

MSDP Meeting: Wednesday 07 July 2021 (via Zoom)

Dear members

Here are just a few shared snippets from our meeting held on Wednesday.

Partner institutions in attendance: Aston, Birmingham, Birmingham City, Keele, Nottingham, Oxford Brookes, Staffordshire, Wolverhampton, Worcester.

Apologies received: Harper Adams, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham College, UEA, Wolverhampton, AdvanceHE

MSDP updates:

We look forward to meeting face to face in December hosted by Kate Crane at Birmingham.

Date for diaries is Wednesday 01 December 2021, University of Birmingham (10:00 - 15:00).

SDF updates:

- [Festival of Learning 2021](#) The opening keynote is Kate Richardson Walsh, OBE (Olympic Gold and Bronze Medal winning hockey player).
- Final call for member contributions is Monday 12 July.
- [SDF on AdvanceHE Connect](#). SDF has its own area on AdvanceHE Connect. It currently uses it to share videos and resources collated from last year's Festival of Learning.
- [SDF partners](#). SDF is keen to engage with sector and commercial partners whilst maintaining the SDF mail chat as a closed self-help discussions forum for members only. To this effect SDF will limit and send out just 2 authorised emails a month from partners. 1 from AdvanceHE (which will be specific to SDF) and 1 from a selected partner.
- Revised partnership agreement with AdvanceHE sees a £8K support grant to SDF plus ongoing support to other initiatives (including the Festival of learning).

Festival of Learning 2022 (new concept)

The concept for 2022 is to have a blended version which integrates national online days intertwined with a live day hosted regionally.

Our consideration and responses included:

- the existing 4-day online programme outline is too long a duration for many.
- potential optimisation for condensing down to 2 days of content (may lead to more reserving dedicated time to fully attend as opposed to dipping in, out and then not subsequently attending sessions).
- is there potential to blend the regional day with some national online content so we view a keynote session nationally and then follow up with regional discussions.
- replicate a conference networking feel by considering
 - a) tagging on regional evening meal (e.g., central Birmingham curry or pizza house) and or
 - b) having overnight in a not too expensive hotel
(although various members indicated that budgets might not extend to this option).
- more optional national online networking opportunities (coffee rooms) attached to the national offer.

AdvanceHE updates

- The fortnightly AdvanceHE emails to the MSDP together with the In-partnership are well received by members.
- The update video on [transformation of Athena Swan by Chair Parveen Yaqoob](#) (3 minutes) was shown to members. Associated Link to [downloadable information packs](#).

The [Midlands Innovation](#) TALENT programme: Sandy Spark

- The MSDP welcomed our guest Sandy Spark (previously at Warwick) who is currently a Technical Training Manager for the MI TALENT programme.
- Sandy provided the [attached presentation](#) outlining the work she is undertaking in advancing the status and opportunities for the technical community in HE.
- Midlands Innovation is a collaboration between eight Midland HEIs. The Universities are Aston, Birmingham, Cranfield, Keele, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham and Warwick.
- Whilst the initiative is primarily linked to these 8 HEIs there are some elements (and future elements) of the offer that can be disseminated more widely to the sector.
- For further enquiry members are encouraged to contact Sandy directly at sandy.sparks@nottingham.ac.uk or mitalenttraining@midlandsinnovation.org.uk

[Gamification \(doesn't always need to be digital\)](#): Beth Lloyd

Beth led a short inquiry in how the gamification approach could or has been adapted to our own development offerings. A few snippets included.

- Various members provided examples of utilising role play and simulation exercises in their offer.
- Reminder of the [MSDP Sim Uni event](#) held in May 2016 at Derby. The University simulation game was subsequently taken up by different members. [Details of Sim Uni from Pixel Fountain](#)
- Carol (Nottingham) shared that she has been in discussions with the local Army base to initiate a leadership team building event (clarification not assault type course).
- Carol shared this article from WonkHE: [Playing at university management](#)
- Sarah (Birmingham) already sees gamification in action with their compliance e-learning assessment with staff undertaking it multiple times to get 10/10.
- Not forgetting the [Change Game \(face to face board game\)](#) which MSDP launched as a trial just before lockdown (ha ha). Current custodian is Aston.

Remaining snippets

In the extended range of 'gives and gets' key areas for members attention were

- Return to campus initiatives (wide ranging variations of positions)
- Supporting hybrid working
- Supporting managers to support hybrid working
- Staff wellbeing initiatives
- Systems development or renewals
- Carbon literacy initiative
- Job crafting (job enrichment)
- Sexual misconduct reporting and supporting
- Career frameworks

That is it for snippets.
Chair Ian Whiting.