

## **Chaplaincy 2015-16 Annual Review Report Feedback**

### **Response to recommendations in previous year's report:**

- The Chaplaincy has made strong progress in the areas designated as priorities, including: successful use of the new rooms at King's Buildings; diverse work in the area of Religious Literacy in Higher Education; support for Widening Participation; and development of the 'What's the University For?' initiative; appointment of a full-time administrator; new workshop for Equality and Diversity training.
- Responding to the challenge of the university's geographically dispersed nature, the Chaplaincy has advised on new prayer and reflective spaces.
- The Chaplaincy has undertaken creative and successful work in order to understand perceptions of the Chaplaincy and then to think how better to communicate its nature, within the 'Creative Brief' initiative. It will be good to hear more on how this develops in next year's report.
- Responding in a wide-ranging manner to the last QA recommendations, the Chaplaincy has, among other actions, initiated work with student support officers to promote use of the Chaplaincy Centre's space and services.

### **Major achievements/commendations:**

- This compelling report demonstrates the impressive and diverse ways in which the Chaplaincy enhances the quality of the student experience at Edinburgh. It is not always easy to measure the impact of its work in a quantitative manner, but the report thoughtfully uses a range of feedback indicators in order to discuss the work of the Chaplaincy.
- 98% satisfaction in the International Student Barometer, placing the Chaplaincy at number 1 in Scotland for Faith Provision.
- The Chaplaincy delivers its service with a core team of 3.65 staff, a staff:user ratio of 1:1000 per week.
- Average service users of the Chaplaincy Centre remain at around 3,000, although this does not include numbers of individuals involved in other Chaplaincy delivered services outside the Chaplaincy Centre, of which there are many more.
- The Chaplaincy website had 39,276 unique visitors for 2015-16.
- Chaplaincy's Facebook page has 712 followers, significantly higher than other University Chaplaincy's Facebook pages (e.g. Southampton – 220; Glasgow – 154)
- Launch of a YouTube channel in 2014-15.
- Through its internal and external partnerships the Chaplaincy fosters community within the University and community engagement beyond it.
- Service usage figures and feedback data continue to show that the Chaplaincy provides a very important and much-appreciated resource within the University. Despite this, there appears no complacency, with key initiatives already being developed to enhance further its usage and impact (e.g. 'What's the University for?' and 'Creative Brief').
- The Chaplaincy supports the student experience with regard to learning and teaching in ways that are creative and innovative. Notably, the Chaplaincy

established an Edinburgh Award in Mindfulness (successfully completed by 25 students, who have become Mindfulness Ambassadors in 2016-17), contributes compassion teaching for the Medical School, participated in the editing of the Tools of the Trade poetry book that each graduating medical student in Scotland receives (through the involvement of Associate Chaplain Alison Newell), has enhanced the availability of services and support to online students, and has provided a multi-faith panel for teaching of undergraduates at New College.

- The Chaplaincy participated in Project Elpis, taking an interfaith group to the Greek refugee camps in Athens and Lesbos.
- Ongoing involvement in the Soweto Melodic Voices Project has encompassed outreach to local schools.
- The Chaplaincy is undertaking ongoing work to develop the Compassion Initiative, in coordination with the Global Health Academy, the Royal College of Surgeons, and Stanford University.
- The Chaplaincy has been supporting work on equality and diversity via the establishment and hosting of the Religion and Belief Advisory Group.
- The Chaplaincy is responsive to trends in demand, notably a growing interest in well-being societies and in events to promote mental and spiritual well-being. There are particularly extensive new initiatives in the area of mindfulness, while other provision includes Spiritual Conversations on Living and Dying Well and Dreamwhispering. Research on the impact of Chaplaincy Mindfulness courses is strongly suggestive of their success and promise.
- The Chaplaincy's Honorary Team has expanded to include a Pagan Belief Contact.
- New initiatives to bring UG, PG students and staff together including "The Compassionate University" conversations, and a U.lab hub for those wishing to develop peer-coaching, following MIT's Theory U leadership MOOC.
- 100% rate of completion of Annual Review.
- Decision to move to a full-time administrator (from two part-time posts) is contributing to efficiencies and improved communication.

**Esteem indicators:**

- Associate Chaplain Geoffrey Baines received accreditation as a Human Capacity Mentor.
- Associate Chaplain Alison Newell has international recognition for retreat leadership.
- The Chaplaincy was invited to contribute to an International Higher Education Interfaith Leadership Forum, at Georgetown University, including a visit to the White House.
- The Chaplain plays an important role in religion-related matters; as convener of the Scottish Episcopal Church's doctrine committee, she has made representation to the Scottish Parliament on assisted suicide, and has produced a substantial paper on same sex marriage for the General Synod.
- Chaplain nominated for EUSA Teaching Awards for the past three years.
- Chaplain's significant contribution to research through publications, grant income and invitations to talk.

**Promising practice commended for wider dissemination:**

- As the Chaplaincy indicates in the current report, the piloted E&D training, with the Vet School, shows great promise for wider dissemination across the University by tailoring to the specific needs of other areas.
- In place of staff lunches and coffee mornings, the Chaplaincy has developed more activities that are attended by both staff and students. The provision of more staff and student combined events across the University would contribute to greater community building.
- Exploring the potential for efficiency gains in pooling resources across a wider group for the handling of certain administrative tasks (e.g. Finance and HR).

**Areas for the Service to consider:**

- Whilst the Distance Education Initiative (DEI) is mentioned in the report (p.4), the Chaplaincy should be mindful of the increasing numbers of online distance learning (ODL) students matriculated at UoE. Moreover, of the current perception, amongst some ODL students, that the Student Support Services are designed or meant to serve only on-campus students.

**Areas for other parts of the University to consider:**

- In learning of the experience of many students, Chaplaincy members have developed an awareness of problems encountered by Jewish and Muslim students, 'some of whom feel inhibited to display aspects of their faith within the University'. Clearly, the Religion and Belief Advisory Group is undertaking important work, and similarly important is the support provided by Chaplains to student societies and groups on concerns over Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, but are there opportunities for further work across the university community, in order to promote more successfully an inclusive and tolerant environment?