Dear all

This is the second ESS Update on the progress of the Enhancing Student Support project and I would just like to take the opportunity to thank all students and staff who are actively involved in making the proposed enhancements a reality. This is no easy task and, given the importance of this project to the University, the collective effort already evident is very much appreciated.

Professor Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal

Enhancing Student Support wiki: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PESS/Home

Topics:
1. IT for Enhancing Student Support
2. Communication and recent email to continuing students
3. Students - Peer Support
4. Student Surveys
5. Reward Working Group

1. IT for Enhancing Student Support

The first meeting of the Project Board for IT for Enhancing Student Support was held on 10 April. Given the time constraints a comprehensive set of online tools to support ESS cannot be delivered in the first phase of the project and this strand is currently being benchmarked and scoped. By August 2012 a set of online tools will be provided via a web interface to facilitate and record meetings between students and staff.

There are four key roles that need to be supported – Personal Tutee (PTE) or student, Personal Tutor (PT), Student Support Officer or Team (SST) i.e. more than one individual is likely to fulfil this role, and Senior Tutor (ST). The functions that have to be delivered in the first phase are:

1. Establishing, recording and disseminating the relationships. For a PTE who are their PT, SST, ST; for a PT who are their PTEs, for a ST who are their PTs are and who are their PTs’ PTEs. For SSTs who are their PTs and their PTEs. The assigning of PTEs to PTs is expected to be an admin function carried out within the Schools.

2. Meetings - in the first phase there will be no functions for scheduling meetings. The relevant parties will need to arrange meetings as they have always done e.g. e-mail, notice boards, etc. When a meeting has been arranged it will be the responsibility of the SST or PT to record the event in the system. The system will send confirmation via e-mail and possibly calendar invitations to the relevant parties.

3. Notes of meetings – the system will have the ability to record notes and associate them with meetings. PTE, PT and SST will have the ability to record the first note and to add further comments as desired. Notes will be visible to all suitably authorised EUCLID users i.e. most academic staff and many admin staff. However, a PTE, PT, or SST may ‘check a box’ to mark a note and any associated comments as ‘private’ which will restrict access to only the PTE, and their PT, SST and ST.
4. A PTE will have the ability to raise an issue with their PT or SST. In the first instance there may be a process which will allow the PTE to fill in a free text form and possibly select some categories for their issue and send it via e-mail to their PT/SST.

2 Communication and recent email to continuing students

The implementation group is developing a Communication Strategy for the project. We want to be clear about the communications that are sent to students about the project. The Project Team will link these to the wiki and will send updates to School/College/Service contact lists. It will also be helpful if Schools and Colleges copy B.Connolly@ed.ac.uk and Sara.Welham@ed.ac.uk into their communications with students.

An email was sent to continuing undergraduate students about the project on 27 April: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PESS/Email+to+Continuing+Undergraduate+Students

3 Students - Peer support

EUSA is setting up a Peer Support Working Group to develop proposals for peer support pilots in Schools. Initial discussions have been held with the Vet School and GeoSciences. Other schools who are interested in exploring pilots are asked to get in touch with Sarah.Purves@ed.ac.uk

A joint SCE/IAD Workshop – Enhancing School-based support for students: Peer and group activities is being held on Tuesday 19 June 2012 (09:30 – 13:30). All are welcome to attend. The workshop will be of particular interest to staff and student representatives in Schools in SCE involved in student support, including Personal Tutors/Directors of Studies; Teaching Organisation Administrators; and staff in relevant support services. Please book through MyEd: https://www.events.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm?event=book&scheduleID=3296

4 Student Surveys

Surveys have recently been carried out in the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering. The results of these and other surveys and reviews are being used to inform the development of the project, for example the NSS and Teaching Programme Reviews.

5 Reward Working Group

In early discussions it became apparent that there were several questions related to the reward processes of the University that would require further consideration. This included recognition of the time that staff devote to student support activities and how that relates to their career development. A Reward Working Group has been established to explore a number of associated reward issues. RWG proposals will be approved, as necessary, through the appropriate channels.

If you know of any colleagues who are not currently on the list to receive this update but may be interested in joining, please forward this message.

Regards,

The Enhancing Student Support Team