

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our Region Newsletter which we hope will give you a brief overview of current activities of NWUA.

Higher Level Skills Partnership

The HLSP has provided funding for 60 projects to date and has developed more than 63 demand led courses in partnership with employers. There are 11 Higher Education Institutions and more than 13 Further Education Colleges involved in the region and over 380 employers have been involved in course development. Employer in-kind contributions of over £850,000 and over 30,000 hours have been utilised.

HLSP has been noted as a case study of good practice in two separate BIS publications, namely the Low Carbon Skills Consultation and Postgraduate Review. An Impact Study for the HLSP is also being undertaken by the KSA Partnership which includes 10 in depth studies of HLSP development projects. The 10 projects include one from each sector, one from the redundancy response fund and two additional projects to ensure full coverage of institutional type, geographical spread, employer size and course level.

NWUA have been undertaking improvements on the *Discover HE* database over the last 3-4 months. This has improved the search ability of the database and the presentation of search data. The upgrades now allow NWUA to monitor more closely the usage of Discover HE, and allow all providers to add, edit and delete their own provision information. The new version of Discover HE™ was launched in February and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Enhancing Higher Level Sport Volunteering and Coaching Skills

HEFCE have agreed to extend Phase 1 of the project until 30th September 2010. The extension means that the remaining funding from Phase 1 can be used to develop a HE sport volunteering and coaching database. NWUA, in partnership with institutional and BUCS colleagues, are in the process of developing a specification for the database and are currently in consultation with software developers.

NWUA is exploring opportunities to access support from the Sport England Active Universities funding round. There is the potential to undertake activity relating to disability and sport in higher education.

House of Commons Reception

NWUA hosted a successful reception at the House of Commons on 23rd March to celebrate the organisation's ten year anniversary. The event was attended by North West MPs, members of the House of Lords, NW stakeholders and member institutions and was an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the individual and collective contribution that NW HEIs make to the region. The reception marked the launch of the *Working Together – Building on Ten Years of Success in the North West Universities* publication. To view the report in full click [here](#) or alternatively contact Sandra Atkinson (satkinson@nwua.ac.uk) to request a hard copy

HEFCE Response to the Economic Downturn

The Higher Education Sector in the North West – Fighting Recession and Supporting Recovery report was also launched at the House of Commons reception. The report details

the strength of the HE sector in the region and its value to the regional economy. It describes the way in which the region's HEIs have collectively provided a comprehensive support network for graduates, businesses and those made redundant during the economic downturn and underscores the way in which the sector can support economic recovery. To view the report in full click [here](#) or alternatively contact Sandra Atkinson (satkinson@nwua.ac.uk) to request a hard copy

NWUA also presented at a Jobcentre Plus (JCP) EURES event and training day for local JCP managers in February to outline the way in which the HE sector can provide support to individuals affected by redundancy.

HEFCE officially announced its Graduate Internship Scheme on the 11th Feb (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2010/interns.htm>). NWUA has worked with HEFCE, the federation of Small Business (FSB), and Business Link North West (BLNW) to ensure that the scheme is properly promoted to businesses in the region.

Digital Pathways Event

NWUA in partnership with the national and regional hub of the Digital Communications KTN held a showcasing event entitled 'Digital Pathways' on 1st February 2010 at the Lowry. The event aimed to connect digital communication businesses to NW HEIs and enable businesses to learn about funding opportunities for collaborative R&D. The event consisted of funder presentations and a chance for attendees to network either side of these presentations. The event was very well attended with over 100 digital communications companies (including large companies and SMEs) represented.

New Industry, New Jobs

NWUA made a presentation to the NW Science Council in April on the priority areas that NWUA members have track record, and with potential for future development within three themes of; Sustainable Energy (including Nuclear), Creative Media and Health (and Industrial Opportunities in an Ageing Society). This will feed into the process of updating of the NW Science Strategy.

Regional Skills Strategy

The development of the Regional Skills Strategy led by NWDA is underway. NWUA have been in discussion with NWDA colleagues on the evidence base to support the development of the strategy. NWUA have collated a number of research reports to enable NWDA to enhance the Higher Education aspects of the evidence base, which will be a key component of the Regional Skills Strategy.

We hope the information in this first issue of our Regional Newsletter is of interest. We will be sending regular newsletters to our regional partners. You are welcome to forward this bulletin to anyone you feel would be interested in it.

Please contact us if you would like any further information about the projects mentioned above. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, please email us and we will remove your name from the address list.

Kind regards,

NWUA secretariat