

Update on SDF Business

The updated SDF Business Plan was considered and approved at the April meeting of the Advisory Council. Subsequently we have received confirmation from the Leadership Foundation about our continued sponsorship funding. This short article sets out key priorities in relation to our funding and development of future SDF business.

We are delighted that LF are committed to sponsoring SDF despite reductions in their overall funding, and the new executive will be working closely with Bob Thackwray on continuing to secure close and reciprocal working with LF.

Our key priorities for 2012/13 are to:

- Deliver a Regional presentation of the ILM Level 3 Accredited award 'Working in Staff Development' aimed at Staff Development admin colleagues;

- Re-launch the other two SDF accredited awards aimed at Staff Development Leaders and Practitioners on the back of the accreditation by ILM;

- Offer a slimmed down CPD events programme consisting of 4 or 5 major events starting in the autumn of 2012;

- Sponsor an SDF project looking at best practice in staff and organisation development to support the student experience in HE;

- Further develop the SDF Web site and in particular it's potential as a repository of resources to support the staff development community in HE;

- Encourage greater take up of the Regional grants available to support activities and CPD events locally;

- Continue to develop SDF Fellowship as a professional mark of achievement for developers in our sector, and also award our first Honorary SDF Fellowships;

- Publish the first edition of an SDF professional journal provisionally entitled SDF Digest;

- Deliver a well attended and quality Spring Conference that maintains the developing quality of recent years.

As ever we are always keen to involve other colleagues from the sector in SDF activities so please do get in touch if you would wish to contribute your efforts and expertise in relation to any of the above activities.

What's on my mind

What's on my mind: an occasional article in which a member of the staff development community shares what is currently occupying their thoughts. In this edition Deborah Snell, Investors in People Co-ordinator and Organisation Development and Training Officer, Manchester Metropolitan University shares.....



Gold Fever!!

The summer of 2012 will certainly go down as one that has been dominated by Olympic dreams for many. You will not have been able to pick a newspaper, switch on the TV or radio without hearing something about the excitement of the Olympics. In terms of being on my mind, since joining Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in January this year, my thoughts have been dominated by my own little Gold rush (I'd like to say it had something to do with my sporting prowess, but that simply isn't so). The Gold I have had my mind on, has been the University wide re-assessment against the Investors in People standard (IIP) and the 'beyond the standard' levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The original assessment against the IIP Standard successfully took place for MMU back in 2009 and one of my first responsibilities has been to co-ordinate the University wide re-assessment. I am delighted to say that MMU achieved the highest standard, Gold IIP Status, placing us in the top 1.5% of all IIP accredited organisations.

The assessment process

- The assessment process took the form of one-to-one interviews, focus groups, surveys and the provision of documentary evidence.
- In all, more than 1,000 staff actually took part, providing the assessors with the evidence to show how we measured against the IIP criteria.
- Whilst initial selections for involvement were made using a random selection process by the assessors, all staff were invited to get involved and take the opportunity to let their views be heard.
- In addition to the IIP New Choices framework evidence requirements we asked the assessors to focus on the areas identified for development from the staff survey 2010 and new strategic priorities:

- Customer service
- Leadership and management
- Celebrating success
- Organisational culture, especially empowerment

- Strategic plans and PDR (the links between)
- Change management Results
- The assessors commended the good progress we have made since the Staff Survey, particularly in relation to organisational culture, empowerment and change management.
- We have also significantly improved since the last assessment in 2009 in relation to performance management.
- Throughout the grades and levels, people can explain how the application of their skill and expertise impacts on overall KPIs.
- PDR is working better than at the time of the previous assessment and people confirm there are other forms of feedback they value, including student feedback and team meetings.

Aspects that stood out for the IIP assessors were:

- Evidence that the University is constantly striving to improve communication and opportunities for feedback.
- We have aligned our strategy to changes in the political and economic climate.
- Strong evidence that the student is seen as 'customer'.
- Better use of PDR, improving the approach to accountability and performance management.
- The fact that more people understanding that a culture of continuous change is a constant.
- Improving empowerment and involvement through project groups and membership of representative groups.

Being recognised as a Gold Standard 'Investor in People' is fantastic, as this places MMU as the largest of only five Universities to be acknowledged in this manner. I am absolutely delighted to be associated with such a successful project so soon after joining the team.

SDF Fellowship Scheme

In the last newsletter we announced that 3 colleagues had been successfully recognised as Fellows of the SDF following the submission of their evidence portfolio and a meeting of the recognition panel earlier this year. Our congratulations again to Andy Wilson, Meriel Box and Martin Cussons – see <http://sdf.ac.uk/fellowship/fellowship-profiles.html>.

SDF Fellowship provides a means for HE staff developers to gain recognition for their professional achievements and contribution to the staff development profession. Full details of the fellowship process and requirements are available at <http://sdf.ac.uk/fellowship.html>. Invitations to apply for recognition as a Fellow are issued twice yearly. The current call for expressions of interest

closed in late June, for applications to be considered by the recognition panel in October 2012 however any colleagues who might be interested in applying for recognition as SDF Fellows should contact Becky Robson SDF National Coordinator – Becky.Robson@sdf.ac.uk. Certificates of recognition were presented to Andy Wilson and Meriel Box at the 2012 SDF Spring Conference in Manchester. Meriel comments

'I found the process of applying for fellowship to the SDF a challenging yet rewarding experience. It was a useful exercise to take time to personally reflect on my role, contribution and professional practice. I am committed to continuous personal learning and development and sharing



Meriel is seen receiving her recognition Certificate from Paul Dixon, Chair of SDF at the 2012 Spring Conference.

practice. I am passionate about developing people and proud of my contribution in supporting and enriching our sector as a whole. I strongly encourage colleagues to apply to join me as a fe-mellow of our SDF.'

We are still working on an alternative non gendered term to capture the spirit and essence of what it means to be a 'fellow' – any suggestions gratefully received.

SDF Did Indeed Spring into Manchester!

The SDF Spring Conference was held in a warm and sunny Manchester on the 19th and 20th April. As in previous years, the conference had a practical focus and aimed to give staff development colleagues a number of tools and ideas which they were able to apply in their institutions. There were plenty of opportunities for colleagues to swap stories and experiences as well as meeting friends, old and new.

This years theme was 'Inspiring Learning-Enhancing Performance' and aimed to offer colleagues an opportunity to experience new development approaches as well as revisiting and considering

alternative applications for established approaches.

Colleagues were introduced to the 'Manchester Colour Wheel', which is the subject of on-going research (at the University of Manchester) into the relationship between mood and colour. Colleagues discussed the possibility of using the wheel in coaching sessions and also as an evaluation tool.

There were a number of parallel sessions for colleagues to attend including, coaching supervision, storytelling, on-line business simulation game, using transactional analysis, e-learning approaches, managing changing teams in a changing environment, on-

line performance management tool.

This years conference was designed to appeal to our colleagues in staff development administration as well as practitioners. Although administration colleagues were very welcome to attend all sessions, we also offered a number of specialist administration sessions including, using the AUA standards for personal and professional development and the ILM Working in Staff and Organisational Development Award-Taster Session.

One of the more energetic sessions was 'One Voice'. This high energy event was designed to re-invigorate colleagues at the end of the first day by giving an opportunity for people to join in a singing and musical movement session.

The evening entertainment was a specially designed 'Malteaser' quiz which gave colleagues the chance to taste a number of 'real ales' whilst trying to answer a number of beer-related general knowledge questions. Here are some comments from this years delegates;

"Great to see everyone, great atmosphere".

"I feel that the sessions were diverse and relevant, and that the conference was excellent value for money".

Congratulations to Helen Charlwood of the University of Hertfordshire who was picked out at random to receive a £40.00 Amazon voucher from those people who completed the evaluation questionnaire.



Colleagues seen taking part in the 'One Voice' session.



SDF UPDATE

Summer 2012

Changes in SDF Executive Group



Emma Vincent, Deputy Chair of SDF

Colleagues will know that the Executive positions for SDF: Secretary (Denise Fieldhouse, University of Manchester); Treasurer (currently vacant); Chair; and Deputy Chair, are voluntary two year positions arrived at through nominations from SDF Advisory Council.

Following the recent election Emma Vincent has been appointed Deputy Chair for a two year period from July to coincide with Paul Dixon (University of Manchester) taking up position as chair until 2014. Emma is currently Deputy Director of HR (Staff Development) at York St John University, where she has worked for 7 years.

Emma's previous experience and background is in Training and Development within the private sector where she held many Senior Training Manager roles in the UK, France and Germany for Marks and Spencer. She is married and has a 6 year old

daughter Millie. Emma has been involved in the Steering Group for the NEYSDF Region for a couple of years now and joined the SDF Advisory Board as a Regional Representative in 2011.

The recent changes in the Executive mean that sadly we will be saying good bye to Matt Levi who as many will know latterly led the HEaTED project, and has served the SDF with such graciousness, passion and commitment over the last two years. We asked Matt to contribute a few thoughts in the light of his 'retirement'.

Arm Chair Thoughts

Well, it is time to say goodbye as departing Chair of the SDF. What an enjoyable ride it has been, a real privilege, thank you for the opportunity! Also, how nice to hand over the responsibility of looking after the shop to such an enthusiast, and friend in Paul Dixon and his new team supported by the Advisory Council, a wonderful group of professionals, at a time when our good colleagues at the Leadership Foundation have committed to continue to support the SDF.

So, here's to the SDF as it seeks to strengthen its relationships with other HE organisations, offer a wide range of services to its public and most importantly continues to offer support to the wonderful regional groups. After all, networking and sharing is everything. What has impressed me most about the SDF is not just the friendship, comradeship and intimacy that our community offers, it is the sheer enthusiasm and dedication of willing volunteers to better the

profession. The list is too long to insert here but we know who these great people are. There are also many other fine qualities that have been so well exhibited, particularly resilience and belief; a willingness to keep going and to keep trying. Well done everyone.

I personally intend to remain involved as part of the SDF family from a distance and to watch it grow whilst continuing to develop a local horticultural project and a UK consultancy Service to Higher Education through various routes, supporting workforce development initiatives for teams and individuals.

It is though time now to then thank everyone for their fantastic support to the SDF and me personally over the duration of my involvement and for me to also offer my support for a bright future. In my humble opinion at this time the SDF is needed more now than ever to meet the perpetual new and difficult HE challenges. As for me? Arm Chair? Not yet!!!



SDF Conference Scotland



The SDF Conference in Scotland was entitled Improving Organisational Development through wellbeing and engagement. This took place on Thursday 24th May at the Stirling University Management centre.

The topic had been chosen as a number of Universities had seen the development of these themes coming from different starting points. In some instances "Wellbeing" came under the Healthy Working lives agendas, whilst "Engagement" belonged to those designing staff surveys or from a management development perspective. The topics were now overlapping and the conference was designed to allow delegates to explore these subjects and seek way to develop a strategic approach to both.

The keynote speaker was Ivan Robertson who gave an explanation of the science behind wellbeing and its impact on an individual as well as the organisation. He addressed the theme of the conference by asking delegates to consider a narrow view of engagement that excluded concern for an individual's psychological wellbeing, energy and resilience. He challenged the delegates to consider if this was sustainable or whether it described a sufficient level of engagement. The conclusion was that we cannot ignore well being if we are helping our organisations achieve sustainable engagement.

Ivan presented numerous pieces of research that link wellbeing and engagement to improved business performance so the case for action was clear. We then discussed an array of tools that Robertson Cooper can use to help organisation develop a strategic approach to addressing these issues.

The conference than heard from Alex Killick, Director of People at Glasgow

Caledonian University (GCU), this gave an HR perspective that reinforced the need to ensure an integrated approach is taken to wellbeing and engagement. Alex was also able to present how this had been tackled in other organisations based on his experience in the NHS.

The conference then focused on the various measures that organisations have to measure wellbeing and engagement and the delegates echoed views expressed elsewhere that clarity over the definitions could assist measurement and benchmarking across the sector. We had two cases presented, Gordon Robertson from Aberdeen showed how they had developed an effective internal survey procedures and followed this up with interventions to build resilience. Adrian Egglestone from University of the West of Scotland demonstrated how when tackling wellbeing and engagement there was a journey from staff climate surveys, focus groups to an Organisational Development checklist to monitor whether best practices were consistently adopted across the organisation.

Like many conferences we covered a lot of ground and delegates left inspired but conscious there is no silver bullet just hard work to ensure a range of initiatives are connected to the goal of delivering "Sustainable Engagement".

The SDF group in Scotland previously known as the Management and Professional development group will now be known as the Organisation and Staff Development Scotland. (OSD Scotland)

Anyone interested in the activities of the former Scotland Management and Professional development group can find details on the group tab of the SDF website - <http://sdf.ac.uk/>

Honorary SDF Fellowship

In addition to the SDF Fellowship by application process the Advisory Council has also approved a process for awarding Honorary Fellowship of SDF. The purpose of the SDF Honorary Fellowship Scheme is to recognise those people in the Staff Development community who have self evidently over a number of years made a major contribution to staff development practice in the HE sector, and have also served members of the community as peers, supporters, advocates and valued colleagues. Further details on the nomination process can be found on the SDF website: <http://sdf.ac.uk/fellowship.html>



About SDF UPDATE...and a call for contributions

Update is a twice-yearly newsletter for staff developers in Higher Education. Limited numbers of paper copies are distributed to HEIs in the UK, and it is available as a PDF download from the SDF website. We'd love you to share your news or a practical tip or information about a resource, or if you have a suggestion or comment about this issue, we'd really like to hear from you, especially about ways it can be improved.

Contact: **Becky Robson**, SDF National Coordinator, becky.robson@sdf.ac.uk, www.staffdevelopment.ac.uk

International Leadership Development Programme

The International Leadership Development Programme is an innovative approach to leadership development, capitalising on the strong links that the British Council has developed in global Higher Education and delivering reciprocal value to partner countries and the UK.

Article by Hank Williams and Claire Bradshaw

The British Council is rethinking the way that it supports leadership development in HE. Working closely with Hank Williams, a management development consultant, it has developed a programme which pairs managers and leaders in UKHE in mentoring relationships with emerging leaders in other countries.

They have asked 11 Staff Developers from UK HEIs to form a Consultation Group* to support the development of the programme – signaling their intent to work collaboratively with us both as experts and potential customers.

It started in Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Higher Education in Afghanistan asked the British Council to help them to develop future leaders in their HE sector. The only practical way to do this was to work remotely, through a combination of action learning sets and mentoring relationships. Hank went to Kabul in May 2011 to launch the programme.

There were a number of significant challenges, and the original design had to be scaled back so that it focused on mentoring. Nevertheless, it also became clear, through feedback from the UK mentors, that they were getting substantial value out of working with academic leaders from another country in this way.

Next step: Bangladesh.

The British Council in Bangladesh also wanted to look at new ways of supporting leadership development in HE. The old model - bringing senior managers to the UK for one-off study visits was expensive; there were also doubts about how much transferrable value they generated. Bangladesh provided the opportunity to apply the lessons learnt in Afghanistan.

How does the ILDP work ...?

The Bangladesh ILDP is based on 1 UK leader remotely mentoring 2 leaders from Bangladesh Universities over an 18 month period – using skype and email. This is underpinned by a set of workshops (see below). In addition, the UK mentors receive regular coaching and support from Hank. They also meet together as a group three times during the Programme to share their learning.

This is how it happened ...

January 2012 – The British Council runs a 2-day workshop, led by Hank, for 23 Bangladeshi Vice Chancellors to engage them in thinking about leadership and leadership development. Barry Winn, Deputy Vice Chancellor at Bradford runs a session via skype to help the group explore governance and structural issues. Claire Bradshaw, Head of Staff Development at Loughborough University, talks with the group via video-conference to describe Loughborough's emerging approach to leadership development. 11 of the VCs commit their HEI to participate in the ILDP and develop criteria for selecting suitable candidates. 23 candidates are accepted onto the programme.

March 2012 – The British Council invites 11 Staff Developers in the UK to form a Consultation Group to support the development of what is now known as the International Leadership Development Programme. The concept behind the ILDP is that it has reciprocal value - that it is a

development programme for UK managers as well as for the people they mentor. The Consultation Group respond positively to the idea.

UK Recruitment - the Staff Developers on the Consultation Group start the process of identifying suitable UK candidates for the ILDP. The BC charge a pilot programme fee of £1500 per place. All places are filled by mid May.

"Choosing the right participants..."

The ILDP requires UK participants who have an appetite for development and have the potential to learn from the self-directed and experiential nature of the programme. One of the Deans at Loughborough, Professor Angus Laing, sprang to mind when we were considering possible participants on the ILDP. I wanted to offer Professor Laing an opportunity that would help him see things differently and stretch some of the assumptions about senior leadership in Universities that he may have developed. In turn, we hope that Professor Laing's experience of heading up a highly successful School of Business and Economics, with all the transitional work he has done to pull the School together, will be invaluable to his two Bangladesh mentees.

Claire

"This programme is different..."

Most Staff Developers would agree that supporting the development of current and future leaders within our Universities is of major strategic importance. But with budgets being squeezed, the availability of leaders at a premium and a demanding range of needs to satisfy, identifying development opportunities with lasting benefits is a challenge. The first Consultation Group meeting gave us a golden opportunity to explore a programme that offers a new approach. It became obvious very quickly that the ILDP:

- caters for a sophisticated group of staff for whom more traditional programmes often do not suit
- has an international dimension
- majors on the concept of coaching/mentoring as the development medium
- develops a greater awareness of cultural issues and how these operate in real contexts
- appeals to the a sense of 'doing something worthwhile' for the global HE Sector.

Claire

May 2012 – the British Council run a three-day workshop, delivered by Hank and Claire in Dhaka, for the 23 Bangladeshi participants to engage them in a conversation about the leadership context in HE in Bangladesh and to start the process of reflecting on themselves as leaders and managers.

"From Dhaka: a masterclass in facilitation..."

Take 23 Bangladeshi participants of varying levels of experience, from a mix of private and public funded Universities operating in a highly politicised environment; a brand new programme that is still in development; two facilitators who've never worked together; no handouts; no powerpoint (ok, just a few slides, maybe four...); a loosely structured workshop - and what have you got? ... a fabulous experience! The 3 day workshop in Bangladesh was an opportunity to observe some expert facilitation from Hank and be involved in something seriously exciting. I left feeling positive that the workshop had set the programme up to be successful, and confident that the participants were 'getting' self-exploration and reflection. One of my golden memories was a comment from one of the sceptics: "I really get this now," he said. "I am a future leader of HE in Bangladesh and this programme is going to help me do it!"

Claire

"A UK Mentor reports..."

I had some experience of mentoring activity, albeit in a cultural context with which I was familiar and in a face-to-face format. One of the interesting challenges with this programme is that neither of the above is the case! The introductory workshop was invaluable on both fronts. The workshop provided an understanding of the Bangladeshi context, as well as of the mentoring process has allowed me to adapt my thinking around how to approach working with my Bangladeshi colleagues, and I trust deliver something of value to them and which supports my own development. Exploring leadership challenges in a completely different context will, I believe, provide fresh lenses with which to consider the specific challenges we face in the rapidly changing policy context in the UK.

Angus Laing, Dean of Business and Economics, Loughborough University

June 2012 – the British Council run a two-day workshop for the UK mentors, led by Hank, briefing them re the context in Bangladesh, delivering some advanced mentoring skills training and exploring with the group how best to establish and sustain remote mentoring relationships.

June 2012 - Hank goes back to Dhaka to work with the Bangladesh participants to help them prepare for the mentoring relationships and to deliver some management skills training in areas that they have requested. They are now clear about the process of being mentored and have identified issues that they want to work on with their mentors. The ILDP in Bangladesh is underway.

And in the meantime: At the same time as setting up the Bangladesh ILDP, the British Council has been developing the ILDP for global delivery. Discussions are underway with a number of other countries, focusing on a range of specific needs as well as general leadership development. The ILDP is set to become a dynamic new option for leadership development for UKHE.

Interested in finding out more about the ILDP?

Contact **Anna O'Flynn** at the British Council in Manchester.

Her email address is: Anna.O'Flynn@britishcouncil.org

The members of the Consultation Group are:

Caroline Ackroyd	University of Bradford
Carol Bolton	University of Liverpool
Claire Bradshaw	Loughborough University
Wendy Briers	LJMU
Martin Cussons	University of Nottingham
Paul Dixon	University of Manchester
James Howard	University of Cumbria
Lynne Howlett	University of Newcastle
Alex Jones	University of Edinburgh
Keith Willis	Nottingham Trent University
Susan Small	University of London

