



# Postcards from Campus

Celebrating Our Wins and Discussing Our Challenges Together



# *Campaigns in Motion*

Clare Livingston, Interim Director of Advancement



Ready to start  
breaking  
boundaries?

## Wins from the Past Year

- Highest level of philanthropic income received in 24-25
- Largest legacy received
- Campaign plan approved by University Court
- Moving towards launch of new comprehensive campaign
- Alumni engagement and participation at highest ever levels
- University doing well in rankings – student experience, medical school

## Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement

- Budget/Investment in Advancement
- Recruitment and Retention
- Philanthropy during challenging times – sector/finances etc.

## Focus for the Next Year

- Launch of new comprehensive campaign
- Launch of new 3-year Development & Alumni Relations strategy
- Leadership change – new VC and new academic/SMT leadership

## Question for the Group

- Managing leadership transition – what does good look like? Lessons learned?

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UNIVERSITY OF  
ABERDEEN



## Andrew Harris, Director of Campaigns



### Wins from the Past Year

- Launched first institution-wide fundraising Campaign (£250m)
- Completed £10m fundraising gap on a £24m capital project
- 1,000 students currently on campus supported via philanthropy

### Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement

- How we balance competing priorities
- Maintaining positivity within the team
- Numerous asks from across institution to fund what was 'core budget'

### Focus for the Next Year

- Growing our fundraising work in Asia
- Scoping Campaign close, celebration and 'what next' looks like
- Relentless focus on 4 key areas of alignment

### Question for the Group

How are you maintaining positivity and focus in a time of deep challenge?



# The University of Surrey

Jessie Billing, Director of Advancement



## **Wins from the Past Year**

Raising £70.3m against a target of £60m for our Campaign

## **Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement**

Finding and retaining good people

## **Focus for the Next Year**

Campaign planning, building the team

## **Questions for the Group**

How are Campaign targets set?





## **Suzie Thompson**

Director of Development and Alumni Relations

### **Wins from the Past Year**

Crossing £10M NFR for the first time in our history in 23/24, and hitting target in 24/25, despite investment in team slowing.

### **Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement**

Connecting our alumni engagement efforts effectively to recruitment and employability outcomes, making our engagement work truly strategically aligned.

Sustaining T&F income.

### **Focus for the Next Year**

Campaign Planning – we need to prepare for a major campaign, despite investment in team slowing down. A key priority is to engage faculty and shape compelling funding propositions, aligned to Liverpool 2031 strategy.

### **Question for the Group**

Are you still able to be forward facing and ambitious given the financial climate in the sector, or are you facing budget challenges, hiring freezing and how are you managing that?



## *Campaigns in Motion*

How are you sustaining momentum and confidence during leadership change, campaign resets, and sector-wide upheaval?

## *Principal Gifts and Major Donor Strategy*



Alison Woolley, Director of Development & Alumni Relations

## Wins from the last year

1. £11.2m for endowed institute (MFI)
2. c.£6m art/cash for endowment
3. *Day of Dialogue*
4. Institutional belief!

## Top of mind challenges

1. Unrestricted endowment governance
2. Events as a means of cultivation – resource
3. Focus in a demanding world!

## Focus on the next year

1. Operationalise art endowment
2. 120 year celebrations/ MFI launch
3. Develop new institute
4. Cultivate next 7-8-figure donors

## Questions for the group

1. How to retrofit a campaign structure
2. How to maintain balance

Kevin Weekley, Associate Director – Principal Giving  
Nicola Williams, Associate Director - Development Services



## Wins from the Past Year

- Full staff team following 3-year investment
- Surpassed £20m DARO funds raised threshold with reduction in reliance on principal gifts

## Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement

- Training fundraisers and campus administrators for comfort talking about unrestricted giving (both asking and stewarding)
- Creating spending plans for principal gifts – do we have the capacity and inclination to accept and steward principal gifts?
- Data integrity / quality to support strategic aims

## Focus for the Next Year

- Setting evidence-based KPIs for gift and engagement officers
- Forecasting fundraising goals through better data entry and analysis

## Question for the Group

- How do other advancement teams set & benchmark targets for gift officers?
- How are you integrating grateful patients from your clinical medical services into your fundraising prospect pools?

## Anne Salenbien – Head of Fundraising & Stakeholder Management



### **Wins from the Past Year**

Perfect storm for university veterinary clinic/research

Number of bequest intentions at an all-time high

### **Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement**

Major donor fundraising

### **Focus for the Next Year**

Getting our new institutional leadership involved, on board and motivated to contribute to the challenges ahead.

### **Question for the Group**

For the institutional strategy to inform your fundraising strategy: how do you go about it when the institutional strategy is not clear?

How then to develop an ask fit for major donors?

## *Principal Gifts and Major Donor Strategy*

What structures or support are helping you land and steward large gifts?

# *Engagement Channels and Audiences*

Almeida Joyce Chan, Alumni and Industry Engagement Manager



## Wins from the Past Year

Middlesex achieved its best-ever results in the 2024 NSS, ranking 10th in the UK for overall student positivity. We were also ranked 1st in London for acting on student feedback and for library and learning resources.

## Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement

With a lean team and limited budget, balancing the breadth and depth of engagement activities remains a constant challenge.

## Focus for the Next Year

Completing a team restructure, implementing a new CRM platform, and improving alumni database adoption and usability by the end of 2025.

## Question for the Group

Reconnecting with senior alumni: how have others successfully re-engaged long-graduated alumni and initiated meaningful support or giving conversations?



Ale Regazzi – Alumni & Supporter Engagement Lead  
Ben Siddall-Jones – Philanthropy Manager



## **Wins from the Past Year**

£10M+ raised in philanthropic funds.

New regular giving colleague who launched first two mass fundraising appeals for six years, raising just under £60k from donors in 20+ countries.

28 alumni events across 14 countries with over 800 guests.

## **Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement**

Raising meaningful participation from alumni with events programme and with philanthropic giving, using bespoke engagement, comms and digital.

## **Focus for the Next Year**

Increase % of alumni giving.

Increase % of funds raised from alumni.

## **Question for the Group**

What approach does your institution have for raising its status in rankings?

Vicky Treherne, Head of Transformational and Major Giving



## Wins from the Past Year

- Rankings: remained in the top 100 QS rankings 2025
- New Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Shearer West.
- Celebrated 10 years of our partnership with IntoUniversity.
- Submitted our first 8 figure philanthropic grant application.

**Focus for the Next Year:** Increase volume, value and pace of our asking. To do this we will increase engagement opportunities for donors, increase outreach and meetings with potential donors and develop a wider range of fundraising projects with lower-level gift opportunities to get more donors started on their giving journey with the University of Leeds.

**Question for the Group:** How do other Philanthropy teams work with their VCP around the VCP's donor portfolio - what does that look like in terms of activity and volume of donors and how do you manage this as an Advancement Team?

## Top of Mind Challenges in Advancement

- How to do more with less – and keep our focus on our biggest priorities.
- Competitive and volatile external funding environment: how to achieve cut-through with funders and secure increased philanthropic income to achieve our big goals and raise funds for our priority projects.



University of  
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

# University of Nottingham Snapshot

Edith Prak

16 May 2025



# University of Nottingham “Snapshot”

## 1. Wins from the past year: UoN Business School

### Rankings and Reputation:

- Ranked 54<sup>th</sup> in the Financial Times Finance ranking thanks to alumni participation in surveys
- Stood up the External Advisory Board and Global Advisory Board, both imperative for accreditation
- 106 self-registrations for QS '26 to date (83 employer and 23 academics)
- 40 alumni profiles shared with External Relations to support marketing and ISR that meet targeted programme and country

### Volunteering and Advocacy:

- Engaged over 400 alumni volunteers this academic year, contributing to 37% of the University's volunteering engagement numbers
- This has supported over 3,500 students and 755 alumni beneficiaries
- Supported 12 academic led alumni gatherings outside the UK resulting in 128 additional QS leads

### Communications:

- Record LinkedIn engagement – 28.18% March 2025
- Successful launch of WeChat account – personally connected and able to direct message 1500 China-based graduates

# University of Nottingham “Snapshot”

## 2. Top of Mind Challenges

- New executive team with no experience of advancement
- Severe financial pressures

## 3. Focus for Next Year

- Asia Fundraising
- Campaign preparation

## 4. Question for the Group

- How to explain Advancement to senior colleagues in a way they understand

## *Engagement Channels and Audiences*

What's working best to convert engagement into new donor discovery or annual giving?

# Additional Introductions

**Win from the past year || Focus for the next year**

## Key Themes and Takeaways

- **Campaign momentum is building** despite senior leadership turnover
- **Talent and capacity are stretched**, especially in the face of rising income targets
- **Principal giving and endowments are rising priorities** with particular attention on dedicated principal gift staff
- **Engagement is driving the pipeline** through volunteer programmes, global alumni events, and digital outreach
- **Data underpins performance and credibility** with upgrades to CRM systems and better segmentation key

## Challenges We've Heard So Far

- **Hiring gaps** – Difficulty recruiting and retaining fundraisers
- **Stretched budgets** – Bigger goals, fewer resources
- **Leadership shifts** – Strategic delays during transitions
- **Data drag** – CRM and analytics limitations
- **Gift governance** – Complexities with major gift oversight and stewardship

What top-of-mind challenges have we **not** mentioned?

What are the root causes of these challenges?

How do they connect to one another?

What are you doing to address these problems head-on?