

Association of Universities in the East of England

Final Higher Education ‘Barometer’



March 2011

This is the final Barometer report prepared for stakeholders by the Association of Universities in the East of England (AUEE). Barometer reports were introduced by HEFCE in 2009 and were intended to project the response of HEIs to the economic downturn. AUEE membership has consisted of thirteen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of which the following seven have kindly contributed information that has informed this report:

- Anglia Ruskin University
- University of Bedfordshire
- University of East Anglia (UEA)
- University of Essex
- University of Hertfordshire
- Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA)
- Royal Veterinary College (RVC)

Economic Challenge Innovation Funded Activity that has become Embedded

Anglia Ruskin University reports that their Student Services team has embedded the careers and CV-writing workshops developed under ECIF into their mainstream activities; thus offering support to both final year undergraduates and unemployed graduates. Self-employment seminars, introduced as part of the University's ECIF activity, are now standard within the programmes of individual Faculties.

The University of Bedfordshire is closely examining the following ongoing opportunities for inclusion into mainstream activity:

- HEFCE Internships programme - after a slow start, there are now 150 matched internship programmes with local companies with strong demand still in evidence – targets have been achieved.
- The EEDA funded Innovation Voucher schemes have again met with a strong demand from SMEs. This has resulted in 12 new consultancy programmes with 9 new company collaborations.

- The University's Enterprise Hub has continued to support the local economy with new Innovation Clinics (including Intellectual Property Advisory Service) assisting 50 beneficiaries and an emphasis on supporting new knowledge-based businesses.
- The ESF & local authority funded Supporting Graduates in Employment programme completed successfully in December with over 100 beneficiaries.

The University of East Anglia ECIF funded 'Project Evolve' has included two elements:

1. *Skills development*

- Evolve's free short course programme has delivered training and development for participants throughout Norfolk. The number engaging with the programme has been 2,343 of which 1,176 were graduates; 720 middle management individuals and 447 businesses. The total interaction has been 4,224 and over 200 courses have run to date.
- The skills development element of the Evolve project is continuing and will comprise ongoing support for under-employed graduates, middle managers and small business owners/ directors. It will also include an ongoing programme of courses. Seed-corn funding has been provided by the University to help with continuation of the programme and several new funding streams are being actively explored.

2. *Internship programme*

- A total of 160 students have or are participating in an Internship scheme (138 with SME's and 22 non-SME's) which provides placements of up to 12 weeks, either full-time or part-time. 315 businesses have been engaged and 1,788 graduates have registered as interested in the UEA Internship opportunities. Approximately 40% of participants have secured further graduate level employment.
- A number of businesses that have completed internships are now in discussion with the University to review other engagement opportunities, including consultancy and collaborative research.

The University of Essex two work placement schemes (one Short Term Work Placement Scheme funded by ECIF) and the Graduate Internship Scheme (funded by the HEFCE internship initiative) were successful and well received by both students and local businesses. The ECIF scheme delivered 92 short placement opportunities and the Graduate scheme delivered 85 internships. Local business has also expressed an interest in taking on more student placements in future years. Work is now underway to embed and extend the internship scheme in the University under the leadership of the new Director of Employability.

Some of the University's training workshops, delivered as part of their ECIF programme, were very popular and oversubscribed (e.g. Search Engine Optimisation, use of social media) and have now been updated and revised and are being delivered as part of the "Building on Success" programme at the University's Southend campus. Over 450 individuals from around 200 businesses have taken part in the programme to date, and the University now have plans to offer these workshops as part of a commercial range of

workshops for the business community. The Transferable Skills Assessment on VentureNavigator will continue to be available on the site as it has proven to be very popular with users. Over 1,200 people have taken the assessment and/or accessed the online skills resources.

The University of Hertfordshire has engaged with 148 employers; 60 completed in-depth consultations to review their Business Resilience and 50 of these received business consultancy support. 214 graduate employees attended training and development sessions focusing on business resilience issues. The University has worked with one business to deliver a management development programme to their first line management team following a review of their business structure to see them through a restructuring process and helped the business to survive.

The Norwich University College of the Arts staff and student consultancy, *The Ideas Factory*, is steadily building its consultancy offer to external clients as a significant means of contributing to economic recovery and development. Activities range across design and media commissions for business and community organizations, the hire of specialist NUCA facilities, and professional training for the creative industries including Apple-accredited short courses. Since the last HERA Barometer was published in November 2010, NUCA has also been drawing its ECIF-supported initiatives to a close. Their internship scheme *ICE* (Internships for Creative Enterprise) has resulted in the placing of 65 interns in the creative industries. The mentoring scheme has paired nearly 50 NUCA alumni as mentors for recent graduates taking their first steps into careers in the creative industries.

The Royal Veterinary College reports that, due to a shortage of funding, no paid internships have been delivered to build on the ORBIS or BRIO bioscience graduate internship programmes. However, the spin-off benefits have been significant including the formation of new networks and collaborations with a range of East of England based SMEs and larger established companies in the veterinary and bioscience sectors.

Sector Specific Increased Demand

UEA consultancy continues to grow within both the public and private sector. UEA Consulting Ltd has received 'cold calls' from a number of local organizations, both SMEs and larger. The total value of contracts awarded in this quarter is £664,000; double that of the previous quarter. This has included 6 EEDA vouchers in the latest round of funding. Other headline news includes:

- The School of Computing Sciences has recently launched a program of ICT courses to the financial services industry and SME's.
- The Faculty of Health has developed three CPD courses in response to the Anglia Stroke and Heart Network and Norfolk Community Health and Care. These are: Service Improvement - 1 day course; Cardiac Rehabilitation - 3 day course; Speech and Language Therapy for Stroke - 2 day course.
- UEA's Health Economics Consulting has secured 11 contracts since Oct 2010.

- Their Faculty of Health is working with new GP Consortia to determine their needs in terms of professional development and information analysis/evaluation.
- A KTP has been established with Norwich based HEART (Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust), which will result in a collaboration including academics from the School of Computing Sciences and School of History who will work with HEART to develop a heritage resources region.
- UEA has detected a significant demand for new training courses and teaching materials from Sixth form teachers. Their PreUniversity Skills training course provides training for teachers to enable them to teach sixth form students the skills during the transition from sixth form to University.
- The University has agreed a License with Monash University for the use of the Training and Networking Model for developing and running an International Literary Translation Course, as developed by the British Centre for Literary Translation at UEA.

The RVC has received a number of enquiries, particularly from SMEs, seeking to engage with their internship programmes. In recognition that life sciences is a skills dependent sector; the latent demand for work placements in the bioscience sector from recent graduates remains significant. RVC believe they could fill up to five hundred 26 week internships in the East of England region alone, based on the level of demand experienced to date.

HEI Economic Impact on Community Engagement

ARU are developing an 'Enterprising Academics' scheme, which funds short-term placements of early-career academics to benefit local small businesses. This activity is intended to encourage their academics to begin the process of working on research with businesses rather than in isolation. It will also open another channel through which SMEs can engage with the University to the benefit of their business leading to further collaborative activities.

As the managing partner of the regional Low Carbon knowledge transfer programme, the University has successfully restructured the budget and financing to enable it to go forward in a simplified format without Technology Strategy Board support. This allows SMEs across the region to access ERDF funding in support of short, practical interventions to improve business efficiency through reducing carbon output, at a time when many other sources of funding have ceased.

Anglia Ruskin are continuing to offer graduate internships of up to 12 weeks, and are finding that SMEs are being referred to them by those who participated successfully in the ECIF and HEFCE supported programmes.

The University of Bedfordshire has been successfully running its Basics of Business start up programme which has attracted much community interest. It has been run from both the Luton and Bedford campuses.

University of Hertfordshire has advised that 380 received support/advice and guidance for self employment and at least 12 have subsequently now started their own businesses. The University is still offering continued support to both the start-up companies and individuals through workshops, business advice and mentoring sessions.

The RVC continues to work extensively within the Hertfordshire area on a number of training and commercial trading levels, with numerous SME veterinary practices involved in companion animal and farm animal health and welfare.

New Partnership and Networking Activities

The University of Bedfordshire continues to be firmly at the heart of the new LEP proposals and is a key partner in the new South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP). It recently hosted the latest SEMLEP engagement event for businesses. Additionally, the University has worked closely with the Bedfordshire Chamber in developing a Foundation Degree in Leadership, Innovation and Management initiative (part of a wider British Chambers of Commerce initiative).

UEA has hosted “Listening to Business: Exploring opportunities to enhance your competitiveness”. This event provided attendees the opportunity to discuss their members’ business challenges and explore ways in which UEA can contribute to their success – the event, that built on the University’s successful University2Business engagement show-case last October in collaboration with the FSB, Norfolk Network, IoD and Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, resulted in a range of new collaborations that are currently being pursued. UEA’s ‘Enterprising Academics’ network continues to meet on a regular basis – as a forum for research and academic staff to meet and share ideas and opportunities for commercialisation activities. The Network also provides a simple and consistent route for Enterprise and Commercialisation communication. Finally, the University reports that InCrops hosted a visit from Dr Peter Bonfield, Chief Executive of Building Research Establishment and Niall Trafford, Director of Sustainable Development & Chief Operating Officer at BRE.

The University of Essex held an event in January in conjunction with Ways2Work, called ‘Helping Your Business: Benefits of employing and serving disabled people’. Approximately 30 delegates attended and the event included exhibition stands from a number of charities and not-for-profit organisations.

In February the University held an event in conjunction with Colchester Borough Council, called ‘Achieving Next Generation Access for Colchester Borough – A Strategic Presentation’. Over 45 delegates attended and resulted in 11 informal expressions of interest to the Council, plus a high-level meeting with BT.

The University of Hertfordshire’s partnership working resulted in 200 business referrals and 600 graduates referred.

Other

UEA reports that two spinouts, *Syrinx* (water pipeline leak detection) and *Intelligent Fingerprinting* (illicit substance detection from fingerprints), have secured additional funding since the publication of the previous Barometer report in November 2010. Also, that their Enterprise and Commercialisation office business engagement CPD courses for research and academic staff is fully embedded within the general University structured training and development programme.

The University of East Anglia annual Business Plan Competition engaged with over 200 students, who contributed to a Student Entrepreneurship Survey to measure the students' enterprise and entrepreneurship ambitions. 10 finalists have been selected to be mentored and present a full business plan to a panel of external judges on the 31st March 2011. The winner of the competition will receive start up support for their idea from the sponsors including marketing, legal, banking and accountancy advice, along with a one week internship at the Hotel Chocolate's Boutique Hotel and Cocoa plantation in the Caribbean. Two runners up will receive internships at Hotel Chocolate's UK headquarters.

At the end of January 2011, the University of Essex offered a low-cost, high value day of sales skills taster sessions, delivered at their Colchester Campus by the Business and Management Training Centre within Essex Business School. This Centre will be providing facilitated business advice and support sessions for a local manufacturing company (a half day per week) over the next 3 months to help them put structures and strategies in place for appraisal and performance management.

Over 35 people from businesses and organisations in the region attended a networking event 'Is your business future proof?' hosted by the Business and Management Training Centre. The event held at Colchester Campus in February was presented by Will Sambrook, Green Light Trust. The Centre is also working with Colchester Borough Council to jointly provide a Customer Service Excellence training programme for 'customer facing staff' currently employed at Colchester Borough, and to roll this out to other regional public sector bodies and stakeholders. A Skills for Energy meeting was hosted at the University last November with the Haven Gateway Partnership. It included public sector and stakeholder providers as well as wind energy businesses and discussions centred on the skills development needs and support for this growing industry. The University also reports that a data sharing consultancy project is now underway with BAE Systems Ltd in Chelmsford.

11/03/11