WORLD TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

World Technology Universities Network (WTUN)
Congress Report, 2018

Executive Summary

The Congress, delivered on 28 -30 November, attracted 101 attendees from universities and businesses from 18 countries across the world. Through plenary and parallel sessions, the following themes were explored: the role and impact of technology universities to respond to global challenges; the varied and innovative ways institutions collaborate with business and industry; entrepreneurialism; WTUN's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development goals and; the role of technology universities in addressing gender inequality. This report captures the key themes and outcomes of the Congress, which in turn will aid future conversations between members and inform the 2019 Congress.

Technology Universities engendering entrepreneurialism

Entrepreneurialism was a reoccurring theme throughout all sessions within the Congress. It was recognized that many universities encourage entrepreneurial behaviors both through their faculty and professional staff and their students to create forward thinking staff and graduates who are primed to tackle the challenges of the 21st Century. Examples showcased how universities were embedding entrepreneurism through the curriculum, from government-led initiatives, from funded projects, individual interventions and institution-led initiatives.

A drive from the leadership of institutions and a commitment at all levels is needed to ensure success. Many of the new universities within the Network have harnessed entrepreneurial behaviors and learning from their inception, it was considered more difficult for older universities to undertake systemic change to become an entrepreneurial university, but it is not impossible.

Entrepreneurialism is expected to be an ongoing theme for WTUN activities in 2019. Professor Klaus Zeppenfeld, President of Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences is keen to take a lead on this work stream with an initial focus on student activities across the Network.

Outcome: Professor Zeppenfeld to develop a proposal for General and Operational Board.

Gender Equality in Higher Education and WTUN

WTUN has been conscious to recognise the gender inequity both within the WTUN membership and the global education sector more widely. A range of presentations within this session highlighted that, whilst there has been great progress, there is still gender inequality in higher education, particular in technology based disciplines. The Network has great potential to address gender inequality and there are some strong examples of projects and innovations that work; Genovate; the UNESCO Engineering Initiative; Women in Research Fellowships and Sponsorship.

Outcome: WTUN will form a working group on Gender Equality and WTUN to consider how this theme can be driven through all its activities.

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United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and WTUN

As a global network the WTUN is both well positioned and has a responsibility to discuss and respond to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The WTUN aspires to be a global network responding to global challenges and the UN SDGs provide a strategic focus for its activities.

In 2018 the Operational Board of WTUN, formed a working group to understand the variety of contributions that member institutions make on the UN SDGs and to identify three of the goals to focus activities on. The work group led by Jo Dobson, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University identified: Good Health and Wellbeing; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Clean Water and Sanitation as the goals in which WTUN will initially focus. These were agreed at the Congress however members were keen to state that this focus does not exclude contributions and inclusion of activities supporting the other SDGs. The WTUN work on the UN SDGs will continue to progress with direction from the Operational Board.

Outcome: Consider signing the UN SDG Accord; developing exchanges and mobility activities focused on these goals and plan for a student competition or other form of student-focused activity.

Concluding comments

It was agreed that technology universities and WTUN can be utilised as a mechanism to challenge inequality and encourage entrepreneurial thinking to tackle global challenges. As an organisation WTUN needs to harness the power of a collection of world technology universities working together to solve the 21st Century's global challenges.