BACKGROUND

The first round of consultation (Straw) commenced on 28 July 2014 and concluded on 15 August 2014. The consultation site has however remained open and some activity continues.

REVIEW OF STRAW CONSULTATION

Overview

The consultation process has included input from 10 individuals accounting for over 70 individual posts on the consultation site, many conveying some interesting and subtle ideas. Participants have been principally from the Academic Division and the Academic Services Division. We have also received individual emails, and a group response from the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Based on the nature of feedback received we have:

1. Made appropriate modifications in the document.
2. Posed additional questions to guide the conversation in the discussion forums.
3. Requested the support of volunteers to co-author topics that demand additional attention for inclusion in subsequent versions of the document.

In addition to consultation on the virtual site and through email correspondence, the support team has been invited to present at forums and meet privately. Some of the forums include:

- Academic Board
- Education Committee
- Academic Services "Lightning Talks" – Doing Business as (Un)usual
- School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery, Learning and Teaching Forum
- Learning & Teaching Division Committee
- Divisional Student Management Committee

Consultation Process

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

The consultation process is designed to be ongoing, maximise transparency, and reduce barriers to participation. We are using a combination of forums, small group meetings, working groups, and technology supported discussion and access to documents.

We are:

- taking advantage of a web-based consultation site
- maintaining an archive of legacy documents on this consultation site
- supporting searching within the site
- providing the opportunity for threaded discussion on topics on the consultation site
- sharing information about events, updates and other useful topics.

The consultation process supports iterative development of the strategy.
We have:
- consulted amongst Vice-Chancellor’s Committee members (ongoing)
- released the discussion document (‘Straw document’) on the collaboration site, presented at relevant meetings and be available to present, facilitate and discuss documents throughout the process
- sought formal feedback through comment and discussion through the consultation site, through email, and other means.

The consultation process is iterated through increasingly formal documents that will be identified using USQ terminology at critical points (‘Bronze’ and ‘Iron’ documents).

After a document is formally set, activity planning will be conducted as part of the budgeting and planning process, taking advantage of strategic funding and planning opportunities at the University level. Consultation will be built into these processes at standards set by USQ that are consistent with our commitments to improve communication and behave as one university.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process is designed to facilitate more than the collection of feedback – it is intended to provide opportunities for co-authorship and to provide agency to every member of the USQ academic and professional community, including active student leaders. The only reason that somebody in the community should not contribute is if they a) do not care about the educational experience, b) think that the Education Experience planning document is just fine as it stands, or c) they feel that the planning process is dishonest. If the reason is c), then we need to know why, because everything we are doing is to open the discussion and create transparency around decision-making as we craft this document.

3. WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN CONSULTATION ROUNDS?

At the conclusion of the first phase of public consultation (‘Straw’)
- we consolidated the discussion and feedback and solicited the help of volunteers with interest in specific areas. The more eyes on the Plan and the more perspectives, the better the product.
- where there is an apparent need to add significant content to the planning document, we reached out to those involved in the discussion and others to form a light-weight authoring party on a topic to create new assets and modify what we have.
- the updated document has been made available again for another round of formal consultation, with the intention that meetings will be scheduled, forums will be conducted, and that the co-authors will be willing to participate in the process to discuss their contributions as well.
- A ‘Transition’ document has been prepared that describes the major changes made from ‘Straw’ to ‘Bronze’. The document is designed to provide some context and perhaps some rationale for modifications to the Education Experience document. It will also be available for review, comment, and discussion.
- The ‘Straw’ vision of the document will remain available on the site for reference as well. We will learn from the work we are doing, and make appropriate improvements as we move from ‘Bronze’ to ‘Iron’ later in the process.

Please note though, that the Plan is meant to have a certain iterative and ongoing quality. Although we will ‘freeze’ the document at ‘Iron’, we will keep the document open for continued consultation and build a process to call for updates as needed or desired. It ought to be a Plan owned by the community, in which the community will also have a shared responsibility for its content, relevance and success.

Modifications to Document

We have made a number of edits to the document reflecting points of clarity and reasonable modifications, all of which will be clearly identified in the ‘Bronze’ document.
Important Questions

There were several themes that emerged through the forum discussions and email messages. We have consolidated the themes and phrased them in terms of questions for further development and potential inclusion in the final draft planning document.

Focused Authoring Groups

There were a few comments and discussions that clearly merit, even at this early stage of consultation, the development of content. As these areas have been identified by one or more contributor, we have reached out for participation to help craft new content.

ACTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Modifications to Document

The Educational Experience Plan support team have aggregated comments and suggestions that referred to specific line numbers and linked them within the document. This makes it easy to identify which parts of the document have received the most amounts of comment and to also read all of the comments on a topic together. We are referring to this document as the 'Feedback Summary (Straw)' document. The document can be downloaded from the Supporting Documents location at the following link https://open.usq.edu.au/course/view.php?id=202.

This document has been helpful when updating the ‘Straw’ document in preparation for the next round of consultation (‘Bronze’), and will also serve as documentation that clearly links the consultation feedback to the planning documents. The most commented topics includes:

1. Personalised Learning/Personal Learning
2. Digital and Information Fluency
3. Open Education/Openness
4. Blended Learning (virtual space and physical place and more…)
5. Professional Liberal Education (including graduate attributes)

Important Questions

- **Should we be focused on applying base-line web-design principles when designing and creating our web-based class assets?**

- **What is the role of professional development and training to attain the aspirations taking shape in the Educational Experience Plan, and what sorts of approaches should we consider?**

- **Given that it is probably possible to learn most things informally by accessing readily available content, why would students come to university for learning, personalised or not?**

  Question based on a discussion referring to “personalised learning services” as distinguished for “personal learning” and the value universities can provide to learners.

  **REFERENCE LINK:**

- **Can we identify some of the creativity and innovation killing “mythic assumptions?”**

  Question based on a discussion referring to the constraining nature of how technology is frequently treated. It is difficult to be innovative and creative when “mythic”
assumptions remain. That is, when we view a technology (not just ICT) as a static given.

**REFERENCE LINK:**

- **What does it mean to be an Educated Individual?**
  - What do we need to do, what investments need to be made, and how do we want to approach our commitment to ensuring that all of our graduates are expected to behave as an ‘educated individual’?
  - How do we harmonise attainment of general graduate attributes, disciplinary graduate attributes, and professional graduate attributes?

**Focused Authoring & Discussion Groups**

There were a number of topics that were refined to the point of needing some development and authorship for inclusion in the consultation document. The sections being developed will take place during the ‘Bronze’ phase and be available during this round of consultation for comment and inclusion in the ‘Iron’ phase.

The topics that rose to this level are a combination of definitions and capacity that needs to be developed at the University to support the Plan as currently constructed. Most of the comments were generally supportive of the approach and required refinement and clarification. Based on this initial round of consultation, we expect that although improved, the final planning document will have similar elements and commitments as the ‘Straw’.

Topics for development and authoring include:
- Personalised/Personal Learning
- Digital & Information Fluency (digital renovators, hackers, and openness to reduce cost of creativity & innovation)
- Blended Learning
- Flexibility

Although some more topics may develop organically, these are the ones that have emerged from consultation. We have reached out to invested individuals and they are willing to volunteer to develop the topic. This could involve leading a discussion and drafting content. Confirmed volunteers include:


The 2014 Horizon Report for Australian Tertiary Education (Johnson, Adams Becker, Cummins, & Estrada, 2014) lists the limited “digital fluency of lecturers and professors” (p. 3) as the top-ranked challenge facing Australian tertiary education. With all due respect to the folk behind this report, I would suggest that there are some related, but broader challenges, including:

1. The digital fluency (assuming you define this as more than using social media effectively) of most senior and middle management at universities is not what I would call significant.
2. The "enterprise information systems" practices widely adopted by most universities have not necessarily kept up with the technological changes occurring in broader society.
3. Leading to the situation that universities still haven't effectively figured out how to provide an environment in which digitally fluent academics could thrive, innovate and be creative.

If USQ can become a digitally fluent institution, it will probably be well on its way to achieving its stated plans.

MODIFICATIONS

Based on general feedback we have identified the need for several modifications to the document. The most important modifications include:

1. Clarity about the role of physical space
2. Additional examples of Strategic Initiatives in Section 8 (‘Straw’ document, Section 9 in the ‘Bronze’ document)
3. Additional clarity about the importance of the professions
4. Additional clarity about the importance and impact of professional accreditation
5. Indications of where additions need to be inserted.
6. Inclusion of general sentiments for working within the context of the University and within reason and common sense. For example, where we need to retain professional accreditation, we will harmonize accreditation requirements with strategy, moving forward with good sense, but in ways best aligned with University strategy.
7. More clarity around diversity and personalisation being a theme/thread.
8. Including ways of acquiring and exhibiting knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the coming weeks we need to:

- Include some content more specific to Learner support. (Students & Communities)
- Include some content more specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education practice and capacity.
- Elicit ‘Divisional’ response to the ‘Bronze’ document outlining how it relates to the Divisional Annual Plans. (VCC)
- Include a base-line learning model that captures values of a) active learning, b) engagement, c) blended design and pedagogy, and d) social and teaching presence supporting continuous improvement around KPIs. (Educational Committee Working Group – Associate Deans, Teachers, and Learning & Teaching Service team members).

Professor Ken Udas
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Services) & CIO