

THE NLS LEGAL EDUCATION GROUP

Newsletter 9 (June 2011)

This Newsletter summarises the Nottingham Law School's 3rd Annual Learning and Teaching Conference on 8th June 2011. **Andrea Nollent**, Dean of the Law School, opened the event with a welcome and introduction about the nature of teaching and learning. After a general discussion, Andrea emphasised that in the current higher educational climate, it is not good enough to be good at teaching; we have to be excellent, radical and innovative in methodology. We are entering a new era and cultures are changing. Homogeneity in module delivery is a thing of the past. There was a lively debate about the nature of the market (parents, students, employers) and how market forces apply to determine what we do and how we do it; the importance of differentiation and the uniqueness of the offering was raised (and later developed in Becky Huxley-Binns' Inaugural Readership session, below). All of the morning sessions were voice-recorded and have been uploaded to the T drive (or please contact rebecca.huxleybinns@ntu.ac.uk).

Chris Slade, head of the NTU Collaborative Partnership Office, delivered a session about the wonders of collaborative provision (any work we do with a partner which is credit bearing and delivered off site). This includes franchise delivery (same product usually delivered by local staff locally), distance delivery (delivered by fly-in NTU staff), joint/dual delivery (NTU and another HEI), consortium delivery (for example delivered by NTU staff at multiple sites), delivery through Advanced Standing with named HEIs where the students come to NTU in years 2, 3 or even 4). The major part of NTU's collaborative work is the Validation Service where partners offer programmes that we validate (we have 7000 students and 22 partners). Chris summarised the draft version of the NTU Collaborative provision Strategy including the draft principles and criteria (Chris' slides are available on the T drive) and she also listed (it took 3 slides) the countries where we have validated centres. Chris also advised how new collaborative provision can be set up. Finally, Chris urged any member of staff who is travelling going aboard (conferences for example) tell the Collaborative Provision Office because there may be money available if you simply find time to visit one of the students on a validated/partner programme.

Dave Bailey, Director of the NTU International Development Office, spoke about building and delivering an international recruitment strategy. His talk included discussions about marketing, the role of the IDO and how NTU's priorities are being put into action (and what it will mean for the Law School). Dave developed some ideas raised in the debate led by Andrea in the opening address, warning that a solely market-led approach can be too narrow, but using examples from around NTU demonstrated that a firm grasp of relevant market and customer intelligence can enable us to deliver our academic ambition. He described the Woodland strategy (with oaks, acorns and squirrels – all will be clear if you refer to his slides which are also on the T drive or available from Becky by email). Where this may lead the Law School was also discussed.

Clare Newstead from the School of Arts and Humanities kindly stepped in to the shoes of Murray Pratt who was unavoidably absent (en route to China), to share the experience of her school in the Erasmus exchange programme. She started with an overview of the international strategy the school and showcased the many achievements of school in meeting their aims. There are many different exchanges available, some in Europe, some elsewhere, some programmes taught in English, some in the local language, some for a full year and some for a semester. The International Exchange Semester was of particular interest to the Law School given the new year 2 semester options for the LLB from 2014 (for students on the 2012 intake).

Angela Donaldson, Libraries and Learning Resources spoke to us about Open Educational Resources (what? how? Where?). Her slides and a separate handout are also on the T drive. An OER is a resource made available for free use and re-purposing for others (e.g. lectures, quizzes, weblinks, documents, etc.) Some of the examples Angela shared were very inspiring (and freely available) including a simulated clinic (a family law model from Anglia Ruskin). There was a broader discussion about developing our own OERs and the consensus (not confirmed by the Law School executive) was that academic staff who wish to develop OERs that meet the strategic direction of the Law School and can enhance reputation (locally, nationally and internationally) should discuss these ideas with their ATL or as part of their PDCR (and John Hodgson or Becky as LTCs may also be able to offer some help in respect of wider NTU or NLS policies).

Becky Huxley-Binns, Reader in Legal Education delivered her inaugural readership speech entitled "What is the Q for?". Becky joined her voice to many that have previously asked "What the law degree is for?" and found a possible answer in reflecting on the skills that law students develop during their programmes. Rather than the skills being incidental to legal academic study, her suggestion is that certain discipline specific skills should replace the foundation subjects in the qualifying law degree. The session concluded with suggested exemplar programmes designed to meet legal intellectual and professionals that meet the needs of the law student in the early 21st century whilst respecting institutional autonomy in legal curriculum design.

The afternoon parallel sessions talks on elearning (feedback on assessments by **Shane Russell**, elearning activities on the LPC by **Amanda Rushby** and **Adrian Savage**, and uploading podcasts by **Marek Oledski** (CADQ whose presentation is available at <http://tinyurl.co/6j3lker>) vocational qualifications (work based learning by **Jane Ching** and the BPTC by **Ian Fox**), cause lawyering (**Graham Ferris** and **Nick Johnson**) and the Innocence Project by **Jo Ann Boylan-Kemp**, the role of the personal tutor (**Emma Winfield**), transitions (**Stephen Acquah** from New College Nottingham), ethics as part of the QLD (**Jeremy Robson**) and teaching methodology (**Simon Boyes**). There were also two meetings of the Legal Education Group. The first was a follow-up to the February 2011 LEG meeting on assessing oral presentations, with a focus in this meeting on assessment criteria and consistency in grading. The second LEG meeting was a plenary of the day.