Faculty of Humanities eLearning Network

28 April 2022

Unconfirmed Minutes

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| **Item** | **Noted** | **Actions** |
| **1.** | **Welcomes and apologies**  Present: Becki Bennett (**BB** – Chair), Hannah Cobb (**HC**), Huw Morgan (**HM**), Amanda Banks Gatenby (**ABG**), Kamil Stobiecki (**KS**), Alex Galbraith (**AG**), Dan Rigby, Stuart Phillipson (**SP**), Hilary Pooley, Lauren O’Donnell, Elsa Lee, Helen Perkins, Jonny Crook, Omar Ahmedmia, Graham Holland, Eva Ward, Kar Stanton, Mark Lobjoit, Anna Verges (**AV**), Lisa Mcaleese, Linda Irish, Angela Gardner, Janean Lancaster, Benjamin Scoble, Charlotte Warden, Giorgis-nikos Aspiotis, Andrew Richardson, Jac Dennington, Malak Elasaar (ME), Rebecca Oldfield (Secretary).  Apologies: Olesya Shipova, Sharon Newton (ITS), Steve Bagley (TIS) |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes of last meeting 26 January 2022 [eLN-3\_21\_2]**  **To approve the minutes as an accurate record.**  Minutes approved – subject to any comments that members may want to submit to Secretary. |  |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising and Outstanding Actions [eLN-3\_21\_3]**  **To update the committee on matters arising and actions**  Chair reports that outstanding actions are complete |  |
| **4.** | **Chair’s Update**  **4.1. Verbal report from Becki Bennett**   * BB stepping down from Associate Dean role at the end of the current semester. A new AD will be recruited. * Flexible Learning Program (FLP) new appointments – see Briefing Note. Alex McTaggart from SEED is now the UMW academic lead, taking over from Elaine Fernley. Miriam Firth for Assessment. Increase in Humanities representation in FLP. * UMW and UCIL review are both part of FLP. There is interlinking between the teams. * In the MS Teams area, alongside the papers, find a detailed timeline of what is happening in FLP, including when FLP hopes to report on the Flexible Learning project and DLE review. Deadlines have been pushed back again. * FLP report was pushed back to give us time to feedback on the draft: we expect a draft soon and there will be time to feedback before its finalized at the end of the year. We should get involved and make sure we are heard as a Faculty. The DLE Time scales have also changed. The draft looks to be ready for June. BB will keep everyone posted on the working groups. * Noticeably the expression Digital First has changed to Flexible First – to be discussed first in later agenda items. * AV reports on Blackboard (Bb) Ultra pilot: proposal came from Ian Hutt, Head of digital learning. There is the possibility of having a Bb Ultra navigation alongside the current version of Bb. This is like a layer on top of our existing Blackboard Learn that would give students and staff, the ability among other benefits to have a new Activity Stream, receive notifications across courses, an integrated Outlook and Bb calendar, and a much nicer look and feel for this additional Bb layer. Bb units would not change. Our Humanities response will be that Bb Ultra Navigation is evaluated from an academic point of view. eLearning teams including Humanities feel that Ultra navigation could potentially undermine the consistency that we've been trying to achieve across courses. * Teaching Excellence awards: the original deadline will be extended to 25th May. So far not been many submissions from Humanities, which does not represent the amazing teaching that is delivered across the Faculty. BB invited members to publicise the awards and/or nominate people. | **BB to update all staff on the FLP working groups**  **Members to let BB know if there is anything they want raised at the FLP working groups**  **BB to report back to committee on DLE working groups**  **eLearning leads to propose individuals willing to evaluate Bb Ultra navigation – from an academic perspective** |
| **5.** | **Future Planning**  **5.1. Digital Chairs**   * Digital Chair roles: Four Digital Chairs were advertised to both external and internal candidates. From the job descriptions, they will have experience of effective online and blended learning and be creative in their approach to teaching digital skills. The candidates will be expected to model and develop innovative practices and digital and online learning. They will have leadership skills and able to mentor and support colleagues across their school in developing sector leading programs and in shaping our Humanities digital flexible future. * Meeting of 10th March on the future direction of travel for Humanities. During the meeting became apparent that there are things that we want to retain from the COVID period. While Humanities absolutely embrace using different tools, different platforms, different ways of teaching and being more flexible and hopefully more inclusive in doing that, we do not want to do lose the in person contact with our students. We want to reassure our students that replacing face to face is not on the agenda as this the message can get lost in discussions on digital and flexible learning I.e., it is not about losing face-to-face contact, but it is about embracing all these other things and knocking down barriers for those who want to use different ways of working.   **5.2. Humanities Flexible learning strategy**  <https://express.adobe.com/page/2kijdorKoBDrX/> |  |
| **6.** | **Student Voice**  **6.1. Verbal updates from student reps.**  Reported by student rep (ME)   * Blackboard (Bb) notifications: students have raised shortcomings about Bb notifications. They do not appear to all students, and they do not seem to be delivered when Bb App is used. Malak confirms used the Bb App and does not receive any notifications. * Bluetooth: students generally have wireless headphones or earbuds and would like to have a Bluetooth connection to computers in university building. * Students are not always clear how to contact their academic advisors.   Agreed that discussion on the above will take place under IT agenda item.  **6.2 To share/discuss: Student Pulse Survey (2021-22 Semester 2**) **[eLN\_3\_21\_6.2 enc.]**  Reported (AV)  Pulse Survey is an early semester survey at programme level – where individual students are asked about their experience across all units Results from semester 2 survey:   * Participation smaller than previous rounds: overall: 612 students. Participation from remote student particularly small which affects the validity of the results for this group of students. * Results are positive across all questions and overall are a further small improvement on what were positive results in previous years. The areas where improvements appear more needed are around access to resources and academic advising: Approximately 24% of students disagreed with the statement “So far in Semester 2, I have had opportunities to meet (including online) my Academic Advisor”. * Qualitative answers: Students were asked, “Looking at your Programme as a whole, what is going well?”. Answers include engaging lectures and useful seminars; units that have on campus recorded lectures, the combination of online lectures and in person seminars; online exams being more manageable than on-campus closed book exams; students preferring multiple smaller assessments as opposed to one final assessment; students knowing about the assessment cycle early including whether assessment will be online or on campus; weekly quizzes to text knowledge; slides being available before lectures and seminars; and a clear Bb layout. * Students were asked, “Looking at your Programme as a whole, what could be improved?”. Students disliked courses where lectures were not recorded; on-campus students not having an online option (Dual Delivery should be an option to all students); excessive workload; wanted to have more connection with professors, interaction in class, contact time, delays in academic response; found attendance system problematic; disliked assessments bunching; teaching being too fast in some course units; considered strikes lost time and lost teaching; called for on time and better feedback on assessments; raised IT issues such as poor Wi-Fi, PC loading time, Bb being down, sound quality of online delivery being poor at times; asked for teaching materials to be released earlier and consistently; found as poor teaching such as reading from PowerPoints. * Students were also asked, “Are there any courses that have featured examples of good assessment?”. Students favoured modules that have more than and different balanced forms of assessment, where assessment is spread out, practical and real life. They liked open book exams; clarity about assessment tasks with clear instructions, deliverables and to understand the reasons for choice of assessment. They liked non-assessed essay plans ahead of summative assessment; clear and extensive feedback; and flexibility to choose what to write about or design your own essay question or choose between questions. * Elearning leads who may like to obtain a copy of results can approach the respective teaching and learning directors.   Comments   * Malak: offered to send the next survey to student reps to help distribute the survey and get more responses * The next student Pulse will be semester 1 next academic year | **AV to distribute next student Pulse survey to Malak for further distribution** |
| **7.** | **Schools’ updates. [eLN\_3\_21\_7 enc.]**  **7.1**. **To share/discuss School eLearning Priorities (2021-22) on Communities of learners – what eLearning leads are aiming to achieve and obstacles.**  **Reported:**   * Paper circulated on building communities of learners to facilitate discussion. All Schools mentioned in this year's eLearning Priorities trying to enhance communities of learners. What are schools trying to achieve and what are the obstacles that Faculty could help with?   **Discussed:**   * HC: SALC has done some work on Blackboard Community spaces. These have been used in some subject areas in SALC before the pandemic. SALC implemented them across the School from the start of the academic year 2021 as a way of forging community building. Intention was that Bb communities would be a place where all the online welcome week materials would be located, and to be a kind of virtual notice board. Community space existed already for every subject area but a review of what works well and how to use them in the future took place. One of findings of this review was that the more departments put in, the more students get out. There was diverse use of these spaces. Student Reps in SALC agreed that, generally, the community spaces which have a lot of information are the ones which have higher engagement. HC presented three examples in Classics, Liberal Arts and Film and Drama. * BB asked whether there had been issues with students accessing the site. Access is granted automatically via Campus Solutions plan codes or alternatively manually via upload which is only sustainable for small programmes. There have been ongoing integration issues and ITS are planning to have these resolved asap in time for the start of year. * AB noted how helpful was to be able to observe and access other Programmes site. SEED team has run some student focus groups sessions to gather student views on course navigation and structure as well as mixed views on the use of Teams and other tools and channels for building community. AB is trying to do a journey through a task and which tools students go through and how they use them and will report back to the Network. KS organised the Focus group looking at the course templates to start with and getting students to talk through the way in which they use the system and things that stop them doing what they wanted to do but attendance was not high due to timings and intention is to repeat it and crossing over other tools. * HC reported that every program director and students said that Blackboard was clunky and old-fashioned looking. * DR reported on a slightly less formal evaluation of the hubs in SoSS last year. This was informative about what was common, what was good. He wondered if the reason why SALC did not have data on usage was because the tracking stats had not been switched on those spaces. Where these are enabled quantitative data on access is easily available. * AB reported that Steve Ellis in BMH eLearning team was developing a widget that was allowed as the would allow students to use emojis to say what they felt about particular resources or particular parts of Bb. * ML reported that integration has been an issue in this academic year with regards to student enrolments in community spaces. * SP reports that at the time of the meeting IT has committed to fixing the integration problems by the end of June. * AG says clarification is required on date of integration fix.   1. **To receive: any other School matters**   No other School matters raised. | **AG to confirm the date integration issue is expected to be resolved** |
| **8.** | **IT Updates**  **8.1. To receive: a verbal update from Sharon Newton, ITS T&L lead**  Apologies received from Sharon Newton for this meeting and the next scheduled meeting.  **8.2. To receive: To receive: a verbal update from IT on items raised by members (Jac Dennington/Steve Bagley/Alex Galbraith)**  **Reported:**  AG: circulated the root cause analysis document prior to this meeting. IT have been working on DUO authentication support for students during exams. MS Teams spaces: currently IT is not looking to use Teams in a teaching and learning capacity. Slow PC logins and Bluetooth airpods have been addressed in the document. Bluetooth is something that may be looked at in the future but ITS cannot retrofit into existing machines.  **Discussed:**   * RE slow loading of PCs. AV asked is there anything which can be done? This affects students and academics. SP reported that he has collected data on the login times. It is highly variable: one room may take 1 minute; another may take 8 minutes. AG noted that the profile of the user is now deleted after every log off for security reasons, therefore the login times are slow. SP responded that this behaviour was changed back temporarily during semester one, and local profiles were downloaded again, making the log in time slightly quicker. When there has been a large break from the university, for example over Christmas, then logins are slow again. This behaviour of profiles cuts into teaching time and is particularly an issue for Dual Delivery, because the class cannot start until the academic has logged in and the remote students have joined the class. Alongside Dual Delivery, this is a serious impediment to teaching and learning. * DUO issues workarounds for onsite, cluster exams. AG reported that DUO can be whitelisted, or for adhoc/ unsupported exams students can be given a bypass code. The focus currently is on supporting off-campus/ remote students if they have a DUO issue. Ringing the service desk can take a long time. IT are working on a better solution to support these students. SP noted that all humanities exams are remote. It is likely that there will be cases such as students who get a new phone, or a new number, and lose access to DUO. If they lose access to DUO they cannot sit the exam. AG reported that in a recent on-campus exam, 3 students had DUO issues. One of the students had not registered for DUO and the other students had forgotten their devices. AG thinks there should also be some accountability on the part of the students. BB felt that there had to be a safety net for these students, so they are not penalised for forgetting things. HC added that even if students had a month to prepare for DUO, it was disruptive for them, especially for distance learning students. One issue in SALC is that distance learners are variable. Some are mature students who do not have a smart phone, some are in remote, conflict areas where there is no access to the IT helpline. These groups are disadvantaged and amount to approximately 500 people. SALC has now had to insert a clause into admissions materials that states that students must have a smartphone or acquire a dongle if they cannot have access to a smart phone. AG points out that DUO has been brought in to protect us all against cyber-attacks. BB notes that it would be better if the committee were more informed about these kinds of things in advance in the future. There was not time to figure out the solutions to these problems.   **8.3. To receive: any other IT matters**  No other IT matters raised | **SP and AG to discuss log in times after the meeting**  **IT to discuss a way to support remote students better with DUO issues during exams** |
| **9.** | **Faculty eLearning Updates [eLN\_3\_21\_9 enc.]**  **9.1. To receive: Briefing Note\***  Briefing Note circulated: there is information on My Learning Essentials and home production kits. Case Studies are still welcome for the Good Practice site. Workshops are upcoming: volunteers welcome for individual workshops or panels.  BB invited all members to share examples of good practice. |  |
| **10.** | **A.O.B.**  LM confirmed that the Teaching Excellence Award (TEA) deadline had been extended to the 25th of May. |  |
| **11.** | **Date of next meeting:**  6th July 2022 |  |