Student Engagement: Bridging the gap in expectations between staff and students.

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Workshop Outline

• Overview of research project (5 minutes)

• Activity (15 minutes)

• Presentation of some results to help discussion (15 minutes)

• A strategic framework for student engagement (5 minutes)
School of Earth and Environment

• ~ 650 undergraduate students
• Enrolled on a diversity of programmes

• Minimal formal teaching in the School building
• Many students never attend classes together
• Merged school
• Higher student experience expectations

Motivation

• Quality of student experience
• Building stronger sense of community
• Positive learning outcomes – academic success
Measuring Student Experience

Surveys used extensively in North America (NSSE) and Australia (AUSSE) to measure **experience** rather than **satisfaction**. Extensive surveys to provide information on six student engagement scales:

- Academic Challenge
- Active Learning
- Student and Staff Interactions
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Learning (School) Environment
- Work Integrated Learning

55 questions and 2 open questions

2011 – 374 responses = 60.0%
2012 – 401 responses = 64.1%
What we hope to achieve

Understanding student engagement

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE
Barriers & enablers

THE ENGAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

STAFF PERSPECTIVE
Expectations & understanding

Student - Staff Interaction
Enriching Educational Experiences
Supportive School Environment

Promote and facilitate opportunities for enhanced engagement
In 2012 we also administered a staff survey to explore their understanding and perceptions of student engagement:

- The extent to which they believe their students are involved in certain activities and how they spend their time
- The extent to which they believe their students should be or how important it is that they are involved in certain activities
- The extent to which they believe the school emphasises certain activities to the students

54 questions and 3 open questions

44 responses = 42% response
Activity

1. For each of the three benchmark areas consider a question that you would use to **EXPLORE HOW YOUR STUDENTS ENGAGE** with your school / department and their discipline - with a view to enhancing their engagement.

2. For each of the questions you have developed
   i. how do you think your students would respond?
   ii. how would you like them to respond?

3. Familiarise yourself with the surveys provided.

4. Do you think there is value in this approach in understanding student engagement?

**THE BENCHMARKS**

**STUDENT-STAFF INTERACTIONS** - the level and nature of students’ contact and interaction with teaching staff outside the timetable

**ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES** - students’ participation in broadening educational activities over and above ‘in class’ teaching (student and / or staff led).

**SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** – creating an environment that enables students to succeed, including role of support networks and facilities.
Enabling us to understand engagement of our students
Benchmarking: Staff-student interaction

Programme of Study

- Multiple communities with differing characteristics
- Changing engagement throughout the student journey
Enabling us to identify gaps between staff understanding and the reality of student engagement
During the current academic year about how often have you worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework (e.g. research placement / student internship)

Student comments:

“Good community feel, plenty of extra activities offered away from lectures”

“Advertise more internships/aiding with research opportunities in the School”
To what extent has the School made explicit where an academic member of staff’s research has been used in teaching?

- Students
- Staff think students believe
- Staff think School has

Bars representing the percentage of responses:
- Very little
- Some
- Quite a bit
- A lot
Have you attended events delivered within the School (e.g. SEE Behind the Scenes)?

Students

69% Yes
31% No

How important do staff think it is that students attend these events?

- Very important: 17%
- Important: 43%
- Somewhat important: 34%
- Not important: 6%
Enriching Educational Experience

Extent to which students are **encouraged** to attend talks/presentations/seminars to enhance their learning?

[Graph showing student and staff opinions on encouragement]

Extent to which students actually **attend** talks/presentations/seminars to enhance their learning?

[Graph showing student and staff opinions on attendance]

- **Make them more welcoming**
- **A lot clash with my timetable**
- **Make more accessible / aim at undergraduates**
- **Publicise more**
Supportive School Environment

To what extent has the School **helped you settle into university life**: through providing induction activities if in your first year or welcome back events if not in your first year?

- **Students**
- **Staff think students believe**
- **Staff think School has**

- Very little
- Some
- Quite a bit
- A lot

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0% 80.0% 90.0% 100.0%
To what extent has the School helped you settle into university life?

Same question as previous split into year group.
Enables staff and students working together
Themes and objectives clarify the interpretation of student experience in context of strategy.
Key messages

Staff understand the nature and significance of student engagement in part.

Data enabling us to

• engage staff in discussions to enhance their understanding.

• identify, target, promote and evaluate effectiveness of interventions to enhance engagement.

• bring staff and students together to build the academic community.
Questions?

Please contact us if you want further information about our research and/or a copy of the slides

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