

AGENDA ITEM 11

Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee

11.2 Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 6 February 2008

The Committee met on 6 February 2008 when there were present: The Chair (Associate Professor G Ryan) presiding, Professors D Armstrong and B Sutton, Associate Professors D Airey, S Barrie, C Collyer, M Freeman, P McCallum and P McGreevy, Drs C Asmar, D Collins, S Cumming, C Groenlund, B Rooney, A Rubino, C Taylor and F Waugh, Mr R Anderson, Ms K Barnsley, Ms J Gavan and Mr J Saurine. Drs R Ellis and D Field, Ms P Gemeinboeck, Ms L O'Reilly and Ms A Griffiths were in attendance.

11.2.1 eLearning: Nature of teaching and learning*separate attachment*

In his capacity as Director of eLearning in the Office of the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dr Rob Ellis was invited to lead discussion on this focus topic. A handout was distributed and is included as a separate attachment.

Key points from the presentation included:

- distance education v on-campus learning – requiring different pedagogical approaches to the use of eLearning - Appendix 1 (*page 3 of attachment*), shows growth of university activity in on-campus eLearning
- These activities are enabling Faculties to achieve learning and teaching goals
- eLearning development has workload implications – e.g. students now come to classes with the expectation that there will be a website to accompany their course, online materials to accompany the in class teaching. However there is no formula to acknowledge the extra work that is required to provide these resources – how can this workload be acknowledged?
- Each faculty has an eLearning representative (*page 1 of attachment*).

Comments and queries raised during the ensuing discussion included:

- Workload is a key issue that is currently under discussion at the University level, including review and formulation of new policy.
- Particular mention made of resource implications for postgraduate students who are tutoring, as well as research-only academic staff who do voluntary teaching. With casual tutors already overworked, any increase in 'hidden work' impacts upon them significantly. Student tutors need to be remembered in discussions on workload.
- An incremental approach will be taken to any future eLearning systems migration, with trial of potential software for at least a year before considering University wide application, followed by a two year migration program to ensure the system is stable and robust.
- The level of finesse needed in technological production to motivate student engagement. The University has about 10, 000 units of study on books, with approximately 45% eLearning coverage. By International standards this is very high, but there is a way to go to make a mature system. The current forty five percent coverage could be expected to go to eighty percent but there needs to be workload acknowledgement and budgeting for online tutoring for this to occur. It was also noted that equitable access for students has been assumed.
- Importance of the conceptualisation of learning in eLearning. Table one (*page 2 of handout*) is not hierarchical. Training for integration of eLearning is crucial. What percentage of a teacher's time is spent in training? Best practice benchmark of around ten percent noted within the school education system.

- What evidence do we have that investment of time and energy in eLearning has helped the experience of learning. Resources should be placed where they can best make a difference.
- Plans to incorporate new technologies into teaching also needed to be backed up by appropriate levels of infrastructure. Faculties, such as Dentistry, that work in partnership with outside agencies face the added difficulty of having to work with systems and infrastructure (or absence of) not always compatible with the University's.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report on eLearning: Nature of teaching and learning.

11.2.2 Report from the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) & Pro Vice-Chancellor

It was reported that some faculties had yet to supply Learning and Teaching plans. In the absence of a Learning and Teaching Plan, faculties would not be receiving any TIES money. In some TIES applications the value to Learning and Teaching was not explicit and such applications were unsuccessful. A key issue to arise was what should be funded by faculties as core business and should reasonably be funded under the TIES scheme.

Members were also reminded that both the Vice-Chancellor Awards and Carrick Awards are again open for nominations.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report from the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro Vice-Chancellor.

11.2.3 Proceedings of the Committee

(1) Other Reports

The Committee also noted the following reports:

- Report of the Chair
- Report of the Academic Board meeting held on 11 December 2007.