



Multi-Campus Teaching Alert

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Professor Belinda Probert



Special Edition | June 2009

Multi-Campus Teaching – Rules of Engagement for Semester 2, 2009

If you are someone who teaches a subject involving students on more than one campus then please read this 'Alert'.

- **The importance of being trained**

Shortly after the start of every semester a significant number of academic staff experience a major problem with the equipment in their teaching space, causing major disruptions such as lecture cancellations. In the vast majority of cases (and I have followed up many complaints) this is because the staff member is unfamiliar with the equipment – either because the equipment is new, or because the staff member is new to the venue.

These problems can easily be avoided by taking advantage of one of the brief, hands-on Lecture Theatre Audio-Visual Sessions that will be offered by the CTLC during the mid-semester break. To make this really easy and convenient for you the CTLC will be posting session details and online registration for these familiarisation sessions by mid June (www.latrobe.edu.au/ctlc/workshops).

Compared to the aggravation and raised blood pressure caused by equipment difficulties, doing the training will be positively good for your morale and your health, not to mention student satisfaction. I look forward to seeing significant enrolments...

- **New AV installations in Lecture Theatres**

This year, as part of our systematic improvement of AV facilities, some lecture theatres have already been upgraded for videoconferencing, dual projection and Lectopia recording. If you will be using these theatres please make sure you sign up for one of the orientation sessions (see above). That way you will have a pleasant rather than unpleasant surprise.

- Bundoora Economics LT,
- Bundoora HuEd LT,
- (and Bundoora Undercroft is planned for the mid-year break).
- Bundoora Martin Building LT,
- Bendigo AS2210,

Over the mid-semester break the following venues are scheduled for Lectopia installation, in time for the start of semester 2.

- Bundoora Glenn College LT,
- Bundoora Glenn College Seminar 6
- Bundoora HSci 222
- Bundoora HSci 223
- Bundoora HSci 224
- Mildura S1
- Mildura S3
- A/W 3112

- A/W 3114
- Bendigo Education LT
- Bendigo Business 133

Progress is being made on an improved control panel, which will become the standard across all La Trobe lecture theatres. The aim is for all La Trobe lecture theatres to have the same touch screen interface for the start of 2010.

- **Videoconferencing and DVDs in second semester**

In second semester, programs relying on videoconferencing and DVDs for multi-campus lecturing must ensure that a tutor, lecturer or demonstrator is present in all teaching venues. Ideally, the videoconference session will include interaction within and between students in the participating classes.

La Trobe already has the research-based principles for good teaching in multi-campus settings – and these can be found at

www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/assets/downloads/VideoconferencingGuidelinesVer6.pdf

Understanding and Improving Multi-Campus Teaching at La Trobe – next steps

As part of La Trobe’s overall efforts to develop a more distinctive, effective, and learning-centred approach to curriculum design and renewal, the recently adopted *White Paper* announced a concurrent initiative on ‘developing principles for multi-campus teaching and learning’. Our shared goal is to ensure that high quality teaching and academic support are effectively and equitably provided to students on all La Trobe campuses.

With this in mind, a faculty-by-faculty, campus-by-campus study of multi-campus teaching is being conducted by the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Centre (CTLC) to learn more about current practices and the priorities of academic staff. The CTLC has appointed Ms Ainslie Ellis to carry out this study, and Ainslie has already interviewed a number of staff in Bundoora and Bendigo. This study will build on the work of the 2006 Multi-campus Teaching Working Party headed by Dr Kay Souter, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Taken together, the 2006 and forthcoming 2009 reports will provide well-founded recommendations to guide the development of multi-campus teaching at La Trobe in 2010 and beyond.

While technologies of various kinds can be more or less helpful in multi-campus teaching, it is important to recognise that the main factors determining educational effectiveness are not the particular technological “tools” we use, but rather the design of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching. Subjects taught across campuses should, therefore, be “purpose built” – intentionally well designed and delivered for this very specific purpose.

Preparing for 2010...

From 2010 the CTLC will no longer provide a video recording service for lectures. This has become both financially unsustainable and also the source of many student complaints.

- In June and again in July (this year) the CTLC is offering a special workshop to demonstrate alternatives to delivering lectures by DVD.
- The workshops will include a panel of academic staff who have successfully used these alternatives. Workshop participants will be assisted in choosing and developing a transition strategy, including post-workshop follow-up consultations, as needed.

Five multi-campus teaching options which are supported by the University will be demonstrated and discussed in these 'Alternatives to DVD lectures' workshops:

1. Videoconference from one campus to all other campuses where taught – with variants ranging from traditional lectures to moderated discussions;
2. Repeat lectures to remote campuses using either teacher-only videoconference or other online synchronous technologies. (For example, *Illuminate Live* is one such synchronous tool currently being trialed at La Trobe.);
3. Narrated 'Camtasia style' screen recording, made available online to all relevant students as a direct substitute for lectures; and
4. The placement of lecture content on the LMS as a resource – preferably sequenced with activities and self-tests and supported by face-to-face or online tutorials/practicals.
5. Use of academic staff to provide face-to-face lectures at each site.

For more information on these workshops, please contact Dr Ric Canale at R.Canale@latrobe.edu.au or x6548