

**Student Support Theme: Services, Information, Advice & Guidance ● Delivering a Service Ethos ● Welcome & Induction ● Student Communication**

**Graduate Employability Theme: ● Graduate Destinations and Employability**

**Systems and Infrastructure Theme: ● Timetabling ● Systems & Business Processes to Support Students ● Consistent Implementation of Policies and Procedures**

Project Roundup: Issue 2, February 2013

Welcome to the second issue of the Student Experience Project Roundup. In this issue: An ambitious programme for change; Leading on the student experience; project highlights; open briefings

#### An ambitious programme for change

The proposals to enhance the student experience which Tim Westlake put forward to the PSS Senior Leadership Team back in February 2011 were ambitious. But he and his DSE leadership team are convinced that the changes outlined are necessary, and that PSS staff can deliver them.

As is so clearly stated in Manchester 2020, 'Nothing ... is currently more important than ensuring all of our students have a rewarding and satisfactory experience.' The energy devoted to the eight projects – especially when the number of other initiatives underway in the University is taken into account – is impressive. Colleagues from right across the PSS are involved with many of the projects being chaired by Heads of Faculty Administration. They also all involve colleagues from Schools, Faculties and Central PSS, as well as the Students' Union: this is a concerted, single team effort which will succeed because of this genuine partnership approach.

#### Leading on the student experience

Every programme for change and enhancement relies on leadership and in an organisation of the size of our University that leadership has to take place at many different levels. One of the initiatives emerging from the projects has been the concept of the PSS Student Experience Leads. Originating as a response to, on the one hand, Schools feeling bombarded by requests for information and participation in projects and working groups and, on the other hand, a lack of clarity about who to contact in any single School or central PSS Unit, PSS Student Experience Leads can now be found in every School, at Faculty level and in each Central PSS Directorate, plus the University Library. Their initial remit was concerned with opening channels for dialogue and dissemination of information, and was then elaborated on at the inaugural Student Experience Leads Conference on Bonfire Night 2012 (fireworks were strictly decorative). Participants found the Conference itself to be a valuable source of good practice and networking, and planning for a second Conference is now underway, with the theme 'Delivering a Student-Centred University'. The PSS Student Experience Leads will take an increasingly prominent role in promoting the importance of the student experience in their areas, supported by the Directorate for the Student Experience. You may well have received this roundup from your local Student Experience Lead, but if you don't know who they are you can find out by emailing [studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk).

#### Project Highlights

University place is to be re-invented as a true hub for student-facing activity with many of the DSE's student-facing services being delivered there from September 2013, making it much easier for

students to access information, advice and guidance. Successive student surveys have shown a low level of awareness of support services, even though those who use these services are generally very satisfied with the support they receive. Students also commonly find that they are sent from 'pillar to post' when attempting to obtain advice or information, or undertake what should be simple admin task's, and it's hoped that a new University Place will help to eradicate such complaints. The first phase of the work is concentrating on face-to-face services in the atrium on the first floor, while phase 2 will seek to develop the ground floor into a student hub for all levels of enquiry by September 2014. A series of 'Student Information Points' (working title) will begin to appear from September 2013, delivering an enhanced first point of enquiry service to students.

Since 2011, much attention has been given to the quality of the welcome we offer as an institution to our new students. Now, as a result of the work of the Welcome Project, the 'Manchester Welcome' has been agreed. Its explicit purpose will be to celebrate new students' choice to study at Manchester, and to begin to break down barriers and integrate them into our community. For the first time ever, the University will publish the shape of its plans for Welcome 2013 well in advance – by the end of February – and the whisper is that you should expect something a little different ... Whilst the Student Communications team in the DSE takes over the operational responsibility for the Manchester Welcome, the project will continue to work with Schools to review School Welcomes and to consider how Induction, which follows on from Welcome, can be enhanced to ensure students have every opportunity to be equipped to succeed.

The Mystery Visitor scheme being coordinated by the Service Ethos project is now underway. The scheme – which is being managed by an external company – has students assessing service standards at designated reception areas across PSS. Upwards of 54 locations will be visited in total – so far there have been 11 visits to Food on Campus outlets and 3 visits to PSS receptions. Reports from the visits will be distributed to the appropriate PSS Student Experience Lead and will provide a fair, insightful and measured account of how our service came across in 4 key areas.

#### Open briefings

In response to feedback from Student Experience Leads, there will be a series of open briefings on each project, beginning with services, information, advice and guidance on 25 February, 1 – 2, University Place 3.204. Contact Rajeshree Rana, SIAGS Project Officer, to register your interest ([rajeshree.rana@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:rajeshree.rana@manchester.ac.uk)).

#### Want to know more?

Full details of all the projects (their aims, objectives, memberships) can be found online at [www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/studentexperienceprojects/](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/studentexperienceprojects/) and your feedback is welcome - just email [studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk) (or any Project Manager - their details are on the website).

Next roundup (3) will be circulated in May.

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