

## **Student Access to Services - Staff Awareness Survey – December/January 2004/5**

*“I feel the SAS Programme has been a very worthwhile initiative and has achieved a lot in a short space of time. My perception is that the consciousness of all staff of student access to services issues has been raised.” (quote from a respondent)*

Many thanks to all who took part in the SAS online staff survey. Here are some of the key points from the responses:

- 55% of respondents said SAS had made a difference to their work; 45% said it hadn't.
- Web pages (improved/great/better/easier to use), working with other departments and Plain English were the top changes
- Greater student focus is a benefit of SAS (and something we need to keep working at):
  - “Continue to remind us all that to students we are one organisation and need one 'face'”
  - “a greater emphasis on the student as user of services and user with a choice of universities”
- There are training needs, some related to the SAS quality expectations.
- Communication about and marketing of services for students is an area where SAS can work with staff.

If you want to read more, please go to the next page. This document will be on the SAS section of my.Caledonian very soon.

### **What next?**

- Carry on working with services and promoting SAS principles and approach
- Look at training needs and ways to meet them where this can be done centrally
- Keep working on clear and timely communication
- Another survey around June

## **Student Access to Services (SAS) - Staff Survey (SAS/SG/26)**

**Purpose:** to find out about the impact of SAS on staff in Learning Services and the Finance Office

We ran the survey online between 17 December 2004 and 10 January 2005 using SurveyMonkey software.

### **Who replied?**

39 staff completed all or part of the survey. This is around 14% of staff in Learning Services and the Finance Office. It is a fairly low response rate but enough to be meaningful. Here is the breakdown by area. The Finance Office response is particularly high in relation to work with SAS; Learner Support's response is low by comparison. This may affect impact figures.

- Academic Registry - 4
- Finance Office - 8
- General Academic and Professional Studies - 3
- Learning Resources - 8
- Learner Support – 14
- Other - OCL – 1; Principal's Group -1

### **What they said**

#### **Has SAS made a difference to your work?**

Yes – 21 (55%)

No – 17 (45%)

1 person skipped the question

#### **Changes to people's work**

Only staff who said SAS had made a difference to work were asked the next three questions

#### **1) How much has SAS affected your work?**

13 of the 21 who said SAS had affected their work commented further. 7 said it had affected their work 'somewhat' and 6 'quite a lot'. No-one said SAS had affected their work very little or considerably.

#### **2) List up to three aspects of your work which have changed**

12 respondents gave 29 answers. The three main areas were:

- Web pages (8) - improved/great/better/easier to use
- Working with other departments (5)
- Plain English (5)

This comment sums up the themes: “improved web site both in terms of organisation, Plain English and arrangements for allocating responsibility and keeping the pages up to date”

Other aspects were:

- Student focus (2)
- Easier to find information/easier to show students at Induction where to look
- Appointment making facility at the base
- Timeline driven
- More work
- Development of service
- Cut across own development [not clear whether this was positive or negative]

### **3) Eight respondents provided further information on how things had changed including:**

#### **Student focus/service improvement**

- Very useful focus for purposeful consideration of how to improve access to services. In the past often felt University should address this issue, but it was difficult to know how to progress some issues.
- a greater emphasis on the student as user of services and user with a choice of universities - meet their legitimate needs, and reap the benefit: fail to meet them , and lose them and all the people whom they have told GCU is sub-standard
- It is has been really helpful to have the SAS team to take a lead on projects. This has meant it has been easier to allocate time to feed into a project that it would have been to find time to do alone. It has also been helpful to have worked as part of a team with people outside my department. The plain English training has also been really useful.

#### **Web/information/communication**

- I would say that the improvement in layout of web pages has made it much better for us to show students how to use the pages and services. Particular praise should go to Jane Ross and her team for organizing groups to talk to, speaking to us all, following up on points raised. Without this 2 way communication across all areas, and the effort they put into creating the new services, it may not have been so successful.
- Clearer language appearing on websites and in documents already and this trend is gathering momentum. Let's hope for an end to management-speak and waffle!

#### **And a resource issue**

- An increased need to up date and develop web site information-specialist person needed to maintain this service.

#### **Possibilities...**

We asked all respondents three other questions

##### **1) What could SAS do for your area of work?**

20 responses from 10 people including:

- **Student focus**

Continue to remind us all that to students we are one organisation and need one 'face' ; pre-formed user groups; tap into our bank of user evaluations

- **Communication/marketing:**

highlight events being run by our service; page for services offered to students; help us to maintain a high profile for our service; expose students to the services we provide in a number of different ways, supplementing what we already provide; developing information kiosks at [incomplete reply]; keep communicating [presumably about SAS rather than with students]

- **Training issues**

help with training in customer care principles; help with training on adjustments to facilities, services, information formats, to help students with disabilities or whose first language is not English; assistance with developing appropriate feedback from customers [these are all SAS quality expectations]

- **Other**

longer and closer look at process review; continue making improvements along the same lines; Learning Centre; a staff access to university services page

- **More critical of the SAS approach/lack of involvement?**

seek advice from us; act on feedback from the areas concerned; invite us to inform the strategy

## 2) **How could your area contribute to achieving the SAS aims**

22 responses from 10 people including

- **Service generally**

monitoring service provision; feedback evaluations; reflective practice; continue working with the SAS team; multiple methods of payment; piloting ideas

- **Strategy**

informing strategy (2); to think of the whole area of student services rather than specifically library based ideas; input into discussions on dealing sensitively with students; articulating student needs into discussion on provision shape and extent

- **Technology**

an even better student record system; make better use of C & IT; improved library systems

- **Web/information related**

we can improve our subject web pages ; ensure our info is up to date - both in terms of written publications and web services; follow SAS guidelines for web pages and documents; contribute to any more themed pages

Comments like “keep up our involvement with SAS. I think we have already improved our web pages and induction skills as a result” and “take every opportunity to publicise SAS type developments” were particularly encouraging.

**3) Anything else?** 4 respondents added some final comments

It has been difficult to respond to some of the demands made by the sas project. Requests from the sas project have usually been last minute ,requiring an immediate response .The sas project has not considered the fact that staff are already busy doing their job and do not always have time or resources to match requirements

The project has made a big difference - well done. (x2)

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