

Session Title:	35 Years Celebratory Progression Panel
Speaker(s):	<p>Jonny Atkinson-White (JAW), Customer Success Manager, Revolution Viewing</p> <p>Joe Bradbury-Walters (JBW), Head of Outreach, National Film and Television School</p> <p>Robbie Pickles (RP), Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, Keele University</p> <p>Mike Nicholson (MN), Director of Recruitments, Admissions and Participation, University of Cambridge</p> <p>Liam Owens (LO), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Marketing, Student Recruitment and Student Administration), Edge Hill University</p>
Chair:	<p>Reena Littlehales (RL), HELOA UK Chair</p> <p>Fiona Curry, HELOA Vice-Chair (Finance)</p>
Reporter:	Ellie Lloyd Davies & Tiegan Yates

Key note Content	<p>MN – Why HELOA membership mattered in the beginning? Why was HELOA formed, and what value did it provide in the early days of student recruitment and outreach?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was around when HELOA was set up. - Student recruitment (SR) has changed a lot since then. Used to be one person to cover all areas, marketing, WP and SR. People doing the role were academics, ex-teachers. - Late 90s – universities thinking about expanding and thinking about what they offer – new courses to promote. - No student ambassadors to support and no one knew what SR was and what you were doing. You were just never seen in the office and always out on the road. - This is why HELOA needed to be created, there was no career development and no structures. - Everyone was always on road, saw lots of colleagues from other unis. - UCAS had just formed – they were starting to run fairs. - Schools and colleges ran events. Professional support came from the other people doing your job at other universities. This brought lots of collaboration.
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- HELOA was initially set up to be support network to ensure those on the road felt supported, loved and cared for.

JBW - Why HELOA membership matters to developing a career within recruitment and outreach?

- Outreach to me is basically lots of exhibitions, cold events, sandwiches, premier inns.
- It's not an easy job, but it is rewarding.
- Really important to have the reward. Being a member of HELOA has benefits. Training – NPC – you get the lay of the land. A group level you can see the shape and size of other institutions and then the annual conference.
- Learn from peers and colleagues. It wasn't just coming as an attendee. Be part of key notes, run session, environment is very welcoming. Try out different skills.
- Inspiration – favourite part of the conference, creative work going on – gave me a boost of the importance of the work we do, specifically in outreach, diversity and inclusion.
- Going alone isn't the way forward – support network to ring, call, read this for me, what's this event, a lift to the event etc. You can reach out to them.
- ADHD – anxiety – present on finance – being able to do that blows my mind I was able to development my career – confidence building, opportunities to do something different and get out your comfort zone.
- Join as a member – you end with colleagues mentors, buddies and friends.

RP – Why HELOA membership matters to developing progression to strategic leadership roles?

- You don't need to have a 'role' in HELOA to be a leader and be strategic. When people come together and want to change things and make it a better place then you'll make change.
- I want to be an officer, manager and now a leader.
- HELOA can't do that – but it can help you see what you value and go from there.
- I started out travelling around the country – it taught me a lot about me.

- You become more professional and it helps you see what you value and what you champion.
- Working with me – people have shaped me and helped me shape my career.
- Sessions on leadership – being present in each others company.
- RP noted that the panel consisted of all men.
- Men have felt more comfortable being in this role – We need to see more changing and evolving in this area.

JAW – Why HELOA membership matters to developing opportunities outside higher education?

- Customer success manager for Vepple.
- 11 years in HE: Uni of Liverpool, UCLan, Edge Hill University & Newcastle.
- Chair in Covid – challenges with that when an organisation is based on meeting up – charity grew.
- Values of HELOA – intentions of roles, make an impact on people's lives, help people realise their potential.
- How do you turn this on yourself – be the strongest that you can be – transferable skills for everything
- Account management – stakeholder manager, WP – Data analysis, event – project management.
- When you see gaps in a job advert – identify what you haven't got that you need and acknowledge that, you can get involved in opportunities that can help you expand your skills set e.g. managing people, managing budgets etc – you have to be a good motivator because people aren't getting paid, so they need other motivations – it requires time and effort but what you can get out is massive.
- You don't have to be in UKC to get the most about it – Started as VC training to Chair.
- You are supporting people on the road all the time – HELOA feeds and grows this.
- If you can't see an opportunity – create one – HELOA will support that.
- Transferable skills – in and out of the sector – believe in yourself.
- Speak to people about how they got where they are now.

	<p>LO – Why HELOA membership matters now? What role can HELOA members shape in developing internal ideas and activities within their current organisation, and also contribute to the wider national discussion on university participation and widening access?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a lot going on in the sector it’s going to go through a tough time. - It doesn’t matter where you work geographically or within your university. - We do not know any answers – it’s uncertain but you’re trying to do a job in that – See slides. - Things are changing economically – borrowing for government is getting more expensive. - Policy, Sector, Regulation, research, international, Skills, Legislation – lots of things within this. - Is HE going to become public sector is really important for finances. - New post-16 strategy is going to be important for outreach in schools. - Employment rights bill – will matter to student ambassadors etc. - You are operating in a context where your job is becoming increasingly difficult. - Be the best informed person in your dept, be the eyes and ears and become valuable to your institution – get your senior managers to look for you. - Understand the sector that you work in – make yourself the person your university can’t afford to lose.
<p>Questions and answers:</p>	<p>Audience questions</p> <p>Why do you think less women have taken up roles within HELOA?</p> <p>MN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities support HELOA. Replicated who was in charge at the time. 10-year period, there will only be around 3-4 UK Chairs. - It can be down to who is available at the time. - Transiency of contracts – who’s able to take the time to do it. - Uni – your line manager has to be supportive, they need to be supportive of it. Who can do it and have support from leadership team.

RL

- There are 7 females on the executive committee for HELOA. Diversity and inclusion within HELOA are growing.

What is your favourite motorway service station?

JAW – Tebay and Gloucester.

Large number of vacancies within HELOA – why aren't people engaging, do you think?

JAW

- One of the biggest challenges is keeping roles filled as a chair, telling people to stop, do one thing really well and you've contributed to HELOA, there's no contract but if you like it or enjoy it then think about where that has come from. People with the same roles as you, give you a good experience, if you want that to continue then you have to pay it back and get involved.
- Men will say I will learn in that role and women will say I don't know how to do that so I won't apply, which lends itself to why there are more past male chairs. Nobody is perfect, but give it a go, you don't have to fill every skill gap you can learn and develop, do you have personal skills that can help.

Is there a future where there's a national conference not held in England?

MN

- Yes, but you need a venue that people can get to. Where can people attend for a day – maximise attendees. There was a conference in Plymouth – terrible time of year to travel in Jan and too far to go. Comfortable that you're getting a good turnout. Can you make it financially viable.

RL

- It has been researched and documented, please do ask if you have any suggestions or queries.

How do you go from working in student recruitment to becoming VC?

LO

- First generation student from a state school, get beyond thinking you can't do it. Curiosity is important, what do I understand and what can I contribute, be the person that your institution listens to, you get to PVC, there isn't a software update that gives you everything,

you have to learn it by being curious, there are things you should be doing to be valuable internally and more credible externally, if you work in outreach, you want schools to want you to bring things to the conversation, read WONKHE's digest, read internal UUKdaily news internally from your PR and comms teams, THE; etc.

- Be informed about the policy context that you are working in – be informed!

MN

- HELOA has a good track record for getting people to be volunteers and then become VCs (lots of names listed). Really interesting that they started in junior roles – you bring credibility. You have a lot of knowledge about the sector and have insights by talking to peers and speaking to schools. Knowing what's happening down the road.

What are your top tips for Networking?

JBW

- Be brave, don't just sit and work. Going and sitting on a table and introducing yourself to people. You have the opportunity to chat and share knowledge, interests that you can talk about. It's an easy way to talk to people. It's not an interview, just be brave and start with something.

RL

- Having a conversation with Joe at the first conference in 2018 she had attended as a lone delegate that encouraged her to apply for a vacant role within HELOA

Have you found it challenging between your FT role and member of committee?

RP

- Being in SR has got hard, the world is more complicated. You can't just drive around to events – you need to be everywhere and on Teams meetings etc. If you're doing HELOA too – if you want to do it, you need to find time and carve the time out.
- If you change university – having an understanding manager and make sure they understand your role. They should want you to do this – it's a mistake if they don't.

- Interested people and positive staff are the people you want to retain, you want people that want to do these roles. If managers aren't supportive HELOA can speak to them – it's good for staff and the uni.

LO

- When you are in a UKC role you are making a commitment; you need an employer that understands but you can do it in your spare time as well. You need your institution to understand that there is a huge benefit of having people in these roles to your institution – you are part of groups that require you to do high profile things e.g. radio or TV and it shows your institution off so it's good for the university and you, you can name drop your university. Relay the benefits to your managers and institutions.

RP

- It's really good to be able to use this to say how credible – senior management ask about 'do you know what you're doing', we can say we have someone in HELOA that's the UK Chair they are doing that and they are in the forefront and have influence and are part of conversations.

MN

- I made it very clear that I had this UK Chair role – the benefits for you and your university is so important.

Can SR and Outreach be combined?

MN

- People bring different skills, you need to be flexible about how your role is. There is greater specialization – you need a good skill set and have a broader experience to help progress your career – it's not good to be too niche. You need more experience to have a broader role.

What do you do or how do you plan to increase racial diversity?

RL

- Going to do some research, this is her final year as UK chair, she will be stepping down January 2026, but something to takeaway and have more conversations with.

Is it appropriate to merge SR within an institution?

LO

- If there was a right way to do it, we would all do it the same way but there isn't so there isn't a right answer.

JAW

- Put it on the students that you work with, trust your university has what to offer, its not necessarily about your institution or your job its about supporting the students so do the best for the student in front of you as it is your job to aspire the student in front of you and show them the opportunities, if you don't have it at your institution point them elsewhere.

RL

- In HELOA we are there to support students make informed decisions.

Closing statement

RL

- This is where HELOA was (points at all male panel), but we (looks out to audience) are all where HELOA is going.