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SLA newsletter

June 2014

Issue 8



Welcome

...to the 8th issue of the Student Learning Assistant Newsletter.

We have come to the end of yet another academic year, and we are now ready to relish in the sunshine as summer begins.

This issue's topics cover several events and projects that the amazing SLAs have been involved in, success stories of SLAs and last but not least, the SLA Awards Ceremony.

A great "thank you" for all the feedback we have received so far!

If you have further comments on our work and the SLA Newsletter, please email s.ajayi@mdx.ac.uk.

Question of the month What colour is the SLA T-shirt?

The story of the SLA T-shirt is one of the funniest topics to cover in this issue. The SLAs have been wearing these for the last couple of months. When asked what colour it actually is, there are so many versions of green and blue that come to mind: jade/turquoise/light green/teal/petrol/duck green light blue/ sea green...



Nastasia's choice is #JADE...

Which one would you opt for?
Tweet @SLAMDX

Student Learning Assistants ...

are Middlesex students who have been identified by their academic tutors as being highly motivated and capable individuals.

work collaboratively with academics in lectures, labs, seminars, workshops and small group sessions to support other students in their learning.

To find out more about SLAs, visit: <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/ldu/index.aspx>

Contributors:

Anne-Marie Legg
Charles Nwabueze
Faith Warner
Kristina Karadzhova
Nastasia Chirbea
Prashant Sharma

Events SLAs have been involved in...

BITE THE BALLOT...



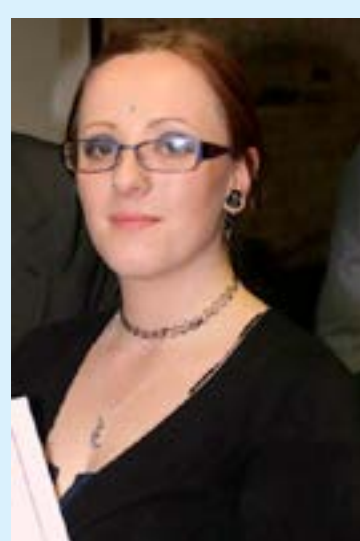
Over the last two years, Media and Society students have been working with external not-for-profit organisations campaigning for social change. This year, students campaigned for Bite the Ballot and Intern Aware.

“Bite the ballot” is an organisation which encourages young people to vote and have a say in politics. Secondly, Intern Aware is an organisation that raises awareness for interns and campaigns to end unfair, unpaid internships. It is a great way of getting students to understand how a campaign is run, which is vital for them to succeed in their future careers and also shows how a group of students are able to get the government to listen.

In my role as an SLA I worked with students on the Intern Aware campaign, which involved encouraging Middlesex University students to sign a letter and then later going to other universities in London to encourage students to sign up to the fair pay charter, a charter encouraging fair pay for all interns. I worked in seminars discussing with students what about best methods to attract students to the stall, dispelling their fears about approaching people and giving them advice on what was possible and what was not. Overall, the campaign was successful as they gathered many signatures, and delivered them to Vince Cable, using it as a photo opportunity for Intern Aware.

Anne Marie Legg (SLA for Media Discourses)

JISC DIGITAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE



Faith Warner at the SLA Awards Ceremony

Six of the Middlesex University's SLA team attended the JISC digital student experience event, hoping to give their two cents on student digital needs.

Being a keen bunch, the team from Middlesex had much to say on all areas of the digital experience including user friendly interface of univer-

sity software, accessibility to all devices and campuses, course specific software and social media, with many staff from other colleges and universities hanging on our every word. Much of what is offered to us is not offered to other students. With ease of access to a consistent blackboard platform across all modules, extensive computer facilities in a library that is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week, laptop hire, subscription to course specific programs such as SPSS, access to a variety of hardware from cameras and CPR mannequins to sewing machines and the three of the best words in the English language for any student - FREE COLOUR PRINTING - we could simply not knock our digital experience.

Furthermore, despite our odd issue, when you put us in a room with delegates from other institutions they look to us for inspiration toward a brighter digital future. That just got to make you proud.

Faith Warner (SLA for Ayurvedic Medicine)



As an SLA, you help fellow students get the best experience from university. Still, we cannot stop and wonder, “how does the SLA scheme actually help the SLAs?” We have managed to gather some feedback from some of you and the very interesting views from Kristina Karadzova and Charles Nwabueze

FROM SLA TO WALT DISNEY



I spent two years as an SLA and I could describe this period of time as the most rewarding experience at university. My role as an SLA helped me add an invaluable experience to my CV and boost my employability skills.

After my second year at university I decided to take on a placement year and I became an IT intern at The Walt Disney Company. My experience as an SLA helped me to cope with the interview process and made me stand out from the crowd. My interviewees were impressed with the wide range of skills, which I developed as an SLA.

The SLA scheme is a fantastic opportunity for students who want to develop new skills and help other students to succeed in their studies. The SLA team gave me a lot of helpful advice and guidance on how to succeed in my role. Being an SLA enabled me to learn how to present in front of large groups and solve a variety of problems. The interaction with the students helped me to improve my communication skills and become more confident.

Wherever my career takes me, I believe that the skills, which I developed as an SLA, would be valued in any organisation.

Kristina Karadzova (SLA for Business)

FEEDBACK FROM SLAs - What I gained from being an SLA

“I got a strong sense of accomplishment when I was able to help other students feel more confident in their work. Also, being able to have a job that I thoroughly enjoy and that works within my own hours of study has been perfect.”

“Seeing my peers at work and being able to provide critical feedback on a regular basis has enabled me to become more motivated and critical, in my own portfolio development.”

“The challenge of addressing the variety of learning styles present among the individuals forming the group and learning to value diversity and inclusivity as things which actually aid good pedagogic practice.”



“Through the SLA role, I have been able to gain a considerable degree of understated skills in the professional field. These include coaching, facilitating, effective communication and interpersonal skills. These have been

immense as they increase my employability value and most importantly they are life skills. However, what has stood out for me was the honour of being able to mould future legal academics and lawyers of the world (the younger law students). I have enjoyed being in the academic lives of the law students and the Middlesex students as an extension. And as such, seeing the invested time and efforts of the SLA Scheme being acknowledged by both students and fellow work colleagues have been immensely satisfying.”

Charles Obinna Nwabueze (SLA for Law)



Student Learning Assistant Awards Ceremony

At the end of the academic year, the hard work of Student Learning Assistants was rewarded!

On a rainy Tuesday afternoon, the SLAs made the sun shine in their elegant clothes; everyone was ready to celebrate what an excellent year it has been.



A beautiful event, with many awards given. All of the SLAs received acknowledgements for their hard work.



Nick Bevan (Pro Vice Chancellor and Director of Library and Student Support) handing in an award



Nadia Ipqal is the proud winner of the iPad competition!

“Proud to be an SLA” smile

To our audience, we would just like to remind what the SLA scheme means...

- SLAs facilitate and do not teach

- SLAs are not counsellors- when in doubt, refer to Academics, PAL Manager, or the counselling service on <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/counselling/index.aspx>

- SLAs are students and should keep on top of own workload

- SLAs work collaboratively with Academics

- SLAs are the best.

Let this reflect in all aspects of our education.



The SLA Awards ceremony planning Committee pose with Nick Bevan and Simbo Ajayi.

The year 2014 was one with many accomplishments. The SLA team gives a big “Thank you” to all that have been involved in the many activities we have undertaken and is proud of you all!