

## A RISK WORTH TAKING – LEADING A DIVERSE AND DISPARATE TEAM TO ACHIEVE

### SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Blowing glass and forging iron – can both create masterpieces or cause serious damage. However, many artisans over centuries have lived on the edge believing balancing the risks of disaster against the possible rewards is a risk worth taking. Leading the MyLO Project has involved working with challenging stakeholder groups and while there have been failures there have been significant successes. This presentation will look at the approaches taken; what has succeeded and where disaster, has sometimes been narrowly avoided.

The MyLO Project (the project) was established to implement a replacement Learning Management System (LMS) for the University of Tasmania (UTAS). In stage one of the project a comprehensive program of research, consultations and evaluations around three potential replacements was commended by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in its March 2012 audit report

([http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/auditreport\\_utas\\_2012.pdf](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/auditreport_utas_2012.pdf)).

“The University of Tasmania is commended for its inclusive approach in determining the operational needs and usability requirements of staff and students for its new learning management system.” This commendation, together with the objectives and aspirations of the project and the expectations of the Council and senior management of the university, set the standards very high for the implementation stage of the MyLO Project. The university expects that the implementation of the Desire2Learn (D2L) Learning Suite at UTAS will support Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching (TELT) by providing a core online learning and teaching environment that is robust, reliable and intuitive to use, and that integrates seamlessly with current services. The new LMS will be adaptable, facilitating a full range of learning and teaching approaches, disciplines and contexts, and will offer scope to support external partnerships. The system will evolve as new learning and teaching needs and opportunities arise.

Since University Council approved the original project, the strategic learning and teaching environment has evolved in ways that necessarily have impact upon the context in which the LMS will be implemented. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students and Education), Professor David Sadler, has led the development of a renewed vision for learning and teaching at UTAS. The Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan 2012-2014 ([http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/268160/Learning-and-Teaching-Strategic-Plan.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/268160/Learning-and-Teaching-Strategic-Plan.pdf)) under objectives 1.2, 2.1 and 3.3, articulates objectives and rationales

for the learning and teaching environment in which the LMS will be implemented and informs the learning and teaching deliverables of the project.

In stage one, a statement of aspirations was developed, and included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and its component parts were informed by a range of institutional research and strategic objectives. They have also been updated to align with the Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan 2012-2014, and are reproduced below.

### Aspirations

The MyLO Project will implement an LMS that is:

- a) robust, reliable, usable and integrated with current TELT services
  - b) adaptable, facilitating a full range of learning and teaching approaches, disciplines and contexts, and offering scope to support leading edge pedagogical innovation
  - c) commensurate with UTAS's commitment to excellence in learning and teaching and the delivery of a distinctive student experience
- and supports the following outcomes/objectives and/or is in concert with other projects and initiatives that aim to:
- d) improve access and flexibility of study for students, thereby supporting UTAS's aspirations for social inclusion and growth in student numbers
  - e) add value to and enhance the learning experience for all students, including those who study principally in a face-to-face mode
  - f) support a blended mode of delivery, including fully online degree courses
  - g) broaden the reach of UTAS courses to allow for delivery into more national and international markets
  - h) develop educational partnerships within UTAS, as well as in the wider community, including among schools, state and federal governments, other higher education institutions and international bodies
  - i) increase the level of work-based learning and formal internships within programs, including postgraduate coursework offerings
  - j) expand awareness and use of learning technology to support students and staff, and maximise the return on investment from current systems
  - k) systematically identify opportunities to embed online learning in existing student support, transition and information literacy programs and other quality initiatives
  - l) establish a minimum online presence for every undergraduate and postgraduate unit
  - m) implement improved systems and workflows to support online assignment submission, handling and feedback with a view to making this facility much more widely used
  - n) recognise current modes of study and engagement with technology by introducing online Student Evaluations of Teaching and Learning (SETL)

- o) systematically investigate current practice at UTAS, and within the sector, to develop quality guidelines, standards and evaluation schemes for online learning and teaching and
- p) develop open education resources (OER).

Are these aspirations too ambitious for the only university in an island State of approximately 500,000 people?

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