



Welcome

Welcome to the tenth 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 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 training gets familial

Six PASS training sessions for new mentors were held during September and October. Sessions from the QM Careers team were, as usual, well received as were the contributions by those really in the mentoring know, current PASS mentors and organisers. Thanks to the following Luke Armstrong (Maths), Hrista Dimitrova (History), Jessica Guy (SBCS), Leo Hansel (History), Kareem Khazem (EECS), Priyank Krishnani (EECS), Henrik Mathiesen (History) and Brett Osler (EECS). Special thanks also to the trainee mentors on days when help was needed with arranging desks and casting

healing spells on the computer and for their willingness to throw themselves into things and mix and mingle with students from subject areas very different from their own.

One of the sessions was attended by QM alumna and former SEMS PASS mentor, Thiaga Edirisinghe, who gave the trainees the benefits of her insights from three years of mentoring. In a PASS first, she came along to see her brother, second-year Kavinda Edirisinghe, being trained up to join the PASS team in Electronic Engineering.

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Sister and brother Thiaga (ex-SEMS) and Kavinda (Elec Eng) after training

New PASS year

As you can see from the contacts section at the end of this newsletter, two new PASS schemes are piloting this year: English PASS (led by second-year Lauren Blackburne-Tinker and third-year Mike Spencer with Dr Rhiannon Moss) and Geography PASS (led by second-year Rebekah Soen with Dr Alastair Owens). Read how they are finding it so far in the next newsletter.

This year's student organisers have been working hard to get sessions running and to spread the word to first-years. Their enterprising ideas for publicity have included History PASS setting up a twitter stream (look out for more on this in the next newsletter) and *QMessenger* carrying an article by Jessica Guy (joint student organiser, SBCS PASS) explaining PASS to first-year readers and encouraging them to come along.



Retiring and aspiring SBCS student organisers, Jessica Guy and Martin Rosillo-Lopez, at the 2011 PASS Mentoring Certificate Event

PASS mentors at 3rd National Transition Conference

A team of PASS mentors, Melissa Gabriel and Sandra Nwokeoha (SEMS), Brett Osler (Computer Science) and Anirudh Kapoor (Dentistry) were deservedly well received at the 3rd National Transition Conference at UCL on Friday 17 June. Their interesting workshop, 'Is the Queen Mary First Year Experience the Same as Yours?', was run in a well-prepared and engaging fashion. They were the only student presenters in a day of papers and workshops by academics and senior administrators from HEIs across the UK. (To see the abstract, click on 'Workshop Session 1', afternoon, Choice B, at www.ucl.ac.uk/transition/transition-conference-2011/schedule.) The idea for their workshop was born out of the PASS First Year Experience Summit held by and for Queen Mary PASS mentors in February (see Issue 9 of the PASS Newsletter on our website for details).

The effort the students put into the preparation of the workshop and the professionalism shown was impressive, with everything fitted in among exams and many other commitments. As well as electronic contact, the team had a series of thorough planning and preparation sessions. Their teamwork and rapport (especially as only the two Engineers knew each other before they came together for this), was excellent and a credit to their teaching in their school/institute/department, as well as to themselves.

Isabel Wood, Assistant Registrar and Andrew Keegan, SEF Student Support Manager, both happened to be at the conference and went to the workshop to cheer the home team.



Anirudh, Mel, Brett and Sandra on the steps of UCL

Future Events

Afiqah Abdul Aziz (joint student organiser for Dentistry PASS) and Priyank Krishnani (student organiser for Electronic Engineering PASS) are representing PASS at Queen Mary at the National PASS Leader Conference in November (report in next newsletter). The conference is in Brighton, co-hosted by the University of Brighton and the UK National Centre for PASS/SI at the University of Manchester.

We are holding our second Speed Mentoring event at Mile End on the afternoon of 25 January. All PASS mentors will be contacted nearer the time to see if they want to come along and test their skills.

The 2012 PASS Mentor Certificate Event will be held at Mile End on the afternoon of Wednesday 21 March.

Alumni news

New mentors may not know about the PASS It On scheme, where former mentors (including those whose news is given below) offer advice to current mentors in their subject, particularly about their own experiences in applying for jobs or further study. For further information on this scheme, ask your student organiser or Debbie Andrews.

Jesse Boamah (SEMS PASS mentor 2008-11) is doing a DPhil at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, University of Oxford. It has begun well:

It's been brilliant here thus far! The workload, as expected, is quite huge. I attend taught courses and biomedically related seminars as well as doing bits of computational programming. All in all? Exciting!

Nanna Botwe (Computer Science PASS mentor 2009-10 and joint organiser 2010-11) is working at Business & Decision UK and wrote this message to current PASS mentors in her lunch-hour:

Being a PASS mentor helped me gain as much as the mentees during my time at Queen Mary, I gained a lot of satisfaction from helping and supporting new students as they embarked on what could sometimes be a daunting start at university. I was able to inspire others and assist them not just with their education, but also with information such as the best place to socialise or get bargains on campus.

Being a PASS mentor is unique; it gave me the extra edge when it was time to look for work.

As a graduate consultant, I am able to transfer the experiences and skills from being a PASS mentor and apply them in my work environment. I am very articulate, confident and able to deal with clients effectively.

Again, being a PASS mentor helped me gain good people skills, time management and team working skills. I graduated not just with a degree but with the skills that have transformed into a successful graduate career for me. Ask yourself what you can be from being a PASS mentor.

Shilan Ghafoor (SBCS PASS mentor 2008-9) is now in her third year of a second degree, Pharmacy, at Kingston University. She contacted us because she misses PASS and would like to start something similar in her department there. We sent her something to spur her on and she writes:

I've been proudly using the PASS bag this weekend to carry my shopping.

Serap Gonen (SBCS PASS organiser 2009-11) is researching salmon genetics at the University of Edinburgh. As a Londoner, she has found her new home very different:

I've settled in really well in Edinburgh, it's a lot of work but I think I'm managing OK so far! I have to do a 10-week presentation soon: I'm dreading it but I think I've had quite a lot of practice in front of an audience with PASS! It's weird

because everyone is so nice and relaxed here, it makes a change to the stress and rushing around that you experience in London. And my bus route is so pretty! Mountains and forests and lakes (or lochs as the Scots say, I've been told off about that already)! Sometimes I still wonder whether I'm good enough to do a PhD and whether I'm ready, but I can say that I am thoroughly enjoying it so far, so I'm going to try and make the most of it.

Emily Seiorse (Maths PASS mentor 2009-11 and joint organiser 2010-11) writes:

I've been working as assistant manager in a country pub and learning to drive. At the end of January I'll be starting a three-year training contract with Haysmacintyre, a medium-sized accountancy firm based on Chancery Lane. The work is mainly audit-focused but includes college courses as there are many exams.



Jesse Boamah enjoying the refreshments after the 2011 PASS Mentoring Certificate Event

Finding out more

Anyone reading this newsletter is likely already to be involved in some way 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, Directorate of Marketing and Communications): d.m.andrews@qmul.ac.uk

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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Plea to (a few) mentors from (some) Student Organisations

Please check for emails from us and then reply to them!