

# Using the Student Learning Experience (SLE) model to inform institutional strategy development #10

## Part 2

### Transcript

0:00 Catriona Bell

So in terms of then developing your own strategy at Forth Valley, how did you get started with that?

0:05 Catriona Bell

What, what were the kind of steps you went through?

0:07 Rob McDermott

I suppose the strategy has come as a response to a strategy, a whole college strategy.

0:12 Rob McDermott

We got a new Principal, we've got whole college strategy.

0:15 Rob McDermott

They've just brought, the Principal and the senior management team, have brought in, which can revisit some of the historical stuff, develop some of the historical stuff further.

0:25 Rob McDermott

So it was, we were ripe for a new strategy.

0:27 Rob McDermott

We also had got to the end of our kind of Student Experience Strategy, which had been, had a bit of a focus more on digital skills and developing digital skills and breadth.

0:36 Rob McDermott

But we felt as if perhaps we maybe need to go back to some more basic stuff roundabout, you know, the student experience. What we're noticing also, as well, is the changing learner. The changing learner and that element within those learners, perhaps we need to go back and, really go back, to some basics.

0:54 Rob McDermott

And the Student Learning Experience allowed us to do that.

0:58 Rob McDermott

So in many ways, we were tasked to put together, you know, a five-year strategy that met the requirements recognised in the changing climate we're in, recognising the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework and actually recognise the fact that we're living in quite a dynamic changing world and our learners are changing.

1:18 Rob McDermott

And perhaps a refocus, a good refocus, really concentrating on supporting and developing and really considering what we do in terms of student experience was very valuable.

1:32 Catriona Bell

Thank you, Rob.

1:32 Catriona Bell

No, that's, so I've heard that a lot from a lot of different colleagues across the sector that the changing learner is really critical right now.

1:39 Catriona Bell

And so many things have happened in the world over the last few years, which may have influenced that, but our learners have changed, definitely.

1:45 Rob McDermott

And we're actually, you know, within education, we're at the front line, our school partners are at the front line and they are now coming into our, you know, our environment.

1:55 Rob McDermott

And I'm sure the university sector is the same, that learners have changed and with those changing learners have brought lots and lots of change in interactions with the people we work with.

2:08 Catriona Bell

OK, so you've now got your new Student Experience Strategy for the next five years and where have you got to in your journey with it?

2:17 Rob McDermott

So in that sense we have presented it, well.

2:21 Rob McDermott

We came away with the strategy and then went round various groups, and for scrutiny, and then got presented to the Board.

2:31 Rob McDermott

So the Board of Management who, who endorsed that.

2:35 Rob McDermott

What we've also done is, is we're very much, I think sometimes strategies, especially I think strategies quite often can be quite global.

2:44 Rob McDermott

And what we decided to do was, was to, the model kind of does it already, asks certain questions of itself.

2:52 Rob McDermott

And what we then did is, we took those questions and put some smarter objectives in there.

2:57 Rob McDermott

So in many ways, what we've done is we've tiered it up, and actually our Principal is very, very keen on measurables, you know, so what we can actually do is, we've been tasked to say, 'How are we achieving this?'

3:12 Rob McDermott

How are we gathering the student voice?

3:14 Rob McDermott

What does partnership look like and how is that measurable?

3:17 Rob McDermott

So we, we've, they've got a kind of, we've got the strategy, we've got the questions that come from the learning experience within that strategy.

3:25 Rob McDermott

But then also what we've got is, we've got targets, right?

3:28 Rob McDermott

And those targets are based on, are very much based on, what we think are very much based on Forth Valley, you know, and you know, are these, are they achievable?

3:39 Rob McDermott

The world's changing very much right now.

3:41 Rob McDermott

They may be achievable, but I think we're keen to test them and see where we get to on that, on that one, you know, and some of these targets are this year, next year, five years' time.

3:53 Rob McDermott

So we kind of, we've scanned across, you know, and we've scanned across the five years of, of the strategy.

4:01 Catriona Bell

And have you got any examples of targets that you could just share, just to give an idea?

4:04 Rob McDermott

Well, an interesting one is we want to see our Class Reps increase by 10%.

4:10 Catriona Bell

OK, yeah.

4:11 Rob McDermott

So, so those are the elements and that'll be, and that's within a year.

4:15 Rob McDermott

So that would then be tasked with working, the Students' Association in conjunction with my team, to make sure that, that you know, the importance of Class Rep training, the, clearly, Class Reps that's shared with the Students' Association who really they drive it.

4:27 Rob McDermott

But actually there has to be buy-in from managers and academic teams on that one.

4:31 Rob McDermott

And that's because it was driven by the Directors of Curriculum.

4:33 Rob McDermott

So those are, those are two ones, Student Satisfaction Engagement Survey.

4:38 Rob McDermott

Well, Student Satisfaction Engagement Survey, we, we don't get the best returns on that one.

4:44 Rob McDermott

So that again, that would be, that would be another maybe 10, 15% increase on that.

4:50 Rob McDermott

So I suppose it's targets to, to achieve targets that are measurable.

4:56 Rob McDermott

And, you know, we can then justify why we didn't, why we didn't, why we did or why we didn't.

5:03 Rob McDermott

I think that's quite important.

5:04 Catriona Bell

Yeah.

5:04 Catriona Bell

And you're measuring incremental change.

5:06 Rob McDermott

Yeah.

5:07 Rob McDermott

We are measuring different timeframes.

5:09 Rob McDermott

Yeah.

5:09 Rob McDermott


But data rich, the colleges and universities are data rich.

5:12 Rob McDermott

So, so these are the kind of things.

5:13 Rob McDermott

And actually what it does is it justifies my existence.



5:16 Rob McDermott  
It justifies the Students' Association's existence.

5:18 Rob McDermott  
It justifies all the things that we want to happen to perhaps a Board, that may be not as granular in their understanding of the organisation.

5:27 Rob McDermott  
I mean, that might be.

5:28 Rob McDermott  
No, I think that's correct.

5:30 Rob McDermott  
You know, the Board themselves have got a very, very strategic.

5:32 Rob McDermott  
So actually what we can see is, yeah, this is working because of... yeah.

5:36 Rob McDermott  
And there's a good measurement.

5:37 Rob McDermott  
We can demonstrate it and evaluate.

5:39 Catriona Bell  
Absolutely, yeah.

5:40 Rob McDermott  
And our new Chair of the Board, again, our Chair of the Board is very keen on measurables so that we can then go to them and say this is what success looks like.

5:50 Catriona Bell  
Interesting.

5:50 Catriona Bell  
So you've got that governance angle coming in as well at the highest level.

5:54 Catriona Bell  
Yeah, really interesting.