Can students contribute to the recruitment of staff?
New approaches to partnership working
at the University of Worcester

Change Agents Network

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@Dr_Sarah_P

Everyone raise your hand!

Keep it raised if:

- *You've been involved in recruiting recently (as interviewer, interviewee, test panel, etc)*

- *There were students involved in the recruitment process*

- *The candidates were asked to do something you consider innovative or different*

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who

where

why

Setting the scene at Worcester

What we wanted:

To get real information on our candidates that we couldn't get from interviews alone

To make a statement about our partnership working ethos

We could achieve both these things by including students in the recruitment process

Our first activity saw candidates working in pairs together with a group of students to scope out a plan for a new initiative (a library innovation competition)

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We've also run speed dating activities
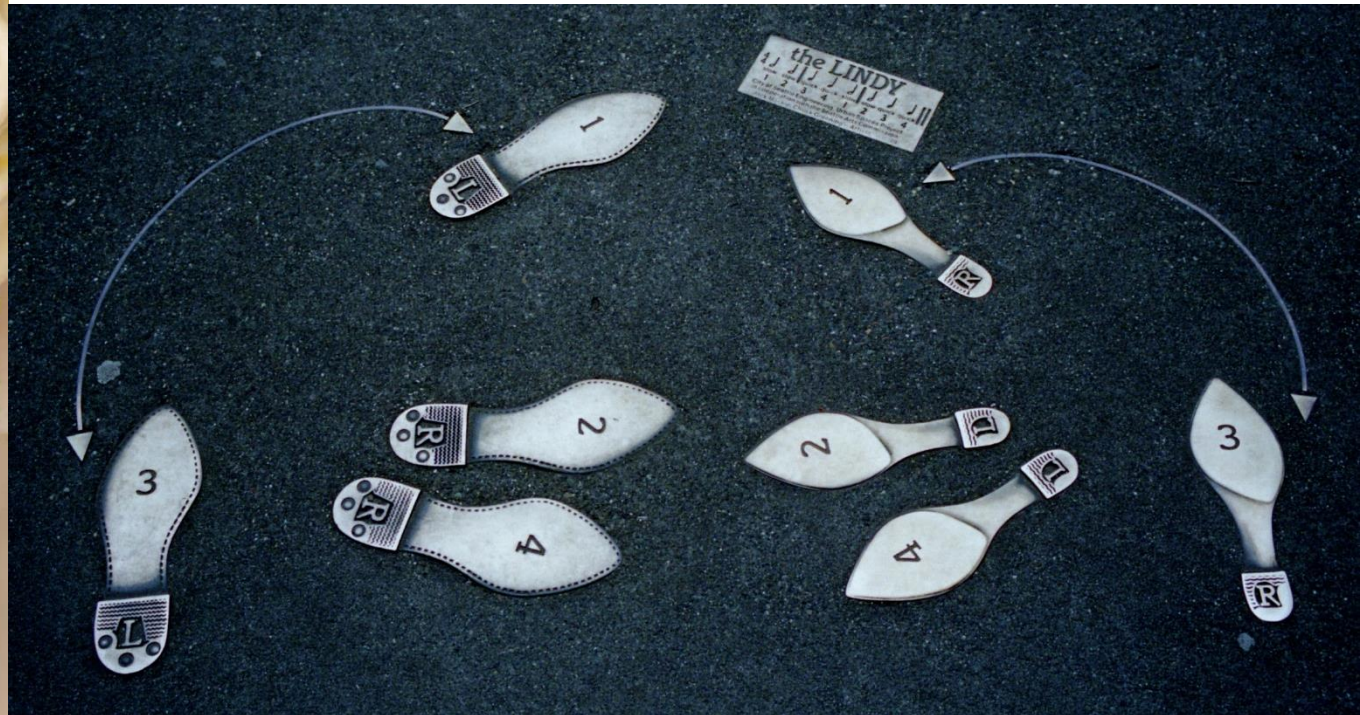
Candidates meet students, and library and academic colleagues

Micro-teaching has also been successful

Topics have included swing dancing and making cupcakes!

Benefits & feedback

"The student consensus on a candidate is often quite different to the Librarian consensus on a candidate, which is what makes this such a valuable exercise.

Library people can have a mental checklist of things they are looking for (did they mention social media/ engagement blah blah blah?).

The students don't have this - they are often quite focused on personality, how the candidate came across, and whether they could understand the candidate or were drowning in a sea of buzzwords and acronyms"

Allie Taylor, liaison librarian
(overseen several work related exercises)

Having said that:

In nearly every interview we have run in this way, student feedback has either:

- Confirmed the interview panel's choice of candidate, *or*

- Enabled us to make a more nuanced choice between two well qualified candidates, *or*

- Helped make a more informed decision where there is some doubt about a candidate that the interview panel cannot fully articulate

And also:

"There is always a concern that the students might only be interested in the personality that they liked most but I was reassured as a candidate that the interactions were being monitored and recorded by other librarians who would be judging it differently and that it was only one part of the selection process"

Shona Raymond, Academic Liaison Librarian

(successful candidate)

Candidate feedback

"Other universities talk about 'student engagement', but Worcester actually means it. Having students involved in the interview panel really keeps them in the centre of the process and purpose. It's surprising, but it shouldn't be – everyone should be doing this!"
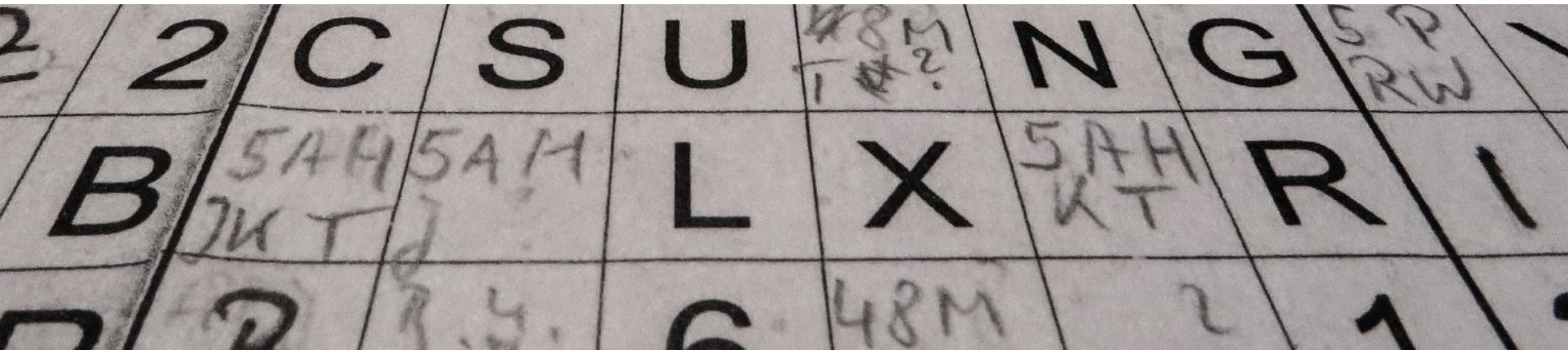
Hannah Hickman, Academic Liaison Librarian

(successful candidate)

Student feedback

"It's a very enlightening experience to see how job interviews work from the other side of the table. I'm sure it will be very useful in the near future as I will be applying for jobs"

Fateha Aziz, PGR student

There are some challenges

Organisation and logistics
(i.e. getting your ducks in a row)
is probably the biggest challenge

"Students rarely bring a pen. Make sure you supply all the equipment you need"

Students need to understand the whole recruitment process – and be aware of bias

"I take pains to make it clear to students that they might not get the result they want, that their input is part of several other hurdles that a candidate has to clear and doing really well in one part of the interview process doesn't always mean a candidate will do really well in all parts"

The future – rolling out across the institution?

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Time to talk! How might you take this forwards?

https://tinyurl.com/
StudentsRecruitment

Further information

Pittaway, S., Engaging students, shaping services: the changing face of student engagement at The Hive, presented at UKSG 2016

Slides https://www.slideshare.net/DrSarahP/engaging-students-shaping-services-the-changing-face-of-student-engagement-at-the-hive

& recording https://tv.theiet.org/?videoid=8264

Pittaway, S., Students as partners in recruitment, SCONUL FOCUS, no.65, https://www.sconul.ac.uk/publication/students-as-partners-in-recruitment

Thanks for listening!

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