UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

e-Learning Steering Group

Minutes of the meeting of the e-Learning Steering Group held on Thursday 14 October 2004

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Mr J Dale, Dr J Dempster, Mr R Green, Dr L Polezzi, Mr K Mohaddes, Professor L Wilcocks

Apologies: Professor A Neal, Dr M Crawford

In Attendance: Ms A Bell, Mr S Carpenter, Ms R Gilmore, Dr G Carden (for item 12/04-05), Ms R Wooldridge Smith, Mr J Moss

1/04-05   Terms of Reference

            CONSIDERED:

            (a)   The Terms of Reference of the e-Learning Steering Group, paper EL 1/04-05.

            (b)   The desirability of instituting a joint reporting structure to the IPSC and the AQSC.

            RESOLVED:

            That the e-Learning Steering Group should report to both the IPSC and the AQSC.

2/04-05   Constitution and Membership

            CONSIDERED:

            The Constitution and Membership of the Committee, paper EL 2/04-05, it being noted that consideration should also be given to the question of the annual election of academic staff members of the Group.

            RESOLVED:

            (a)   That the Chairs of Faculty IT Committees or their representatives be nominated to membership of this Group.

            (b)   That it be noted that Dr P Ferry had left the University and that the Faculty of Medicine be invited to nominate a substitute member.

3/04-05   Minutes

            RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the e-Learning Steering Group held on 29 April 2004 be approved.

4/04-05   Matters Arising

Modern Languages e-Learning project (Minute 20/03-04 referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Dr L Polezzi on progress on the project, it being noted that the Modern Languages Committee was considering ways forward in funding the refurbishment of locally-timetabled teaching rooms.

5/04-05   Faculty e-Learning Advisors

CONSIDERED:

A report from the e-Learning Advisors on current projects, future priorities and their role, paper EL 3/04-05, incorporating information requested by the Committee relating to the take-up of SiteBuilder and use of VLE tools.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That following an effective period of capacity building, the e-Learning Advisors should in future prioritise more advanced and innovative projects over more routine work, gradually moving away from giving customised one-to-one responses to requests for assistance with basic tasks;

(b)   That where common issues could be identified across different requests for assistance the e-Learning Advisors provide advice to groups of academic staff on a many-to-one basis, or on a departmental basis.

(c)   That assistance with some more basic tasks be carried out by normal helpdesk staff, or by bought-in assistance where this was forthcoming;

(d)   That the Chair, Mr J Dale, Dr J Dempster and the Secretary consider the use of the e-Learning Strategy to provide a framework within which priority areas could be identified; it being acknowledged that an appropriate balance should be struck between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to the setting of targets and review of progress;

(e)   That the Chair alert Faculty IT Committees to this re-orientation of role and ask them to disseminate information more widely to Faculties, noting the importance of managing staff expectations in this process.

6/04-05   Teaching Quality Enhancement & Professional Standards Funding

REPORTED:

That the bid submitted by the University to the HEFCE for an extension to existing Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding for 2005-06 and for funding for Professional Standards work for 2004-05 and 2005-06 was successful, it being noted that funded was granted conditional on the updating of the activity plan by 1 December 2004.

CONSIDERED:

(a)   The bid to the HEFCE (paper EL 4/04-05);

(b)   The letter from the HEFCE (paper EL 12/04-05) confirming the success of the bid and containing the condition that an updated activity plan be submitted by 1 December 2004 containing SMART targets and activities;

(c)   Means of administering the challenge funds intended to be awarded to departments for e-Learning projects on a competitive basis; monitoring the progress of projects and carrying out appropriate evaluation, informed by papers prepared by Mr J Dale, e-Lab (paper EL 5/04-05) and Dr J Dempster (paper EL 11/04-05).

RESOLVED:

(d)   That a sub-group of the Steering Group, consisting of the Chair, Mr J Dale, Dr J Dempster, Ms A Bell (or her representative) and the Secretary, update the activity plan to incorporate SMART activities and targets by the end of November, in line with the HEFCE's requirements;

(e)   That Professor Whitby and the Secretary merge the two papers to create a set of principles and priorities for assessing bids for funding for the Committee to approve;

(f)   That the principles for adjudication include increasing staff competency and the opportunity for staff to move on to the e-Learning award, given the intended emphasis of funding on professional standards;

(g)   That Dr J Dempster, Mr J Dale and the e-Learning Advisors adapt the existing process for applying for Teaching Development Fund (TDF) funding to create a light-touch but informative application process, the documentation for which would include a statement that it is understood that departments make use of e-Learning to varying degrees, and that applications for a wide variety of projects would be expected;

(h)   That a subset of the Steering Group be set up to evaluate bids and decide on awards, membership to include Professor Whitby, a representative of each Faculty, CAP, e-Lab, the Library, and the Students' Union, with a Secretariat shared with the e-Learning Steering Group;

(i)   That applications for funds be invited by two deadlines in the academic year 2004-05, the first in the middle of the Spring Term, the second in the middle of the Summer Term; and that a deadline in the middle of the Autumn Term be introduced for the academic year 2005-06;

(j)   That the Chair and the Secretariat alert academic departments to the existence of the fund and raise awareness of it during the Autumn Term 2004.

7/04-05   e-Learning Orientation Week

CONSIDERED:

A paper prepared by Dr J Dempster, CAP, on plans for a proposed e-Learning orientation week to be held during 2004-05, paper EL 6/04-05.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That Professor Whitby write to Chairs of Departments inviting nominations for the first Orientation Week, to be held in December 2004; it being noted that the maximum number of participants was likely to be thirty and that fewer than ten participants would necessitate changes in delivery of the programme;

(b)   That the e-Learning Orientation Week be used to promote the availability of challenge funds for e-Learning projects.

8/04-05   Millennium Library Management System

CONSIDERED:

An update from Robin Green, Library, on developments with Millennium, the Library Management System (paper EL 11/04-05), noting in particular the qualitative improvement in services to library users through Web Access Management (WAM) and WebBridge, the positive feedback from library users about the increasing ease of access to materials.

9/04-05   Working Groups on e-Pedagogy and IT Infrastructure

CONSIDERED:

(a)   A report from Dr J Dempster, Centre for Academic Practice, on behalf of the Advisory Group on e-Pedagogy (paper EL 13/04-05 [tabled]).

(b)   A report from Mr J Dale, e-Lab, on behalf of the Web Architecture Advisory Group, paper EL 7/03-04.

10/04-05   Warwick's e-Learning Strategy

CONSIDERED:

A brief paper setting out views on Warwick's e-Learning Strategy from the University of Bath, paper EL 8/04-05.

11/04-05   HEFCE and DfES e-Learning Strategies

RECEIVED:

Feedback from the HEFCE and the DfES on progress with their respective e-Learning strategies, papers EL 9/04-05 and 10/04-05 respectively.

12/04-05   Refurbishment of Centrally-Timetabled Teaching Rooms

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Dr G Carden, Acting Assistant Registrar (Space Management & Timetabling) on the refurbishment of teaching facilities involving the renewal or upgrading of IT facilities carried out over the summer vacation 2004, noting that thirty-seven rooms around campus had been refurbished on schedule, following some changes to the original schedule.

13/04-05   Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the e-Learning Steering Group would be held on 19 January 2005 at 2pm in the Council Chamber, University House.