

OCTOBER 2015

Welcome to the first CoreMunicate of the new academic year. I hope that you were able to take some time off over the summer and are returning refreshed and reinvigorated to approach the coming 12 months. I'm also well aware that the summer months are some of the busiest for PSS staff, especially those involved in graduation, confirmation and clearing, student admissions and preparing for Welcome Week and the start of year, so I'd like to thank everyone involved in making sure that these key milestones in the University calendar run smoothly and professionally. I thought I'd use this opportunity to give a brief update on progress which has been made over the summer months, as well as looking forward to the significant challenges which lie ahead in 2015/16.

1. STUDENT SATISFACTION, RECRUITMENT AND RESEARCH

In August we received the results of the National Student Satisfaction survey (NSS). The percentage of students reporting overall satisfaction with their experience at our University has risen by 1% to 86%. This is our highest overall response since the NSS began, with outstanding scores of 90% and above in some Schools and discipline areas. We remain on-track to achieve the 90% by 2020 target we have set ourselves as a University and we know there is more to be done to improve student satisfaction even further.

We took over 5,000 calls on A level results day and at this stage recruitment looks very healthy, however final numbers will not be confirmed until the HESES census date of 1 December. We are likely to meet or slightly exceed our target for home undergraduate students and will be slightly below target for home/EU postgraduate taught students. Overseas recruitment is even more difficult to predict, but we are looking likely to meet or slightly exceed targets for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught overseas students.

We made progress towards our employability KPI to achieve a positive destination rate of at least 85% by 2020, as measured six months after graduation in the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. A 'positive destination' can be either graduate-level employment or further study and in the latest survey, 78.5% of our graduates were in a positive destination, an increase of 2.8% on the previous year.

In terms of research, we know that our research and contract income for 2014/15 is likely to reach the £250 million mark. Once confirmed, this means that we will have met the very ambitious target set back in 2004 to double our research income by 2015. A number of league tables measuring research quality have been published over the summer months including the Shanghai Jiao Tong which is one of the key measures we use to benchmark our global research quality performance. We are now in 41st place globally, a slight reduction on the previous year, due to a very small decline in several of the categories of assessment. Going forward, we will broaden out our benchmarking by using three major international rankings to provide a greater understanding of our research strengths and challenges.

2. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2015/16

Foundation Day takes place on Wednesday, 14 October and this year's event will be special for two reasons. Firstly our new Chancellor, Lemn Sissay, will be installed; and secondly we will see the launch of our refreshed Manchester 2020 strategy. While this is not a totally new strategic plan, it is an opportunity to take stock of progress halfway towards 2020 and reinforce key elements of our vision and ambition.

On a national level, we know that there will be significant changes to the way that universities are regulated and funded. We are awaiting a possible Green Paper, likely to be published in October, which will outline the Government's future plans for the higher education sector, and on 25 November the Government will announce the outcomes of its Comprehensive Spending Review with non-protected government departments, including the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (within which higher education is based), being asked to prepare budget reductions of both 25% and 40%. So while our financial position as a University is sound, we already know that we face a potential funding shortfall of £20 million due to increasing costs and falls in income. Any further significant reduction in funding will present serious challenges for the whole sector.

3. IT SERVICES UPDATE

So that we can provide an IT service and infrastructure capable of delivering our academic strategy and essential support services, the University is moving to a more flexible and agile model of IT support which is able to embrace new IT developments, adopt best practice and skills and allow us to invest strategically for the future. As part of this transition, a Voluntary Severance Scheme for groups of staff across IT Services is currently open for applications up until Friday, 16 October 2015.

4. UNIFORM BENCHMARKING PROJECT

Over the summer, the PSS took part in the UniForum Benchmarking Project alongside almost half of the Russell Group universities. The aim was to give a clear view of how activities are resourced and deployed in our PSS to ensure that we are prepared to meet current challenges and be ready to face the future by making informed choices about future investment and building future capabilities. I'm pleased to report that we have successfully completed the data collection part of this exercise and the information has been submitted to the consultants Cubane for further review and analysis. Thank you to the around 480 colleagues who took part - this was a great team effort across the whole PSS. We will begin to receive some initial outcomes from the benchmarking analysis towards the end of this year, but it will be spring 2016 before we get a complete picture of the findings. I will brief you again on the emerging findings and subsequent outcomes in due course.

5. ALLIANCE MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

The Manchester Business School became the Alliance Manchester Business School on 21 September following a £15 million donation to the University from Lord Alliance of Manchester and his fellow Trustees of the Alliance Family Foundation. The donation of £15 million will be invested both in the School's new building and to drive its research agenda forward.

6. DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The 2016 call for nominations for the Distinguished Achievement Awards has now opened. Faculties will be coordinating the researcher, teacher, undergraduate and postgraduate research student categories, but nominations for the PSS, Library and Cultural Institutions and General Distinguished Achievement awards can be submitted directly to the President's Office. For more information, visit:

- [Do you know someone who always goes the extra mile?](#)

7. CHANGES ON CAMPUS

There have been a number of changes on campus as we continue to invest in our Campus Masterplan:

- Major work took place to demolish the Precinct bridge across Oxford Road which saw the road closed to traffic for a short period. If you missed this significant event, there are some spectacular photos of the demolition work at:

[Gallery: Precinct Centre Bridge demolition](#)

Currently there is scaffolding in place outside Crawford House which means the bus lane outside this building is closed until 2 November.

- The Grosvenor Halls of Residence between Booth Street East and Grosvenor Street are currently being demolished to make way for the new Manchester Engineering Campus Development (MECD) project. The Materials Science Centre has also been vacated with staff moving to various sites on North Campus as the building is prepared for demolition later this year.
- Excavations have begun outside the Simon Building on Brunswick Street to improve heating and hot water systems. Future works are planned adjacent to Burlington Street later in this phase.
- Plans were revealed for both the MECD project and the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC)

8. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Anyone who works with children here at the University should read an updated policy aimed at ensuring children remain safe in all their dealings with the University. The policy also includes health and safety procedures for parents who find they may occasionally have to bring their children onto campus. You can find out more at:

- [Do you know our procedures for dealing with young visitors?](#)

9. DATA PROTECTION

We all need to take particular care around data security in our communications with students. Errors may result in harm and distress to students, severe reputational damage and financial penalties to the University from the loss or breach of any personal and/or sensitive data. Particular care should be taken when using mailing lists such as Listserv, or when mailing spreadsheets to groups of students as additional information can be hidden from view but remain accessible. Further guidance is available at:

- [Data Protection](#)

10. SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE 2015

The Sustainability Challenge 2015 took place in Welcome Week with 800 first year students taking part. Students worked in multi-disciplinary groups to explore the social, economic and environmental impacts of building a new campus for the fictitious University of Millchester. The event was led by the Directorate for the Student Experience

with over 40 PSS staff from Schools, Faculties, Directorates and the Library and Cultural Institutions acting as volunteer facilitators.

Finally, a reminder that I am very happy to come along to personally deliver CoreMunicate at any of your team brief sessions. If you would like me to attend, contact paula.dunn@manchester.ac.uk to arrange a suitable date.

Will Spinks
Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer