Leadership Foundation for Higher Education - AMOSSHE

Leadership and Management Development Programme Project

THEMES FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) is funding a scoping exercise to determine the leadership and management development needs within the Student Services professional network and to make recommendations on how these might be supported in terms of learning and training opportunities. The initial target audience for such a development programme is currently envisaged as the Institutional Representative Members of AMOSSHE, ie Heads of Service, with later expansion to other groups of staff if appropriate.

The consultant undertaking the exercise for the LFHE is Susan Chadwick, who has experience in developing the leadership programme for UCISA and SCONUL (Information systems and Library HE professional networks) and works a great deal in the HE sector as a development professional.

Susan’s research will involve focus group discussions, to take place at three regional network meetings, and four telephone interviews with AMOSSHE colleagues from varied types of institution. As input to her work, she will be using a list of leadership development topics produced at a workshop run by the LFHE for AMOSSHE on 18th January this year (see pages 2 and 3).

Focus group themes

The focus groups at the regional network meetings will be structured round the following themes to enable Susan to explore further both the range of needs and the particular interests of Student Services professionals.

1. **What are the key issues/ challenges facing Student Services functions in Higher Education at the moment and in the foreseeable future?** Which of these issues are shared with other functions and which are unique or critical to Student Services?

2. **Given the issues you have identified, would you make any adjustments to the 18th January list of topics?** Which of the topics would need a bespoke development solution, rather than a generic solution? Which topics would you prioritise?

3. **What kind of development programme designed for Heads of Service would work well?** Consider structure (eg modular, pathways), delivery (eg formal courses, virtual via intranet, projects, action learning groups etc), length (elapsed time, number of days).

Susan will facilitate the discussions, which, depending on the numbers of people present, may involve working in small sub-groups as well as some plenary discussion. The length of the focus group will depend on what is convenient for you as participants, but will be no longer than two hours and quite possibly shorter.

Preparation

It would help your focus group to maximise time on the day if you could think about the above themes in advance and familiarise yourself with the list of topics on the next two pages of this document.

With thanks for taking part in this research.
Summary of suggestions for ‘Leadership Development’ topics

Produced by the AMOSSHE/ LFHE workshop of 18th January, 2008 (c.50 participants)

The category headings were not produced by the workshop, but subsequently by Susan Chadwick and others. They are in no priority order.

1 New management roles/ becoming a manager
   - events for recently appointed managers
   - communications skills

2 Self-leadership
   - understanding of personal impact
   - developing an inner frame of reference to help ensure healthy practice
   - use of emotional intelligence

3 Leading others, power and influence
   - relationships with power
   - leadership by Head of Service and formalising the value of them as researches
   - developing and interacting around the services and the role of Heads of Service in this
   - learning the skills necessary to be effective leaders – having the opportunity to go into each attribute in more detail
   - Leadership – what is it? How do we do it?
   - making the most of networks and informal influence
   - influencing others
   - how to develop leaderships skills in others
   - how do you put issues on the agenda / trigger them?

4 Leadership/ management distinctions
   - balancing leadership and management roles
   - focus on management functions and key skills required to succeed in HE would be welcome (incl. new concepts and emerging ways of working etc.)

5 Team leadership
   - leading successful and happy teams
   - developing skills on your team, especially people who are entrenched or are people who have been promoted because they are good practitioners, but not necessarily good managers
   - how to handle difficult ‘resistant’ team members / colleagues / line managers
   - successful leading and motivating your teams (esp. in times of change)
   - dealing with difficult colleagues / managers

6 Managing multiple diverse teams
   - multiple site / multiple discipline management
   - managing multiple teams with a semi focus
   - leading multidisciplinary teams

7 Middle management - managing up and down
   - how to manage your manager and those above you
   - successfully managing your manager
   - leading / stimulating organisation-wide change from middle-management position
   - more on ‘leading our own management’

8 Change/ crisis/ pace
   - dealing with difficult and obstructive staff
   - handling situations when your plans are sabotaged
   - affecting change / influence with large organisations
   - leading in a crisis situation / preparing for crisis
9 Managing in our specific context
- more tailored towards student services
- managing in a professionalising industry, i.e. universities
- strategic development/role(s) of student services in HE
- establish an HE module management / student services module
- externality and HE leadership – articulating external drivers and culture changes
- action learning role with colleagues in SSS?
- dealing with ‘other professionals’ - counsellors, disability officers and etc. – understanding their point of view and etc.
- negotiating with service management
- leading areas with unrelated needs / in less secure positions than each other
- managing with soft and hard skills within student services
- put into practice through case examples
- more varied, interactive approaches, perhaps including simulations and/or case studies from the sector

10 Strategic leadership and planning
- how to think strategically? How to manage strategically?
- managing strategically / managing complexity
- managing and planning with students as ‘partners’ – the pros and cons
- succession planning within student services
- strategic leadership and planning
- how to manage students’ / others’ expectations of the services offered

11 Financial and resource management
- managing resources: translating strategy into budget bids
- understanding financial management
- income generation for student services
- budgeting / business cases

12 Project management
- project management
- appropriate project management skills and models for S. Service managers

13 Sundry
- career management in student services
- how to build on the thinking and processes we have been involved with today in a university culture where ideas can be rushed through too quickly and without thought
- any courses on leadership and management skills
- structuring staff development: fitness for purpose
- ways of managing the demands upon our time
- sharing good practice networks through skills development
- I think it’s important to reflect the hard / soft skills balance
- consider using a ‘change academy’ model