



eLearning Governance Group

1.00p.m. – 2.00p.m.
Thursday 18th May 2006
Main Quad Meeting Room

Membership:

Prof. Judyth Sachs (Chair), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)	Mr Robert Mackinnon Chief Information Officer
Dr Rob Ellis, ICT in Teaching & Learning Coordinator	Assoc Prof Mary Peat, CST Academic Director, ICT in T&L
Ms Anne Forster, Manager Special Projects	Mr John Shipp University Librarian
Dr Nerida Jarkey, CHASS Academic Director, ICT in T&L	Assoc Prof Bruce Sutton Chair Academic Board

Apologies:

Assoc Prof Mary Peat

Minutes

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 26th April 2006 Adopted

2. Review of USyd eLearning Report

The Governance Group unanimously felt that the Report of the Review of USyd eLearning was insightful and useful; being both a strategic and practical document. The Review moved beyond FOLT and gave a picture of mainstreamed elearning – physically, pedagogically and cognitively. The future will be further integrated through the software changes (integrating the WebCT and Blackboard products), FOLT, the Library and academia.

There is a need to build on this Review through a strategic planning process to map out the next phase of elearning – at the program level.

Recommendations 1-3 were endorsed. Recommendation 4 was endorsed as it was felt:

- Locating elearning in the Library was one means of operationalising Recommendation 2
- It potentially provides career management and development opportunities for the FOLT Team.
- It creates an additional opportunity for the Library to build on current digitisation activities and to morph into Knowledge Management and a Learning Commons
- It brings a virtual single Help Desk one step closer

Recommendation 5 was seen to be a “no brainer” however there was felt to be a need to further delineate roles and responsibilities at the centre and at the faculty level.

Recommendation 6 was seen to be too teacher-centric. The prescription that technology supported teaching should only be applied when it either increased academic flexibility or decreased academic time spent in teaching was felt to ignore the student:

- What if the technology increased student flexibility and/or effectiveness, or
- What if student expectation drove selection and usage of the technology

The Governance Group felt that Recommendation 6 needed to be either split or re-worded to achieve a greater balance between student expectation and staff workload demands; and that current proven technology needs to be separated from the newer, unproven technology. The Secretary to approach the Review Team to see if this would be possible.

Adopted

Recommendation 7 is explained well on page 18 of the Report. It is important that lateral flows of communication counter-act silos to ensure effective use of scarce resources.

Discussion took place on whether the ITL eLearning Working Group or the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Academic Board was the appropriate body to take carriage of Recommendation 8. Principles need to be established for allocating workload (academic and administrative) at both the Unit of Study and the Program level. Given that the Head of School would have the power to allocate/redistribute resources, it was felt the Learning and Teaching Committee would be the appropriate route, with the ITL Working Group being a means of spreading best practice.

Recommendation 9 was seen to relate to Recommendation 4 – the link into the Library providing a means, given the limited resources, to free up some of the time of the eLearning Administrator for higher-level management and leadership issues.

Recommendation 10 was seen to have greater implications beyond FOLT. How can the University acknowledge the research and publishing undertaken by its General Staff?

The processes outlined in Recommendation 11 should be documented as part of a pilot study at the level of program rather than Unit of Study (we teach too many). A good place to start would be a Masters level program with little flexibility in the program and a demand-level approach. Start with new programs rather than retrofitting existing programs. There was some query as to whether this approach could be applied to a very flexible undergraduate program.

Recommendations 12 and 14 were seen to be straightforward; while Recommendation 13 was seen to be contingent upon the siting of eLearning within the Library structure.

Recommendation 15 is currently operational in ICT, where ICT identify the licence/purchase required and this is undertaken by Manager of Shared Services.

The CIO reported that the role outlined in Recommendation 16 was that of Relationship Manager. ICT currently have a vacancy in this area.

The next steps will be:

- The Secretary to approach the Review Team with a request for a re-framing of Recommendation 6 as per the discussion of the Governance Group
- Once the revised Report has been received, the PVC (L&T) will take the Review Report to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Academic Board
- The PVC (L&T) to speak to the University Librarian about linking eLearning into the University Library
- A conversation be commenced within the Learning and Teaching Committee regarding workload principles

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the eLearning Governance Group is scheduled for Thursday 20th July from 1.00-2.00p.m. in the Main Quad Meeting Room.