Beth Edwards (Bangor University) – Richard Beresford Bursary Blog: August 2022

Thanks to the Richard Beresford Bursary, myself and two colleagues visited Kings College London, hosted by Julie Devonshire and the team from the Enterprise Institute. Overall, this visit enabled us to learn more about the opportunities available for students and graduates in start-up and accelerator programmes, as well as broadening the reach of enterprise through skill development.

Through this visit, we gained insight into the way enterprise is positioned, and how this influences the engagement and perceptions among staff, students and graduates. Specifically, it was beneficial to learn about how the enterprise institute works in relation to other departments, specifically, careers. Both enterprise and careers teams work separately (with some overlap), whereas in Bangor, enterprise is situated within a wider employability service.

The 7-skills programme offered at King’s demonstrated a way to increase the appeal and relevance of enterprise, something that we aim to develop in Bangor. As one of my colleagues’ role is as an employability adviser, it was beneficial to consider how enterprising skills could be embedded along with general employability skills.

A specific example was of an employer who had asked for an ‘enterprising graduate’. This was interesting to explore what this meant, in terms of skills, what skills does someone who fulfils this criteria have? Reflecting on this has reinforced the importance of engaging with employers to ensure our practice and resources prepare and enable students to be successful post-graduation. Going forward, we plan to organise a shared activity between enterprise and employer engagement to address this in Bangor. We hope the utilise the ‘venture crawl’ model introduced to us by KCL to explore the enterprise landscape in North Wales, whilst also collaborating with other organisations, such as Big Ideas Wales, to signpost students, graduates and staff to further information and resources.

Within our employability award, enterprise activities have been revised following this visit to ensure that developing skills is the focus, which hopefully will encourage all students to get involved, rather than attracting those in Business programmes. An additional application of the information shared on the visit is guiding the planning of a pilot study into a developing a model of enterprise education (starting in September). In this, there is now an objective focused upon identifying skills that can be applied in a cross-curricular setting. This visit has begun to highlight the type of information and support academic staff need to facilitate their own sessions.

A key area of learning was about the definition of cross-curricular material and specific curricular materials. Specifically, we now are aiming to ensure that we promote activities accordingly, so everyone accessing any resources has an easy way to recognise if it is suitable for them. To align with our wide reach approach as previously highlighted, the B-Enterprising team at Bangor developing resources to market opportunities available to ensure that they can get the biggest reach for our population.

Overall, the visit has given me new ideas and guidance on the timescale to plan the development of our model of enterprise education.