

# BI at LSBU

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# Overview

- Background / LSBU
  - About LSBU / ICT
  - Reporting History / Context
- Key BI Projects
  - Progression Analysis Tool (incl. Demo)
  - Reporting on HR Data
- Conclusions

# LSBU

- Founded in 1892 as Borough Road Polytechnic
- 2 sites in outer London
- About 25,000 students
- About 2000 staff
- Income of approx £130m
- Faculties of Arts, Health Engineering & Business
- New Vice Chancellor





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## Vision and Mission

*“To be the most admired university in the UK for creating professional opportunity, and thus a source of pride for our students, our staff and the communities we serve.”*

*“Creating professional opportunity for all who can benefit.”*

# ICT

- Approximately 50 staff  
(plus as many again dispersed  
throughout the university)
- Infrastructure, CIS, Support  
and Telecoms Teams
- CIS contains PMs, BAs,  
Apps Support & Report Devs
- Currently limited Report build  
capacity internally, changing



# Technical Context

- Mixed Technical Environment
  - Open Source (eg LINUX servers)
  - Microsoft (eg desktop O/S, Exchange)
  - Oracle DBs (though some SQL Server, etc)
- Key Applications
  - Agresso (Finance, Student Record)
  - Oracle HRMS system
  - Blackboard VLE
  - CMIS Room Booking
  - Salto Access Control

# Reporting Background

- Application reporting
  - Various systems including eg QLS, ABW
  - Crystal ePortfolio
    - ... & Crystal Server (since 2003)
  - Cognos 8 (since 2007/8)
    - Implemented PoC in 2007
    - Purchased in 2008
    - Work Begun on Data Warehouse 2009
  - And of course Excel



# Taking stock: The problem

- Difficulties with initial requirements gathering
- Lack of high level buy-in (or understanding)
- Started with the Framework, and the collection of useful looking data through feeds



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# Taking stock: The solution

- Independent Health Check
  - Simpsons Associates
  - 2 Weeks consultancy
- Key feedback, including recommendation for quick wins
- Chose small project with biggest value

# Projects: PAT

- Progression Analysis Tool
- To understand proactively manage progress and improve retention / highlight ineffective courses
- Big Opportunity





## PAT: Before

- Basic reports / lists in Crystal with totals
- Not clear how reliable data is
- No year on year Trend analysis
- Not user friendly
- Slow to run
- No consistent usage across departments



## PAT: During

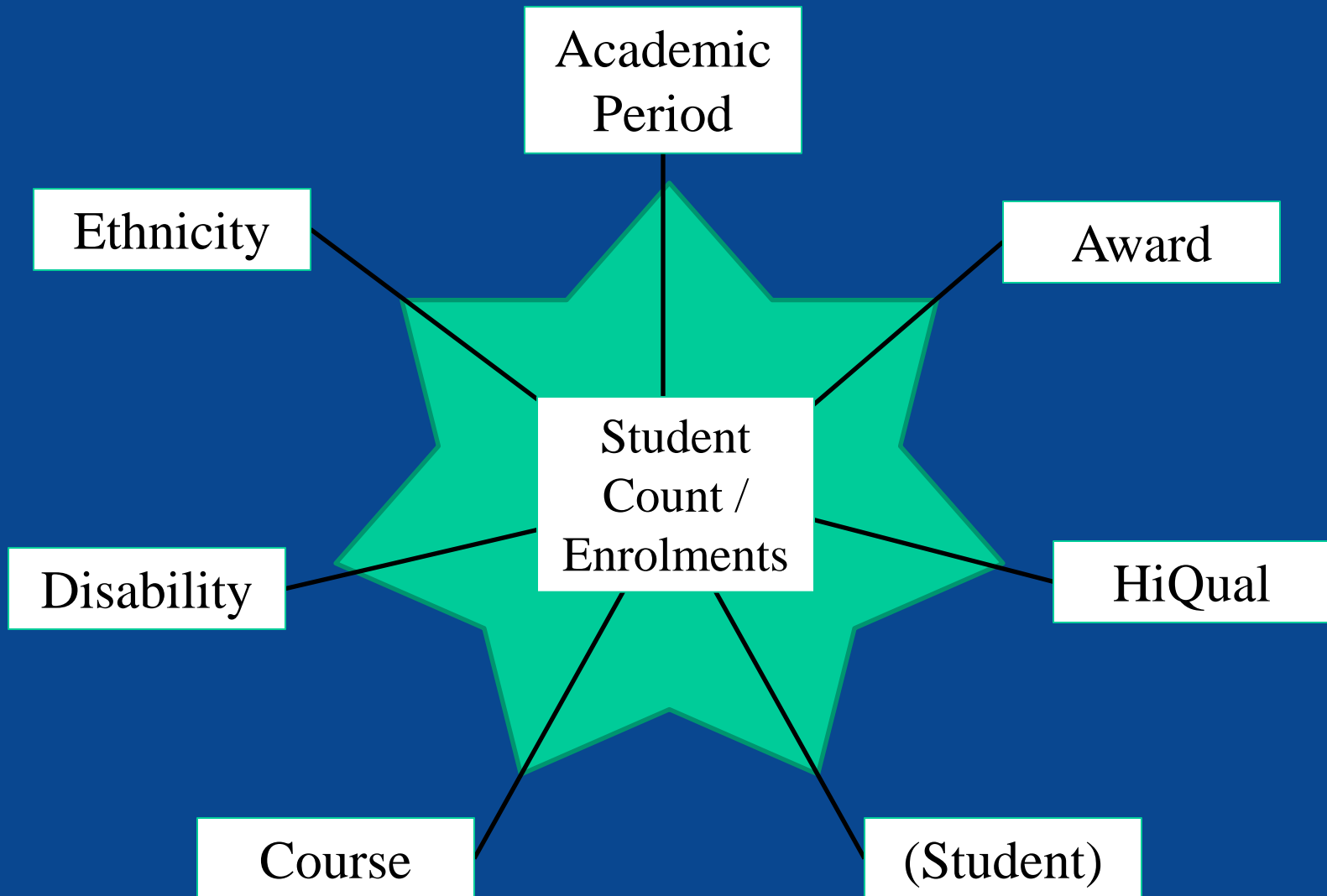
- Strong sponsorship (PVC academic and Pro Dean of AHS faculty)
- ...specify...framework...reports...test
- Supplier led development with close collaboration with users
- Extensive time for knowledge share handover to ICT staff
- Stakeholder presentation to make available to other faculties



## PAT: After

- Very positive feedback
- Dedicated access to suite of reports
- New reports freshly tuned to user needs
- User friendly with Drilldowns, drill outs and sub reports
- Buy-in from Senior managers
  - => widespread & consistent usage
- Improved understanding of any Data quality issues

# Tech Details: Star Schema



# Projects: PAT Training Guide



## Projects: HR reports

- Difficult context from previous reporting
- Reimplementation of our Oracle HRMS
- Vast array of lists and DBs in use
- Decision to develop reports in Cognos
- Began as simple operational reporting
- Scope expanded to include data warehouse





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## Other Projects / Next Steps

- Expansion of PAT
  - Turnstile data, eAssessment, etc
- Consideration of other student reports
  - Crystal using old technology
  - Reporting off Live data
- Finance ...
- Revisiting KPIs



## Conclusions: Warehousing

- Driven from above and from clear requirements (even if high level)
- Start small and grow facility
  - There are risks (eg Dynamic Framework)
  - but easier if tight budgets (prove the value)
- Suppliers, like Simpsons, can help build skills and momentum
- Only as good as your underlying data



## Conclusions: Cognos

- Build relationship with IBM for mutual benefit
- Powerful and complex system
  - => investment and time to bed in
- Not ideal for mail merges
  - Access to learning funds reporting
- Ensure reporting strategy in place (growth, target usage, etc)
- Choose your licensing model carefully

# Questions



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