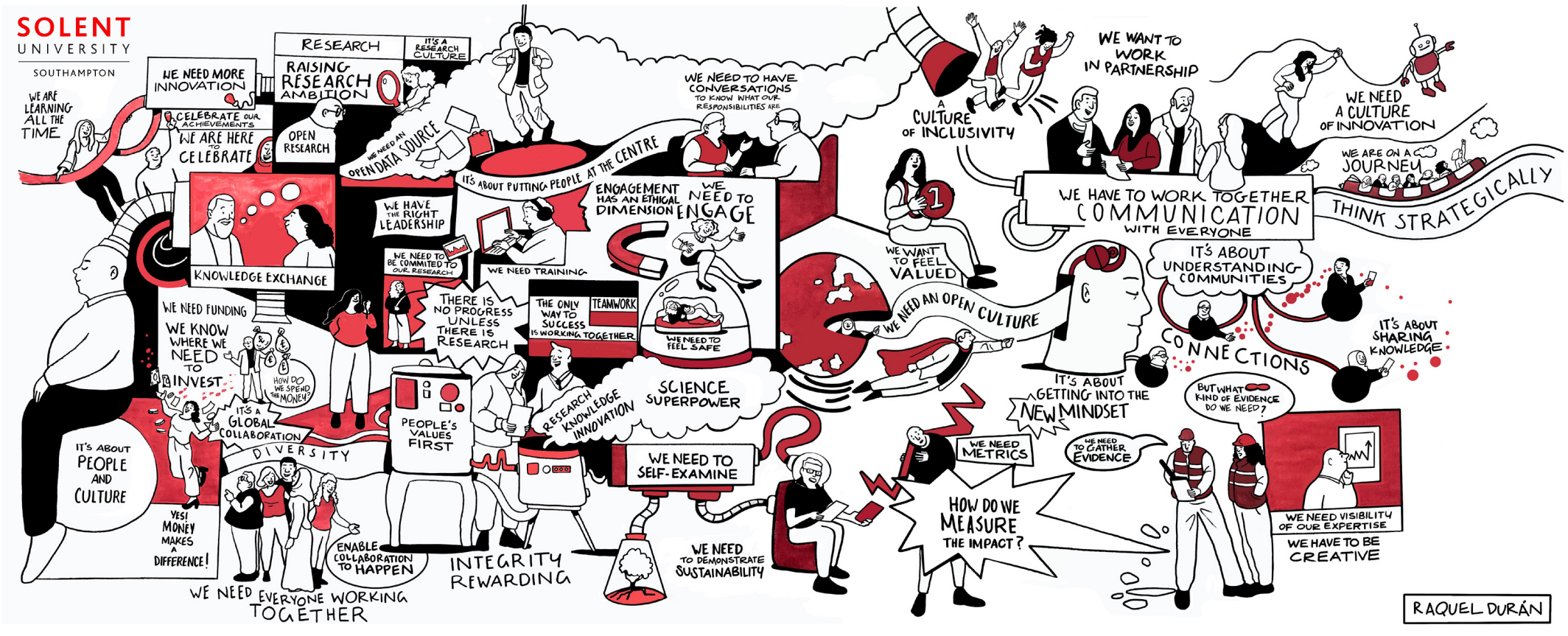


RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AWAY DAY

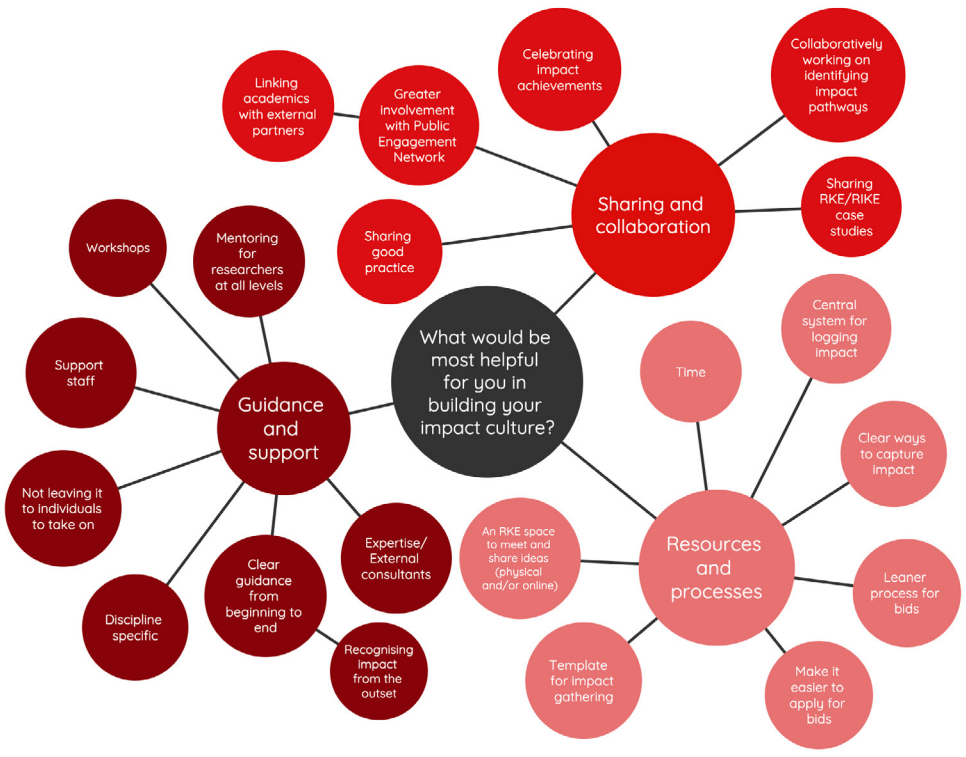
JUNE 2022

SUMMARY

Colleagues on the Research and Knowledge Exchange pathways took part in an Away Day on 15th June. The aim of the day was to come together and celebrate our successes, develop our shared understandings and plan our way forward. The programme included guest speakers from GuildHE Research, UKRI and Bath Spa University alongside a workshop on research culture and updates from the Research Office. Discussions across the day were dynamically captured by live illustrator Raquel Durán and shared in the header image. Professor Syamantak Bhattacharya, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange, provided the opening address and the day was closed by Professor Karen Stanton, Vice-Chancellor, who emphasised that building a positive research culture is a whole university endevour.

BUILDING OUR IMPACT CULTURE

Sarah Priston, Head of Research Support at Bath Spa, reflected on their institutional journey in enhancing impact culture that has led to a recent AHRC Impact Accelerator award. A key message was the importance of approaching impact as a central and ongoing part of research, not an addendum. Sarah asked attendees to share their thoughts on what would be most helpful in building our impact culture. Responses can be broadly grouped into sharing and collaboration, guidance and support, resources and processes:



HORIZON SCANNING

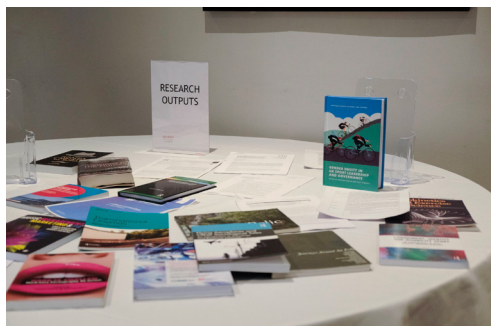
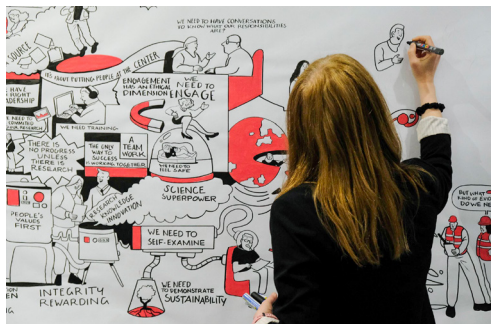
Rachel Persad, manager of GuildHE Research (of which Solent is a member) provided an overview of the current HE research landscape, focusing in particular on the opportunities and challenges for small and specialist institutions (SSIs). This includes the UKRI's first five-year strategy and EDI strategy, responses to the Nurse and Tickell reviews, ARIA, new deal for postgraduate research, and HEIF changes. "It's a jungle out there but you have a different story to tell", is a good reminder to recognise and develop our strengths, to build on what we already do well.

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

Via a post-event survey and informal feedback, the event organisation was praised and the live illustration was seen as a really effective way to capture discussion. Numerous comments pointed to the importance of such an event, hoped that it will be the first of many research events with more participation by more colleagues across the university, beyond the RKE pathways. Highlights for attendees included the opportunity to talk with colleagues about research, the horizon scanning and impact sessions, the interactive workshop and the Q&A panel discussion.

Attendees commented they would have liked the opportunity to consider Research Informed Teaching (RIT), hear examples of ongoing research projects at Solent, to celebrate research achievements, to have an open conversation about the research strategy, and hear more about the Research Office's future plans and activities. Interactive elements of the day were particularly welcomed and valued. Future seminars and training on bid writing, collaborating with others/other HEIs, impact (building and writing a REF Impact Case Study, evidencing impact) were suggested.

NEXT...

Key themes across the day included: the necessity of a joined-up approach and stronger communications; supporting research at all levels and stages, in all its shapes and forms; recognising both the challenges and opportunities of being an SSI; clarifying and being confident about our research identity at Solent. It is clear there is work to do here and the Research Office and RKE Leads will share developments in the new academic year. Meanwhile, we are keen to see good engagement with these existing resources and upcoming events:

- Upcoming training seminars & workshops: creating research checklists; PhD supervision; impact planning.
- Solent now subscribe to Research Professional, a web service for funding news and a comprehensive database of funding opportunities. Start with the Solent LibGuide.
- Research MSTeams - open to anyone whose research and knowledge exchange interests and activities (irrespective of career stage or pathway): Media, Culture and the Arts Researchers; Solent Social Researchers.
- Research groups - there are now 9 across the university. More here.
- A research sandpit event "Life Below Water" is taking place 25th July 10-4.