

OCTOBER 2014

1. NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

This is the first CoreMunicate of the new academic year, so can I take this opportunity to welcome you back and say that I hope that you found time for a relaxing break sometime over the summer months. The past two or three months have been extremely busy for many PSS colleagues. We enjoyed another successful recruitment round, meeting most of our ambitious targets thanks to the efforts of many colleagues involved in recruitment and admissions at all levels.

I would also like to say a big “Thank You” to colleagues from across the PSS who were involved in welcoming our new students from around the world during September. Welcome and Orientation 2014 was even bigger and better than in previous years, with 70 events and activities delivered across campus in 10 days, 8,300 students visiting the Start of Year Fair and numerous staff wearing their *ask me* badges and offering a warm welcome to new students.

Hard on the heels of welcoming new students to the campus, many PSS colleagues were also involved in showcasing the University to potential new students at two University-wide undergraduate Open Days held on back to back weekends on Saturday 27 September and 4 October. Thanks to all colleagues involved in delivering these events.

2. YOUR VIEWS ARE NEEDED ON IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

For this month’s discussion topic, we would like to get your views on how we can further improve the student experience at the University.

Over the past few years, colleagues from across the PSS have played an important role in ensuring that the University delivers an “Outstanding learning and student experience”. The creation of the Directorate for the Student Experience (DSE) almost four years ago was a major signal of our commitment to this agenda, and since then colleagues from across PSS have continued to work as a single team with academic colleagues on a variety of projects and initiatives.

During 2013-14, there has been a specific focus on student employability, with a new partnership model developed between the Centre, Faculties and Schools. Therefore, it was very pleasing to see that the number of students in positive graduate destinations has increased by 4%. This month also saw the launch of a new Division of Student Life within the DSE to promote and coordinate our student support and wellbeing services. Led by Dr Paul Redmond, who has joined DSE as the University’s first Director of Student Life, the Division comprises the Careers Service; Counselling Service; Disability Support Office; Sport; Student Support, Advice & Guidance; and Access Summit. This wealth of activity has contributed to the University’s improving score in the National Student Satisfaction (NSS) Survey in recent years. Whilst we had hoped for further improvement in the scores released in August this year, they actually showed that our score remained at 85% overall satisfaction, consolidating our previous improvements. The responses to many of the detailed questions did show further improvement.

We would now like to hear your views for how we in the PSS can play a role in further improving the student experience. In particular, we want to know what you can do differently or better in your own Directorate or team to improve the way that you interact or support students and how we can work more effectively across the PSS to meet our student’s needs and expectations. You should send the feedback from your discussion to your Director who will collate the findings and include them in the Student Experience Action Plan for your Directorate, Faculty or School and discuss them with senior colleagues.

3. FEEDBACK ON THE “THANK YOU” SCHEME AND DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

We received a lot of feedback in response to our previous discussion topic about the “thank you” scheme introduced in January. Almost everyone who responded said that they knew about, or had used the scheme. Feedback was positive and the majority of staff felt that saying thank you was extremely important and said a lot about the culture of the organisation. The e-card and paper cards were generally popular; however, some staff said that they would also want a face-to-face thank you whenever possible.

A small number of staff cautioned that care needed to be taken that the scheme was used equitably and ensured fairness. Staff also asked for more clarity about the difference between ‘recognition’ and ‘reward’ and for more information on the other schemes and initiatives at the University to recognise and reward staff. Colleagues in HR will be monitoring the use of the scheme closely and issuing guidance about future changes and how the scheme relates to existing reward programmes, such as rewarding exceptional performance.

Continuing the recognition theme, if you know someone in the PSS, Library, Museum, Gallery or Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre who is always willing to put in that bit extra to get a job done, always provides an excellent service or goes out of their way to help someone or solve a problem, then you can nominate them for a President’s Distinguished Achievement Award. As well as individuals, we’re also looking for teams’. Further details of how to make a nomination are available at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=21860>

4. EMAIL UPDATE

The email training and guidance launched in response to the work of the University project group led by Kay Day, Director of Faculty Operations in MHS, and your feedback to an earlier CoreMunicate discussion topic has been extremely popular and well received. The Staff Development and Training Unit (STDU) has delivered the “email Hell to email Heaven” training course to 900 PSS and academic colleagues across the University in just 3 ½ months. The sessions are getting great reviews with many colleagues reporting significant time savings having attended the course. Individuals may book on to the course via the STDU website / online training catalogue and managers can book a session for their team by contacting Peter Sykes on (306) 6421 or peter.sykes@manchester.ac.uk. A companion training module giving hints and tips about using Microsoft Outlook more effectively has also been launched by colleagues in IT Services. Details are available at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/employment/training/pc-skills/email-calendar/hints-and-tips/>

5. POLICY ON OUTSIDE WORK AND CONSULTANCY

The Board of Governors has approved a revised version of the University’s Policy on Outside Work and Consultancy. The Policy ensures that any work undertaken by staff for external bodies follows the Code of Conduct in University Ordinance XVIII and the Financial Regulations and Procedures, in respect of approval, conflicts of interest and related matters. There are no major changes in the Policy, but some aspects have been slightly reorganised and amended. The new Policy on Outside Work and Consultancy is at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=7929>

- Consultancy and Outside Work Application Form:
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=11174>
- Changes to the Policy on Outside Work and Consulting:
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=21312>

Staff are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the detail and comply with this Policy.

6. COACHING AND MENTORING IN MANAGEMENT COURSE

The Staff Training and Development Unit (STDU) invites applications for the next presentation of the Institute of Leadership and Management Level 5 Coaching and Mentoring in Management Award. The programme provides participants with a great opportunity to support the University in the provision of coaching whilst gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Applicants must have the potential to engage in one-to-one coaching with managers at first line and middle manager level and following successful completion of the programme will become part of an STDU network of coaches providing support to colleagues at the University. If you wish to be considered for a place on the programme, please go to the training catalogue [TMS41](#) to apply and complete the application form. For enquires about the programme please contact Donna Wilkinson on (306)3533 or donna.wilkinson@manchester.ac.uk

7. EQUALITY AWARD AND RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING COMMENDATION

The University has been recognised for its leadership in attracting, retaining and progressing the best Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) talent by winning the Transparency, Monitoring and Action Award at the Race for Opportunity Awards 2014. Race for Opportunity is the race equality campaign from Business in the Community.

The University's "World Leading Minds" staff recruitment advertising campaign won a Commendation in the Best Campaign Category at the recent Recruitment Business Awards.

8. APPOINTMENTS

Welcome to Dr Paul Redmond, who joins us from the University of Liverpool as the new Director of Student Life and to two new Heads of School Administration in EPS: Sarah Mulholland in Physics and Astronomy, who joins us from the University of Salford, and Louise Jordan in CEAS, who is moving from her current role as HR partner in EPS.

9. GREEN IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

Green Impact is an environmental accreditation and awards scheme that brings staff and students together to make positive changes in environmental practice. The scheme encourages sharing good practice and celebrates the achievements of teams and individuals at an awards ceremony at the end of the program. Last year saw a record number of 67 teams and we are hoping that more people will want to get involved this coming year. For more details visit www.manchester.ac.uk/green-impact

Thanks to all PSS staff who supported the new Sustainability Challenge for 1st Year students in Welcome Week. More than 170 students attended with colleagues from across the PSS helping to support and deliver the event. Almost 75% of students said that they were more aware of the complexity of sustainability issues having taken part in the event. The Sustainability Challenge is part of the Ethical Grand Challenges Programme to help develop socially responsible graduates by engaging them with issues of sustainability, social justice and work place ethics.

10. VISITS AND COREMUNICATE

If you would like me to visit your team to deliver a future CoreMunicate, please contact Paula on paula.dunn@manchester.ac.uk

Will Spinks

Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer