

Welcome to this first newsletter about the Learning Gateway - the College's new and innovative learning space being built on the Carlisle campus - due for occupation in January 2006. The aim of this newsletter is to introduce the Learning Gateway and keep you up to date with developments. Also, we are keen to obtain your ideas and obtain your views on the services that will be provided.

The Learning Gateway is a building unlike any other. Along with the Change Academy Project, it will enable the College to achieve its aspirations for Flexible and Distributed Learning as outlined in the Corporate Plan. This is a most exciting time for the College; the Gateway promises to be a focal point . . . and with your help an asset that will attract learners from across the regions.

Margaret Weaver,
Head of Library Services
Email: m.weaver@ucsm.ac.uk
Tel: 01524 384238

Pedagogical Principles -

to produce **SMART** learners

SMART LEARNERS:

- See** the possibilities
- Make** informed choices
- Are** active learners
- Ready** to learn
- Take** control of their own learning environment.

The Learning Gateway will:

- Assist students to actively construct new knowledge as they interact with their environment.
- Create a culture of collaboration by reaching out to potential learners and partners.
- Support a diversity of learning styles and empower learners to make informed choices about their learning situations.
- Support staff to introduce FDL approaches into their teaching and learning activities.

St Martin's College . . . at the leading edge of collaborative lifelong learning in Cumbria



Artist's Impression of the new Learning Gateway on the Carlisle Campus

THE VISION for the Learning Gateway is:

. . . to benefit students through efficient, effective and economic learning which will provide them with both the content appropriate to their chosen programmes and with the confidence, motivation, capabilities and learning skills which will support them as lifelong learners in any context. Through digital learning technology embedded in a flexible, designed learning space, students - remote or on campus - will be able to access and create high quality learning resources, engage in discussions, receive feedback and support from peers and tutors, submit assignments and have control over their own learning environment.

This vision is founded in a belief that a step change in thinking about the shaping of place and space for learning can bring enormous benefits to learners and the learning process in Carlisle and Cumbria.

The concept is that the Learning Gateway will be a totally new way to engage students and staff in the learning process, providing a flexible and informal learning space. The facilities within the Learning Gateway are founded on a set of broad pedagogical principles - and unlike any existing teaching space - will give academic staff more freedom over their learning and teaching in the support of Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL).



The Learning Gateway will:

- seek to emphasise the excitement of learning and in so doing will increase both aspiration to learn and achievement for all users.
- be based on an active approach to learning emphasising acquisition of the skills and capabilities which can be tested against a variety of contexts - on campus, in the workplace and virtually.
- enable students to support themselves and their learning in a resource rich environment.
- provide the IT infrastructure to underpin e-learning, online communication, and support.
- provide the means to join up the various stakeholders and affect knowledge transfer.
- create an environment which is welcoming, user friendly, attractive and efficient.
- a building which is a prominent and engaging beacon and a focal point for the community signalling the SMC presence and commitment to the region.
- open zones which can be re-configured for changed use and diverse learning activities
- generous provision of meeting rooms and group study rooms.
- maximum flexibility in layout, design and lighting to allow for inevitable reorganisation and expansion.
- boutique/shop front which invites users to come in.
- One-stop shop service desk for all activities.

Facilities:

- wireless space for laptop connectivity and to allow IT use anywhere.
- social learning space - informal furniture, sofas, places to relax and meet.
- innovative learning pods - modular furnishing system.

- Refreshments and bar seating.
- Portable IT - laptop loan.
- Seminar rooms; teaching rooms equipped with state of the art projection equipment, smartboards, web cams.
- Learning facilitators - staff to enable e-learning and student support.
- Ability to link to partners in remote locations using digital link-ups and audio in real time.
- Advice point.

Design for Learning:

State of the art lecture theatre equipped with audio and video conferencing, digital communication features such as polling. and play and control current media - such as audio CD, VHS, DVD as well as computer displays and programmes.

... we want to host a wide range of learning events in the Learning Gateway.

Please contact:

Shirley Green
at Carlisle Library with
your ideas.

t: ext. 6219
e: SAGreen@ucsm.ac.uk

Learning scenarios

- John arrives at the Learning Gateway. He's some tutorials with students out on placement. He's pre-booked a digital booth. Here he can talk privately and securely to his students by audio or video links. Between tutorials, he uses the computer in the booth to check his email. He's found these virtual office hours very productive.
- As part of their modern language course, students from a local school hold regular video conference lessons in the Learning Gateway with a partner school in Italy. Their teacher finds that this regular contact helps their comprehension of the language. The pupils also have a better understanding of the College, which may encourage them to become students there one day.
- James makes use of an interactive whiteboard in the Learning Gateway when demonstrating digital imaging techniques to his students. Using the installed software, he's able to broadcast his computers display onto all his students' monitors. This allows them to watch from their workstations and keeps them focused on the task in hand. Once on with their own assignment, James can also use the same software to view how his students are getting on. When appropriate, he can then show individual student's work to the rest of the group by broadcasting their screen onto the whiteboard.

Embedding Flexible and Distributed Learning

The College's aspirations for flexible and distributed learning as outlined in the Corporate Plan will be spearheaded by a team of College staff taking part in the Change Academy. The Change Academy is an annual programme funded by the Higher Education Academy, (HEA) and sponsored by the Leadership Foundation. Fifteen teams across the higher education sector have been selected to take part in 2005 - each with a defined institutional wide project. The HEA work with teams to develop the knowledge, capacity and enthusiasm for achieving complex institutional change. St Martin's Change Academy team is

working towards embedding Flexible and Distributed Learning within the institution in order to create an accessible learning and working environment which is fit for the purpose of educating diverse learners. The Learning Gateway will be a focus for these developments linking with partners in Cumbria such as Further Education Colleges, employers and other organisations where FDL will benefit learners. During early September the team attended the annual Change Academy Conference in Edinburgh and advanced their ideas using creative thinking techniques. For more information see <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/3058.htm>



Photo: taken at the 2005 Change Academy Conference, Sept 6-9th 2005, Edinburgh from left to right Caroline Marcangelo, Faculty of Health, Kellie, Cunningham, Faculty of Education, Tony Greenwood, Faculty of AHSS, James Howard, postgraduate researcher, Margaret Weaver, Library Services, Sam Johnson, Strategic Policy and Planning Service, and Jane Inman, CDLT.