



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4TH 2025

CELTIC CONNECTIONS

WELCOME!



Panel Discussion:
Student Life
Beyond the Crisis
in HE and FE:
What Needs to
Change?



Panel
Discussion –
Questions on
Crisis in Higher
Education



No Student Left Behind: Belonging as a Strategy for Engagement

Dr. Emily McIntosh - Director of Student Success, UWS

Dr. Sabina Lawrie - Student Voice Manager, UWS Students' Union



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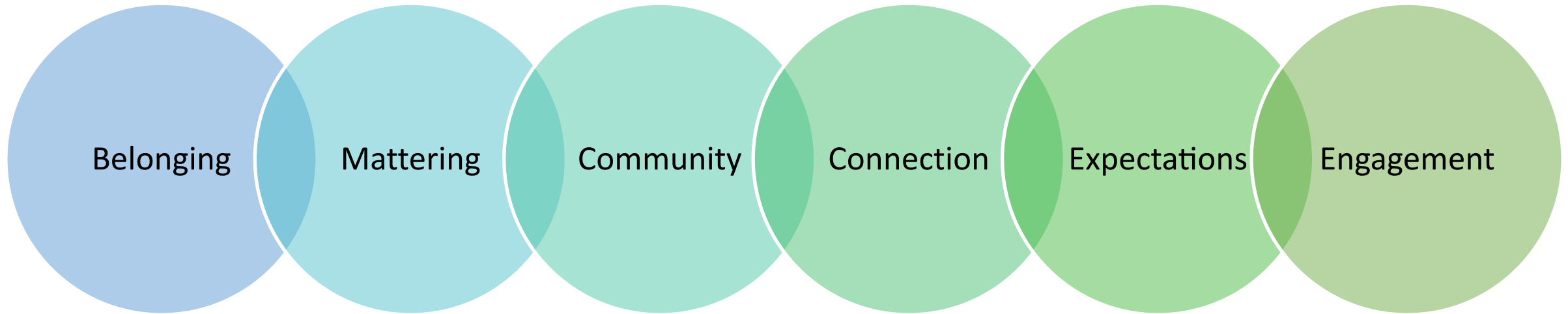
No Student Left Behind: Belonging as a Strategy for Engagement

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Principles of student success...

Student success is *about the learner* – as an individual, with a specific educational legacy, someone who is learning to think about themselves in relation to their subject, a person likely with multiple identities, with different expectations, with a different approach to learning as a cohort, and with their own roles and responsibilities



Do we talk of student successes (plural?)
and student experiences? What's the
difference?

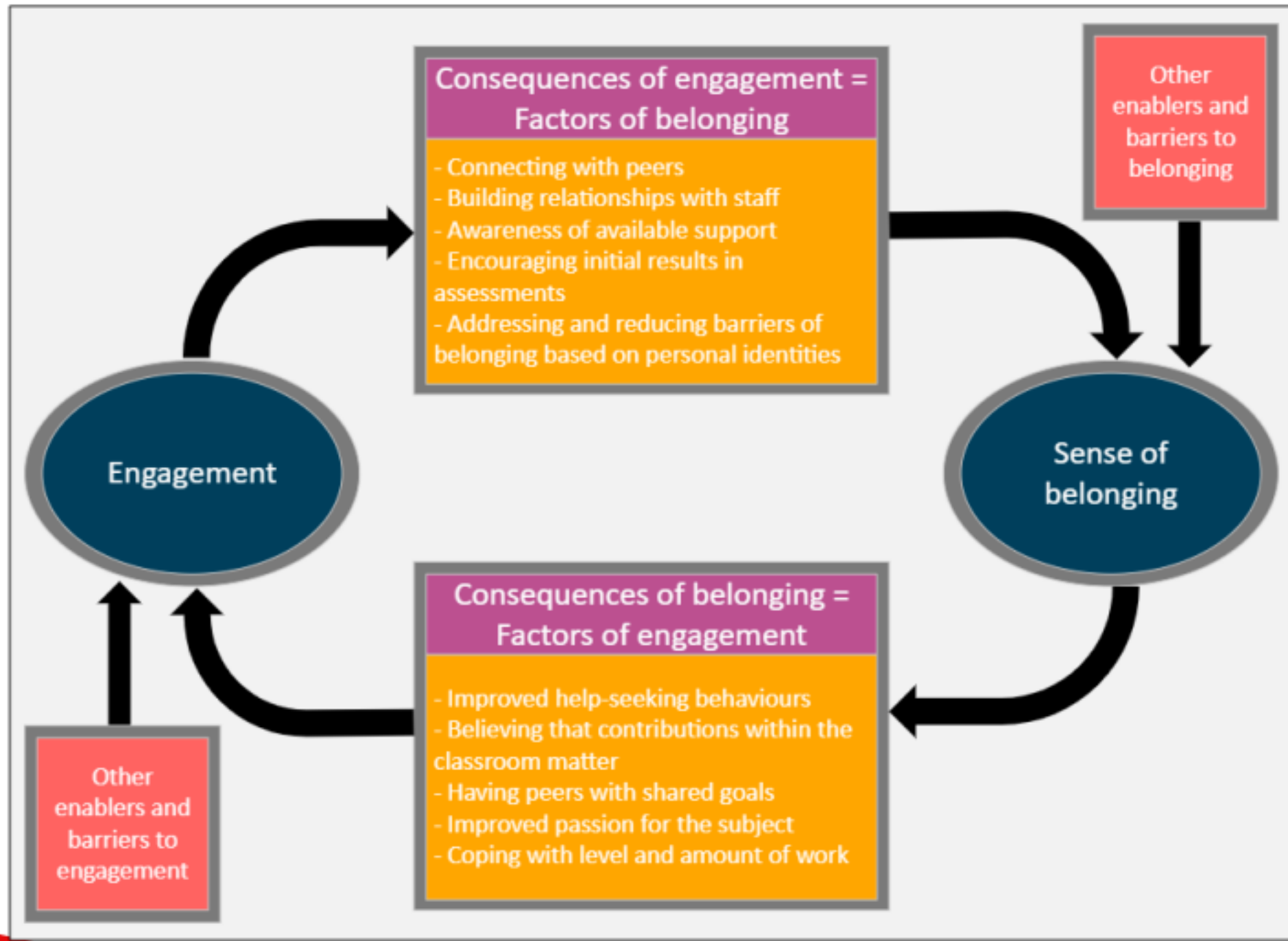


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But It All Starts with Belonging and Community

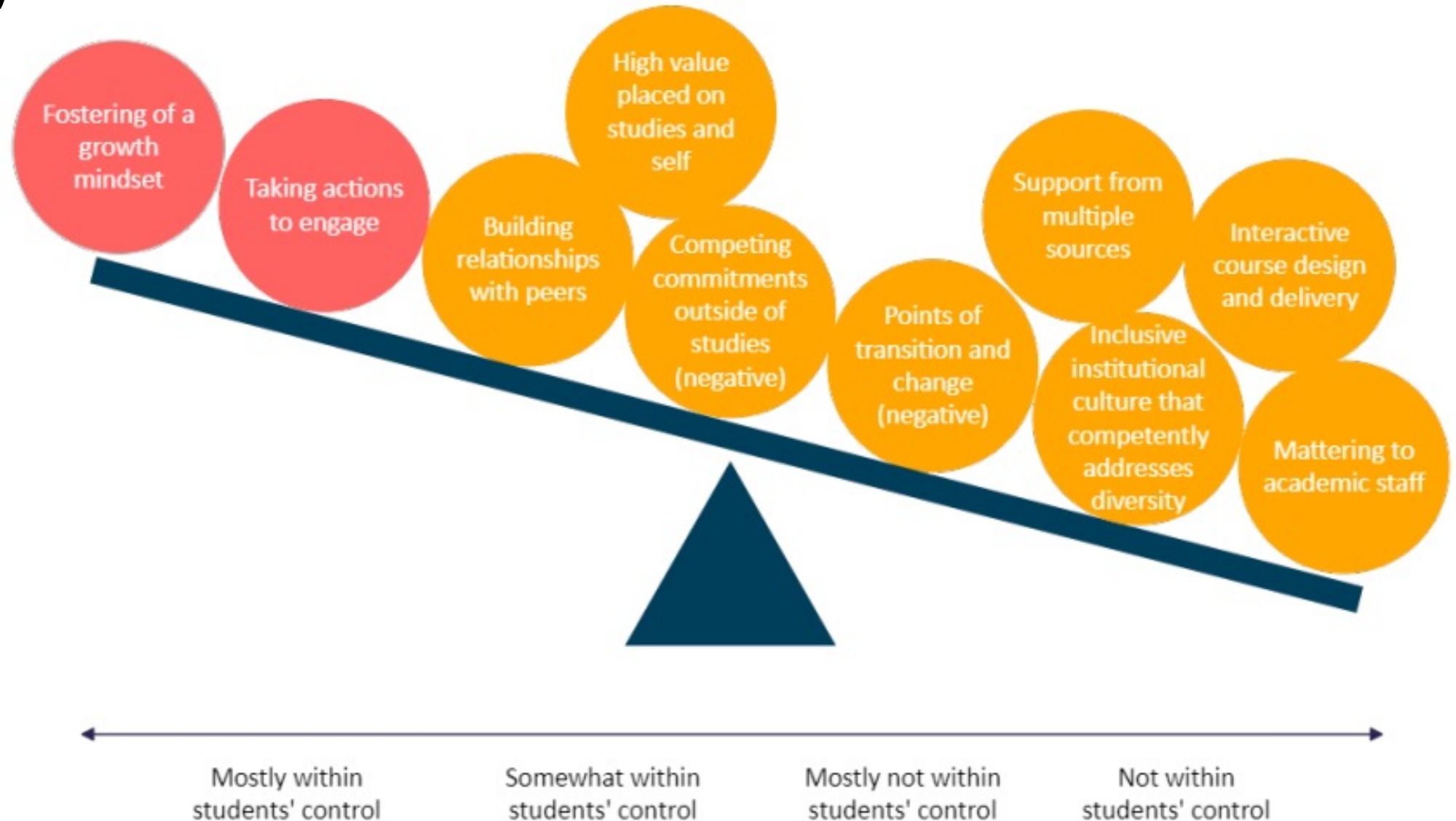
- **Social interaction and engagement** – inclusive events, societies and clubs, sports teams
- **Academic support and collaboration** – group projects, research opportunities, workshops and seminars
- **Supportive environments** – welcoming culture, accessible resources, responsive staff
- **Student voice and representation** – student representatives, feedback mechanisms, partnership initiatives
- **Campus facilities and services** – social spaces, support services, access to technology
- **Diversity and inclusion** – cultural diversity, inclusive policies, international student support



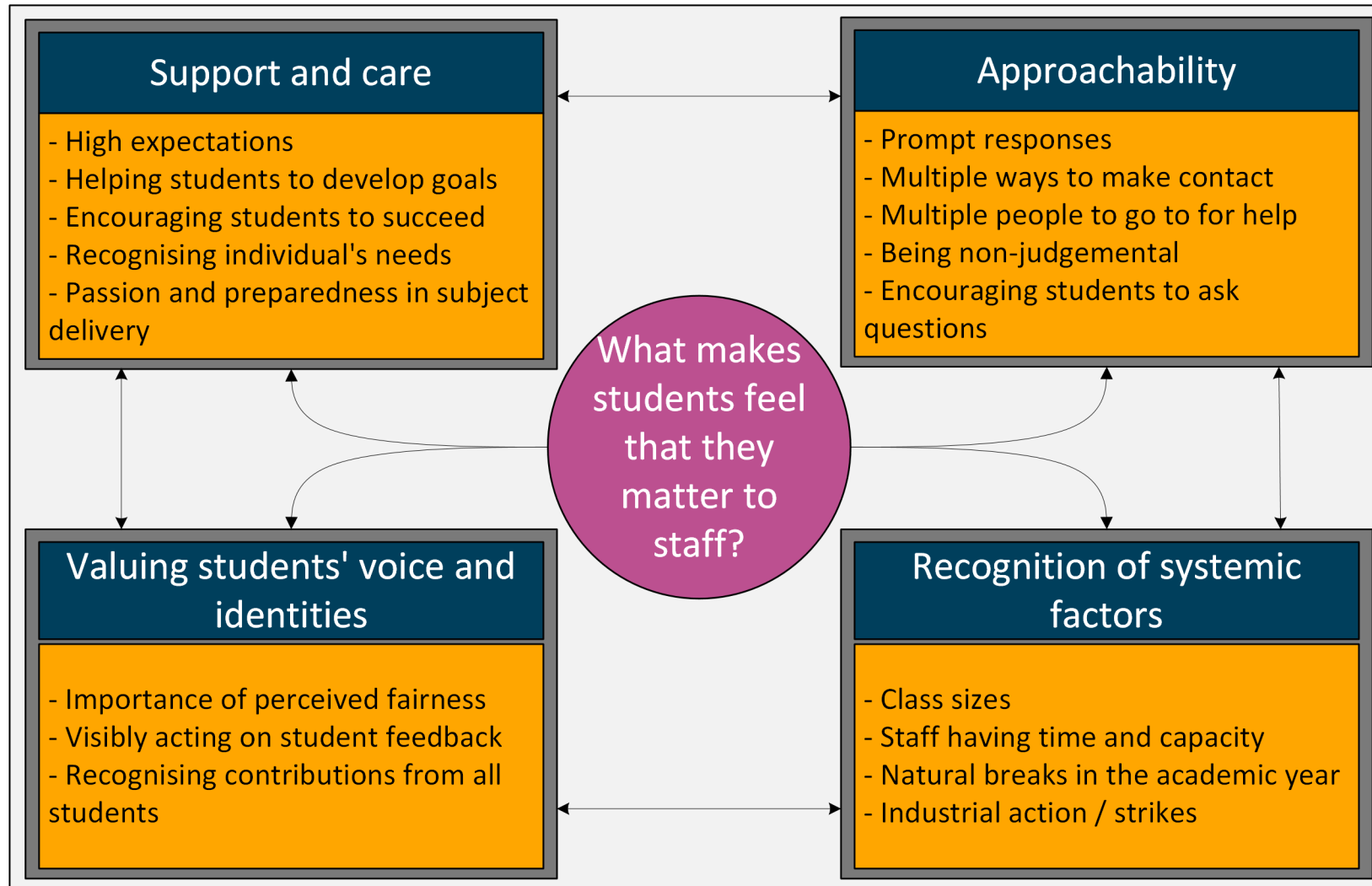


How do we affect students' sense of Belonging?

(David Gilani)

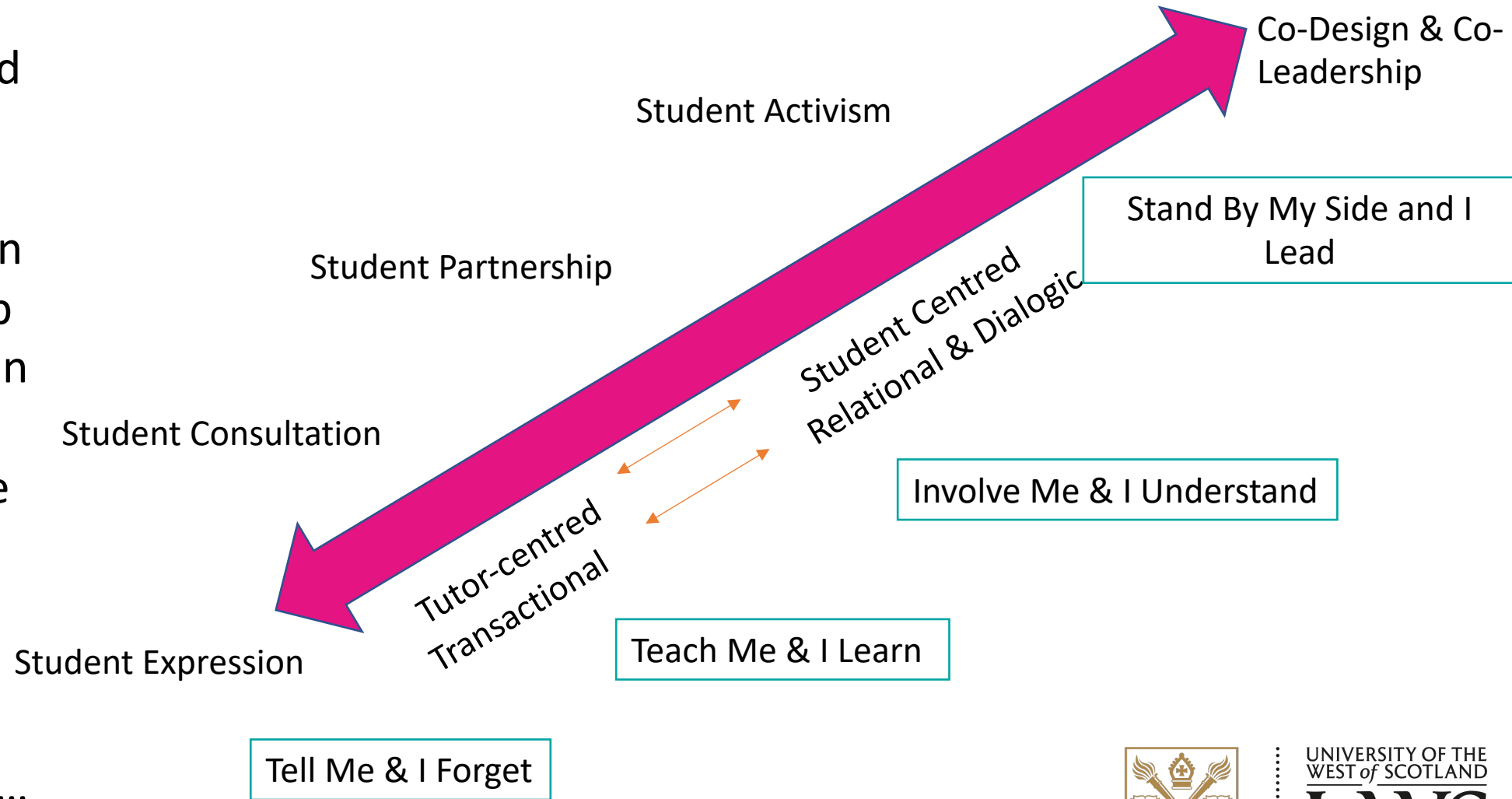


MATTERING IS SOMETHING WE CAN ALL INFLUENCE



Enabling Student Partnership & Leadership

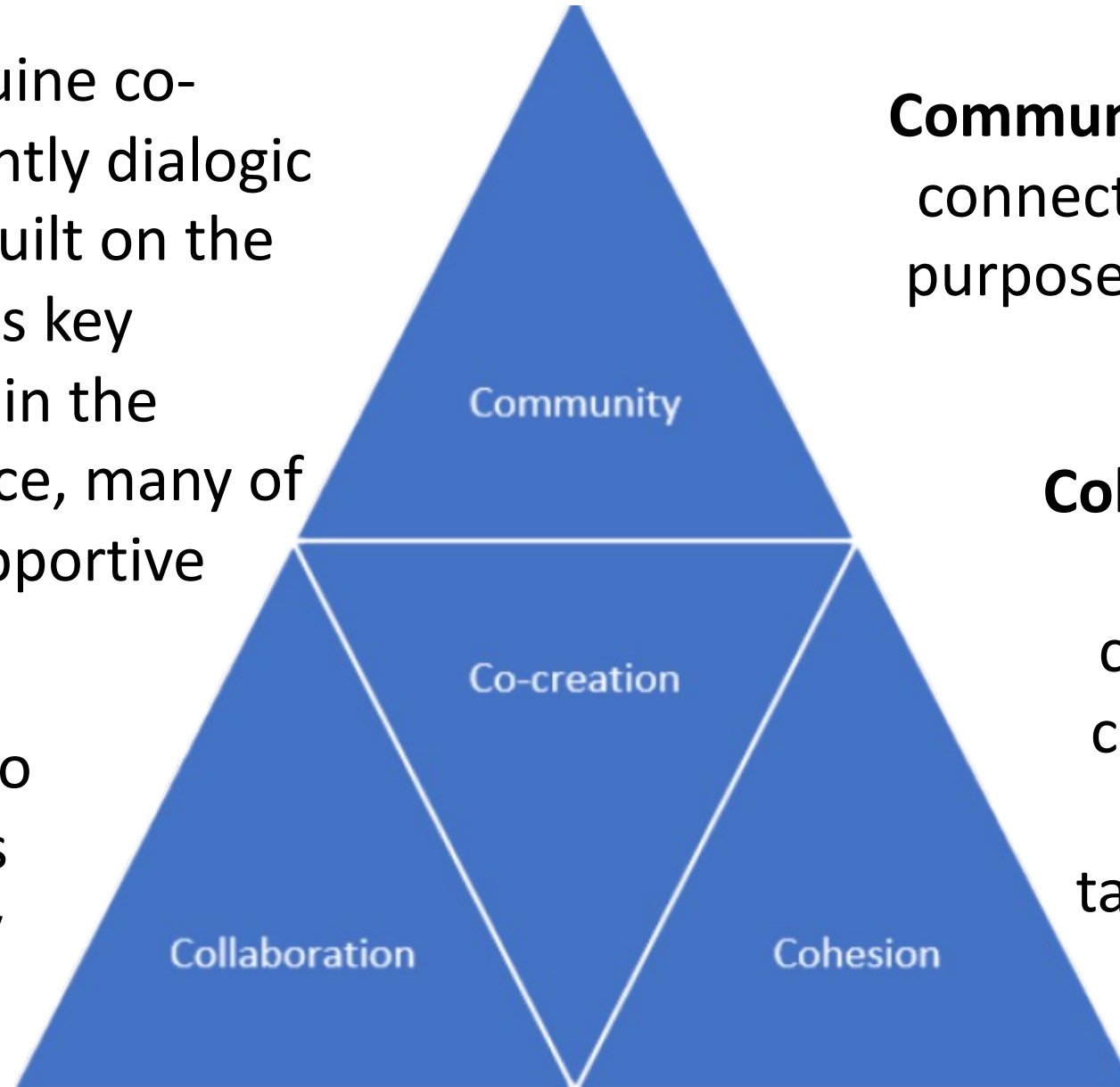
Start small – the road to student partnership is a ladder, or a mountain – something to climb – your engagement in meaningful interaction will make a huge difference to our university community – and encourage others to feel like they belong...



The 3 C's Model (Source: McIntosh & May, 2024)

Co-Creation: genuine co-creation is inherently dialogic and can only be built on the strength of various key relationships within the learning experience, many of which are of a supportive nature.

Collaboration: two or more members of the community working together

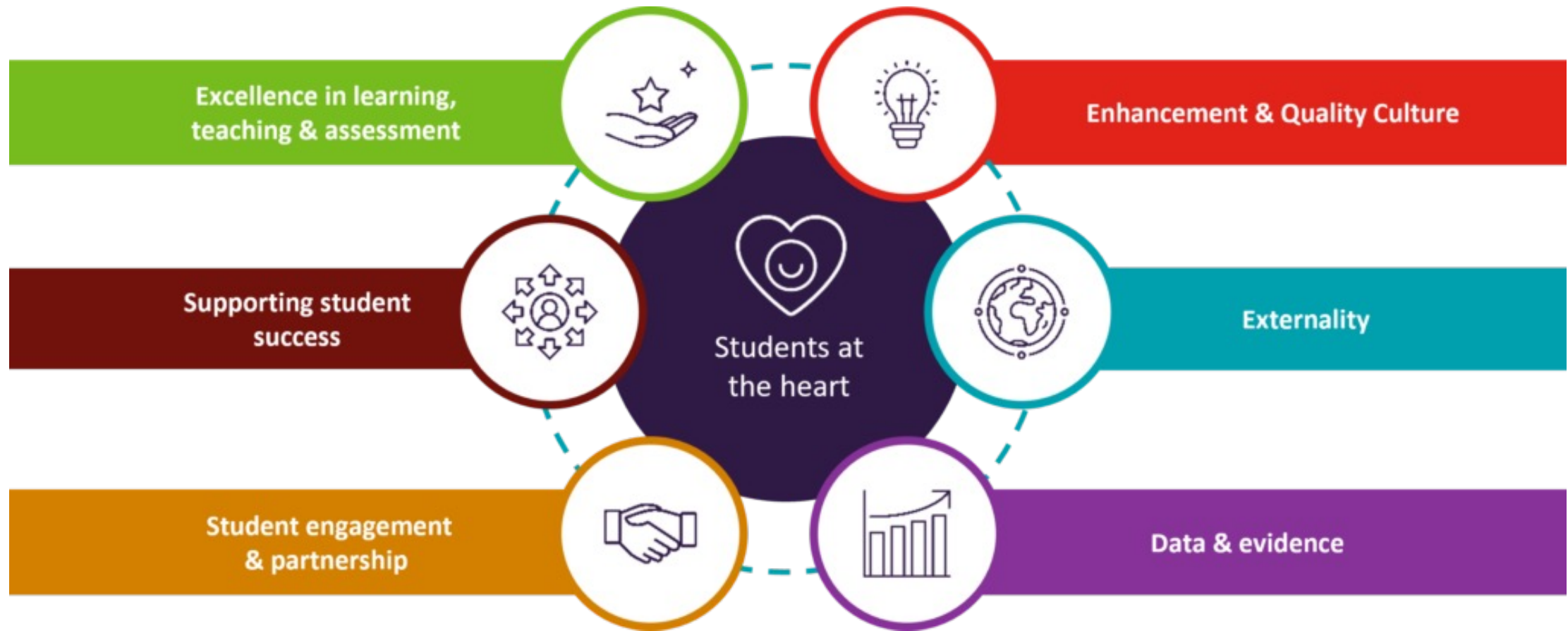


Community: a felt sense of connection and common purpose between a group of people

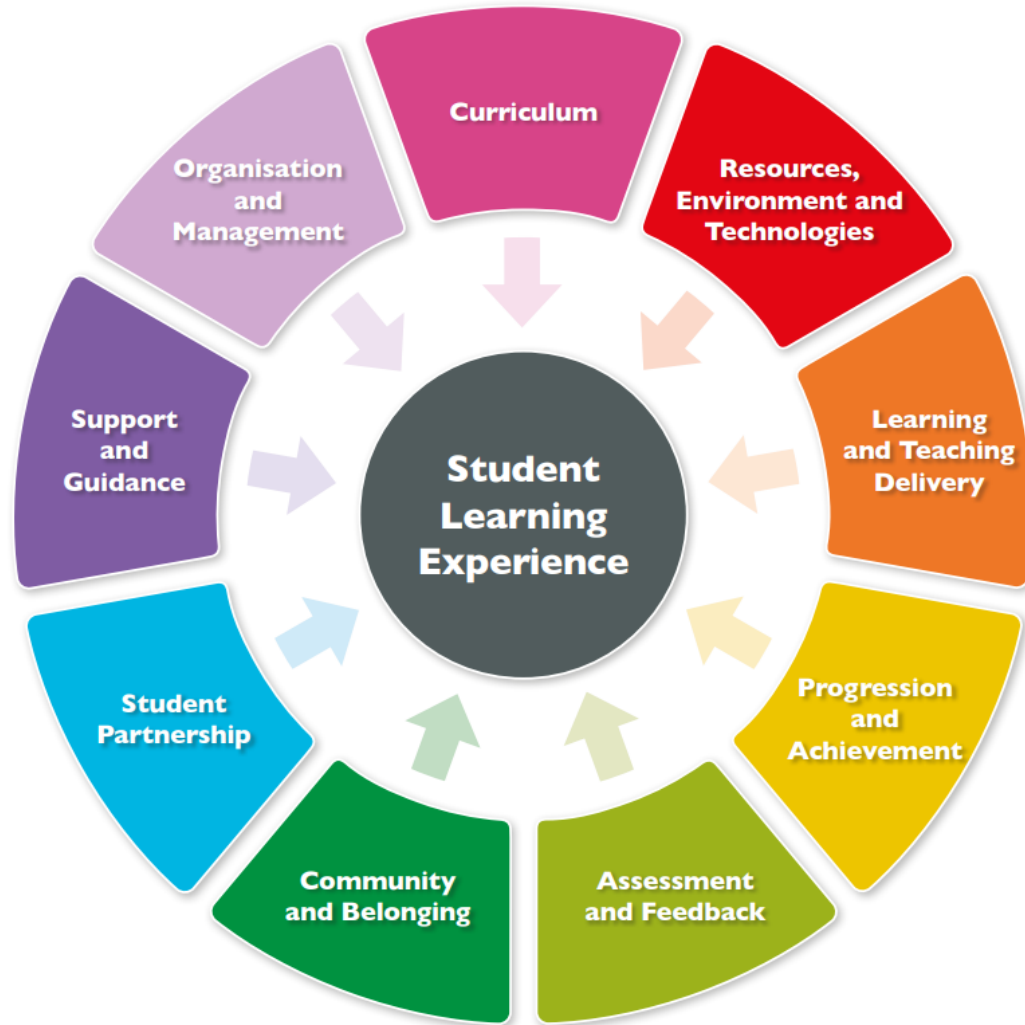
Cohesion: unity between members of the community and their collective endeavours (whether strategic, tactical or operational)

TQEF Vision and Principles

“Our shared vision is for a more coherent and streamlined tertiary education system from the student perspective that delivers the best learning experience for students.”



Student Learning Experience (SLE) model



Student Learning Experience Building Blocks

Curriculum

Course content; course design and development; optional and compulsory modules; learning outcomes; placements; study abroad opportunities; inclusive curriculum; sustainability in the curriculum.

Resources, Environment and Technologies

Library; IT; Virtual Learning Environment (VLE); learning spaces; course resources; digital technologies such as equipment and software; external learning environments; study spaces.

Learning and Teaching Delivery

Teaching methods; mode of study; independent and group work; contact time; class sizes; staff development; inclusive learning and teaching practices; peer learning.

Progression and Achievement

Induction; support between levels of study; individual academic progress; personal and professional development; employability; transitions to further study; articulation; recognition of achievement.

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment methods; frequency of assessments; marking criteria; consistency of marking; formative assessment and feedback; authentic assessment; quality and timeliness of feedback; assessment and feedback support.

Community and Belonging

Learning community; social opportunities; peer support; sense of belonging; community spaces; inclusive communities; student-led communities; local community engagement.

Student Partnership

Student representation system; student partnership in decision making; students' association; course evaluations; student surveys; student voice policies; student engagement in quality processes; hearing diverse student voices; student-led projects and initiatives.

Support and Guidance

Academic support; personal support; disability services; mental health and wellbeing services; support for diverse student groups; financial support; support for students with additional needs for learning.

Organisation and Management

Admissions processes; communication; timetabling; student administration; governance; transport; accommodation; complaints and concerns; equality, diversity and inclusion processes and policies; equality monitoring.

Lenses

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Sustainable Development

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH



- Ethical approval granted – ESS ethics committee, March 2024 [17566]
- 240 responses – 209 student and 31 colleague
- Aim – to improve culture of partnership at UWS
- Improve the student experience by understanding and increasing UWS Students' sense of belonging and community
- Increase opportunities and support for meaningful student participation in UWS life, including setting out the multiple opportunities to get involved, and the way in which they are recognised
- Create infrastructures to support the journey and pathways towards true student partnership
- Use this work to inform change at UWS and a framework
- Being, Becoming, Belonging (BBB) Survey – Oct 2024 – 21% response rate
- Democracy Review – SU - Ongoing



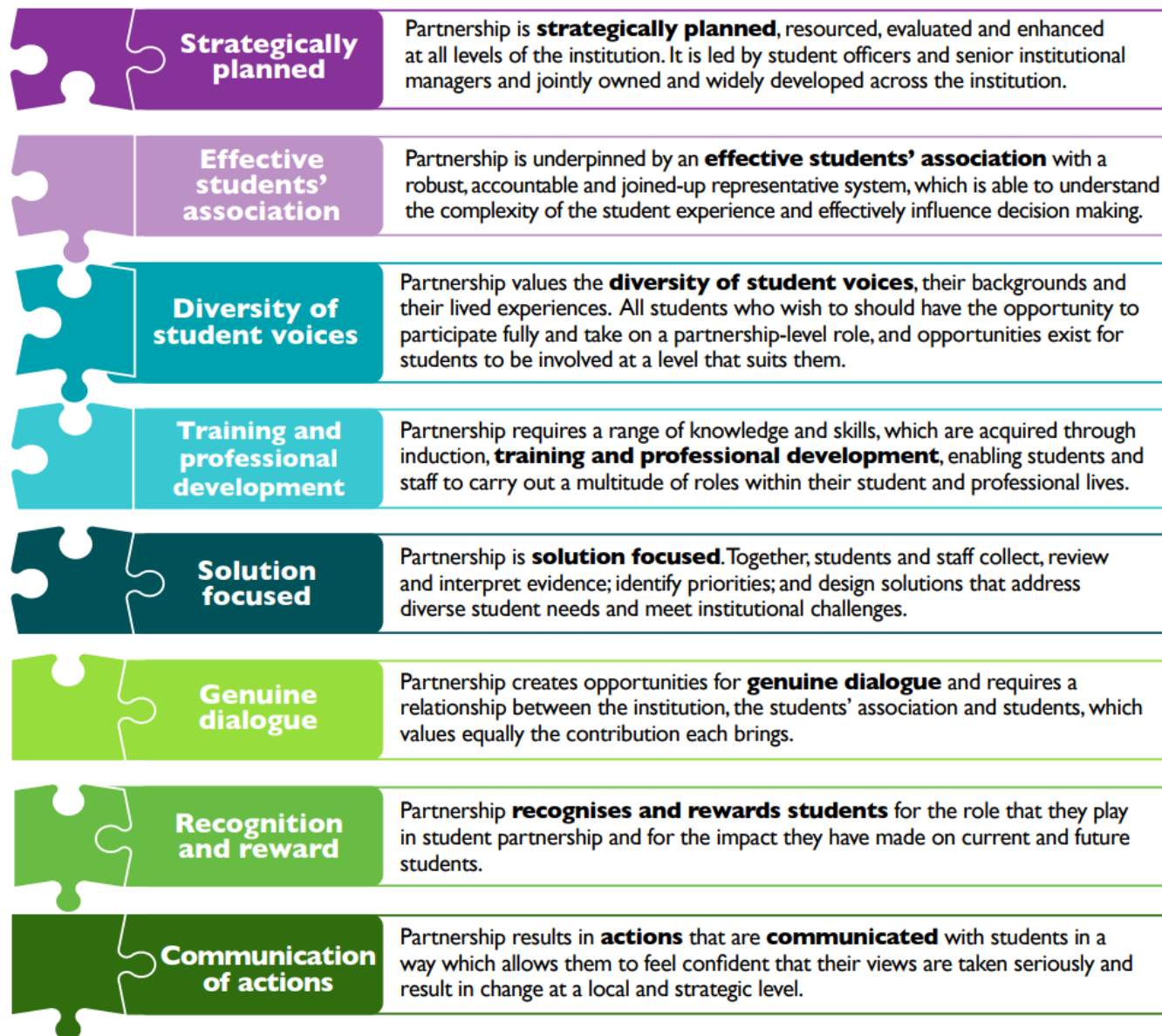
Student Partnership Jigsaw

Each of these features is represented as a puzzle piece, as it is when all the features are present that student partnership as an approach is able to flourish.

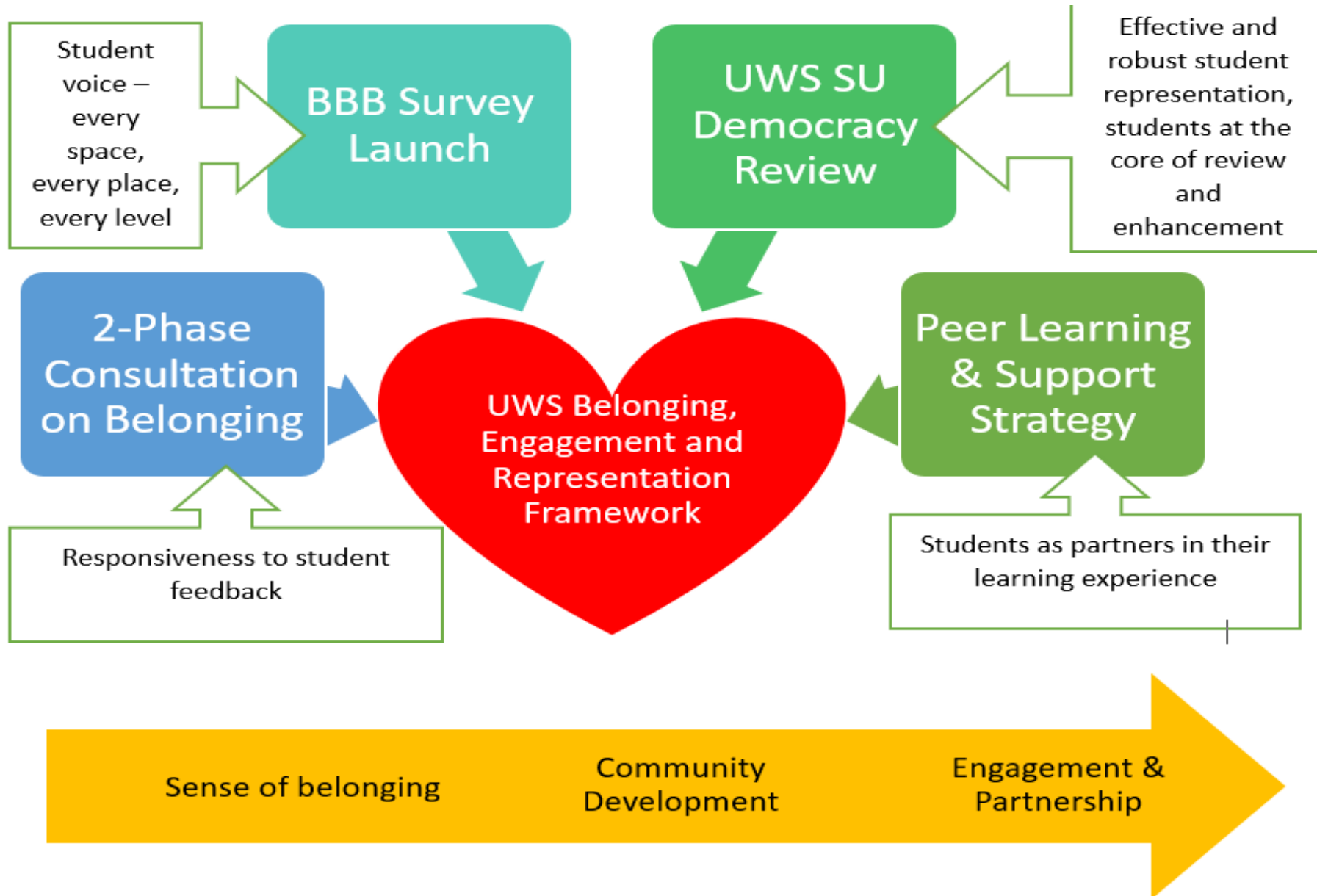


Student Partnership Features

The features of student partnership are:



Towards A Belonging & Community Framework @ UWS



The Journey to Partnership

Belonging

Community

**Represent-
ation**

Partnership

Engagement



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At Cross-Purposes – UWS Staff and Students on Belonging

| Theme | Staff | Students |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Sense of Belonging | Perceptions this is positive and established | Often report this is limited or non-existent |
| Awareness of Opportunity | Aware of many opportunities for engagement and participation | Lack of awareness or feelings opportunities are poorly advertised |
| Campus Difference | Generalise about UWS as a whole | Highlight differences Grass is greener idea if not at Paisley |
| Feedback and Action | Believe feedback systems are robust, have good knowledge of mechanisms | Uncertainty about if/how feedback leads to change |
| Social Opportunities | Frequently mention societies, clubs, and events | Report limited opportunities (especially if not living on |

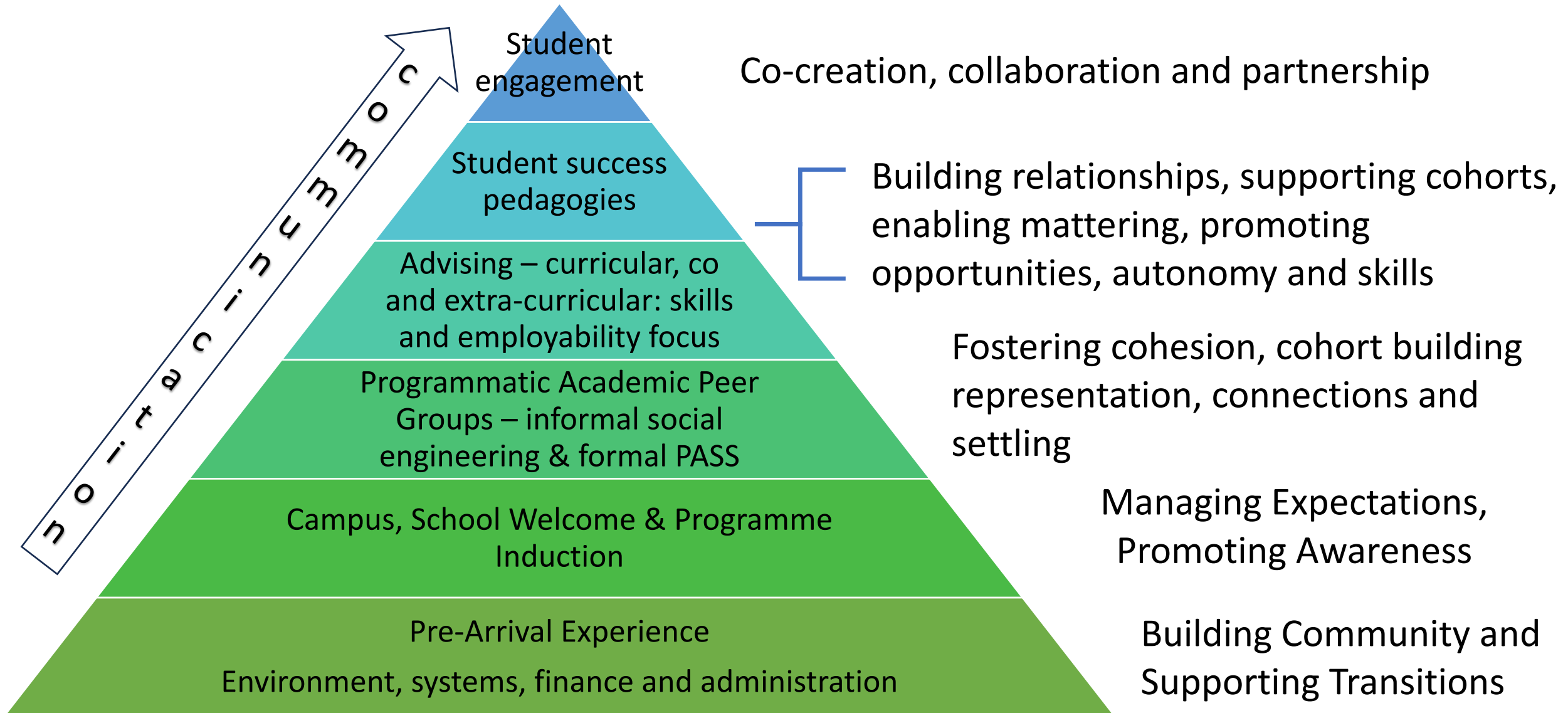
Belonging and Community - Enablers

| | Belonging | Community | Representation and Partnership | Engagement |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Enablers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making friends • Welcome, Induction and Transition • Helpseeking and support • Feeling valued • Communication • Events • Collaborative working (group work) • Consistent advice and guidance • Clear, timely communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in class discussions, projects • Peer education • Clubs and societies based on sports, interests • Ambassadors and buddies • Trust, respect, meaning and mattering. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student voice • Student representation and partnership mechanisms • SU infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Engagement and dwell (campus environment) • Campus facilities and services • Identity • Confidence • Feeling valued • Sense of connectedness |

Belonging and Community - Barriers

| | Belonging | Community | Representation and Partnership | Engagement |
|-----------------|---|--|--|---|
| Barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money • Working commitments • Age (mature) • Mode of study • Campus atmosphere • Travel/commute • Living arrangements • Disability • Mental health and wellbeing • Social and cultural barriers • Inadequate communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of opportunity • Discounting opportunity as “for” them • Fractured or disjointed institutional approaches • Impact of Covid19 • Opportunities outside of class • Campus differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of opportunity • Students cannot identify if/how feedback leads to positive change • Systems and processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward and recognition for involvement • Diversity of views leading to lack of consensus • Lack of social spaces • Lack of time and money • Lack of personalisation to context (cohesion) |

Belonging & Community Framework - Purpose



UWS In Partnership Framework (draft)

| My Student Engagement @ UWS - Attendance and Engagement (SSS2, SEP1) | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Attendance in timetabled classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Co and Extra-curricular engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular use of VLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Library resources and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use of campus study spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Independent learning on campus (dwell) | | |
| My Belonging @ UWS | | My Community @ UWS | | My Representation @ UWS | | | |
| <p>Making Friends (Cohesion) (SSS2-5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting course matesConnections with the SUConnections in HallsGroup work and experiential learningMeeting students in wider UWS communityConnecting with people from different backgrounds and cultures <p>Welcome, Induction, Transitions (SSS3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pre-arrival Questionnaire (PAQ)Foundation AcademyOpen days for offer holdersWest FestProgramme InductionProgramme Re-InductionArticulation InductionInternational Orientation <p>Help-seeking and Support (SSS1-5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Supportive tutors/lecturersWellbeing supportDisability and counselling supportAcademic AdvisorsProfessional AdvisorsSU Welfare TeamEarly Intervention Specialists | | <p>Peer Support (SSS5, SEP1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Peer MentoringPeer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)Peer ObservationAcademic Families <p>Academic Societies (SEP1, SSS5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Relevant to academic interests and goalsSupportive peer relationsDeveloping knowledge, confidence and identity in disciplineMeaningful interaction between staff and studentsCommunity leadership opportunityEmployability alignment <p>Clubs (SEP1, SSS5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sports and other clubsInterest-based groups focused on hobbies, sports, or specific activitiesOpportunities for shared interests outside of curriculum | | <p>Student Voice (ELT 4–7, SEP1-6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs)Being, Becoming, Belonging (BBB)National Student Survey (NSS)Democracy/ElectionsCompassionate communications <p>Student Representation (SEP1-6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Student RepresentativesStudent Sabbatical OfficersStaff/Student Liaison Meetings (SSL)Programme design/approvalEnhancement and Annual Monitoring (EAM)Divisional BoardsSchool BoardsStudent CouncilStudent Experience Committee (SEC)Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)Senate and Court <p>Ambassadors/Buddies (SEP1, SSS5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Buddies support holistic student journeySupport onboarding experienceAdvocates for student experienceDigital connection (social media) | | <p>Careers/Employability (ELT 4-7; SSS3-4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Academic skillsCareers and Micro-credentialsVolunteering / Volunteer AwardPlacementsInternshipsDemola / Student EnterpriseEmployer Mentoring ProgrammeUWS Employability AwardReward and recognitionAdvance HE Associate Fellowship <p>ASPIRE (SSS3-4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Successful transitionsProfessional Values and goal settingResilienceCitizenshipReflective practiceBuilding graduate attributesEnable disciplinary contextualisation <p>Student Partnership (SEP1-6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)Student Partnership Forum (SPF)Student Partnership Conference (SPC) | |
| Impact and evaluation measures: Retention (year on year), Progression (pass rates), Satisfaction (MEQs, BBB, NSS), Outcomes (good honours, graduate employment) | | | | | | | |

Belonging & Community – Key Priorities 25/26

Pre-arrival programme – 6 weeks IAG, focus on relentless orientation and academic skills preparedness

Diagnostics – where students are, providing support, promoting awareness
Toolkits and lenses for framework

Social engineering – programmatic, campus informal academic groupings (PAL) in addition to PASS

Student representation infrastructure based on informal to formal (academic peer groups to student partnership forum)

Focus on advising model – academic, pastoral, professional – orientated around student-centred pedagogical practice

Community principles – based on university pledge (as a student I will, as colleagues we will, as a university we will...)