

Widening Participation in your School of Biosciences: A check-list of good practice - Useful Do's (and one 'Don't')

Do's (for university departments / schools of the Biosciences):

- Ensure a co-ordinator for Widening Participation / Schools' Liaison is appointed. The person appointed needs to be able to
 - work within the overall university strategy for WP
 - work with central staff with WP / schools' liaison / marketing roles
 - motivate colleagues to explore working to widen participation (e.g. to get involved with activities such as those as described above)
- Ensure there is a departmental strategy in place which does not leave all the work to one person to encourages collaboration and sharing of good practice
- Ensure that the various roles are co-ordinated, e.g. marketing, schools' liaison, WP, (sounds like common sense but they are often given to different staff with differing agendas which is wasteful of time and energy)
- Make use of central university staff with a remit for WP - admissions, marketing, access, partnerships - whatever they are called - there are staff employed to help the process and provide valuable assistance
- Make use, too of development staff within the university. They can help in setting up workshops, motivating staff, providing small grants for pilot projects
- Make use of technical support staff who, as the above illustrations show, have a very valuable role to play, both in demonstrating technical equipment to visiting school children and in making visits to schools.
- Make use of any funding sources, internal and external which might be available
- Find out what's going on in other places; what synergy or transfer there might be - don't reinvent wheels when there's on out there to borrow
- Talk to the expert teachers / educational developers when thinking of student retention - what changes can be made to the curriculum? What additional tutorial support / support processes might be put in place?
- Work with external agencies wherever possible (see above for project involving museums, Local Education Authorities etc)
- Set departmental targets - to provide evidence to the sceptics that things can work - albeit long term in some instances

Don't: Try to go it alone: contact details of staff in the three institutions cited are given above and below and they will be glad to respond to any queries you might have.