Learning Matters

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Curtin Academy Fellowship Nominations - Now Open

The Curtin Academy is an active honorary network of exceptional leaders committed to the collaboration and dissemination of teaching excellence at Curtin. The Curtin Academy aims to provide strategic leadership and advice in learning and teaching and scholarly teaching/scholarship of teaching.The Academy fosters innovation, development and enhancement of teaching excellence and provides an independent, learned voice to advocate on behalf of learning and teaching and create opportunities for teachers to interact and share scholarship and/or learning and teaching ideas.

Currently Curtin has 15 Curtin Academy Fellows - outstanding staff recognised for their leadership in learning and teaching. The 2016 Curtin Academy Fellowship round opened on **11 July 2016 and closes on16 September 2016.** Nominations are called for academic staff who demonstrate leadership in learning and teaching at the University-wide level or broader. Nominations can be made in four different pathways: by nomination by Faculty or School; self-nomination; by invitation from the Curtin Academy Executive; or by open nomination. Nominations are then assessed by an independent selection panel chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and selected according to the selection criteria.

Guidelines, information sheet and nomination forms are available from the Curtin Academy website. Any queries can be directed to clt@curtin.edu.au

Success with Team Diversity

Curtin Business School Lecturer Janet Sutherland's approach to English Language Proficiency (ELP) and cross-cultural facilitation is proving highly successful. Janet sees differences in English language proficiency and cultural backgrounds as opportunities to enrich collaborative learning and expand understanding of local and global diversity.

Janet's teaching philosophy is influenced by her own prior experience with cross-cultural facilitation in an international organisation dealing with over 60 countries. That experience informed her development of an AusAID leadership program at Curtin that dealt with 64 countries. One of her AusAID workshops had over 30 nationalities in one room! Janet also draws on the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Feire, an advocate of critical pedagogy and author of the influential work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972), to create inclusive environments in which teacher and learners are co-creators of knowledge.

"Using information from a written and spoken PELA to create student teams delivered the best outcomes we've ever had."

A first step in understanding student language ability was to work with CBS Faculty English Language Development Coordinator, Chris Symons, to administer a Post Entry Language Assessment (PELA). Because the ability to facilitate and present are important elements of learning and teaching in Janet's Postgraduate units, Chris also assessed a spoken PELA for Janet. Delivery and assessment of a spoken PELA is a first for Curtin and it is great to see academic staff taking advantage of the many resources available in the ELP space.

"It's important to understand students' language abilities and create teams that exploit a diverse range of culture, work experience and language."

In one of Janet's Master-level units, students encounter varying interpretations of challenging nomenclature through academic literature, practice literature and course content. Students develop understanding of correct terminology through team presentations, thereby demonstrating understanding of content in relation to context. Such assessments also afford students opportunities to demonstrate how they manage diversity within their teams.

"I was very explicit about what I was doing and the way I was working. A key focus was to be very explicit about English language requirements, both generically and specifically within the context of unit content."

By working with offshore instructors in Singapore and Mauritius to customise content, and extrapolating assessment tasks into international contexts, student teams were provided with opportunities to demonstrate understanding of the challenges of global diversity for businesses. Importantly, students managed diversity within their own teams to demonstrate the required level of English language proficiency and awareness of cultural context to facilitate and present the business solutions they had created.

If you would like to learn more about Janet's approach she can be contacted in the School of Management at Janet.Sutherland@curtin.edu.au If you are looking for general information on English language development or embedding ELP in the curriculum please contact the English Language Proficiency Advisor, Stu Knox in the Curtin Learning and Teaching Course Quality Team at S.Knox@curtin.edu.au

Building Partnerships with Innovative Schools

A High Achieving Student Strategy has been developed by Learning Futures, Curtin Learning and Teaching to attract students within and beyond Western Australia, build deep relationships with Schools, offer exclusive access to opportunities for innovative students and create accelerated learning opportunities for high achieving students.

The Innovative Schools Consortium (ISC) is one of the initiatives that is building partnerships with schools that demonstrate high levels of innovation and wish to build stronger relationships with Curtin. Memoranda of Agreement are currently being developed, which outline the mutual benefits of the partnership and include the development and transformation of learning and teaching, and identification and development of high achieving students that are likely to succeed at university. There is capacity to tailor each agreement to meet the particular needs of each individual school, providing a unique opportunity for the school to reflect its own values and approach through the innovative partnership with Curtin.

Scotch College is the first school to confirm its commitment to the Consortium. Teachers and senior leaders from Scotch College together with academic and professional staff across Curtin, recently participated in a three-day Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum think-tank. Curtin hosted the event with Australian curriculum expert Dr Scott Sleap, Program Director at Regional Development Australia (Hunter Region). The workshop was held in the Cisco Internet of Everything Centre, and brought together senior teachers to develop a new Year 9 STEM subject curriculum. Participants came away with a framework for a new elective that asks year nine students to use STEM to explore drone technology as a solution to real-life issues. The curriculum is the first joint initiative which recognises the commitment of tertiary and secondary educators to identify and support talented students through innovation in learning and teaching.

Through the ISC, Curtin is playing an active role in creating community impact, leading organisational change, expanding curricula and increasing educational opportunities for teaching staff and promising youth. Strategically, the ISC supports Curtin's remit to provide innovative, creative and entrepreneurial education, offer personalised and interactive learning experiences at scale, and equip graduates with the skills and attributes that will support lifelong learning and enhance employability.

Other initiatives of the High Achieving Student Strategy to note are:

- The Achievement Centred Engagement for Students (ACES) program; and

- The Scholarships for High Achievement and Performance Engagement (SHAPE).

Scotch College students will benefit from the ACES program through a suite of co-developed workshops, seminars, academies and summer camps building strengths in innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. Students in the ACES program will then be able to build a record of achievement in recognised entry pathways and contribute to accelerated entry into Curtin. These opportunities are open to any innovative school that wishes to partner with Curtin through joining the ISC.

To find out more about this exciting partnership contact: Dr Melissa Langdon, Manager of Partnerships and Pathways at Melissa.Langdon@curtin.edu.au from Curtin Learning and Teaching, Learning Futures.

Turnitin Upgrade

Learning Technologies Support (LTS), Curtin Learning and Teaching will be conducting an upgrade to Turnitin Direct and Turnitin Basic plug-ins on 17 July 2016 in preparation for Semester Two. These upgrades are taking place to improve the stability and performance of the Turnitin building blocks within the Blackboard environment and will ensure a better user experience for both academics and students using the product. The upgrades do NOT add any new features or functionality to Turnitin but address bugs and provide updates.

As a part of the upgrade process, the Turnitin Direct assignment will be made the default assignment type available to staff when creating an assignment within Blackboard. This will streamline the Turnitin products offered and will remove support of Turnitin Basic from 2017. This will simplify the processes for staff by only having one standardised version.

In regards to product functionality there is no difference between Turnitin Basic and Turnitin Direct (though Direct is more feature rich) - so this should have a minimal impact on academic users, however, Turnitin Basic assignments will need to be recreated using the Turnitin Direct assignment tools in Blackboard (refer to the Turnitin Guide provided to Unit Coordinators).

Turnitin Basic will still be available for use by academic users but will need to be requested directly via the Learning Technology Support Team. Please note that Grademark is not required to be use with Turnitin Direct.

Further information will be disseminated to all Unit Coordinators with an updated Turnitin guide – including practical 'How To' guides on setting up assignments. For any assistance or queries contact the IT Self Service Portal, selecting the *Learning and Teaching Systems Requests*.

Universal Design in the Curriculum

Curtin received a $25,000 grant from the WA Disability Commission for the University to produce educational resources around the subject of Universal Design – Liveable Homes. The aim is, once produced, that these resources will be utilised in teaching within Curtin courses and in the wider public arena so that Universal Design becomes "best practice" (and "best design") rather than the need to retrofit the built environment to provide greater accessibility. The hope is that graduates of Curtin will be better placed to understand and apply the concepts of Universal Design, particularly those within disciplines that deal with builtform (planners, architects, construction managers etc) and/or those that may need to "meet" the needs (health professionals) of those in our communities that need different requirements around access.

This is a significant Universal Design project and is the result of discussions with the Disability Services Commission over the last two years. The resources will benefit students across the University (eg Design, Architecture, Occupational Therapy, etc) learning about Universal Design principles in order to support the Liveable Homes initiative developed by the Housing Industry Association et al in conjunction with the Disability Services Commission.

The project will be managed by Mrs Julie Brunner, OUA Academic Program Manager from Curtin Learning and Teaching, who has a discipline background in Built Environment. If further information is required, please contact Julie at J.Brunner@curtin.edu.au

Learning Futures Team Profile

The **Learning Futures Directorate** in Curtin Learning and Teaching led by Associate Professor David Gibson is comprised of three key areas: **Learning Futures, Partnerships and Pathways** and **UniReady**.

Partnerships and Pathways develops and maintains articulation agreements and creates new internal and external partnerships with a focus on high achieving students as well as learning and teaching.

UniReady provides expanded pathways to University for a wide range of students - we will focus on Kathy Lawson's UniReady Team in a following edition as they are currently busy with Boards of Examiners and enrolments.

The **Learning Futures Team** assists Faculty by exploring digital learning experiences, investigating innovation in educational technology such as the Challenge platform for gamified individual and team-based open-ended problem-solving, and promoting staff and student entrepreneurship, attracting and retaining students through collaborative partnerships, and the use of learning analytics.

Dr Melissa Langdon is the Manager of Partnerships and Pathways. Melissa works within the Learning Futures Team to develop and strengthen strategic learning relationships with diverse stakeholders including schools, training providers, museums and other cultural institutions. She engages and collaborates with academics and professional staff to identify and implement educational partnerships and pathways. Initiatives include the new High Achieving Students strategy with program and scholarship incentives for strengthening school-to-university connections, increasing options for high achieving students at Curtin and expanding articulation agreements. Melissa's email address is: Melissa.Langdon@curtin.edu.au

Dr Leah Irving is Project Manager and her position bridges the technical and business perspectives of the Challenge Platform connecting the Digital Futures (strategic projects) with Learning Futures (Curtin Learning and Teaching). Leah manages the ongoing functional and strategic develop of Challenge*. She liaises with the broader Curtin community to embed existing Challenges in curricula and to ideate new Challenges for learning and teaching across Curtin discipline areas. In collaboration with the Challenge team Leah develops new Challenges for curricula, co-curricula and outreach learning engagement. Leah's email address is: L.Irving@curtin.edu.au

* Challenge is a digital learning platform supporting individual and team-based learning via gamified, challenge-based, open-ended, inquiry-based learning experiences that integrate automated feedback and rubric-driven assessment capabilities. The Challenge platform is an integral component of Curtin's digital learning environment along with Blackboard Learning Management system.

Mr Kim Flintoff is Learning Futures Advisor and his work includes tracking trends in global developments in technology influencing education; contributing to the Education theme of the Curtin Institute for Computation; coordinating the Eco Challenge Australia water and sustainability game for schools; exploring digital badges and alternate credentials, and mobile learning; co-developing programs and strategies for ACES (high achieving students) and Innovative Schools Consortium, as well as consulting with schools and sectors around STEM, digital technologies, makerspaces, contemporary pedagogy; management of Innovation Studio activity when required. Kim's email address is: K.Flintoff@curtin.edu.au

Ms Katy Scott is a Digital Learning Coordinator. Katy creates educational online games and apps for students and staff, which involve lots of writing, researching, designing, testing, promoting and evaluating. She's also a front end developer and a web content writer/strategist and focuses on building streamlined websites that aim to deliver the best possible experience to the user. Katy is working on the Quest Games which are designed to help prospective students understand what it is like to study online or at a University campus and how to decide on a career path. When she gets a spare moment Katy designs communication and promotional materials for various CLT and Curtin AHEAD initiatives. Katy's email address is: Katy.Scott@curtin.edu.au

Any further information on specific initiatives can be provided by the individual team member or alternatively contact Associate Professor David Gibson on David.C.Gibson@curtin.edu.au

National Teaching Awards Submissions

Although the Office for Learning and Teaching ceased operating on 30 June 2016, the 2016 round of Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) in three categories continued as planned.

From July 2016, the Australian Government will redirect funding from Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PELTHE) to fund awards through the Australian Awards for University Teaching program for national recognition of excellence and innovation in learning and teaching.

This year, 13 nominations have been submitted from Curtin:

- Five for Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning;

- Two for Programs that Enhance Student Learning; and

- Six for Awards for Teaching Excellence have been submitted.

The outcome of the Citations is likely to be announced in September 2016, the Programs and Teaching Excellence Awards in November, with a national awards ceremony planned for December 2016.

Associate Professor Vanessa Chang
Acting Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
15 July 2016