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At the University

Update on the Teaching Academy

The main aims of the TA are to be a forum for staff to share good practice, to enhance the quality of our teaching provision and promote teaching excellence, to encourage an evidence-based approach to teaching, and to raise the profile and recognition of teaching across the campus.

Professor Jon Green took up the role of Director of the TA on May 1st. An Advisory Board and a Management Group have been established and the TA will be launched towards the end of the summer before the start of next session. The Advisory Board is chaired by the PVC (Education) and comprises the Director of the TA, the five College DoEs, the Director of CLAD/Learning Spaces, the Director of Academic Services and an ‘external’ expert, the new Principal of the University Teaching School, Michael Roden. The Advisory Board will consider the proposals and ideas that come from the Management Group and will input to that group on strategic aspects of the education agenda.

The Management Group comprises the Director of the TA, one representative from each College and from CLAD/Learning Spaces (Dr Michael Grove (EPS, Director of the STEM Education Centre), Dr Sharon Buckley (MDS and a NTF), Dr Elaine Fulton (CAL, HoE History & Cultures), Dr Vikki Burns (Director of Teaching Quality Enhancement, LES), Prof Mike McLinden (CoSS and a PFHEA), and Dr Clare Saunders (Assistant Director CLAD/LS and lead for the Educational Development Team). The Management Group is meeting regularly over the summer period: (i) to develop policies on the categories of membership of the TA (including criteria, responsibilities and benefits), (ii) to set up the ‘forum’ and activities to facilitate the sharing of good practice, (iii) to design and set up the website for the TA including a Canvas site for resources in teaching, learning and assessment, teaching leadership and approaches to educational enquiry (iv) to establish how the Education Development and e-learning teams in CLAD/Learning Spaces will be involved in the delivery, facilitation and support of the activities of the TA.
Future work will involve the further development of the themes of 'Technology Enhanced Learning' and an 'Inclusive Curriculum' as well as designing CPD opportunities for staff in teaching, teaching leadership and educational enquiry. We will also be developing ideas around 'reward, recognition and promotion' including setting up advice and mentoring for staff who are considering applying for promotion or prestigious teaching fellowships.

Education in Practice

The first issue of the new ‘in house’ educational journal ‘Education in Practice’ will now be in September 2014 with a view to subsequent issues being produced 3-4 times in the first year. Guidance is available on the Education Matters web pages. Please contact either Jon Green or Michael Grove to discuss your ideas. You will need to submit your contribution by mid-July in time for consideration for publication in the first issue.

Register now for the Teaching and Learning Conference

Registration is now open for the annual Teaching and Learning Conference on Friday 4 July 2014. This event provides a great opportunity for staff and students to celebrate, showcase and disseminate the wealth of good practices in teaching and learning across the University.

The theme for this year’s conference is Educational Innovation and our key note speakers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience on this topic:

- Dr Gus Cameron, University of Bristol
- Holly Shiflett, Deltak-Wiley
- Dr Samantha Pugh, University of Leeds

Come and hear from pioneering academics on topics including the Virtual Laboratory, International and Distance Learning and Student-Owned Learning. Attend open presentations and poster sessions and share with colleagues your own educational innovations in your field.

To register complete the T&L conference registration form or visit the T&L conference website for further information on the conference programme and key note speakers.

External news

HEPI / HEA 2014 Student Experience Survey: “vital questions for universities, students and Government”

The Higher Education Policy Institute and the Higher Education Academy have jointly published the findings of the 2014 Student Academy Experience Survey. Information is available on the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) website.

Universities to contribute to new Science and Innovation Strategy for the UK

The four UK higher education funding bodies and Research Councils UK (RCUK) have written to the heads of all UK higher education institutions inviting input into the science and innovation strategy.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) will be gathering a wide range of contributions on the development of a new strategy in May and June. The new strategy is due to be announced in autumn 2014. The funding bodies and RCUK are working in partnership to gather evidence from the higher education
sector to inform their contributions to the strategy.

Institutions are invited to provide views and any available evidence by 12 noon on Monday 30 June. View the source and letter of invitation on the HEFCE website.

Graduate employability: connectivity is the key

Putting students’ potential at the heart of education is a powerful but dangerous ideal, says Dr David Docherty, Chief Executive of the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB), in a think piece published on 21 May.

Writing for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Docherty argues that offering a degree on the basis of graduate potential is a dangerous ideal. It raises high expectations, and failure to deliver produces anger, frustration and a sense of betrayal. Read more on the QAA website, and download the full paper, entitled 'Only connect - employer engagement, graduate employability and university-business links' QAA.

UK-Brazil links continue to develop as Science without Borders intake for September 2014 announced

The UK HE International Unit (IU) announced on 14 May that over 2,700 Brazilian undergraduate students will be coming to the UK in September 2014 under the Brazilian government’s Science without Borders (SwB) programme. This takes the total number of students who have come to the UK since the programme launched, including PhDs and post-docs, to over 8,500. The numbers have grown significantly from 519 students placed in the first cohort (September 2012), demonstrating the increasing popularity of the UK as a destination. The SwB programme is managed by the UK Higher Education Unit (IU) on behalf of Universities UK (UUK). For source and further information see the International Unit website.

Education Matters
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/educationmatters

Please contact Dr C Teeling for information.