

## Students and CETL

A key role of Birmingham City University's Faculty of Health is to prepare students for their roles in a workplace where they will be required to work flexibly, efficiently and effectively. This newsletter focuses on some of the cultural changes and initiatives which have been developed through student engagement with the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). In some cases this has provided students with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning experience.

CETL aims to engage all of the people and organisations that are its partners in new, deeper and more meaningful ways. It is working with service users, carers, academic and health and social care staff and students to improve the educational experience for all.

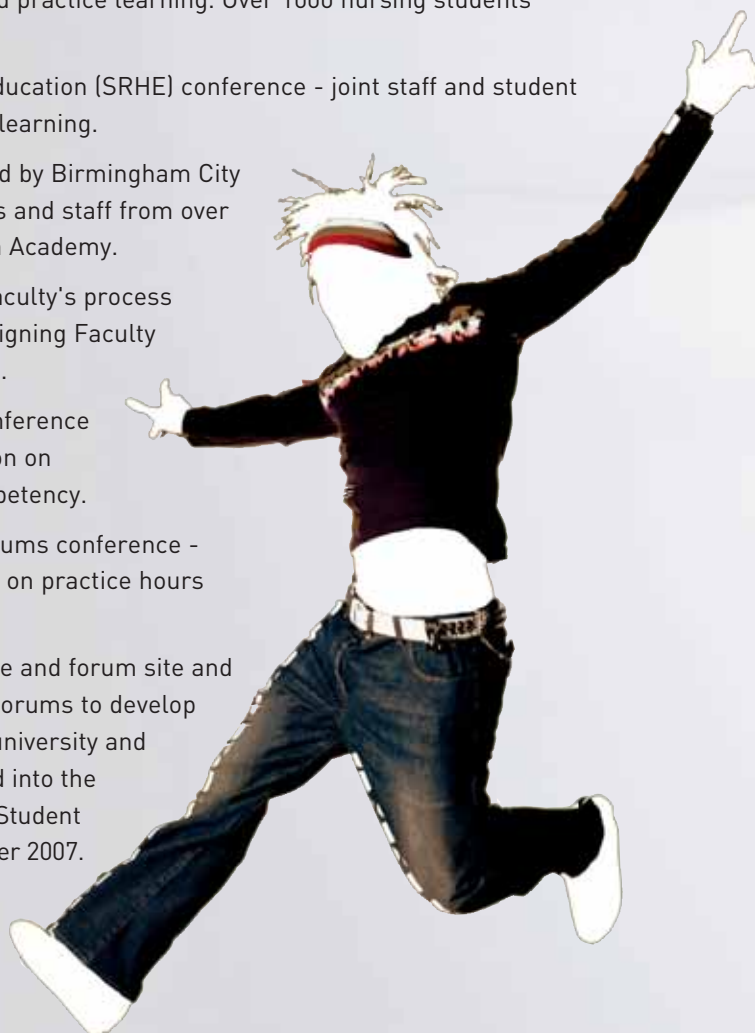
This newsletter offers an insight into the way students have helped shape the CETL journey and hints at their future involvement.

**Rebecca Freeman, CETL student appointment, Students' Union**



## Snapshot of CETL student activities

- April 2005** President and Representation Co-ordinator of the Students' Union assigned as full members of the CETL Steering and Implementation Groups.
- November 2005** Series of consultation groups focusing on the student experience feed into the Major Review of Health Care in 2006.
- Summer 2006** Competitions to encourage students to write critiques of learning tools.
- Internally** - Student placement toolkit developed for students going out on placement for the first time, students asked to provide 500 word critique of toolkit and entered into a prize draw.
- Externally** - Students submit a critique of an e-learning tool for competition run by Collaborative e-learning Symposium and win a place at the annual conference in June.
- September 2006** Students act as part of selection process for 2006/07 Learning and Teaching Task group, feedback incorporated and used to advise those selected.
- October 2006** Students and staff from Birmingham City University attended leading to joint publications and presentations.
- October 2006** Joint Birmingham City University, Huddersfield and Sheffield Universities project on Learning in Practice held at Buxton. Students and staff from Birmingham City University attend, leading to publication and presentations.
- October - December 2006** NMC pilot project on simulation and practice learning. Over 1000 nursing students participate.
- December 2006** Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) conference - joint staff and student presentation on inter-professional learning.
- February 2007** CETL Student Network event hosted by Birmingham City University and attended by students and staff from over 30 CETLs and the Higher Education Academy.
- April 2007** Students as key members of the Faculty's process re-design project looking at re-designing Faculty processes based on lean principles.
- May 2007** International Council of Nurses conference - joint staff and student presentation on practice hours and relation to competency.
- July 2007** RCN Education Joint Education Forums conference - joint staff and student presentation on practice hours and relation to competency.
- Summer 2007** Trial of 'Moodle' electronic resource and forum site and introduction of termly student rep forums to develop support for student reps whilst at university and on placement. This project will feed into the re-development of the University's Student Representation system for September 2007.



## Simulation and Practice Learning Project

Between September and December 2006 Birmingham City University piloted a Simulation and Practice Learning Project, one of 13 national pilot sites, on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). During the project period over 1000 pre-registration students (from all four branches of nursing) engaged in simulation activities exploring whether students can develop key clinical skills through simulation as they occur in practice.

Students involved in the initiative had up to one day per week out of their placement in which to engage in simulation activities. All activities took place in the new simulation and skills centre in Seacole Building, Edgbaston Campus. Significant CETL funding has supported the new skills centre in moving forward with replicating multi-functional primary and secondary care environments. These flexible and multi-purpose learning spaces enable students to practice and develop health care skills in a safe and supportive, replicated workplace environment.

The NMC initiative involved partnership with 11 major service providers. The outstanding contributions from students and staff created a culture conducive to learning, with on-going feedback informing the programme and enhancing the experience. The very positive findings were reported to the NMC in January 2007.

*"As a third year nursing student being involved in the ward simulation experience, I was initially apprehensive. However, after taking part, I felt it had so much potential, so I decided to become more involved in the project. I feel that simulation is a fantastic concept that brings together existing nursing skills with new ones in a safe learning environment. The potential to recreate real complex incident scenarios makes the simulation environment invaluable. I feel that a simulated nursing environment gives people the opportunity to go over skills which they may not have visited for some time, in a safe controlled environment, and without fear of intimidation or 'getting it wrong'. I have often heard stories of students who have made it to the end of year three, and even qualified staff nurses, who have completed nurse training without practising certain skills which they fear they are poor at doing. With simulation, these weaknesses can be identified, and skills enhanced. Therefore, I have no doubt that this virtual environment will have the capacity to generate highly skilled, confident staff nurses in all areas, which, in the current climate of few jobs, will make Birmingham City University students stand tall among the rest."*

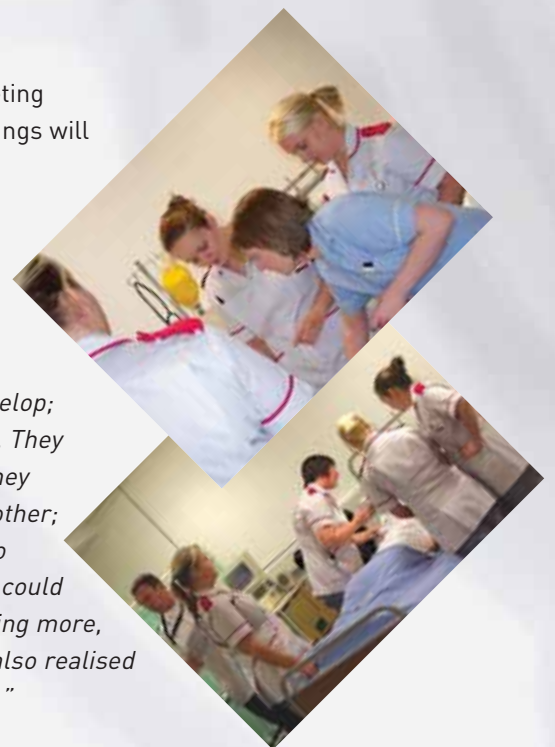
**Alwyn Scott, BSc (Hons) Nursing**

The NMC collated all pilot site findings and reported at an NMC council meeting in June 2007. An additional Faculty newsletter summarising the project findings will be circulated in spring 2008. For the future, the project clearly recognises the far reaching impact that simulation has had upon the student learning experience. Not only has the simulation environment altered the dynamics of learning and teaching within these courses, but it has also altered the students and staff perceptions of the University as a learning environment. As one member of staff stated:

*"For me, I watched a nervous bunch of apprehensive students grow and develop; the difference in them in just two exposures to simulation was breathtaking. They started to talk about team work, delegation and putting into practice what they had learnt. They asked very pertinent questions, the group supported each other; no one laughed at what may seem silly, all were eager for the answer and to share their own personal experience of practice. They wanted to learn, they could see the relevance of what they were learning, they were enthused and wanting more, they were constructive in their criticism of each other and supported. They also realised that the people teaching them could not only talk the talk but walk the walk."*

**Carol Doyle, Head of Department, Practice Learning**

If you would like to know more about the initiative please contact [gerri.nevin@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:gerri.nevin@bcu.ac.uk).



## SRHE Conference

In October 2006, a group of student volunteers, academic and support staff met to discuss the Inter-professional Learning (IPL) Programme in the Faculty of Health and to develop this into a paper for the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) conference.

The Faculty's IPL Programme aims to ensure that students from different professions are able to work together within a health and social care setting, to ensure the best possible standards of care for service users. The group began by considering the challenges generated by learning about inter-professional working on campus and in the workplace and identified some of the costs and benefits of IPL to different stakeholder groups. It then worked these views into a role play to illustrate the complexity of balancing these expectations in the development of an IPL programme. It was this role play that was presented to the conference, which was followed by a discussion. The group now intends to write a paper about IPL and the experiences of being a small inter-professional learning group.

*"Attending the conference allowed me to broaden my horizons and the planning helped me to see the different points of view that exist in a health care setting, I felt like my suggestions and opinions actually mattered."*

**Angela Akobi-Ebhote, BSc (Hons) Nursing**

The group felt that the most interesting aspect of the exercise was not so much what they gained from the presentation, but what they gained individually, and as a group, from the learning process involved in working together to prepare for, and present at, a conference.

*"The experience provided an excellent opportunity to find out about the student experience outside the normal box and to see current research from their (the students) point of view."*

**Julie Nettleton, Director of Curriculum Change, Faculty of Health**

## Learning in Practice - Partnership project with Universities of Huddersfield and Sheffield

This tri-university project focused on the practice learning experience of nursing students. There has been much anecdotal evidence of students not being fully employed whilst in practice, and stories are told of the means by which students and practice staff aim to fill the unallocated slots of their 2,300 hours.

The UK Council of Deans and Heads of Schools has repeatedly asked for a review of the 2,300 hour interpretation, pointing out that Allied Health Professionals need many fewer hours in practice, despite having the same level of patient care responsibility on registration.

These shared concerns resulted in the three universities working together and taking a group of students away for two days to: determine their views on this subject; and see if they had any comparable experiences. It will not surprise you to know that the students immediately identified with the cases put forward by students from other universities. Some of the stories and quotes were very enlightening and will be employed later on as this exciting group continues to work together. Plans include a desire to publish articles on the subject in the nursing press and the group has recently been invited to present its findings at the International Council of Nurses conference in Japan.



# The CETL Student Network Launch Event, Birmingham City University, 12 February 2007

The CETL Student Network was officially launched on 12 February 2007 at Birmingham City University. The Student Network is an informal community of students involved in activity across all 74 CETLs. The group is supported by a committee of student's working with CETLs from around the UK and the Representation Co-ordinator at Birmingham City University.

**The Network's aims are to:**

- Promote student participation and involvement
- Build CETL communities
- Raise the profile of each individual CETL

**There is a huge range of ways in which students are involved with CETLs around the country, depending on the focus, ethos and flavour of each individual CETL. These include:**

- Involvement of the student body in exchanges, trips and visits, individually or in learning sets
- Paid employment, sabbaticals or internships, placements, secondments and student ambassadors for students whose CETLs fund this
- Student involvement in the design and use of CETL learning spaces, publicity and materials development
- Groups of students engaging more fully with their learning as a result of CETL enhancement activities
- Studentships in which students undertake scholarly activity in relation to the aims of CETL
- Student involvement with the evaluation of CETL activity

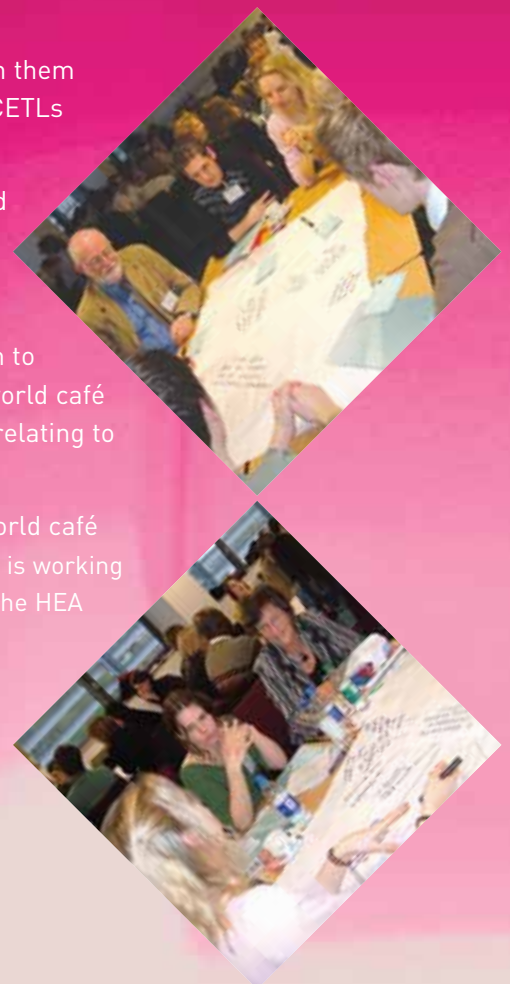
We invited each student to bring a key member of staff from their CETL with them to the launch event. 70 student and staff representatives from 30 different CETLs and the HEA attended the event.

The Dean of Faculty welcomed the attendees to the event. This was followed by a presentation from Brenda Smith, Associate Director at the Higher Education Academy (HEA), which focused on the HEA's goals for student engagement. Each CETL was asked to bring a poster outlining student participation to share with others. These were displayed during a long lunch to enable attendees to network and share ideas. The afternoon focused on a world café activity to encourage attendees to work together to consider key questions relating to student participation in learning and teaching.

Following a number of requests for the student participation posters and world café date to be collated into a publication to be sent to each CETL, the committee is working with the HEA to make this available. Results from the event were presented at the HEA CETL conference in March and the HEA annual conference in July 2007.

*"I think it exciting that this network has had such an auspicious start and I look forward to it doing great things."*

*Bob Hunter, Project Co-ordinator, Higher Education Academy*



## New alliances - University of Pittsburgh

In May 2005 a team led by Stuart Brand, witnessed a presentation at the International Council of Nurses Conference from the School of Nursing at the University of Pittsburgh (PITT). This innovative presentation on the use of simulation in learning struck a chord with the team at the conference and led to much discussion about how such an innovation could impact at Birmingham City University.

In March 2006 a team from Birmingham City University went to Pittsburgh to gain further information on the PITT simulation model and to share ideas. This visit was reciprocated in March 2007 when Dr Helen Burns and Dr Rose Hoffman from PITT visited the University and witnessed the progress made.

The approach to simulation adopted by Birmingham City University, including the use of the Virtual Case Creator and supporting clinical skills sessions, impressed our visitors, as did a variety of other innovations developed by the Faculty. We are pleased to announce that this has resulted in a formal partnership agreement between the Faculty and the School of Nursing at PITT.

**We anticipate that the partnership will result in:**

- Student and staff exchanges
- Joint research and evaluation projects
- Joint publications and presentations
- Greater and regular sharing of innovations and ideas

We will keep you informed of further developments as this partnership flourishes.



## New alliances - University of Hull and Virtual Linac

CETL has provided the funding to enable the Faculty to become a consortium partner with the Department of Computer Science at the University of Hull, which is developing a simulated radiotherapy (RT) training system using a virtual linear accelerator (linac). This simulation system takes a hybrid approach using an actual linac handset (hardware) in combination with a virtual environment (software) to visualise the movement of the equipment as controlled by the handset.

The virtual linac will provide students with the opportunity to practice their psychomotor skills in a 'safe environment'. They can then enter the clinical environment with a basic understanding of treatment techniques and the confidence to move the equipment. This will allow them to concentrate on the acquisition of more advanced technical skills and the development of holistic approach towards patients when in the clinical environment. Staff also anticipate that the virtual linac will transform some of the current modules by allowing a visual approach to many academic modules that are currently taught in a largely theoretical way. This would allow immediate structured links to be made between theory and practice, rather than depending upon students to apply theory at a later date, whilst on clinical placement.

The course team will also use the linac to explain more complicated treatment techniques as there is not always the time to do this in the clinical environment and it can be disconcerting for the patient if lengthy explanations are carried out in their presence. Hull has already developed an application for the virtual linac so that students can practice electron skin apposition techniques. This is a demanding technique that often causes students to become anxious when practicing on real patients, as they are touching the patient with a large piece of equipment that requires very precise manipulation. When this application was evaluated 93% of students perceived an improvement in their understanding of this treatment (Phillips et al 2005).

**For more information on the project contact [julie.hall@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:julie.hall@bcu.ac.uk).**

## Future CETL work with students

CETL is now beginning a consultation process with students. We want to begin to evaluate how involved students feel they are with CETL and wider Faculty activities, and to find out how, and in what ways, students would like to be involved. One of CETL's goals is to demonstrate to students that the Faculty intends to go beyond consultation and make the pioneering shift in the institutional learning culture that will underpin the process of making effective educational judgements. We hope that this exercise will take us a step closer to that goal and will inform our work in the future.

For further information contact [rebecca.freeman@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.freeman@bcu.ac.uk)

## CETL Evaluation Network led by Birmingham City University

The CETL Evaluation Network is a national, peer supported and self sustained network that held its lively first meeting in February 2007 at Birmingham City University. This popular event attracted 75 members from 48 UK (including Northern Ireland) CETLs. The majority of members were in research roles and were engaged with internal CETL evaluation activity. The network actively seeks to promote innovative and creative approaches to CETL evaluation.

*"It was good to share experiences and begin to form some sort of community of practice"*

**Kim Whittlestone, LIVE, Royal Veterinary College**

*"The most valuable thing about the event was realising the commonalities between all CETLs in relation to evaluation from approaches to common foci to anxieties"*

**Yvonne Wollny, CETL for Mental Health and Social Work, Middlesex University**

The first national meeting included guest speakers: Glynis Cousin, Senior Advisor from the Higher Education Academy who led the discussion on CETL Self Evaluation; Alan Palmer, HEFCE Policy Officer for Learning and Teaching; and Professor Peter Knight Director, Institute of Educational Technology at The Open University.

Peter led the discussion on CETL mid-term evaluation and the challenges faced by CETL programme evaluators.

Workshop sessions included Approaches to Evaluation and Dissemination, The Power of the Visual in Evaluation and Appreciative Inquiry and Organisational Change. After the

overwhelming success of the first event at Birmingham City University a following session 'Evaluating for Change' was held at the CETL Annual Network Event at Warwick University and led by Johannah Latchem, Research Assistant from the Centre for Stakeholder Learning Partnerships at Birmingham City University and Co-ordinator of the Network. This session addressed emergent themes from the first meeting; How do we evaluate mobile devices, situated learning, podcasting?; and How can we involve students in the evaluation process? The network and the committee meet quarterly and look forward to welcoming more members.

For further information please contact [johannah.latchem@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:johannah.latchem@bcu.ac.uk)



## Other events

### Learning and Teaching Conference - 29 June 2007

The Faculty held its third learning and teaching conference on 29 June at the Edgbaston Campus. The focus of the day was learning from ourselves. There is a great deal of excellent practice that goes on across the Faculty that is not shared with potentially interested colleagues across the Faculty. We wanted to bring this innovation to the surface and encourage staff to produce posters celebrating their work and innovations.

In addition, attendees were able to choose two from seven parallel 45 minute interactive sessions running in the morning. This was followed by the opportunity to engage with colleagues from other professions. Heads of Division and their staff ran a 'market stall' during the afternoon session to show the excellent practice that takes place in their divisions.

We are acutely aware that staff most value the interaction with staff from other divisions and professions and this conference provided the opportunity for staff to access information that they find most useful.

Please contact [rachel.moule@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.moule@bcu.ac.uk) for further information.

### The First Annual Birmingham City University Health Care Awards - 13 July 2007

The first Faculty of Health Alumni event provided an opportunity to celebrate and recognise achievement within the Faculty over the past academic year. Recognition of achievement was in two distinct areas: Student awards (final year students from each professional discipline who qualified in 2007) and Practice awards.

The event took place on 13 July 2007 at the Botanical Gardens, Edgbaston. Award winners and staff from the University and Practice were invited to attend this excellent event celebrating the achievements of our students and practice partners.

Staff were invited to nominate students and practice areas for the awards.

For further information on the event and the winners, please contact [karen.parkes@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:karen.parkes@bcu.ac.uk).

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