This session will focus on the institutional system as a vital unit of analysis and action on student engagement and the first year experience in general. The aim will be to share experiences and identify effective ways to gain greater institutional support for first year work. Support can be defined broadly in terms of management practice, with specific reference to pedagogical and other elements of a systematic approach to the first year. Key topics will include:

1. How to move the student experience further up the agenda in your institution.
2. How to apply concepts and lessons from first year research and conferencing in your institution.
3. The benefits and tensions entailed in taking institution-wide action, and the prospects for 'joined-up' thinking in your institution.

Hopefully participants will identify other focal points for discussion.

Colleagues who are already working at institutional level are the prime target, however any conference attendee with an interest in influencing their institution's managers and decision makers, should attend.

Participants will be asked to spend the first 5 minutes noting ideas, questions and suggestions on post-it notes. The notes will then be clustered around the three bullet-points identified above. Discussion and debate will ensue, and all participants will be encouraged to contribute.