



eLearning Governance Group

1.00p.m. – 2.00p.m.
Thursday 5th May 2005
Main Quad Meeting Room

Attendees:

- Prof Judyth Sachs, Chair, Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
- Mr John Shipp, University Librarian
- Mr Ed Binney, Chief Information Officer
- Dr Nerida Jarkey, for Pro-Vice-Chancellor, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof June Sinclair
- Dr Mary Jane Mahony, for Pro-Vice-Chancellor, College of Health Sciences, Prof Don Nutbeam
- Assoc Prof Mary Peat, for Pro-Vice-Chancellor, College of Sciences and Technology

Apologies:

- Prof John Carter, Chair, Academic Board
- Ms Anne Forster, Manager Special Projects
- Dr Rob Ellis, ICT in Teaching & Learning Coordinator

Minutes

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd March 2005

- **Adopted**
- It was recommended that key documents of the Governance Group should be placed on the Web at <http://www.usyd.edu.au/quality/teaching/elearning.shtml>

2. Name of the Governance Group

The Chair explained that the restructured portfolio of the CIO was called ICT and there was a need to stress that the role of the Governance Group was focussed on the learning and teaching applications of Information and Communications Technologies.

The Academic Directors recommended the Governance Group be re-named the eLearning Governance Group. **Adopted**

E-Learning is defined as:

'The terms used to describe IT-driven change such as "e-business" and "e-learning" are simply metaphors for the pervasive, ubiquitous connectivity between and among people, knowledge, activities, and markets enabled by digital technology.' (p.181)

Source: Duderstadt, J. J., Atkins, D. E., & Van Houweling, D. (2002). Higher education in the digital age: Technology issues and strategies for American colleges and universities. Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger.

3. Report from ICT in T&L Coordinator (tabled)

Discussion took place about the proliferation of middleware over the last 6 months that could be used to support the University Learning Management System. The eLearning initiative is supporting demand from faculties for some ongoing solutions.

The CIO informed the Governance Group that the 2005 eLearning Review will focus on enterprise software solutions such as Learning Management Systems, streaming and some middleware solutions. Technological projects considered by the eLearning review committee are structured around 3 timeframes:

1-5 years out – review available e-learning technologies

5-8 years out – possible short term scenarios based on student expectations

10 years out – longer term scenarios

For 2005, the review processes are supported by \$500,000 to pilot new technologies and to submit them to assessment of their business benefits and the costs. .

Benchmarking continues to be an important aspect of the eLearning initiative. The benchmarking relationship with ANU was noted, with the Chair underlining the necessity for benchmarking relationships to provide reciprocal learning and to contribute to mutual quality improvement.

4. TVAC Meeting

The Chair informed the Governance Group that the re-formed Teaching Venues Advisory Group was meeting on the 6th May. Its new name is the Learning and Teaching Environments Committee. Discussion ensued on the need for more flexible teaching and learning spaces and to move away from the model where examinations drive the number, size and orientation of teaching spaces.

Academic Directors felt that current teaching spaces are detrimentally impacting on the growth and success of the eLearning Initiative, due to the complete separation between the classroom and the Web.

Mary Jane Mahony will distribute the Web address for the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII) and Educause Seminars on Learning Design (see below):

<http://www.educause.edu/nlii>
<http://www.educause.edu/LearningSpace/942>
<http://www.educause.edu/LearningSpaceDesign/2610>
<http://www.educause.edu/2004FallFocusSession/2672>

5. Report from Academic Directors

The College Academic Directors submitted one report outlining common issues:

- Teaching Venues
Teaching takes place in classrooms that do not support e-learning developments (see above discussion)
- ‘eLearning’ replace the phrase ‘Information and Communications Technologies in Learning and Teaching’
- Commend the recommendation of the TIF Review which proposes alignment of University learning and teaching funding opportunities
- Access of all staff to WebCT via UniKey account
This initiative of ICT is considered very significant as it encourages team teaching and the sharing of content such as image databases. The CIO mentioned that the technology behind this initiative needs to be well tested before it is released.

6. Assessment of the Model’s Effectiveness

Academic Directors informed the Governance Group that it was too soon to assess the success of the model, as the first round of projects were preliminary. The second round has just commenced and staff available to the Colleges based on the type of projects adopted, have changed (indicating that the mix of skills is appropriate). However the Directors warned that the model was not just about project managing a set of people.

Blockages outlined in Items 4. and 5. above also have potential to influence the success of the model, along with existence, adequacy and risk management around central servers storing images, the call for (feral) middleware, and long term sustainability of the projects once they are implemented. It was also noted that the current initiative was funded out of capital monies, which is not a sustainable funding model.

The Library is dedicating staff to assist the University with establishing standards for servers for image databases and for the control of electronic thesis lodgement.

7. Next Meeting

Thursday 14th July 1.00p.m. – 2.00p.m. Main Quad Meeting Room.
A light lunch will be provided.