

THE NLS LEGAL EDUCATION GROUP

Newsletter 10 (May 2012)

This Newsletter summarises the Nottingham Law School's 4th Annual Learning and Teaching Conference on 11th May 2012. **Becky Huxley-Binns**, Learning and Teaching Coordinator, opened the event with a presentation entitled 'Tuition, Recession, Progression: Problems or a Perfect Storm?' It was a personal reflection on what the changes on education in general and legal education in particular might mean (or bode) for the future, and generated a short but lively debate. *Would a further session on this be appreciated?*

June Gorton, NLS Marketing Manager, gave a presentation about law student intake at all levels. She explained the main marketing information given to potential students including reputation, innovation, student employability, careers service support, high quality staff and facilities. She explained the various sources of data available to the University and Law School to track our student intake, and then showed from that data the reasons students give for applying to and then accepting (or declining) a place At NLS. The institutional reputation, fees and the trend for studying close to home were strong features across the board.

Sue Clarke, Employability Coordinator for NLS, presented colleagues with further information about where NLS students progress after leaving our UG and PG courses. Sue explained the University Employability Project and the focus on the UG provision, including the opportunities available to students. There was a brief discussion where we reflected on the curriculum and skills offering, and the progression of UG students into non-law jobs. The importance of soft skills, including marketing, selling, and 'commercial awareness' were emphasised and there was a brief discussion about this. There was also a great deal of information about the central university and student union support (there is a wealth of information on the latter's website here: <http://www.trentstudents.org>)

Sue McLaughlin led a session where colleagues brain-stormed the role of formative assessment within the teaching and learning contact time.

Ideas generated and questions asked include:

- What form does formative assessment have to take? - Does it have to mirror the summative assessment? - Can it be condensed? - Can it be peer reviewed? - What are the advantages and disadvantages of peer learning in seminars? - Encouraging students to present their work in seminars. - The role and placement of soft skills in seminars. - Getting students to lead seminars, or parts of seminars. - Emphasising the importance of feedback for formative assessment (in fact it has been argued the only purpose of formative assessment is feedback, Bone, 2006) - Using the extra time in seminars to support student development and autonomy. - Getting students to engage with formative assessment. - Computer based formative assessment (*is there a need/will for CADQ elearning to run the CBA staff development session first run in January 2012 again, at least once?*). CBA takes time to set up, but then runs itself and provides instantaneous feedback to students. - Using the creative commons licence to search for and find other lecturers' resources (*is there a need/will for Angela Donaldson to offer staff development on open educational/creative comments resources?*)

Emma Ireton's talk was about the Freshfield's Masters, a unique course attracting very high rated employees, taught in a variety of European locations. Emma also talked about the numerous and various bespoke legal training and consultancy services that NLS offers to law firms generally, including the NLS training on risk management for the Hong Kong Law Society. The unique LLM in Advocacy was highlighted by **Jeremy Robson**. This is a specialist course offered within the Malaysian judicial training context. It is evident that NLS offers some very interesting bespoke legal courses and consultancy to key sections of the legal services sector, both at home and abroad.

The Dean recently returned from Vietnam where further training opportunities for NLS were identified.

Professor David Burdette presented the PG Diploma in International Insolvency Law, focusing in particular on elearning and the NOW. This is a unique programme which is taught entirely online. David explained the context of the programme, focusing as it does on the emerging market (developing countries), and leading as it may to an LLM. The programme is endorsed by Insol International. There is team of international professors delivering the course. David gave some anecdotes on the problems, challenges and opportunities involved in the validation processes and getting the module ready to be delivered. The course has learning materials as well as videos supporting learning as mini-lectures. David thanked Marek Oledski and Vicky Mcgarvey from CADQ elearning for their help and support, and also Angela Donaldson for her work in providing materials and videos on study skills. The learning room is accessible through reviewer mode. The course is LAW_104.

Ryan Murray, Course Leader of the LLB FT and DL, spoke about the elearning enhancement of the LLB DL Course. He set the scene including the background of the DL programme, the context for the enhancement of the provision, the fees structure and the JASB requirements for minimum periods of time for the QLD study. It was Ryan's intention to make the enhancements as user-friendly as possible. For example, existing LLB materials have been converted into web-based material with integrated elearning activities; audio-visual presentations introducing key themes and topics; ongoing feedback (online formative feedback assessments) and online discussion fora. Ryan showed how converting materials into HTML made it very accessible, and could facilitate embedding activities and hyperlinks into the pages. Ryan then showed how he had used his existing PowerPoint presentations and converted them into a movie file which was converted into flash so it can be played in various ways. The PowerPoint technology is very flexible and very easy to edit. Ryan has also written some formative self assessments tests on the NOW to help students identify knowledge strengths and weaknesses. *There was a discussion about taking some of these ideas and implementing them on the other NLS courses.*

John Tingle, Head of International, shared the NLS International strategy, where the Key NLS Markets are, how they are spilt into Tiers 1, 2 and 3, and the activity in countries in each tier. There was a discussion about these activities, particularly the Erasmus programmes, which **Tracey Watson** led. *She asks if there is a need/will for Tracey to offer a session explaining the Erasmus programmes.*