

Minutes of the eLearning Governance Group, Thursday 19 July 2007.

There were present: The Chair of the eLearning Governance Group Professor Derrick Armstrong, the Chair of the Academic Board, Professor Bruce Sutton, Associate Professor Rob Ellis, Director of eLearning, Associate Professor Mark Freeman, Director Office of Learning and Teaching in Economics and Business, Mr Bruce Meikle, Chief Information Officer, and Mr Peter McGeorge, Assistant Director, CP&S. Ms Sally Paynter was in attendance.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Associate Professor Mary Peet, Mr Andrew Cooper, Ms Sue Hanfling, and Mr John Shipp.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Resolution 3/07

The eLearning Governance Group adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 May 2007 as a true record.

3. Matters arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)

There was no business arising.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair advised that he had nothing on which to report.

5. Streaming Trial

Associate Professor Rob Elis spoke to the report on the Streaming Solution for Learning and Teaching trial for semester 2 2007 noting that ICT were working to get the infrastructure in place by the end of August ready to conduct the trial between September and October. A report on the trial would be forwarded to the eLearning Governance Group by the end of the year. It was agreed that integrating streaming technologies across the Institution would require some cultural change in the way the University supported its students and staff.

Resolution 4/07

The eLearning Governance Group noted the report.

6. Infrastructure White Paper

Associate Professor Ellis advised that at the Vice-Chancellors Advisory Committee retreat in July he had made a presentation to deans on the potential infrastructure at the University and that he, John Shipp, Professor Richmond Jeremy and Mr Bruce Meikle had been asked to draft a white paper on the issue. The Chair advised that Senate had asked for a review of the University's Strategic Plan in August and that the Learning and Teaching strategies was a major focus and that it would be aimed at joining up different aspects of different portfolios. It was noted that infrastructure and eLearning were two key areas in Learning and Teaching and that the concept of the Sydney experience was being explored and the areas of postgraduate coursework degrees, the structure of the undergraduate degree, academic pathways for research higher degrees and graduate attributes were being focused on. It was noted that the Infrastructure White Paper would be related to these areas and offer strategies to support them. Members agreed that there it was important to take a holistic approach to developing the student experience at the University by focusing on infrastructure, research and teaching together.

Resolution 5/07

The eLearning Governance Group noted the report.

7. Plagiarism

Professor Bruce Sutton reported to members that Internal Audit and Review had recommended that the Academic Board consider implementing a University wide policy on using plagiarism detection software and as a result a working party was established to do just that. The Working Party decided to refer the matter to the eLearning Governance Group to seek advice on how the University could proceed if the decision was to implement the software.

Members discussed the issue and the following points were raised during discussion:

- There was an issue of certain software throwing up false positives and it was noted that there was a danger that this could happen so often that academics stop looking at them;
- A question of whether the software has matured enough to allow academics to rely on it was raised;
- Three areas of detection were identified, text matching, code matching and group work, and it was noted that more than one type of software may be required to identify all three areas;
- Blackboard had updated its program to now include inbuilt plagiarism detection software;
- A decision needed to be made as to whether the University wanted to implement software at all and what needs must be met by all the relevant stakeholders before an appropriate evaluation could be done;
- It was agreed that the technical side of selecting the appropriate software and guiding its implementation was not as important as the reaction to its usage;
- The issue of student assessment needed to be addressed prior to looking at plagiarism; and
- The costs in training students to use the software needed to be considered and an educational justification not a plagiarism detection justification would need to be made.

The eLearning Governance Group resolved to let the issue mature over the next 12 months whilst the Academic Board tackles the issue of drafting plagiarism policy and how they would support the introduction of the software. The evaluation of different software would only be pursued if there was a push from several faculties with the possibility of getting the Faculty of Economics and Business involved in an initial trial.

Resolution 6/07

The eLearning Governance Group noted the report on Plagiarism Detection Software.

8. ePortfolio

Associate Professor Ellis advised that Emeritus Professor Ann Sefton had agreed to work over the next six months on the ePortfolio project in relation to the disciplinary approaches to its use and the effects on the key stakeholders, alumni and students. Members noted that Professor Sefton was ideally suited to work on the project with Associate Professor Ellis as her role as Deputy Chancellor gave her an institution-wide view as well as her reputation as an outstanding educator.

Resolution 7/07

The eLearning Governance Group noted the report.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Next Meeting

Members noted that there would be a change to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Group resolved to meet on Thursday 13 September 2007 instead.