

# THE NLS LEGAL EDUCATION GROUP

Newsletter 6 (May 2010)

The LEG, led by Becky Huxley-Binns and Jane Ching, engages in research in legal education and as a result aims to raise the profile, internally and externally, of the teaching quality within NLS. This newsletter summarises the sessions at the second annual NLS Learning and Teaching Conference held on May 21st.

**PETER JONES.** Peter introduced the NTU strategic plan 2010-2015 and discussed the potential impact of it on NLS. His slides are available on the T:/R: drive. The learning environment is at the heart of university aims and there is a new platform on an international strategy (see below) including an aim of global citizenship. There are express post-graduate attributes for first time to reflect anticipated expansion of PG student numbers. Comments are sought in the specific law school recommendations (see slides) by July 2010.

**BOB WHITE AND HILARY TWYCROSS.** Bob's and Hilary's session focused on student attendance and the 'Gold Standard' by explaining the history and development of the LPC since 1993. *Inter alia*, the session highlighted the importance of the personal tutor system (and knowing the students' names). The point was made that student engagement with the programme is achievable only if they attend and participate; there is a clear link from attendance to performance and retention. A lively discussion followed on tracking/crediting student attendance; **Hilary is going to set up a whole school focus group on whether we should, and if so, how to, track student attendance. Please do contact Hilary if you would like to join the group.**

**ALISON STEWART.** This session was about Alison's role in supporting staff development in learning and teaching. Her slides are also available on T:/R. There was a great discussion about how different academics perceive their career development which stimulated discussion about the role of different types of CPD, and how formal courses (such as a PGCHE) may have more limited appeal and impact on early career HE teachers, than more practically focused CPD which helps establish initial teaching confidence and competence.

**JANE JARMAN.** Jane's session was delivered with great humour; but there is a serious message: *Why are we teaching what we are teaching how we are teaching it given the changes to the legal profession under the Legal Services Act? What are the (new) opportunities open to students and what are our challenges? Specific examples were given: there are solicitors now coming off the roll to use their legal knowledge without the bother of being regulated. And barristers are doing it too. There is increasing direct access to barristers, and the BSB has said it may not even become a regulatory body under the LSA. Last week an LDP was granted approval to offer a pupillage. The demarcation in the traditional operation of the legal profession is gone. Where are we going now? And if we find that out, how should we get there?*

**JONATHAN DOAK.** Jonathan is Chair of the School Ethics Committee. **If a student wishes to make human brings the subject of empirical research, they must be given approval before the research commences** (the practitioner masters courses do this by protocols which cover most, but not all projects). This is of particular importance to GDL projects and final year LLB dissertation, which become compulsory from October 2010. **Please contact JD for more information.**

**JEREMY ROBSON.** As the BVC becomes the BPTC, Jeremy explained the impact this will have on course content and assessment. His slides are on the drives, as well as slides which may help tutors in advising students on how to maximise impact on applications.

**GAIL CUNNINGHAM AND ALISON DAVIDSON.** Gail explained the operational matters that tutors on the GDL FT engage in for consistency in teaching (consistency in outcomes *not* delivery/style). Alison explained consistency in marking. Slides are available; vertical marking is whole script. horizontal is where one marker marks only part of the script but perhaps all of 1 question for the whole cohort. Given the current and likely future demands of the FT students, the issues of consistency and how to achieve it (both in marking and teaching) will become a paramount concern across all programmes.

**JANE MCNEIL.** Jane introduced the NTU Learning and Teaching Strategy (in draft form). It is designed to embrace activities and support schools whilst encompassing the strategy of the university. It is an iterative process. The potential impact on NLS was shown through the example of elearning linked to the relevant objectives in the draft. Slides are available.

**BRETT SLATTER.** Brett explained the nature and scope of the NTU International strategy. There is an emphasis on capturing and harmonizing good practice existing across the university. Statistics are available on slides on T:/R: drive. Brett focused on the integrated nature of the strategy - recruitment, collaboration and curriculum.

A meeting of the **Legal Education Group** closed the day by reviewing and evaluating the sessions (and writing up this newsletter), adjourning by mutual consent to a cooler venue to do so.

**NICK AND ANGELA'S PARALLEL SESSIONS.** Sorry but I couldn't go to more than one parallel session in each time slot (!); Nick explained the nature of pro bono activities of NLS and Angela explained the new Talis Aspire software which will replace the Reading List function on the NOW (all staff should be aware of this change to this function because it comes into effect from October).