

Welcome

Welcome to the ninth PASS Newsletter. Please send contributions or comments for future issues to: d.m.andrews@qmul.ac.uk. The next newsletter will be in the new academic year. Back copies can be found on the PASS webpage: www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/schools/educationliaison/wp/pass

Don't forget, all contributors receive a PASS mug



PASS First Year Experience Summit

PASS mentors came together on 9 February at an event to share their own experiences and those of their mentees. The conference format gave students not yet familiar with the genre a chance to experience a mini-version. Active in the planning stages were PASS student organisers Henrik Mathiesen (History) and Nanna Botwe (Computer Science), choosing key areas affecting first-year students across the disciplines. Further mentors then took up the challenge of preparing short presentations to set the mentor-delegates thinking before splitting into discussion groups and reporting back their findings in a plenary session. The event was opened with an uplifting keynote address by former PASS mentors and organisers Samia Faruq and Nuzhah Gooda Sahib.

The summit's conclusions will be taken forward to make a resource for use in PASS sessions in the future but these are a few highlights:

1) *How to fit it all in (getting to grips with time management for work, revision and the rest of life)* Presenter: Brett Osler, Computer Science

Bright idea: being organised is the key to success but you also need to learn that priorities are not the same as preferences.

2) *Across ponds – issues for international first-years* Presenters: Thiaga Edirisinghe (SEMS) and Henrik Mathiesen (History)

Bright idea: by using their imaginations, home mentors can be really helpful with the special problems of international mentees.

3) *The jump to university work – what are the main hurdles?* Presenters: Serap Gonen (SBCS) and Shrenik Parekh (SEF)

Bright idea: structuring essays and learning how to take effective notes in lectures are big hurdles PASS mentors can help students get over by discussing a range of strategies that have worked for them.

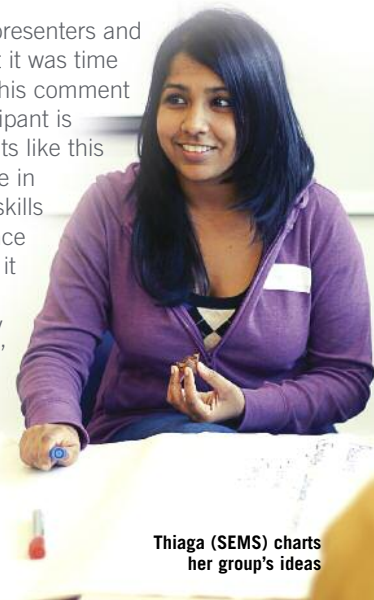
4) *Why PASS is good for you – getting mentees into sessions* Presenters: Nanna Botwe (Computer Science) and Margaret Dinh (Dentistry)

Bright idea: Why not have first-year PASS torch-bearers or champions to spread the word among their immediate peers?

Organisers, presenters and delegates felt it was time well spent. This comment from a participant is typical, 'Events like this are invaluable in building my skills and confidence ... I think it went really well.'



Serap (SBCS) and Shrenik (SEF) at the lectern



Thiaga (SEMS) charts her group's ideas

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- Conference news
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- Saying goodbye and PASS It On
- Finding out more – contacts for all school/departmental PASS schemes

Saying goodbye and PASS It On

New mentors will as usual be trained in September and it is hoped that that current mentors going into their final year will continue mentoring and give the new ones the benefit of their experience. If you are graduating and would like to keep in touch via this newsletter, please let us know. You may also be willing to be part of PASS It On. This is where former mentors offer to give occasional email advice in response to queries from current mentors in their subject, particularly about their own experiences in applying for jobs or further study. This kind of advice is very reassuring, especially for people who already believe in the power of the peer.



Conference news

A cross-disciplinary team of PASS mentors have had a proposal accepted to give a workshop, arising out of the First Year Experience Summit (see above), at the Third National Transition Conference at UCL on 17 June. The workshop is entitled: *Is the Queen Mary First Year Experience the Same as Yours?* There will be a report on this in the next newsletter.

Delegates at the PASS National Centre Meeting at the University of Manchester in February were brought up to date with recent developments in our schemes in a presentation, *PASS at Queen Mary: Strength in Diversity*. Thanks to our colleagues at Manchester for their friendly welcome and stimulating ideas.



Computer Science mentors



Celebratory cake for Physics and History mentors



PASS Mentoring Certificate Event

Congratulations, certificates, cake and chat (in that order) made up this well-attended annual event, held this year in the Arts Lecture Theatre on 30 March. Anne Setright, head of Outreach and Widening Participation, whose pleasure it was to make the presentations, said she was particularly pleased that PASS mentor certificates now include mention of the Queen Mary Graduate Attributes. It was very good to see so many mentors and also some of the very busy academic coordinators who came to applaud their mentor teams.

Gratitude was extended to all mentors and student organisers but PASS mentor of the year awards (chosen within the mentors' own schools or departments) went this year

to Amundeeep Jandu (SBCS); Brett Osler (Computer Science); Afiqah Aziz and Ashwinni Selvarajan (Dentistry); Lan Nguyen (SEF); Priyank Krishnani (Electronic Engineering); Saqib Jivani and Vishal Rana (SEMS); Tatyana Zhukova (History); Luke Armstrong and Richard Smith (Maths) and Sam Gardiner and George Wells (Physics). Tributes to these mentors included, *all-round helpful person; reliable and enthusiastic; brilliant with the first-years; done a huge amount to help our PASS*

scheme this year; always helpful and supportive to mentees; thoroughly prepared AND fantastic.

Of the 'retiring' student organisers this year, Serap Gonen (SBCS) has been student organiser for two years and Mel Gabriel (SEMS) has held her post for three, a record equalled only by Jason Lizarraga, former student organiser for Electronic Engineering and occasional contributor to the Alumni News section of this newsletter!

Dental mentors in line for their certificates



Finding out more

Anyone reading this newsletter is likely already to be involved in PASS at Queen Mary. However, if there is anything about which you would like to know more (or if you would like to contribute to the next edition of this newsletter), please contact:

Dr Debbie Andrews, Peer-mentoring Coordinator (Widening Participation Team, Corporate Affairs):
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Below is a list of the key PASS people in schools and departments. These are the academic coordinators and the undergraduate student organisers, each of whom is a PASS mentor leading a team of mentors.

Biological and Chemical Sciences

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Serap Gonen
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Computer Science

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Dentistry

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Economics and Finance (pilot)

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Languages, Linguistics and Film

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Physics (pilot)

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Academic coordinator
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SEF PASS Mentor of the Year, Lan Nguyen