An end and a beginning

Project FOCUS is coming to an end.

After nearly two years of planning and hard work by all those involved with the project, nDeva was retired and the new student management system, Student Services Online, had its launch on 23 August.

“For such a major project that affected so many staff and students the launch of Student Services Online went remarkably smoothly,” said Stephen Whiteside, Director of Organisational Performance and Chief Information Officer.

“Feedback since the launch has been very positive from both staff and students about the enhanced usability and new features of Student Services Online.”

The project received invaluable input from groups all over the University, including the dedicated FOCUS team, staff from ITS, and others who were involved through various governance groups and from all areas of the University.

The core team reports that they hugely appreciated the amount of time that people across the University were prepared to give to the project.

“These groups were key to the success of Project FOCUS, as they allowed two-way feedback between staff and project team members,” said Beth Macdonald, Change and Communications Co-ordinator. “Another key to the project’s success was the amount of time and effort our project sponsors, owners, team members and subject matter experts spent in keeping our stakeholders informed about what was happening, and what key changes they could expect.”

During the two years of the project, more than 200 presentations were given to a wide range of stake-holder groups to ensure people knew what to expect from the new system.

As in all projects of this size, the team has been faced with a few issues. Most, however, have been easily resolved.

The Student Management Services team has worked closely with the project team to ensure there is adequate resourcing and smooth knowledge transfer.

Some of the key members of the project will now be joining the Student Management Services team. This added resource will ensure that staff have the support they need to get the most out of the new system and to build on the foundations laid by Project FOCUS.

Plans are already underway to develop and implement enhancements to the system over the next few months.

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