

# EVENTOS

XI Jornadas CRAI

2013



Northumbria University: case study



crue

Universidades  
Españolas

Red de Bibliotecas  
REBIUN



## Northumbria University: case study

Professor Jane Core  
Director of Academic Services



# Background to Northumbria University and Academic Services



- Northumbria began in the 1880s as an innovator in technical education provision in the city and became
- a Polytechnic in 1969 with 12,000 students
- a University in 1992
- By 2005 Northumbria was the voted 'Best New University' in The Times 'Good University Guide' for three consecutive years.
- Northumbria still puts an outstanding student experience and research informed academic programmes at the heart of it's mission



- We develop our support to put students at the heart of our services as a 'customer' or partner in learning

# Facts and Figures 2012/13



## Numbers

33,032 Students

25,319 Full-time

7,713 Part-time

## Nationality

77.4% UK

2.4% EU and Isles

20.2% international

(of which) 12.7% East Asia

## Age Groups

49.5% Ages 18-20

23.4% Ages 21-25

9.5% Ages 26-30

17.6% Ages 30+



## Study Level

28,413 Undergraduate

4,052 Postgraduate Taught

567 Postgraduate Research

## Delivery

25,293 At Northumbria

1,721 Distance Learning

5,783 Franchised/Validated



# Introduction

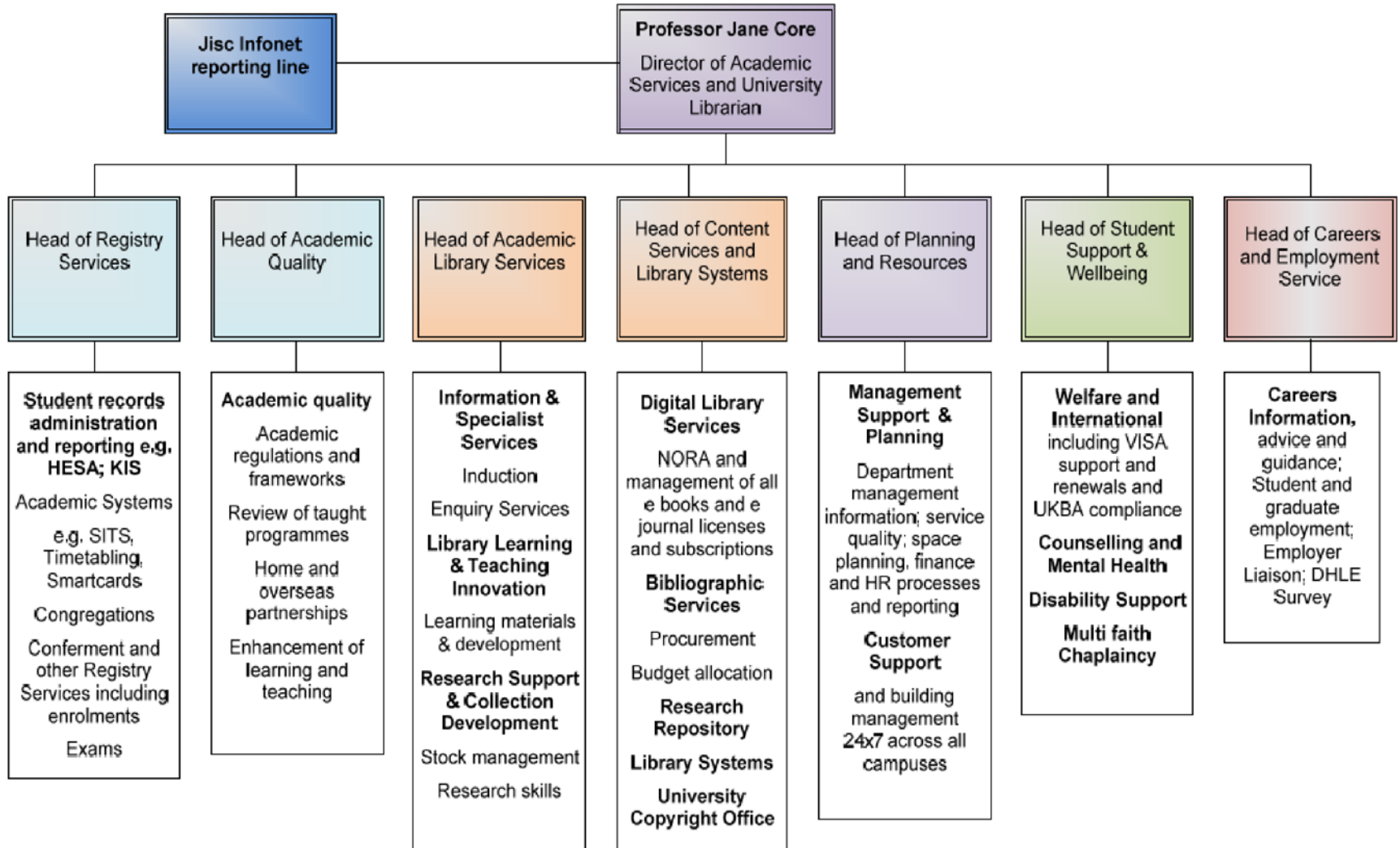


- Student Support and Wellbeing Services operate across 2 campus sites
- Careers and Employment Services operate across 2 campus sites
- Recognised by MATRIX accreditation for excellence in advice and guidance and winner of national awards
- The University Library operates 24x7 across 3 campus sites
- Recognised for innovation and student satisfaction e.g. Third equal in the UK in the Times Higher Education Satisfaction Survey for the last 3 years; Internal student satisfaction of over 90% for the last 5 years; Customer Service Excellence Accreditation for 3 years
- In 2010 with planning for new funding models in mind the University undertook strategic reviews – including a fundamental review of portfolio - and of costs
- This resulted in a review of professional support services and changes to structures to align services more closely to the ‘student journey’
- ‘Academic Services’ was a new partnership of very different services
- The operating models were different but had excellence to share

# Academic Services December 2011



Student journey from entry to programme support, graduation and employment





# Student Access to Services Project

# Services in 2011

## Separate operations; hours; services and locations



- University Library in 3 locations across 3 campuses
- City Campus Library 24x7 all teaching weeks and weekends
- Coach Lane Library - midnight opening all teaching weeks and weekends
- Law Practice Library (City Campus East) – 9pm evenings and weekends
- Careers & Employment Service in 2 locations across 2 campuses
- City Campus Careers Centre office hours – no evenings or weekends
- City Campus Wellbeing Centre part time – no evenings or weekends
- Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) in 2 locations across 2 campuses
- City Campus SSW Centre office hours – no evenings or weekends
- Coach Lane Campus SSW Centre part time – no evenings or weekends
- Academic Registry and Academic Quality are office based in other locations at City Campus and link operationally to academic administration in the 4 Faculties – only accessible from the faculty offices during office hours

# Project objectives and activities



- To place students at the heart of the service and improve access; availability and visibility of a growing range of student facing services
  - To deliver a seamless join-up of enquiry services between the University Library; Student Support and Wellbeing and Careers and Employment
  - To develop a single support model and provide a ‘gateway’ into the whole range of specialist / professional services available
  - To reduce ‘bounce’ for students moving between services
  - To enable students to ‘touch’ the service from a single point
  - To use our smaller campus at Coach Lane; and the opportunity of the refurbished University Library there as a pilot for the new service model
  - To evaluate Coach Lane experience to inform adoption for all service centres
- Activities included: steering group and working groups on service models/ triage; referral and recording enquiries; staff development and training
- Emphasis on involving staff and students was crucial
- Our Student Union team were very important to us throughout

# Planning the transition



- World café sessions; project newsletters and visits to other universities were used
- The project had a sponsor from Academic Services Leadership Team
- Further leadership by the Director gave strategic oversight and links to the University Executive and wider corporate objectives
- Service managers from all service areas led different work strands; they had to trust in each other; all services were then represented in each group
- To support the work of the Steering group, the following subgroups with staff from across Academic Services (Substrands) were formed:
  1. Support Works Development (call centre and enquiry handling software)
  2. Triage and Service Models (when and how to refer)
  3. Staff Development/Training (build staff confidence, shared knowledge)
- Aug 2012, to support Phase 2 of the project 3 more subgroups were formed:
  1. Coach Lane Evaluation (Task and Finish Group)

2. Roving Service (City Campus Library – to implement a single point of service and place staff through the 9 floor building – roaming advice)
3. Branding (ask4help had to be the single neutral first line service)

## Services in 2011 .....

### Separate operations; various hours and service



- University Library in 3 locations across 3 campuses
- City Campus Library **24x7 all teaching weeks and weekends**
- Coach Lane Library - **midnight opening all teaching weeks and weekends**
- Law Practice Library (City Campus East) – **9pm evenings and weekends**
- Careers & Employment Service in 2 locations across 2 campuses
- City Campus Careers Centre office hours – ~~no evenings or weekends~~
- City Campus Wellbeing Centre part time – ~~no evenings or weekends~~
- Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) in 2 locations across 2 campuses
- City Campus SSW Centre office hours – ~~no evenings or weekends~~
- Coach Lane Campus SSW Centre part time – ~~no evenings or weekends~~

- Academic Registry and Academic Quality are office based in other locations at City Campus and link operationally to academic administration in the 4 Faculties
  - only accessible from the faculty offices during office hours – self service academic portal being developed

## Services in 2013 connected but physically dispersed, extended access



- University Library in three locations across three campuses
- City Campus Library 24x7
- Coach Lane Library = single service to midnight x 7 days
- Law Practice Library (City Campus East) 9pm evenings and weekends
- Careers & Employment Service
- City Campus Careers Centre + single service at Coach Lane Library
- Student Support & Wellbeing
- City Campus Wellbeing Centre + single service at Coach Lane Library
- Academic Registry and Academic Quality are office based in other locations at City Campus – operational links to academic administration in the faculties

- a number of transactions including standard letters and FAQs are self service (online) and could be built into ask4help services in future
- Our staff are working to common purpose and shared service.. Ask4help
- Joining all services virtually/ online makes branding; staff training; shared knowledge and a common referral system crucial to the multi site model

## Services in 2013

### A single contact point online and phone



- **ASK4HELP** is the single service gateway joining up all points in the student journey through Academic Service
- Referrals to specialist groups from first contacts
- Making use of social media and online services wherever possible



**Ask4Help - information and advice  
24/7 on or off campus.  
E-mail, telephone or visit an  
Ask4Help point.**

ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk  
0191 227 4125  
[www.northumbria.ac.uk/ask4help](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/ask4help)



**northumbria**  
UNIVERSITY  
Academic Services

There are no metrics or benchmarks available and so we will be building those as we build service models – so far we know that:

- At our pilot site (Coach Lane) we have a fully converged service model with a single front line – in a single building offering...
- Improved visibility for SSW/ Careers
- 20% increase in dyslexia tutorials

# Evaluating the new services



- Increased take up 'drop in' sessions for Welfare and International
- Examples of 'joined up' support working e.g. library fines problem was linked easily to a referral for financial support and guidance
- At City Campus where services are still operating over 4 sites it is more difficult but ask4help is the single service link
- A verbal survey showed that 89% of students recognised the Ask4Help logo and 75% understood the scope of the service

## Staff issues and concerns..

- Getting buy in from such a large staff group - over 200 – is challenging
- People think change means something does not work
- We used world cafes; visits to other universities; strategic presentations; staff ideas
- We used the feedback constructively
- We issued newsletters regularly
- We published FAQs regularly
- We linked the plans clearly to future expectations and strategy – VISION 2025
- We used the sub strand leaders as a coalition of champions for moving forward

- Concerns about having the right skills or being able to learn them
- Worries about the new service causing job losses/ staff reductions
- Concerns about the loss of identity; visibility; expertise
- Concern that we were losing enquiries and delivering a poor service
- Our subgroups tried to look for evidence to set against this

*"Our information resources are much more accessible...in terms of where they are sited and the hours they are accessible"*  
(Careers adviser)

*"The relocation to a more centralised location, in the library, is very beneficial to students with regard accessing the services we offer"*  
(Welfare and International Support Team)

*"Has brought teams together"*  
(Staff member, City Campus)

*"Ask4Help identity and publicity works well as students feel they can come to us for help on any issue they have"*  
(Staff member, City Campus)

*"This has been a very positive move as students know they can access services from a central point rather than having to search out different points around the Campus"*  
(Coach Lane lecturer)

*"[It has] renewed the relationship between former learner support and customer support"*  
(Staff member, City Campus)



## Coach Lane Pilot Site feedback

# Virtual branding...facebook, twitter etc...



This screenshot shows the Facebook profile for the Northumbria University Library. The cover photo features a group of students and staff members gathered around a table, with the text 'UNIVERSITY LIBRARY' and the website 'www.northumbria.ac.uk/library'. The page includes an 'Admin Panel' at the top, a 'New' section on the right, and a 'Status' section at the bottom with a post about a silent study space in Zones Learning 26.3 at City Campus Library until May 22nd.

This screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Northumbria University Student Support & Wellbeing. The cover photo is a night view of the university's archway. The page features a 'New' section on the right, a 'Community' section with a post about helping students get the most from their higher education experience, and a 'Sponsored' section with various advertisements like 'New with Wellpage Fair' and 'The Money Advice Service'.

This screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Northumbria University Careers & Employment. The cover photo depicts a busy careers fair with students and staff. The page includes a 'New' section on the right, a 'Community' section with a post about 'Year Career in Our 360', and a 'Sponsored' section with advertisements for 'New with Wellpage Fair' and 'The Money Advice Service'. The page also features a 'Like' button and a 'Message' button.

# Physical branding...



University Library



Student Support and Wellbeing

# Physical branding...



## Careers and Employment Centre



University Library

# Timescales were ambitious..



- Phase 1: [Coach Lane Pilot Site](#) February – April 2012
  - pilot the new support model at Coach Lane Library (the smaller campus)
  - Careers and Employment activities relocate to Coach Lane Library following refurbishment and adjustments to service model
  - work with service staff involved to ensure effective training and development
  - work with staff, students and faculty at the pilot campus to evaluate the pilot and make recommendations for development of the model at City Campus
- Phase 2: [Coach Lane Pilot Site](#) Summer 2012
  - co-locate remaining Student Support and Wellbeing services into Coach Lane Library; aligning with ongoing building refurbishment project and the identification of new ways of working within new space
  - Initiate training for staff at City Campus in the agreed processes for reception/welcome; triage and referral
- We had to revise these timescales again.. But we did keep moving

# ....timescales continued



- Phase 3: [City Campus over 3 locations](#) From September 2012
  - roll out the new support model at [City Campus Library](#) to include a single point of access for University Library (i.e. Academic Library Services; Customer Support and Welcome Services)
  - streamline triage processes within [Student Support and Wellbeing and Careers at City Campus](#) to deliver a system of cross-referrals using ‘best practice’ defined through Support Works (helpdesk call system)
  - work with staff, students and academic colleagues to evaluate the new service making recommendations for future developments
  - consider academic administration and transactions of Academic Registry (student record) which might be enhanced through a one stop shop model
- **Phase 4: 2018?? – sector leadership and innovation...**
  - Wider benefits from the colocation of University Library/ Careers/ Student Support and Wellbeing Services within a newly refurbished/expanded building
  - Realise customer service excellence across ALL Academic Services
  - Embed self service transactions wherever possible
  - Build knowledge base to support self service

# Issues from the case studies



- Leadership: must be visible and coalitions are important
- The Student Union is particularly important as a partner
- Leadership: is shared at every level - to reach a large team (s)
- Staff: roles will change; it is important to ensure that we are open and honest with staff about this
- Staff training is essential but we must be realistic about how expertise is shared – not everyone needs to know everything and staff are very concerned if this is the expectation
- Service quality: different services have different benchmarks and some have none at all – we will have to develop intelligent indicators of quality from new datasets
- Culture: it was important to recognise the fact that everyone was expected to make a cultural shift; and that was part of a university shift: VISION 2025
- Visibility: We need to avoid competing branding of the various services within the single point model – a single new brand is best
- Where there is no single physical space this is a real challenge as services may revert to promoting their own area over the larger service ambition – this territorial approach is natural and requires sustained advocacy
- [Timescales always slip.....](#)

Professor Jane Core

# Thank you – questions and discussion..



Director of Academic Services  
Northumbria University  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST  
[jane.core@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jane.core@northumbria.ac.uk)

## References

Core, J and Hordon, K (2010) Supporting learning beyond the classroom: developing the Northumbria Learner Support Model. *Emerge*, 2, pp. 24 - 31.

Available from: <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/arpdf/1329815/emergecore2>

Core J and Young D (2011) Access to services for students Cilip Update December 2011 pp37-39

Bulpitt, Graham ed. (2012) Leading the student experience; superconvergence of organisation, structure and business processes. Leadership Foundation Leadership foundation for Higher Education London (case study D Student Access to Services)

Available from: <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/research-resources/publications/index.cfm/S3%20-%2005>

