Enhancing Student Support – Senior Tutor Network

Meeting from 15.00 – 16.30 on Wednesday 22 August 2012
Room 1.07, Main Library

Action Notes

Convenor
Professor Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal

CHSS
Dr Arriana Andreangeli, Law
Dr Elizabeth Bomberg, Social and Political Science
Dr Matthew Chrisman, Philosophy, Psychology and Language Science
Mr Neil Houston, Education
Dr Colin Roberts, Economics
Dr Julian Ward, Literature, Languages and Cultures

MVM
Dr Philip Larkman, Biomedical Sciences

CSE
Dr Donald Macleod, Biological Sciences
Professor Simon Harley, GeoSciences
Dr Paul Jackson, Informatics
Professor Alan Murray, Dean of Students
Dr Martin Reekie, Engineering
Dr Maximilian Ruffert, Mathematics
Dr Neil Stuart, GeoSciences

Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Jon Turner, Director
Ms Daphne Loads

IT Tools
Ms Sheila Fraser, Project Services Team Manager, IS Applications Division

EUSA
Ms Katie Scott, EUSA Peer Support Co-ordinator

Project Team
Ms Sara Welham, Academic Services

The Senior Tutor Networked welcomed Katie Scott, who had taken up post this week.

1. Discussion

The main discussion focused on progress on implementation and what was still needed.

- Members welcomed the slides that had been produced by IAD, SACS and EUCLID and thanked Jon Turner for these very helpful resources.
- A key aspect of the project was the partnership element and the need to encourage a change of approach by students and staff. This can be seen in the online tools which have been designed to facilitate students taking notes and reflecting on their meetings.
The message of encouraging students to take responsibility for their development will be reinforced through EUSA and the class reps.

There were a number of points associated with note writing.
- By adding a note to the meeting on the system, it confirms that it has taken place.
- Personal Tutors should write initial, succinct notes/bullets which records that the meeting has taken place and prompts the student to reflect on the discussion.
- Students will be encouraged to write more detailed notes, which demonstrate their reflection, understanding and acknowledgement of any actions suggested or required.
- Personal Tutors can comment on the students’ notes if this is needed, e.g. “remember we also discussed …”
- We need to encourage a professional approach to writing notes.
- It may be helpful to add a slide about this issue, with an example of good student reflection.

**Action:** Jon Turner/Sara Welham to update slides

- If Personal Tutors do not engage with the process then this will need to be managed through School management structures. Members agreed that it will be helpful to take a common attitude to this among Senior Tutors and Deans of Students, endorsing that action needs to be taken to resolve such issues.
- Members agreed that if students did not attend a 1:1 meeting then initially the Personal Tutor/Student Support Team would try to rearrange the meeting. It was reasonable to follow this up with a second reminder before closing this down and informing the Senior Tutor. The most effective way to do this is by writing a separate note on the system which alerts the student to the implications rather than writing a comment on the original meeting. This way the meeting remains flagged open, which will draw it to the attention of the Senior Tutor. The nature of some interactions may mean that additional messages are sent but the approach of - no show/reminder/second reminder/finish - could be a useful standard for many cases.

**Action:** Sara Welham/Sheila Fraser for guidance notes

- Further work will be done on guidance for students explaining the consequences if they don’t engage with the process. However, EUSA is keen to start the initiative with positive messages so this will be issued later in the project.

**Action:** Ian Pirie, EUSA and Project Team to draft guidance for students

- Until there is a robust approach to attaching files, and locking the content of some of them as confidential, we do not expect special circumstances documentation to be added to the record. CSPC has a task group this year which will be considering special circumstances and which will take account of the project and IT tools.
- There will be some incremental releases for the IT tools, including the ability to attach a file (by late September). Then there will be a period when feedback and input is sought (November/December) on a list of possible enhancements for the IT tools, which will be mapped for the later phases of the project, with development taking place from Semester 2 onwards. Members made a number of suggestions for considering in the future development of the IT tools:
  - Closing discussion threads
  - Some PTs will wish to record fuller notes but don’t wish to make these available to students as they wish to encourage students’ self-reflection. Could the tools help?
  - A facility to add the same information to a number of students’ records
- A way to record once in relevant students’ records that a group meeting has been held
- Drop downs with standardised text for key interactions could be useful, e.g. no shows/implications for student
- Greater clarity for some of the flags on the system, e.g. deleted/hidden
- Identifying in drop downs the different groups of people who need to be alerted about categories of information
- A “special circumstances” flag, which enables PTs to search for students with special circumstances

**Action:** Members and colleagues to give Sheila Fraser input for future developments, reflecting on this as they use the online tools

- There may still be occasions when other communication methods are used, for example, emails. When this is the case it is useful for a note to be put in the student's record once the email discussion has come to a close, where this is appropriate. Reminders will be sent to students' University email accounts when there is a new note for them on the student record. The University emphasises to students the importance of checking their emails, for example: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/new-students/checklists/getting-started-ug
  The University policy on Contacting Students by Email is online: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Contacting_Students_by_Email.pdf

**Action:** Sara Welham to ensure there is a student FAQ about use of email

- Synectics’ style focus group meetings with students and staff will be held in Semester 1 to gain input to the project.

### 2. Communication

Copies of the Enhancing Student Support Phase 1 Communications Strategy and Timetable had been circulated to Senior Tutors. They welcomed the timetable in particular and endorsed using it and making it accessible on the wiki. The timetable is a dynamic document which will be updated with new messages. The focus on central messages was thought to be appropriate and Schools will be aware of local messages.

**Action:** Members can send suggestions for items for the Communications Timetable to Sara.Welham@ed.ac.uk

**Action:** Sara Welham to add the timetable to the wiki: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PESS/Communication+Timetable+of+activity

Members agreed that key communication messages which are sent to Senior Tutors and School Administrators should also go to Student Support Teams.

**Action:** Project Team

### 3. Future Meetings

Members agreed that Deans of Students will chair the Senior Tutor Network meetings in rotation and that Alan Murray will chair the 25 September meeting, which will be held at KB. The dates of future meetings were noted.

**Action:** Members to send suggestions for issues and agenda items to Alan Murray, copied to Nichola Kett, by the end of week 1, i.e. 21 September 2012. The main focus of the
meeting will be to capture the experience from the start of semester and initial Personal Tutor meetings. Alan.Murray@ed.ac.uk and Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk

The October meeting will discuss monitoring, evaluation and enhancement.

Meetings, which are all held from 1.00-2.30pm are scheduled for:

Tuesday 25 September 2012 *(Please note change of date)*
Monday 15 October 2012
Tuesday 13 November 2012
Wednesday 12 December 2012
Thursday 17 January 2013
Wednesday 13 February 2013
Monday 11 March 2013
Thursday 18 April 2013
Tuesday 14 May 2013
Monday 17 June 2013

Sara Welham
23 August 2012