Strategy White Paper Consultation Report 2019

Summary of Responses

Introduction

The White Paper consultation was undertaken from 22 July 2019 to 30 September 2019. An online survey was the main response channel used, with some individual or group responses also submitted direct. This paper summarises the response rate and the themes which have emerged through this stage of consultation.

Response rate

The White Paper Consultation received a total of 1416 responses, providing almost 6,000 individual pieces of feedback. The overall demographics indicate engagement from staff, students and alumni from all of the University's country campuses. Appendix 1 details the overall breakdown of these. Discussions undertaken with a variety of external stakeholders have also fed into the developments.

The online response rate (1408 of the total responses) surpassed that of the Green Paper Consultation, with a particularly significant increase attributable to a large response from UNNC students (58% of all responses). As such, the overall reactions to the proposed content have been considered by campus to ensure any impact of the weighting is transparent.

Proposed content – responses to four key statements

The White Paper Consultation focused on four key statements based on Proposed Content for the New University Strategy. These statements linked to the key risks around the strategy development highlighted by the Strategy Development Steering Group.

Responses indicated a generally positive reaction to the content, with slightly stronger agreement with the direction and relevance, and slightly less agreement around its ambition and support to decision making. This distribution is consistent across all campuses, although the results by campus indicate that UNNC's reaction is proportionately the most positive, and UNUK's the least positive particularly in respect of decision making. This campus breakdown is included at Appendix 2.
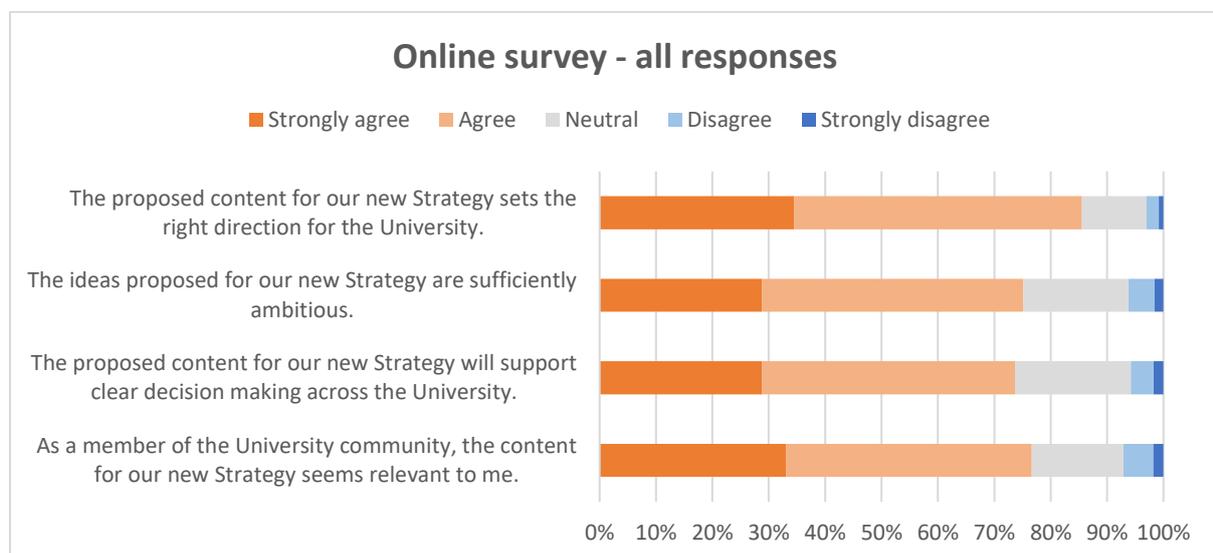
Free text responses – themes and reactions

The online survey enabled the submission of free text responses, for example if respondents had comments about any of the individual goals. Approximately a quarter of the responses included comments, along with a small number of group or individual responses submitted direct, so this is far more limited than the rich resource of responses to the Green Paper themes.

There has been a generally positive response to the proposed values, and a good reaction to sustainability featuring prominently, although with some queries about operationalising these ambitions. Some of the comments help to contextualise the positive scores:

> "Overall, I love the content and find pride in however small a part I add."

> "It's a great start, much more meaningful than GS2020 - a genuine example of less is more. I get a real sense of what we're about, where we want to be, what we want to do. Thank you."

Overall, however, the comments received do predominantly capture negative reactions or suggested changes which provides useful insight into the reasons for the lower ratings.

There are some themes emerging within the free text responses which are summarised below.

Specific terminology

There have been some strong reactions to particular words or phrases being unclear or inappropriate to use.

> "Future-proof our students" (see Goals section). This is nonsensical jargon."

> "disruption is not opportunity, it generally damages lives, so that is an appalling phrase"

> "Some borders are beyond our control."

Lack of distinctiveness

One of our stated objectives is to develop a short, distinctive, compelling expression of our Strategy.

Whether the proposed content is distinctive is not one of the four statements tested through this stage of consultation. However, comments indicate the wording is too broad or vague, not clear enough about what makes Nottingham distinctive.

> "The strategy outlined could effectively apply to any UK University, there seemed little to address a unique selling point for Nottingham, overall I thought it was pretty bland. will this really drive change?"

> "The university's mission is so vague and spread out over all the modern trendy topics it spreads itself out too thin."

Change of emphasis

Aspects are highlighted where greater emphasis is sought for a particular goal or aspect of University operations, reflecting the challenge of a short document combining vision, values and goals. Some seek more prominent references to key aspects of an academic institution: teaching, research and students. Others identified that their job family or function is excluded or lacking prominence in the

wording. Within this, the need to directly reference sport has come through strongly, including multiple submissions of similar comments about the benefits of sport and physical activity.

> "*not enough about the basic job of a university: teaching and teaching quality, research.*"

> "*Sport plays such an integral part in student and staff wellbeing, and is a major factor in students' choosing which institution to study at - so why can't we embed something in the strategy that mentions sport? Not just a 'brief' passing mention of a very generic 'Health & Wellbeing'?*"

> "*It's also discouraging to see zero mention of mental health, despite it consistently appearing across the green paper consultation documents.*"

> "*The ambition for business engagement and industrial partnership development comes through in the Strategy Green Paper Consultation Report, but the document outlining the proposed content for the University strategy makes little reference to this at all.*"

Comments about operations

A large number of the responses focus on details of how the strategy would be implemented. Many have reacted to the illustrative examples or provided further operational suggestions in line with Green Paper consultation responses, particularly in relation to the 'environmental sustainability' goal. Some responses indicate frustration that current issues or challenges are not acknowledged. Additionally, a number of respondents sought clarity about how the new strategy will be implemented and measured, with some appetite for specific dates or targets.

> "*It seems to me that there is insufficient emphasis on measurements to determine whether the broad aims are being achieved within the target timescale*"

> "*At the moment so many of us are focused on day-to-day survival and damage-control, that the high-sounding stuff in the white paper just feels rather hollow.*"

> "*Some really ambitious and quantitative targets with clear KPIs are needed to focus our efforts as a whole University and not silo those objectives to a few service areas - we need to take collective responsibility for achieving these. Universities that do this achieve far more by collaborating on these shared objectives (e.g. carbon reduction, getting in shape, EDI, Engagement, etc).*"

Appendix 1 – White Paper consultation response demographics

1. About you. Are you:

More Details

🔵 A staff member	429	
🟠 A student	903	
🟢 A former student	68	
🔴 Other	8	

2. What are you studying:

More Details

🔵 A foundation programme	223
🟠 An undergraduate programme	560
🟢 A taught postgraduate progra...	108
🔴 A research programme	29
🟣 A short course (less than a year)	19
🟤 Are you a member of Senate? ...	2
🩷 Other	8
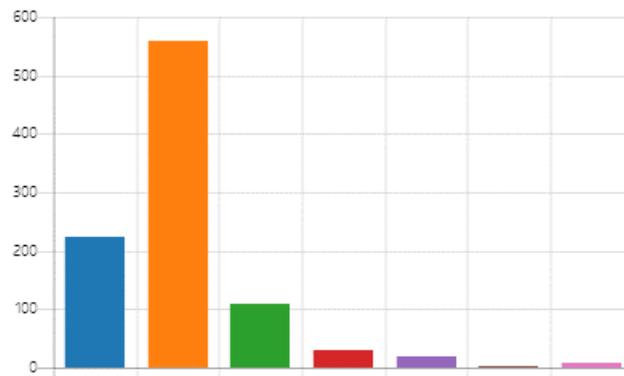
3. What is your 'job family':

More Details

🔵 Research and Teaching (R&T)	186
🟠 Administrative, Professional &...	200
🟢 Operations and Facilities (O&F)	13
🔴 Technical Services (TS)	29
🟣 Are you a member of Senate? ...	4
🟤 Other	5
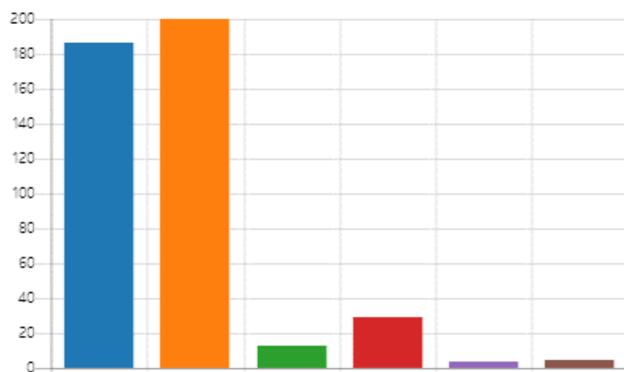
4. Which is your 'home' campus:

More Details

- 🔵 UNM (University of Nottingha...   94
- 🟠 UNNC (University of Nottingh...   888
- 🟢 UNUK (University of Nottingh...   409
- 🔴 Other   17

Appendix 2 – White Paper Consultation responses by campus

UNNC responses

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ▫ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

- The proposed content for our new Strategy sets the right direction for the University.
- The ideas proposed for our new Strategy are sufficiently ambitious.
- The proposed content for our new Strategy will support clear decision making across the University.
- As a member of the University community, the content for our new Strategy seems relevant to me.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

UNUK responses

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ▫ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

- The proposed content for our new Strategy sets the right direction for the University.
- The ideas proposed for our new Strategy are sufficiently ambitious.
- The proposed content for our new Strategy will support clear decision making across the University.
- As a member of the University community, the content for our new Strategy seems relevant to me.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

UNM responses

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ▫ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

- The proposed content for our new Strategy sets the right direction for the University.
- The ideas proposed for our new Strategy are sufficiently ambitious.
- The proposed content for our new Strategy will support clear decision making across the University.
- As a member of the University community, the content for our new Strategy seems relevant to me.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%