

MARCH 2016

1. DISCUSSION TOPIC – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For this month's discussion topic, we would like your ideas on community engagement.

Our University provides some valuable benefits and opportunities for people who live in our neighbouring communities (eg Ardwick, Rusholme, Fallowfield, Hulme, Moss Side and the City Centre). These range from employment opportunities, learning opportunities, schools-engagement, access to our Museum and Gallery and support for local businesses and the local economy. At the same time, these communities also provide homes for many staff and students and opportunities for them to volunteer and conduct frontline research.

A group chaired by Associate Vice-President for Social Responsibility Professor James Thompson is developing a new strategic framework for community engagement to better focus, measure and communicate the University's impact in these communities. As part of this exercise, we would like your views on the following:

1. What do you think are the most valuable activities that the University provides for the local community?
2. What are some of the key benefits to the University from having a good relationship with its local community?
3. What can we do more of, or differently, to improve our contribution to our neighbouring communities?

Please send feedback to socialresponsibility@manchester.ac.uk before 1 April. A summary of your feedback and how it is being acted on will feature in a future CoreMunicate. Finally, there are two face-to-face consultation sessions on our community engagement work on 21 March (10.00-11.30) and 23 March (12.00-13.30) Information is available on StaffNet at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/archive/list/display/?id=15974&year=2016&month=02>

2. FEEDBACK – TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In the February CoreMunicate we asked for your feedback on the issues of secondments, coaching and mentoring and career planning. We received lots of useful feedback and ideas, which we will act on, including:

You expressed concern about the lack of clarity of policy, process and commitment from senior leaders in relation to secondments and work shadowing. We will review our existing policies and guidance, consider appointing a named person as the designated "lead" for secondments and work shadowing across the University whose job will be to promote roles that are available and share secondment case studies.

You think coaching and mentoring are valuable, but that opportunities are not available widely enough and are rarely mentioned in P&DRs. Although we have some very successful schemes like Manchester Gold, opportunities have been rationed in the past due to the number of coaches/mentors available. We will put out a call for experienced coaches and explore the establishment of a coach and mentor 'exchange' with other local universities and employers.

In relation to career planning, you raised two issues of concern, namely: the poor quality of some P&DRs and the lack of a career structure and 'pathways' for many PSS staff. Projects are currently under way to address both these concerns. The revised P&DR arrangements will be rolled out in the coming months and will include retraining *all* reviewing managers and a new online system to guide and confidentially retain records of discussions and enable monitoring of progress. Approval has also recently been given for work to begin on developing a new PSS Professional Development Model to enable a clearer structure and roadmap for PSS roles, careers and opportunities. This is clearly a major/sizeable project, but we hope to see some practical results and benefits for all PSS staff in 2017.

Thank you, once again for your ideas and feedback

3. PSS PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES

Later this month, together with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and other senior managers, I will be spending a couple of days with the Board of Governors at the annual Planning and Accountability Conference discussing how the University is doing and what progress we are making towards the goals outlined in our *Manchester 2020* Strategic Plan.

For my part, I will be letting the Board members know about the critical role that PSS colleagues have played in the success of the University over the past year, such as the dramatic increase in Research Grant and Contract income, our strong student recruitment performance, improvements in student satisfaction and employability and the delivery of a whole host of programmes, projects and targets, not least the Estates Masterplan and our distinctive and award-winning Social Responsibility activities.

At the meeting, we will also be discussing some of the challenges and opportunities for the University over the next year. The biggest challenge is progressing our ambitious plans in more uncertain times. For instance, almost six months after the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), we still don't know the details of the government grant that we will receive from HEFCE for the current or next year. There is further uncertainty on the horizon with the prospect of further cuts in public spending, the continuing instability in the global economy and the outcome of the EU referendum.

The opportunities for this University are also considerable and these are reflected in the operational priorities set by SLT for the year ahead, which include: the need to grow our research income even further, to diversify and increase the number of international students and to carve out a distinctive identity for the University with our social responsibility activities. In the PSS, we have a great opportunity to enable the University to create more "financial headroom" and provide funds to invest in our future priorities by working with our academic colleagues and taking a close look at how we do things and seeking to make them more efficient and effective – the so called "simplification and standardisation" agenda.

We have already made a great start on addressing this agenda with the creation of the new Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health and the recent Review of Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions (see below). The year ahead promises further change for the University and the PSS, but also the chance to improve the way that we operate and the role that we can play in helping the University to achieve its ambitious vision.

4. MANDATORY DATA PROTECTION TRAINING

The Information Commissioner (ICO) has called on universities to introduce mandatory Data Protection Act (DPA) training and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at this University has recently agreed that completion of the University's on-line DPA course should be **mandatory** for all staff with an active IT account. The on-line course provides a basic understanding of the DPA so that staff can exercise their responsibility for protecting the rights and privacy of individuals when handling personal data. The course should take 15-30 minutes to complete and can be found at <https://app.manchester.ac.uk/training/profile.aspx?unitid=4467&parentId=4> Once you have successfully completed the course, you should inform your local [Data Protection Guardian](#) for audit purposes.

5. STUDENT LIFECYCLE PROGRAMME

The University has embarked upon a major programme of work scoping out our requirements across the whole of the student lifecycle. Professor Clive Agnew (Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Students) is the Programme Sponsor and Tim Westlake (Director for the Student Experience) has day-to-day operational responsibility for the programme.

The programme will have at its core a “scoping project” which will map the student lifecycle and all key business processes, identify opportunities for greater effectiveness and efficiency and prepare a business case for implementing a student information system with minimal customisation. There are two related projects - managed by the same board - that will provide a new system to support Distance Learning students and monitor the progress of PGR students.

The scale of the overall programme of work is likely to impact across large parts of the PSS and many colleagues will be asked to participate in business process mapping sessions over the coming weeks. This is not an IT project, but is about business process improvement. For further information contact studentlifecycleprogramme@manchester.ac.uk

6. REVIEW OF STUDENT MARKETING, RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

The Final Report of the Review of Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions established in February 2015 has been approved by the University. The Review found that the University has a relatively effective although fragmented approach to supporting course marketing, student recruitment and admissions, but that it will require a more effective and efficient operating model in the future if it is to provide a more consistently high-quality experience for applicants and respond with greater agility to the more competitive higher education environment. The key recommendations in the report include:

- The establishment of a central student and course market intelligence and market research capability
- The development and enhancement of Faculty-led student marketing, recruitment and admissions teams in each Faculty.
- The development and implementation of a University-wide online admissions system or portal for PGR students
- The establishment of a University Portfolio Advisory Group

The implementation team will be consulting and working with colleagues and staff involved in these areas to put in place the necessary changes and will report on progress through CoreMunicate and StaffNet. The full report can be found at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=26961>

7. UNIFORM BENCHMARKING PROJECT

At the end of February, Cubane Consulting presented their initial results from the UniForum Benchmarking Project to the PSS Leadership Team and the Senior Leadership Team. The data collected gives us a rich picture of functional activities and costs across the whole PSS and will allow us to understand and analyse the cost of our activities in much more detail. There is a lot more work to be done to understand the data, and this is now underway. Once complete we will pull together a detailed Action Plan for further discussion with SLT.

8. EASTER BREAK

Can I take this early opportunity to wish you all a “Happy Easter” and encourage you all to switch off all of your PC’s and office equipment during the long Easter holiday weekend. I hope we can repeat the dramatic energy and carbon savings that we produced over the Christmas break

Will Spinks, Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer