UCL

Transforming our Professional Services: Fortnightly Leadership Briefing

What are we trying to achieve?

UCL's commitment to academic excellence means that our professional services - whether in departments, institutes, faculties or central services - must be empowered to support and enable excellence. The TOPS programme aims to improve professional services and deliver: more effective services and a more satisfied UCL community; more fulfilling careers for staff and; enabling greater investment in UCL's academic mission by improving value for money and efficiency in UCL's professional services. TOPS is a two year programme to kick start the delivery of our stated aims.

Priority updates

We're making great progress with setting up the Communities of Practice pilot areas

- Communities of Practice will encourage greater collaboration across professional services, bringing together colleagues who work in similar practice areas to: share and learn good practice; improve existing processes; develop new ways of doing things and expand opportunities for career development.
- The Student Recruitment community of practice has been making brilliant progress over the past few months. Leaders have been appointed and are creating an ambitious agenda for their community.
- If you would like to become a member of the Student Recruitment community you can register here.
- For the Internal Communications, Digital and Events Management communities the pilot steering groups have been set-up and initial workshops are being organised.
- Ideas for new pilot areas are regularly emerging and Alice Chilver (Head of Communities of Practice) is exploring these. If you have any suggestions, please let Alice know.

Please share your thoughts on the wave 2 service design workstreams

- We would welcome any early thoughts and suggestions on the wave 2 service design areas:
  - Information and Technology services
  - Library services
  - Planning, Policy and MI services
  - Legal services
  - Culture services
  - Communications and Marketing services.
- Planning for the wave 2 service design workstreams is still underway and we will provide an update once more information is available.

We'll shortly be hosting our fourth Lunch & Learn session

- Our next Lunch & Learn session will be on 23rd May, 12 – 1pm in Anatomy G29 J Z Young Lecture Theatre.
- For this session, we will be welcoming Marc Gray to talk to us about Imperial College's Operational Excellence programme and what this is achieving in terms of professional services transformation.
- The session is open to all UCL colleagues. If you would like to attend please register here.

Key messages

In previous editions of the Fortnightly Leadership Briefing we have outlined what TOPS *isn't about* in an attempt to help explain what TOPS *is about.* We believe it is important to reinforce this message to help provide clarity on the aims of the TOPS programme.

What TOPS is about…	What TOPS isn't about…
Efficiency - improving our processes and systems so we can deliver our services in different, simpler and more efficient ways	Crude cost cutting
Being clear when and why things need to be done differently and consistently	Uniformity or one size fits all - everything being the same
Process simplification, improvement and clearer accountability	Centralising or decentralising everything
Greater collaboration across colleagues working in similar professional services areas	Encouraging duplication of effort
Recognising, celebrating and replicating where things are done really well	Stating that everything is broken and needs improving
Developing a vision and plan for the future, followed by a phased implementation of changes	Tipping everything upside down and changing everything at once

We are continuing our engagement with each of the staff unions. Going forward, we plan to meet monthly with each of the staff unions.

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Fortnightly progress

In the past fortnight we have…	In the next fortnight we plan to…

Design phase
 • Hosted a People services drop-in session for academics, researchers and teaching fellows on the 8th May. Thank you to all who attended.
 • Held further service design workshops for the first wave of workstreams including:
     o Estates services (10/05)
     o People services workshops (02/05, 03/05, 04/05 and 05/05)
 • As part of the Teaching, Student Experience and Education Administration workstream we have set-up a number of student engagement events over the next few weeks. We know it is a busy time of year, so we're offering Amazon vouchers or pizza to students who attend to thank them for their time. We'd appreciate it if you could encourage your students to get involved. Details are available here.
 	
 Finance – process improvement
 • Many thanks to those who completed the Finance – improving and simplifying project survey.
 • The process that received the most votes, and will now go through the rapid improvement process review, was iExpenses for Students and Externals.
	Design phase
	 • Hold a Research Support services world café engagement event on 24th May for our academic colleagues. Further details and registration can be found here.
	 • Host a Communications and Marketing world café engagement event, open to all UCL colleagues, on 23rd May. Further details and registration can be found here.
	 • Hold service design workshops including:
	     o UCL Culture services (16/05)
	     o Finance services (17/05)
	     o Planning, Data and MI services (18/05)
	
	 Communities of practice
	 • The student recruitment community launch plan will be finalised.
	 • For the internal communications and digital communities, the focus and vision workshops will take place with the core members.
	 • Workshop preparation will continue for the events management community.

Engagement

There is a new section on the website highlighting 'What's new on the web this week?' If you would like us to come talk to you or your team about the TOPS programme please contact us at tops@ucl.ac.uk.

Upcoming engagement events
- We will be holding our third Engagement Group on Monday 22nd May.
- In the next fortnight we are scheduled to attend: Faculty Managers monthly meeting (17/05), Chemical Engineering team meeting (17/05), Departmental Administrators Forum (17/05), Professional Services Leadership Team and Faculty Managers meeting (23/05), UCL Culture team meeting (23/05) and Social & Historical Sciences Heads of Department meeting (24/05).

Recent engagement events
- In the past fortnight, we have attended; Extended Senior Management Team (03/05), Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy professional services all staff briefing (03/05), Mechanical Engineering academic research group (03/05), Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering academic group (03/05), Biochemical Engineering professional services meeting (04/05), HR meeting (04/05), Political Science professional services meeting (05/05), SSEES management committee (09/05), HR Forum (09/05), Unite meeting (10/05), SSEES all staff meeting (10/05), Departmental teaching committee (11/05), Engineering Science faculty forum (12/05) and Institute of Child Health meeting (15/05).
- For further detail on the meetings we have attended please see our engagement calendar on our website.

Feel free to email any suggestions, comments or questions regarding the Fortnightly Leadership Briefings to
tops@ucl.ac.uk