

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**  
**Learning Technologies Committee**

Minutes for the tenth meeting of the Learning Technologies Committee held on Friday 15 February 2008 from 10.00 am – 12.00 noon in the Mandala Meeting Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, David Myers Building.

**Present:** Dr Peter Stacey (Acting Chair), Dr Ric Canale, Mr Rob Cook, Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice

**In attendance:** Ms Lilian Austin representing the Faculty of Education, Mr Max Colebourn, Dr Tony Jarvis (item B1.2), Professor Belinda Probert (item B1.2)

**Secretariat:** Ms Sally Went

## MINUTES

### A PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

#### A1 Welcome from Acting Chair and apologies received

Dr Peter Stacey welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Mr Jeffrey Barnes, Professor Evan Willis and Mr Geoff Payne.

#### A2 Confirmation of the notes from previous meeting (29 October 2007)

The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting subject to clarification of item B4 *Peer evaluation web application (iPeer)*. It was noted that the Faculty of Health Sciences was trialling iPeer in semester one, separate to any investigation of this committee on the best product for peer evaluation.

#### A3 Committee housekeeping

##### A3.1 Committee name

The committee agreed to shortening its name to the Learning Technologies Committee to more accurately reflect the committee's level of authority.

##### A3.2 Acting Chair

The original members of the committee agreed to share responsibility for chairing meetings until the appointment of the new Executive Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The Executive Director will be invited to be the new Chair.

##### A3.3 Support for working parties

The committee noted that the level of centrally provided support for working parties of the committee will be significantly reduced this year for a number of reasons. Members of working parties will need to make alternative arrangements for note taking. The committee requested that executive support be given to the e-Portfolio Working Party at the same level as that which was provided to the Lectopia Educational Pilot Steering Committee to assist with the trial of the e-portfolio application.

**Action:** Sally Went agreed to identify a suitable secretary for the e-Portfolio Working Party. Ric Canale and Sally Went to identify a suitable secretary for the Learning Management System Advisory Group.

#### **A4 Action arising from previous meetings**

##### **A4.1 Reviewing and purchasing new learning technologies**

The committee discussed the need for more control being exerted over the acquisition of learning technologies at the University because of the consequences for students when technologies were not properly implemented nor adequately supported. The committee considered the draft template for staff to use when submitting a proposal to the committee for a trial of a learning technology. It was agreed that key staff need to be listed as contacts on the form, and some text should be added to emphasise that the approval process and technical staff are there to assist applicants, not deter them.

It was also agreed that with some minor modification the same form could be used whether it was a University wide trial requiring central support or a small faculty-based trial. It was critical that ICT be kept informed of possible developments.

Ric Canale is developing a checklist for the committee to use when evaluating applications to implement or trial new technologies, and will obtain advice from the relevant ICT staff on technical aspects of the check list.

**Action:** Sally Went and Ric Canale to revise form and checklist respectively in consultation with Rob Cook before the next meeting.

## **B GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **B1 Technological Pilots**

#### **B1.1 Lectopia**

Rob Cook reported that the Expression of Interest submitted during the 2008 budget process to extend the Lectopia technology across the University had been successful. However, as the money had not yet been transferred to ICT, the roll out had not commenced. Rob reported that the break between semesters in the middle of the year would only provide sufficient time to install equipment in approximately ten additional venues. Most of the University's large venues were already equipped and the next stage would be to work on the small but popular venues.

#### **B1.2 ePortfolios**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Belinda Probert, attended the meeting for this item, as did a representative from the e-Portfolio Working Party, Dr Tony Jarvis. The committee considered the report from the e-Portfolio Working Party, drafted in December 2007, and a follow up report from the delegation who attended last week's national forum on e-portfolios in Queensland.

The committee supported three of the five recommendations from the working party as follows:

1. that if adopted by La Trobe, the e-portfolio should focus on enhancing the student experience in learning and teaching. It should therefore be tightly linked to the graduate attributes, generic skills and employability skills. The working party suggests that such a portfolio could make a strong contribution to building students' awareness of a 'whole of program' perspective on their university studies, and provide a strengthened focus on the benefits they have derived.
2. that appropriate policy linkages, minimum requirements for e-portfolio usage, and a set of guiding principles to assist staff in the use of the e-portfolio be developed.
3. that the current working party continue, with a new Chair and any other appropriate changes in personnel, in order that it may contribute to and oversee any e-portfolio developments.

Tony Jarvis accepted the committee's invitation to be the new Chair of the working party following the retirement of Professor Martin Chanock.

The committee could not wholeheartedly support at this stage the commitment to having a link from WebCT sites to e-portfolios as this could not be determined until the final product was chosen and technical issues of compatibility were examined. The committee also could not commit to collaboration with other IRUA universities as this requires further investigation.

However, the Committee accepted the recommendation in the subsequent report from the working party, based on findings from the Australian e-Portfolio symposium, that a trial of PebblePad be conducted in first semester. Rob Cook reported that ICT supported the choice of PebblePad and would fund the trial which would cost approximately \$6000 for licences for 1000 students. This amount included support from PebblePad in the UK.

Rob also reported that if the University selected this product for a full roll out, the cost would be \$141,000 over three years, which is less than for the purchase and maintenance of WebCT. In addition, approximately \$100,000 would be required in the first year to purchase the hardware to support the application.

Belinda Probert advised that a decision could not be made now about whether a full roll out would take place. The committee would need to await advice from the evaluation of the first semester trial. Belinda would advise the Vice-Chancellor against promoting e-portfolios in any Open Day publicity as a decision on the implementation of e-portfolios would not be made by then.

**Action:** *Tony Jarvis to convene a meeting of the reformed e-Portfolio Working Party. Tony to liaise with ICT staff about the support requirements for the first semester trial. Tony to seek advice from ADU staff about setting up evaluation procedures for the trial. Belinda Probert to discuss with the Vice-Chancellor deferring promotion of the e-portfolios until further evaluation had been conducted.*

## **B2 Learning Management System (WebCT)**

Ric Canale reported on recent developments with the Learning Management System. The system was upgraded over summer to version 6.2.2 and has been rebadged as Blackboard Learning System Campus Edition. The new version is particularly useful to Computer Science and Education because it supports the current version of Java which they require for other applications they use. A

decision was not going to be made on renaming the whole system “My Online Units” or something similar until the student portal was developed.

The next development is the move to Active Directory sign on for the LMS. This was recently delayed when it was discovered that it created problems with Lectopia.

The new LMS website is now online and will continue to be developed over the coming months. It can be viewed at [www.latrobe.edu.au/lms](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/lms)

The committee then considered the document recommending the University adopt a broader definition for the term ‘Learning Management System’ to include systems which support teaching and learning other than just Blackboard, such as Turnitin, e-Portfolios, and Lectopia. It was argued that staff and students are not interested in the names of specific systems and should not be expected to have to find them at different locations online. The committee supported the proposal in the paper:

*That the University adopt a broad definition of the term Learning Management System to include other centrally managed elements whose primary purpose is to support teaching and learning.*

The committee also agreed that advice be sought from the Learning Management System Advisory Group for an appropriate name for the system as the term ‘learning management’ may not have a shared meaning for all stakeholders.

**Action:** Sally Went to forward request to LMSAG to consider an appropriate over-arching name for our learning management system.

### **B3 Camtasia**

The committee discussed a proposal to prohibit the uploading of large digital media recordings, such as Camtasia recordings, to the Learning Management System because of the impact these large files are having on the performance of the LMS.

It was noted that the original Camtasia users in Health Sciences were well advised on how to manage the file sizes but the spread of the use of Camtasia has gone beyond the original controlled group. Max Colebourn offered to provide Ric with the notes from the Health Sciences working group, including the standardised configuration file that Camtasia users can click on to limit the file size.

A file size limit could be imposed in Blackboard itself but it is not clear what the system would do to existing large files after a limit was imposed.

The solution favoured by the LMS Team is to have these large files stored on the University’s streaming server. The LMS Team are currently searching the LMS for large files and will contact the file owners to make alternative arrangements for file storage.

The committee supported the proposal outlined in Attachment 6 that advice on how digital media be handled be circulated as a directive from the Chief Information Officer and the Director of Flexible Learning and Teaching. This will take place when Ric Canale has investigated some of the points made above, and has solutions posted to the LMS site.

**Action:** Ric Canale to arrange for advice on how to manage large files to be placed on the LMS website. Ric Canale to arrange distribution of the directive to staff to limit the size of digital media files being placed on the LMS. The directive will also provide advice to staff about working with their educational designers on strategies to limit the need for large files.

#### **B4 Expansion of audio-visual equipment**

Max Colebourn provided the committee with an update on the three year roll out of audio-visual equipment in shared teaching spaces which commenced last year. Sixty teaching spaces at Bundoora and Bendigo were equipped last year with an integrated data projector, sound equipment, DVD/VCR player, control system and cabinet. This involved major changes to each of the venues including the moving of whiteboards, clocks, shelves and utility outlets, plastering and painting, installing projector mounts, changing lighting locations and switches, and the installation of associated cable for data, AV and power.

Whilst the original three year plan would have seen an additional 100 rooms fitted out over 2008 and 2009, no funding has actually been allocated to the project and so further refurbishments are on hold.

#### **B5 Videoconferencing User Group**

The committee received the minutes of the first meeting of the Videoconferencing User Group and discussed the recommendation from the User Group that the membership be extended to include a Union representative and a student representative. It was agreed that a formal invitation should be issued to the Student Representative Council for a student representative to join the User Group. Other members could be co-opted as deemed necessary by the User Group

It was noted that new members were required for this User Group following the resignations from the University of the group's Chair, Dr Tony Love, and the Health Sciences representative, Ms Lyn Lang.

**Action:** Peter Stacey and Kerry Fitzmaurice to advise Sally Went on their faculty's new representatives on the Videoconferencing User Group. Sally Went to issue invitation to SRC to nominate a representative for the Group.

### **C OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **C1 Other business raised by members at the meeting**

##### **Load testing of LMS**

In response to a question from Kerry Fitzmaurice, Ric Canale reported that ICT staff had attended a recent meeting of the Learning Management System Advisory Group to advise that load testing of the LMS was not going to be performed as it was estimated it would cost around \$100,000.

#### **C2 Next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 14 March, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon, in Meeting Room 3, John Scott Meeting House.

Sally Went  
Secretary  
Learning Technologies Committee

**Distribution**

Ms Lilian Austin, Educational Designer, Faculty of Education  
Mr Jeffrey Barnes, Director of Teaching and Learning, School of Law  
Dr Ric Canale, incoming Director, Flexible Learning and Teaching  
Mr Max Colebourn, Director, Teaching Technology Services, ICT  
Mr Rob Cook, Chief Information Officer  
Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), FHS  
Mr Geoff Payne, Director, Library Corporate and Financial Services  
Dr Jennifer Sheed, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Education  
Dr Peter Stacey, Associate Dean (Academic), FSTE  
Professor Evan Willis, Associate Dean (Academic), FH&SS