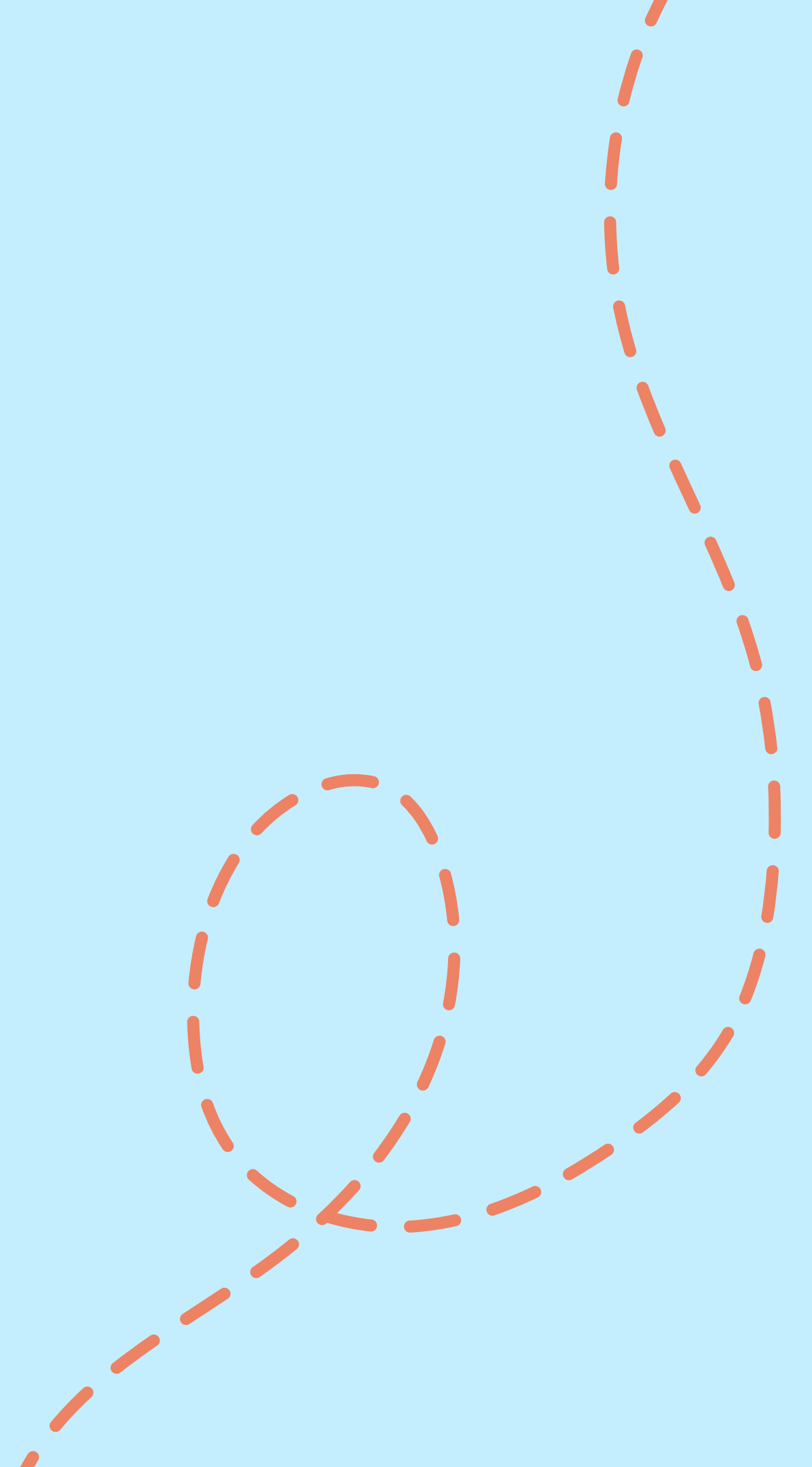# Satellite Campuses
'They haven't told us anything'

Membership Services

16.08.23

This is us:

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Agenda

- **An introduction to satellite campuses**
- **Proactive vs reactivity**
- **Networks**
- **Support and identity**
- **Discussion time**

An Introduction:

A satellite campus is a branch of a university that is physically located at a distance from the original main campus of the instituion.
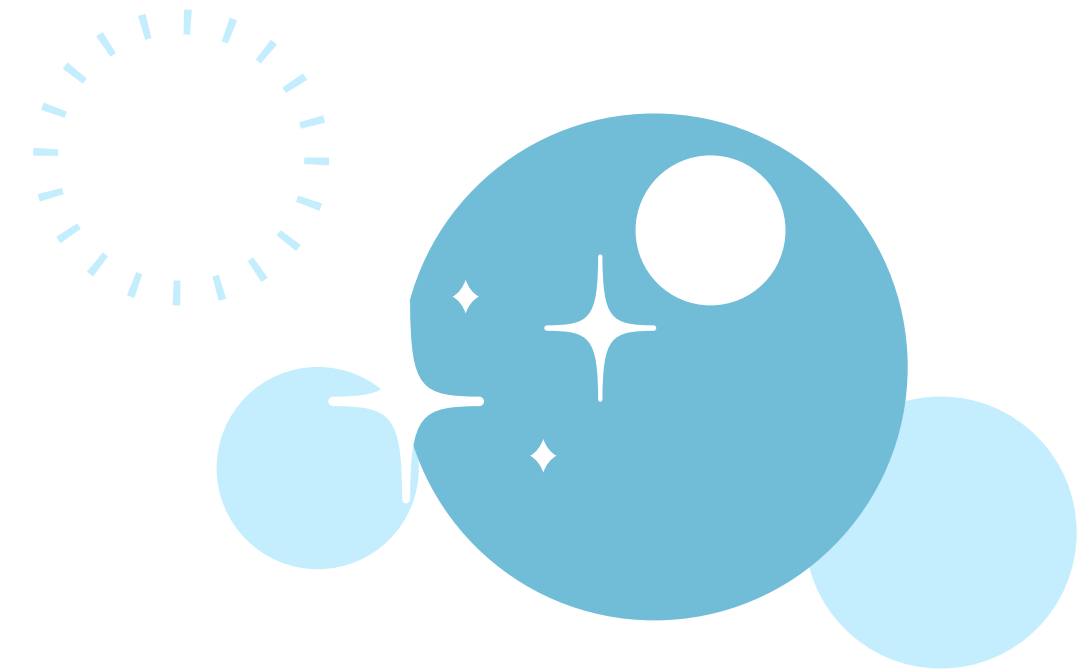
Prior to the mid 2010s franchising was comparatively modest in UK Universities and then Universities Minister David Willetts suspected innovation or geographical distribution was hampered by caps on student numbers (Leach, 2023).

2015: Removal of the student numbers cap
2017: Home student tuition fees fixed at £9,250

So, where are we now?

Reliant on increasing student numbers year on year to raise income (and particularly reliant on uncapped international student fees)

The instability of satellite campuses as a business model has left many universities tentative and uncomfortably on the fence. The sector could change overnight, or it might not. Funding improvements for a site that may not last is an uphill battle.

The grass is greener on the main campus
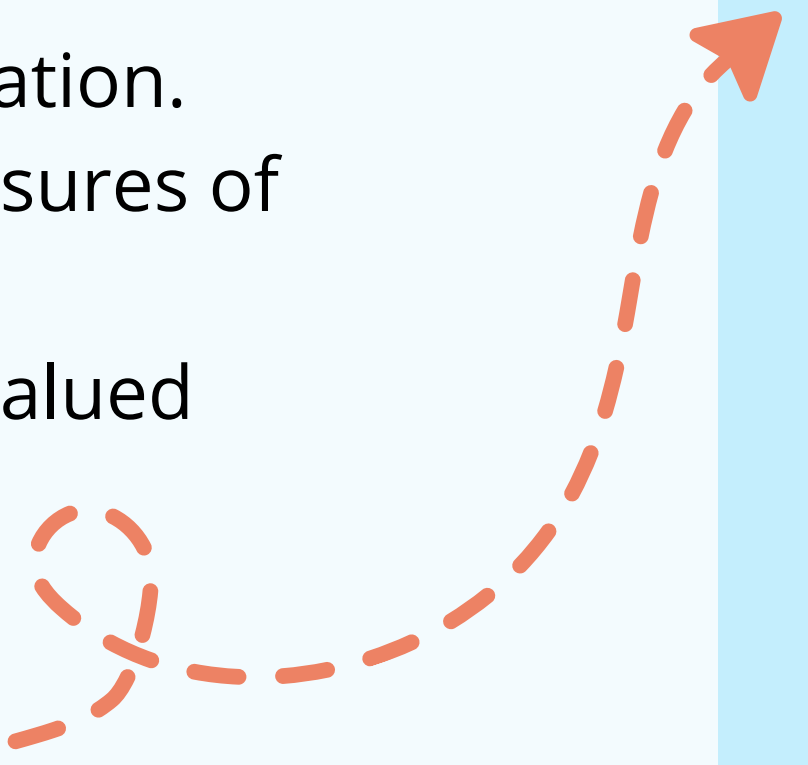
What do we want to be?

Extension of main campus

- Shared calendar.
- Equivalent staffing and funding for equivalent student experience.
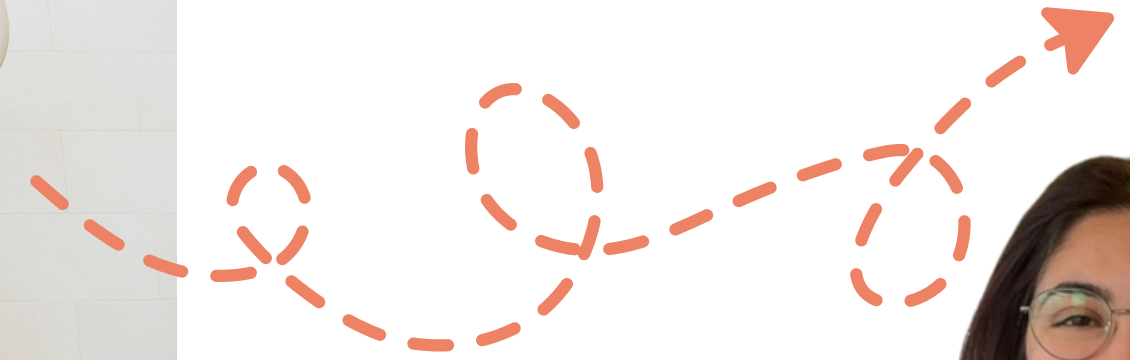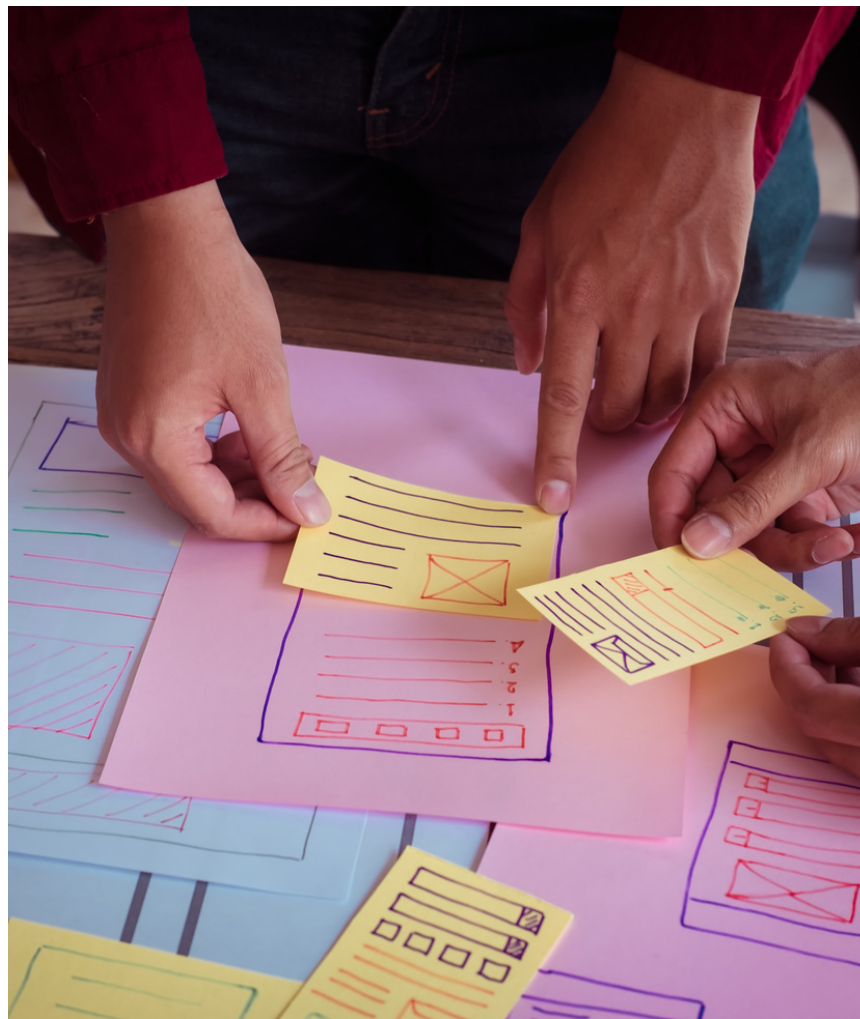- Regular visits between sites.
- Self-sustaining.

Something else

- Parity not duplication.
- Site specific measures of success.
- Supported and valued team member.

Proactivity vs. Reactivity:

— Should your site be Micromanaged or Autonomous?
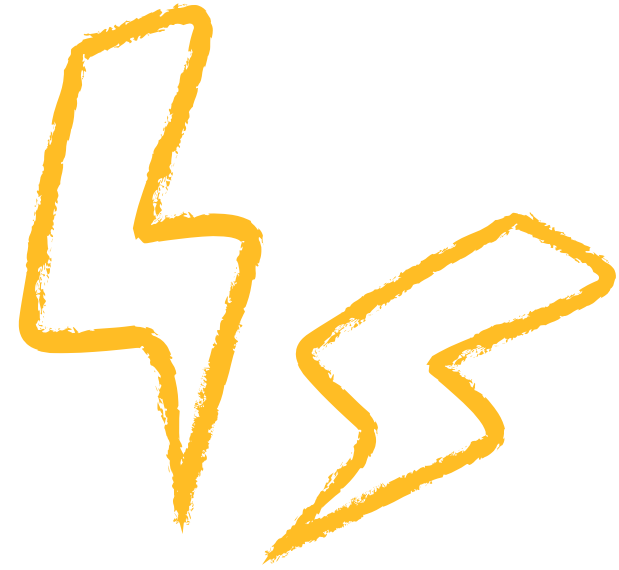
Proactivity

Benefits

- Works when there's a team around you to action the plan.
- Fosters a culture of continuous improvement
- Plenty of time to create good strategic partnerships

Drawbacks

- Long term plans can hinder adaptability
- People power required to plan often isn't there
- Lived/Worked experience is that students don't engage at the early stage
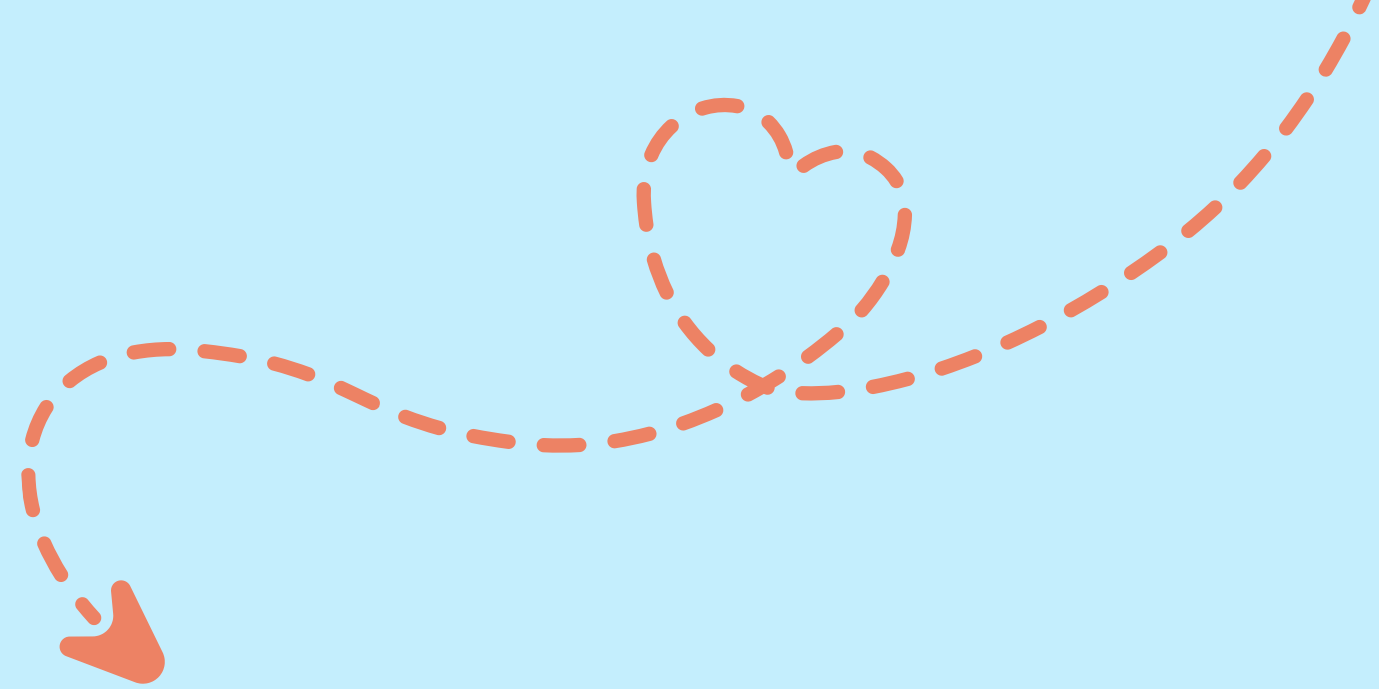
Reactivity

Benefits

- 'The students told us something!' - Sense of ownership
- Immediate problem solving and flexibility in the response provided
- Good resource allocation

Drawbacks

- Constant crisis mode can lead to burnout
- Missed opportunities with externals can occur
- Absence of a clear long term vision

Ideally...

Extension of main campus

- Regular visits from the home campus staff
- Frequent check ins and hybrid meetings across all campuses
- Satellite campus included as checkpoint for all work to be done

Autonomy and trust for the satellite staff

- Satellite campus staff are given the seniority to make snap decisions
- Are appointed and trusted on their knowledge of the local market
- Act as a 'sister site' with differences to home campus

Building your Networks:

___

Where have we come from?
At Sunderland... (Unlike some of the examples we've looked at so far, at Sunderland London we aim to mimic main campus experience...)

Where are we now?
Back to Basics resetting foundations, time to grow!

Becoming a BIG satellite

Spending time at the foundation stage

Bespoke Opportunities for London students

Supporting the Universities strategic aims and the aims of your SU strategy
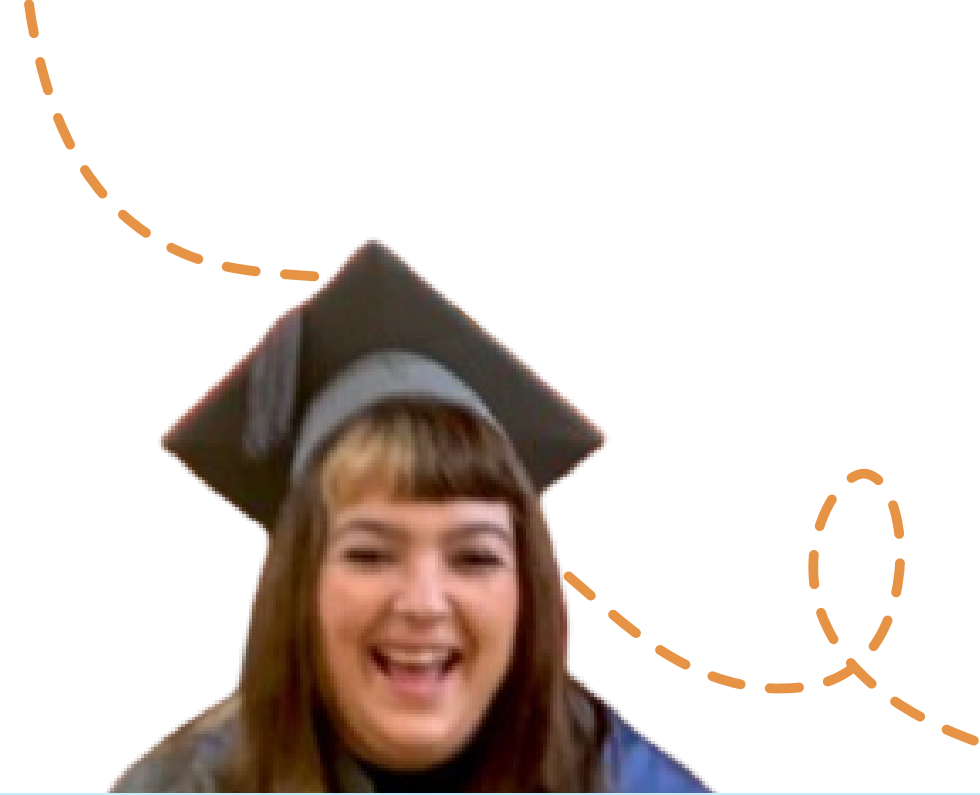
'What is it?' Networks:

Extension of main campus

- Was/is the main campus SU always completely independent?
- Utilizing main campus connections.
- What do we want to do more of?

Something new

- Recognition that we can't afford to work in isolation
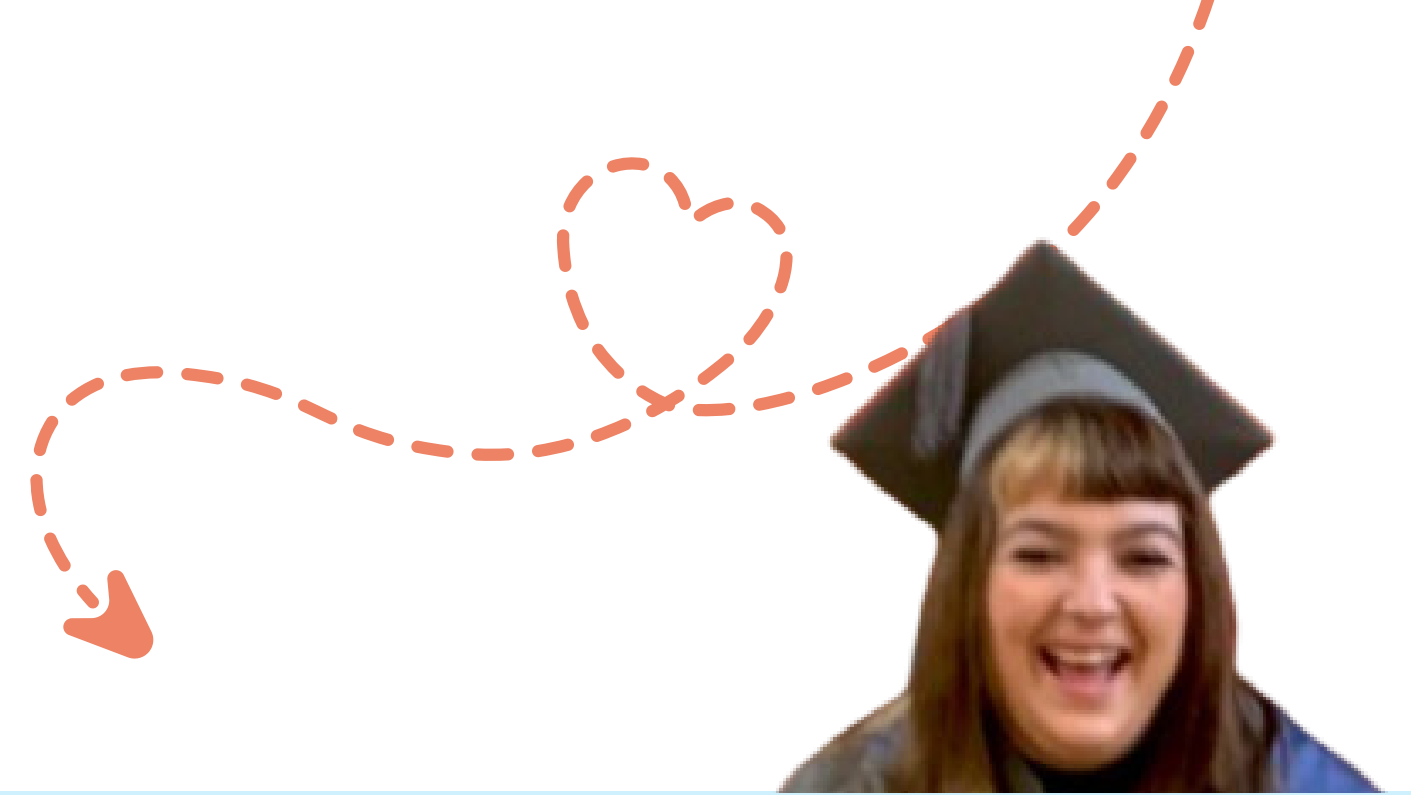- An opportunity to sector innovate

Support:

How to support your Satellite campus.

(And your campus coordinator!)

Where we are now...

Campus

- No designated Union space
- Starting from scratch!
- Healthcare is great for University identity, not so great for engagement
- The campus is regularly left as an 'afterthought'

Coordinator

- Being a lone staff member is difficult!
- Not part of a 'team'
- Hard to connect with tight knit community
- Covering three departments can lead to burnout

Ideally...

Campus

- Dedicated Union space, to create an identity and sense of space
- Create a Union identity bespoke to the campus
- Build significant relationships with Academic Staff

Coordinator

- Regular site visits and check ins
- Consider multiple staff members or allocate them a 'home team' so they feel included
- Understand that satellite staff have different needs

Conclusions
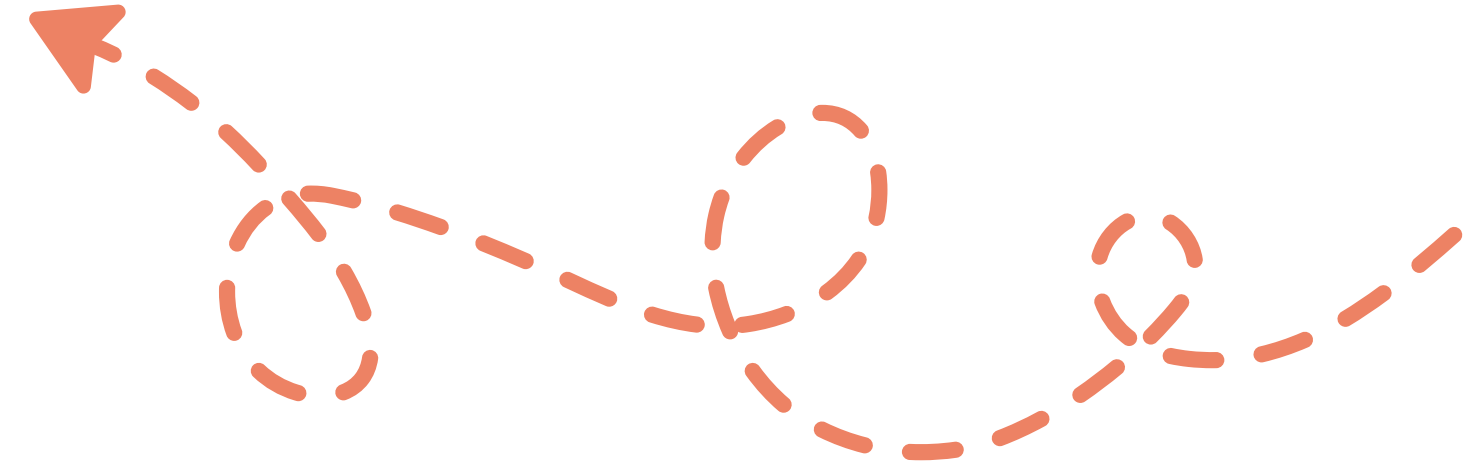
- Know what your satellite campuses goals are - dedicate time and resources accordingly. Being superman will only hurt in the long run.

- Clarify when to be proactive and when to be reactive. Trust in your satellites autonomy.

- Networking is vital, total independence from the university (and it's partners) is a luxury. Don't be afraid to ask for help and resources.

- Define the support offer for satellite staff and check-in regularly and consistently. Make sure any lone working staff are part of a defined team and involved in the development of plans.

~fin~
Discussion time!

Join the WhatsApp
https://chat.whatsapp.com/BxLlueAhh6JCZcsfBi502g

Satellite Campus Staff
WhatsApp group

Sources:

- Nickerson and Schaefer, (2001) Autonomy and Anonymity: Characteristics of Branch Campus Faculty, Metropolitan Universities, Spring 2001, 12, 2, ProQuest Education Journals, p49-59.

- Leach (2023) https://wonkhe.com/blogs/its-time-to-take-a-closer-look-at-an-opaque-corner-of-higher-education/