

REPORT ON LERN FOR 2016.

LERN has had a very busy year with some new initiatives combined with our 'usual' activities and facilities.

It began with a changeover in administrators whereby we have moved to a voluntary system with Tiana and Oskar who have not only worked well with us and been closely involved in our activities but have also dealt with an increased workload. We thank them for all their hard work, involvement and enthusiasm. Our membership, reach and range of activities have grown, helped now by an improved website, better and more visually attractive information for members and others, increased use of social media and continuing support not only from IALS but links with law schools and other organisations. It seems apparent that LERN is now well established within the academic community both in the UK and wider. The opportunities for liaison and work with other associations and bodies are growing, as is interest generally in legal education research. At the same time we recognise the demands and pressures on our contributors and supporters which provide 'challenges' for all who make LERN possible.

Although we await details from our Treasurer it is likely that LERN will meet its target of being self-funded and breaking even (Aside from the research grants). We must thank Chris Gale for again being a highly efficient but also relaxed and supportive Treasurer.

We had a greatly increased number of **Workshops** planned for this year, starting in *February* with a well-attended and enthusiastic session at IALS on questionnaire data and its effective use and presentation, led by Lisa Webley. In *March*, we held a lively session at the ALT Annual Conference on making TEAM LERN effective as a mentoring scheme-outputs from that to take the form of a Guide for the website. On *25th April* we had the first of our collaborative sessions (A new initiative for 2016), this time with the Law Society in Wales, Cardiff University and, importantly, it acted also as the launch of Richard Owen's LERN-funded research findings into the preparedness of universities and others for continuing devolution to Wales of key legal topics. Well over 50 people attended the event which included presentations on a range of legal education topics, ending with debate on how to take forward the issues raised. We were grateful for the support and hospitality of the Law Society and Lowri Morgan, in particular. In *June* we held another well attended event at IALS on effective dissemination of research findings where we had a very wide range of ideas, practices and insights from researchers, but also, importantly from the 'consumers' of research and those who use research to influence policy development.

In *September* we held our second collaborative event. This time we collaborated with Sheffield University Law School for a conference on equal opportunities, diversity and opportunities in legal education and researching it. Again, we had over 40 people attending and an extremely well managed event with high quality and thought-provoking presentations. Amongst the outcomes of the day, some collaborative projects have been planned. Our thanks go to Sheffield University and Tammy Hervey, in particular. In *October* we held an event in collaboration with Portsmouth Law School on effective academic writing, which was very practical and well received. Again the contributors were from both

LERN and Portsmouth, giving a wide perspective on the topic. The collaborative events have proved generally popular and we would want to encourage anyone with ideas for further such events to get in touch.

We had to defer two other planned events for the Autumn, one due to illness, though they have both been rescheduled for 2017. A particular issue this year has been late booking for events, so that we have postponed events and then seen a late rush of bookings coming too late to run the event. Our final event of the year was the Showcasing, though due to some administrative problems and ill health two of the funded projects will be 'showcased, in 2017.

We funded four research projects this year, and applied our usual mentoring and progress procedures. This seems to be an aspect of our work that runs smoothly, though we received a disappointing number of applications for 2017. Perhaps we have to enquire as to why this was?

This year has seen some changes to the Steering Group, with Vera Bermingham standing down after such a long time of active work for us, but Debra Malpass from SRA and Egle Dagilte from Anglia Ruskin University joining us.

As to 2017, we have three Workshops already planned for February, March and May (See Events), and again we want to pursue collaborative activities which seemed to go so well this year.

Thoughts and reflections- can we think how we can continue to enhance the work of LERN, not least because of changes to quality assessment and a number of key developments in legal education itself