Tom Clarke, Vice President Education

StARs

To date we have 580 StARS on the SOLE page. We are expecting a further increase through January and February due to the intake of students around this time. Of these we have trained 273 to date.

In recent weeks myself and the Pro Vice Chancellor Students have completed our tour of all the Institutes to talk about the StARs system. Making sure that all Institutes were fully engaging with the system as well as sharing best practises and talking through ways of improving how it could work.

The second StARs Forum took place on Monday 1st December with 51 StARs in attendance. The main theme of this forum was assessment and feedback. Generally the feedback given from the students was one that painted a positive picture, with many students commenting on the increased levels of e-submission across the University was not only making it easier for them to submit work but was also saving them money also due to them not having to print off the work. However some of the negative comments were centred on the lack of informative assignments in some courses. Many students would appreciate work such as this to establish what level they were working at before the actual formative assignments. They would also know what they would need to improve in order to improve their marks.

There are currently 217 StARs logged onto the Students Union Volunteering Record amassing approximately 1000 hours of volunteering in their role so far.

The deadline for StARs Accreditation has been set as Friday 17th April, with already 1 application being received for the Bronze Award.

Partner Colleges

On Friday 5th February myself and an Institute Representative from the Education Institute will be delivering a Students Union Induction and StARs training session to a group of StARs at Roche in Cornwall. Alongside all of the StARs related information being provided we will be taking this as an opportunity to push our volunteering schemes to the students in the South-West.

Dialogue has also been opened up with Exeter and Taunton to arrange for a similar session to be put on at some point in the near future however a date has yet to be reached.

Also recently a box containing StAR hoodies was sent out to all the partners we have in the Midlands area to enable the students registered as StARs there to receive the benefits that students based on our St Johns campus get.

We are also looking at the feasibility that if StARs at partner colleges chose to run for the Accreditation Scheme me either traveling there to hold the interview or presentation required for silver and gold respectively or to introduce some form of technology based system through Skype.

NSS

To assist in the Universities push to gain a 90% response rate to the survey the Students Union will be looking to work closely with the StARs on each of the courses across the University. A presentation or short script will be produced and given to each StAR with the intention of them presenting that to the students on their course. Also to go alongside this the computers located within the Students Union will be set aside so students in the area can sit down and fill in the survey during their breaks from lectures. Also we shall be arranging for all of the digital NSS advertisement to be screened on our LED screens that are located within the building.

Meeting to discuss the layout plans and designs for Orchard House

With the University recently purchasing the Orchard House complex plans are being put in place for what the interior of the building will consist of and how it will look from an aesthetic point of view. A meeting took place arranged between the Head of Estates, members of the architect team running the project and 23 StARs. During the meeting a variety of things were discussed ranging from; colour schemes, room layouts/designs and lighting options.

Walking Tour of Campus (StARs)

In response to the University conducting a tour of the St Johns University campus centred on the lecture and seminar room facilities with members of staff, it was agreed that the same tour would be conducted with members of the StARs system. The tour was run by the Director of Estates and Facilities and also the Head of Estates. The StARs in general were very impressed by the layout and look of the new rooms located on the ground floor of the Edward Elgar and hoped to see many of the current rooms on campus themed in a similar way.

Student Led Teaching Awards

The Student Led Teaching Award nominations went live last week with a very low key launch as the minute we are currently putting the majority of our work into encouraging students to run in the Students Union Elections. There will be a much bigger push for these Awards in March with the eventual deadline being Friday 1st May.

The awards available are as follows;

* Outstanding University teacher
* Outstanding academic tutor
* Outstanding member of support staff
* Outstanding module
* Outstanding innovative teaching methods or practice