

DECEMBER 2014

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR VIEWS ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND “WE GET IT”

I know that many teams have other things to talk about – and celebrate - at their December team meetings, so there is no discussion topic for this month. I would, however, like to thank you for the feedback generated from your October and November discussions.

The student experience discussion generated some useful ideas about a range of topics. Many ideas have been incorporated into the detail of the Student Experience Action Plans (SEAPs) produced by each Directorate and School. These are now being reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Group (TLG) and Student Experience Management Group (SEMG) for Schools/Faculties and Central PSS respectively. If colleagues have any further suggestions for improvements to the student experience, outside the area they work in, email studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk.

Last month’s discussion on the theme of “Zero Tolerance” generated some lively discussion and a wide range of views. These are now being collated and will be fed back to colleagues in the Equality and Diversity team and the Students’ Union, who devised and delivered the “We Get It” campaign to inform future work around this important issue. A new “Report and Support” resource is now available on StaffNet to enable staff and students to report cases of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

2. AWARD SUCCESS FOR SCHOOL GOVERNOR INITIATIVE

The University has won a national award for “Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community” at the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards for a project that has seen 241 staff, students and alumni become school governors at local schools in just one year. It is the second year running that the University has triumphed in this category having won the award for its local employment initiative “The Works” last year.

The University’s School Governor Initiative is run by colleague in the Directorates of Student Experience and Development and Alumni Relations and the Office of Social Responsibility in conjunction with the charity SGOSS – Governors for Schools. Since 2012-13, the University has helped to fill one in five school governor vacancies in the North West and we now rank highest of all UK employers involved in the Governors for Schools scheme.

Congratulations to all our colleagues who contributed to our success. The success of this initiative - just like “The Works” - is a consequence of a terrific cross-functional effort with colleagues working together as a single team. It also demonstrates that our approach to Goal 3 is genuinely distinctive. We are now on the “look out” for an interesting and impactful project to enter for this category at next year’s awards to make it three in a row.

3. FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

The Division of Development and Alumni Relations (DDAR) have reported over the last month to the Board of Governors on a record-breaking year in terms of philanthropy. £19.5 million was received during 2013/14, £7 million ahead of target. This does not include the recent £15M pledge from Lord Alliance for the Business School. Alumni donor number also rose by more than 15% to 4,600 in the year - also a new high. Many congratulations to the team on what has been a breakthrough year, and thanks, of course, to the generous alumni, other donors and organisations who are supporting our plans in such a meaningful way.

4. ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Andy Westwood has been appointed as the University's new Associate Vice-President for Public Affairs. He will take up his new role in February 2015 and will be responsible for ensuring that the University is able to respond to and adapt to changes in the external political and policy environment and thereby contribute to raising its profile. Andy will work closely with the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Bailey and will provide a primary source of advice to other senior officers. Andy is a University of Manchester graduate and a former special adviser to ministers in a series of government departments including Innovation, Universities and Skills, Communities and Local Government and the Treasury. He is currently Chief Executive of GuildHE, the UK's representative body for small and specialist universities, as well as a professor of politics at the University of Winchester and an advisor to a House of Lords Select Committee on the Digital Economy.

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE FOR IT SERVICES

In support of their on-going transformation, I'm delighted to report that IT Services have been successful in attaining the Governments' Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award. Assessed over the summer based on a body of written evidence (including staff and student feedback), the awarding body were particularly impressed with IT Services' customer service aspirations and values, as part of their IT Transformation programme. This is an encouraging step as IT Services colleagues continue their programme of change. One of the next areas of development will be the setting of challenging targets for customer satisfaction. The CSE assessment will be reviewed each year and the ability to demonstrate continued improvement will be the key to IT Services retaining this award in the future.

6. IMPROVING STUDENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The University hosted a pioneering conference last month for universities, students' unions, landlords, police and community representatives to explore the "hot topic" of student and community relations and off-campus activity. Organised by colleagues from Manchester Student Homes, the 120 delegates at the conference examined the latest trends in university community engagement and off campus issues, heard from keynote speakers from the UK and USA and shared good practice about how different institutions are responding to the impacts on neighbourhoods where students have a strong presence.

7. PENSIONS UPDATE

You will probably have heard the welcome news that the Universities and Colleges Union and Universities UK have agreed the suspension of the current industrial action while negotiations on how we deal with the expected deficit in the USS pension fund are ongoing. I have held a couple of open meetings for staff where I have explained the background and current state of national negotiations relating to this important issue. You can view a copy of my slides from those meetings at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23173>

8. SEASONS GREETING

As this is the last CoreMunicate of the year, can I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Will Spinks
Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer