

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
Learning Technologies Policy and Governance Committee

Minutes for the ninth meeting for 2007 of the Learning Technologies Policy and Governance Committee held on Friday 26 October from 10.00 am – 12.00 noon in Meeting Room 2, John Scott Meeting House.

- Present:** Dr Kay Souter (Chair), Dr Ric Canale, Professor Martin Chanock, Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice, Mr Geoff Payne, Dr Peter Stacey
- In attendance:** Ms Lilian Austin (*vice* Dr Jennifer Sheed), Mr Paul Whittingham (*vice* Mr Rob Cook)
- Secretariat:** Ms Sally Went

MINUTES

A PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A1 Welcome from Chair and apologies received

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Dr Ric Canale who was attending for the first time in his new role as Director, Flexible Learning and Teaching. Apologies from Mr Rob Cook and Dr Jennifer Sheed were noted.

A2 Confirmation of the notes from previous meeting (26 September 2007)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September were confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

A3 Action arising from previous meetings

A3.1 Videoconferencing User Group

Ms Sally Went reported that all members of the Videoconferencing User Group had been confirmed and that Dr Tony Love from the School of Psychological Sciences had agreed to act as Chair. Their first meeting will be in the next fortnight.

A3.2 Models of delivery

The committee reviewed the revisions from the two educational designers to the statement on models of delivery. It was noted that this document was a position statement, and that policy and procedures would be developed from this starting point.

The committee were reminded of Professor Kirkpatrick's directive that any online unit must have at least 20% of the content delivered face-to-face because it was believed that any attempt to introduce fully online units with no face-to-face component would be rejected at the regional campuses. The committee agreed that this would still be the case unless there was a well managed promotional campaign that described the type of collaboration and connection that can take place in virtual spaces.

It was agreed that the document could be re-written to give a more positive focus on the delivery and design of all units, and not just refer to units which are delivered to a number of smaller campuses from a larger campus. This would ensure that the flexibility of unit delivery covered multi campus units as well as accessibility issues for students with disabilities. The revised document could have a more holistic approach to teaching and resources that does not just focus on technology.

It was noted that professional development needed to be provided to staff offering units online and that some of this could be provided by the faculty educational designers. Mentoring was also an effective means of developing staff after initial training in educational technologies.

It was also agreed that as the University does not offer distance education in the traditional sense (that is with no face-to-face contact) the term distance education should not be used in course promotional material.

Action: *Lilian Austin, Ric Canale and Sally Went to collaborate on a redraft of the document and to consider new titles such as blended learning or flexible learning.*

B GENERAL BUSINESS

B1 Reviewing and purchasing new learning technologies

The committee discussed developing a process for reviewing the introduction of new learning technologies prior to their purchase or trial. It was noted that the University is accruing a variety of technologies to deal with specific needs but if it continues to do this it will end up with inefficiencies and conflicts between applications.

The committee noted that any review process should include, *inter alia*,

- an assessment of compatibility with existing or proposed new technologies
- potential overlap/duplication with existing technologies
- negative or unintentional flow on effects
- hidden costs
- economies of scale.

Protocols could ensure consideration is given to the perspectives of students, pedagogy, learning management and IT architecture. The committee agreed that the initial issue to be addressed in the review of software options should be the learning activity that needs supporting and whether technology is the best solution.

The committee secretary reported that she had drafted a template that people could use to propose an investigation of a new technology and this could be adapted to accommodate the points made above. It was agreed that a standing committee of this committee could be convened whenever a new technology needed to be evaluated.

Action: *Ric Canale and Sally Went to develop a template and checklist for learning technology proposals for consideration by the committee.*

B2 Technological Pilots

B2.1 Lectopia

Dr Ric Canale reported that data from the first semester pilot provided overwhelming evidence that the students and staff considered Lectopia a positive enhancement to the teaching and learning experience. Findings from La Trobe and other institutions using the technology were that the availability of Lectopia did not impact on lecture attendance.

If Lectopia is rolled out in the future, support will be provided by the LMS support team and the ICT Service Desk. Training will be incorporated into WebCT training. The committee noted the value of having more experienced users assisting new users the first time they use the system.

It was noted that an Expression of Interest to fund a roll out of Lectopia was submitted to the budget process by the Chief Information Officer. A decision had not yet been announced.

B2.2 e-Portfolios

The committee noted the minutes of the past four meetings of the e-Portfolio Working Party. Professor Martin Chanock reported that the Vice-Chancellor had made public statements about e-portfolios being available by 2009 and so a recommendation on which application would be introduced would need to be made by mid-2008.

Whilst the Vice-Chancellor was more interested in the personal development and employment possibilities arising from e-portfolios, the working party had approached the investigation of e-portfolios from a learning and teaching perspective. Many members were of the opinion that both objectives could be met by the same product.

The working party has organised for two pilots of e-portfolios to be conducted in semester one, 2008 – one overseen by Dr Jennifer Masters in the Faculty of Education and the other by Dr Tony Jarvis from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Blackboard were providing the University with a licence to trial their product in the pilots.

The committee noted that the University may want to simultaneously investigate other products during the first semester trial. They also noted that there were significant implications for curriculum design with the introduction of e-portfolios.

B3 Learning Management System (WebCT)

Dr Ric Canale reported on five recent issues with the Learning Management System.

1. Intermittent and inexplicable faults had been experienced recently with WebCT that required the assistance of Blackboard staff to investigate. It was agreed that downtime would need to be scheduled in order to address systemic problems.
2. The LMS Support Team and ICT staff are preparing to upgrade to WebCT version 6.2.2 over summer. The details are being worked out by the relevant working party of the Learning Management System Advisory

Group The update is considered stable and will solve some of the problems created by earlier upgrades. The new version runs on Java 1.6 which is good for departments who use Elluminate.

3. Over summer there will also be a change to Active directory login for WebCT. The amount of programming this will require has not yet been determined.
4. Investigations about the recycling of units are continuing. An institutional solution needs to be found to the issue of having material available at the end of semester for students who are undertaking supplementary assessment, rather than relying on individual staff members making backups of their WebCT units prior to rolling them over for the next semester.
5. More automated solutions are also being sought for the problem of creating of a large number of WebCT units at the start of semester. The manual creation of units is far too labour intensive.

B4 Peer evaluation web application (iPeer)

Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice asked the committee to add peer evaluation software to the list of technologies it will evaluate. With the introduction of large classes in the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2009, new ways to mentor and evaluate student group work are being considered, and solutions such as iPeer are being explored. It was noted that these applications are often easy to use but require considerable staff time to set up accounts and so automated solutions for this should be explored. It was agreed that Blackboard and open source options should be considered.

***Action:** Sub-committee of LTP&GC to evaluate applications that can assist with peer evaluation.*

B5 Camtasia

The committee discussed the increasing use of Camtasia for videostreaming, particularly in the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. A formal evaluation of the suitability of this product had not yet been conducted and so the implications for other applications, such as the learning management system, were not yet addressed. Members of the committee suggested an evaluation be undertaken of a number of videostreaming products, such as Jing and Wink, as well as Camtasia, using the new process for evaluating learning technologies outlined in B1 above.

C OTHER BUSINESS

C1 Other business raised by members at the meeting

C2 Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 23 November, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon, in the Mandala Meeting Room, 3rd floor, David Myers Building.
[*Secretarial note: The November meeting was subsequently cancelled.*]

Sally Went
Secretary
Learning Technologies Policy and Governance Committee

26 October 2007

Distribution

Dr Kay Souter, Acting Director (Learning and Teaching) **(Chair)**
Dr Ric Canale, incoming Director, Flexible Learning and Teaching
Mr Rob Cook, Chief Information Officer
Professor Martin Chanock, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), FLM
Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), FHS
Mr Geoff Payne, Director, Library Corporate and Financial Services
Dr Jennifer Sheed, Associate Dean (Academic), FE
Dr Peter Stacey, Associate Dean (Academic), FSTE