Enhancing Student Support – Senior Tutor Network

Meeting from 13.00 – 14.30 on Thursday 17 January 2013
Room G.01, 55 George Square
Action Notes

Convenor
Professor Peter Higgins, Dean of Students, CHSS

CHSS
Dr John Glen, Business School
Dr Nicholas Adams, Divinity
Dr Sarah Parvis, Divinity
Dr Colin Roberts, Economics
Mr Arno Verhoeven, Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Arianna Andreangeli, Law
Dr Julian Ward, Literature, Languages and Cultures
Dr Matthew Chrisman, Philosophy, Psychology and Language Science

MVM
Dr Kirsty Dundas, MBChB
Dr Joanne MacLeod, Oral Health Sciences

CSE
Dr Steven Henderson, Chemistry
Dr Martin Reekie, Engineering
Dr Paul Jackson, Informatics
Professor Simon Harley, Geosciences
Dr Maximilian Ruffert, Mathematics
Dr Judy Hardy, Physics and Astronomy

Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Jon Turner

Project Team
Professor Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal
Ms Nichola Kett
Ms Victoria Bennett

EUSA
Ms Katie Scott

IT Tools
Ms Sheila Fraser, Project Services Team Manager, IS Applications Division
Mr Chris Giles, SACS
Mr Richard Arkless, SACS

Student Support Services Project Strand
Dr Sue Rigby, Vice Principal
1. **Apologies**
   
   Apologies received were noted by the Convenor.

2. **Note from the last meeting**
   
   The notes from the last meeting were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**

   3.1 **Pebblepad**
   
   Members were reminded to get in touch with Robert Chmielewski on robert.chmielewski@ed.ac.uk if they have any feedback or comments regarding Pebblepad.

   3.2 **Student Engagement and Attendance**
   
   Members were advised that the draft wording on student engagement and attendance was being revisited and will be circulated to the Network in due course.

4. **Staff non-engagement with Personal Tutor System**

   As requested at a prior meeting, an open discussion on the theme of staff non-engagement with the Personal Tutor system took place. Themes covered included:

   - A number of Senior Tutors reported no issues related to staff non-engagement with the Personal Tutor system. It was felt that allocation versus volunteering for the role of Personal Tutor may have an impact.
   - Some members reported that high ratios of tutees per Personal Tutor can lead to issues of non-engagement, for example not replying to tutee communications in a timely manner.
   - There was some discussion around the benefits of meeting with students perceived as requiring less support. The benefits (and project expectations) of meeting with all students were emphasised by the Convener.
   - There was some discussion around the practicalities of organising the group meetings, e.g. when groups of students were on placement.
   - It was noted that student and staff engagement in the system is intertwined. Positive student engagement and attendance at group meetings resulted in positive staff motivation and engagement, whereas poor student attendance can be challenging for staff.
   - It was recognised that Senior Tutors do not have line management responsibility for Personal Tutors. This can be a challenge in relation to managing non-engagement.

   **Action:** Line management issue to go forward to SSIG for further discussion and clarity. (Ian Pirie)

5. **Communication**

   It was reported that further to the December meeting of SSIG, communications regarding the TPG phase of the Personal Tutor system would be sent out by early in Semester one. It was also reported that a report from the SSIG TPG working group
would be presented to the next SSIG meeting on 28 January 2013 and would then be circulated to the STN.

6. Training and Resources

6.1 Review of Phase One

Jon Turner requested volunteers to review two areas of training and resources from phase one of the project:

- Information available on the IAD website – in particular that aimed at staff.
- Information available around the provision of training and development.

This review would be an opportunity to make enhancements before the TPG phase of the project begins.

**Action:** Members willing to volunteer should email Jon Turner IAD.Director@ed.ac.uk

6.2 Difficult Conversations

Jon Turner advised that Daphne loads has been putting together training on handling difficult conversations for Personal Tutors. The Network was told that the draft training schedule would be circulated before the next meeting of the STN.

7. IT Tools

7.1 IT Tools

Sheila Fraser updated Network members on IT Tools developments.

- New email system rolled out to all students. This system provides a calendar facility for students for the first time. Meetings set up in the Personal Tutor IT Tools result in an email notification to students and a diary entry in their calendar. It was noted that students will have an option to drop appointments into a personal online calendar such as Google calendar. The default slot entered into the student calendar is for 20 minutes.

- When a member of staff goes into the student record they are able to view a photograph of the student. Students will now also have the ability to see their Personal Tutor’s photograph. The photograph used will be the one on staff ID cards. Funding has been made available for members of staff who wish to update their ID card photograph. It will not be possible for staff members to update their photograph on the system themselves. Staff members have the option of opting out of having their photograph displayed.

7.2 Developments in EUCLID

EUCLID is currently being updated with some new features. Features will appear as EUCLID updates. New features will include:

- Being able to view the full student record in a separate window.
- Being able to email all tutees at once.

7.3 Small Group Meetings
Chris Giles reported on on-going developments in IT Tools for supporting small group meetings. The proposal for the first phase will allow Personal Tutors to select a number of students to send an email to as a group. Messages from the Personal Tutor will replicate in each student’s area of the IT Tools but replies from students will only go to the Personal Tutor. Once a group is set up it is fixed, any new meeting of the same students would have to be re-selected. Network members are to advise if this limited functionality would be useful for the present. The next phase of development would look at developing group functionality across systems and allow for the maintenance of groups.

7.4 Recording meetings in IT Tools

The group was advised that the TPG working group report would be made available to the next SSIG meeting. This report would include recommendations for IT Tool developments for the TPG phase of the Personal Tutor system. One such recommendation under discussion surrounds the recording of Personal Tutor meetings using the IT Tools:

All types of meeting could usefully be described simply as ‘meetings’ without additional filters such as ‘semester 1’ or ‘semester 2’ as per the current UG system. Breaking down these boundaries would streamline the system allowing more flexibility for TPG meeting patterns. It was noted that it may also be useful to simplify the UG system in this regard. It was felt that management information reports could still be usefully pulled from the system by date rather than meeting type.

Network members agreed with this recommendation and agreed that the UG Personal Tutor IT Tools should be updated accordingly as part of the TPG developments. There was agreement that it would be most useful if both UG and TPG systems worked in the same way to prevent any confusion for staff acting as Personal Tutor to both types of students.

7.5 Statistics

Chris Giles advised that he is currently looking at statistics drawn from the Personal Tutor IT Tools.

8. Student Surveys

Members were notified that the National Student Survey (NSS) and the new Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES) would both be opening to students on the 21 January 2013.

9. Peer Support

Members were advised that the Peer Support Toolkit would be ready to go out to schools in May. Katie Scott can be contacted on Katie.scott@eusa.ed.ac.uk with any questions or to set up a school peer support training event.

10. Appointment of Student Support Project manager
The Network was advised that Mark Wilkinson has been appointed to the role of Student Support Project Manager.

11. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 1-2.30pm in Seminar Room 2, Chancellor's Building, Little France (with lunch).

Victoria Bennett
24 January 2013