4th Annual Student Retention and Progression in Higher Education Conference

Wednesday 25th February 2009

Improving the quality of the student experience – strategies to improve student retention'

Paul M. Marshall
Executive Director

1994 group

Summary

- Quality of student experience is a major strength of the 1994 Group
- Leading the debate through our ‘Enhancing the Student Experience’ project and policy statement
- The Delivery of a Student-Focused Experience
- Examples of Working in Partnership from 1994 Group institutions

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1994 Group 'Enhancing the Student Experience' Project

- Student Experience Policy Group established in Summer 2006
- Enhancing the Student Experience Policy Statement and Report published November 2007

  (Report available at: http://www.1994group.ac.uk/documents/public/SEPolicyReport.pdf)
- Project analysed growing body of research to identify the challenges
- Worked very closely with the NUS from the outset
- Student Experience Policy Statement provides a snapshot of the student experience in 1994 and sets out seven priority areas.

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Student Experience Policy Statement Challenges for the Sector, 2007-2012

- A requirement to provide transparent and accurate information around the student experience
- Towards the 2020 Workforce: Promoting the well-rounded graduate
- Promoting the student voice
- Engagement with schools and colleges
- Student-focused resources
- International strategy and internationalisation
- Excellence and enhancement in learning and teaching

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The Delivery of a Student-Focused Experience

- Institutions must be demand-led, student-focused and know where they fit in the market
- Altered nature of the relationship between students and universities – rising student expectations
- Expectation on universities to have a diverse set of strengths and even specialise
- Students not simply ‘customers’
- Effective partnerships with students and other stakeholders is critical

Working in partnership with students

- Importance of working with students in order to ‘get things right’
- Need to focus it around the needs of *today’s* students
- Traditional forms of feedback not working
- Willingness to engage in often difficult discussions
- Focus groups can help improve communication, accountability and responsiveness

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Student Volunteering

- Volunteering a distinctive feature of the student experience
- Students develop key skills and institutions attract best students
- Exeter students contribute over 100,000 hours of voluntary work in the community each year
- 1994 Group encourages its students to aspire to be their best academically and outwith their studies

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Making Connections: now and beyond

Tuesday 15th January 2008

The 1994 Group and its work to enhance the Student Experience: Securing your Institution's Future

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