing aspirations**
 - Limited places
 - Limited access to our courses
 - 600 students at least on our progression programme
 - What do we do when they want to apply for Acting, when there are 2000 applications for 25 places?

Challenges

- Employability and risk
 - Risky industry
 - Flexible employment
 - Low salaries
 - Non-traditional students may not have support networks in place
 - They may also find the subject a risk in the first place

Future

- Looking at our evaluation and monitoring of WP
- How do we develop our WP strategy with funding challenges
- Whole institution approach

Questions for the group

- How do we recognise and support raw talent to progress to our courses?
- How do we balance aspirations particularly with the x-factor generation?
- What are the risks to non-traditional students in attending our courses?
- What do we need to change as an institution?

Thank you for listening

Any questions

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