

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Unit: Centre for Teaching and Learning
Date: January 28th, 2010

Section One: Contributions to the University Strategic Plan

GOAL: A1 - Promote and reward the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, public service, and administration. Make the University widely known for excellence in all its activities.

Objectives:

1. To support, promote and celebrate excellence in teaching in face-to-face classroom environments and in alternative delivery environments (e.g., online, video conference, televised). Better teaching will impact student retention. (B2)

Actions:

- Support—through regular workshops, small group sessions, programs etc a variety of approaches/methodologies/strategies for good teaching in all teaching environments.
 - Promote—take a lead on—structuring occasions for demonstrating new teaching approaches, new tools, new resources that can be effectively used in teaching—and which promote sound pedagogy.
 - Celebrate—
 - work with faculties and Deans Council to revise Criterion Documents to more effectively recognize and reward effective teaching; work with all instructors to recognize, seek and collect appropriate evidence of effective teaching; work with tenure and promotion committees to review annual forms and to understand and recognize indicators of effective teaching (B5)
 - work with potential teaching award winners to compile effective dossiers, help with the award application process, hold special events to share and celebrate award winners (e.g., 3M, Graduate Teaching Awards, Garth Ferguson), and otherwise publicize excellence through our journal, on You Tube and other means (B5; C1)
 - Create regular postings in the public domain (e.g., Leader Post page, You Tube videos, UR report, Alumni journal, etc) (C1)
2. To explore and conduct research on emerging/new media (tools, resources and delivery formats) and to inform our stakeholders—and the general public as to the efficacy of our findings. (C1)

Actions:

- research focused on informing teaching and learning (C1)
- research into alternative 'spaces' for teaching and learning (physical and virtual) (B3)
- research student learning characteristics (B2)
- create a demonstration/experimental classroom (B3)
- research alternative delivery formats and blended environments where various technologies can occur together (e.g., lecture casting, web or video conferencing, live streaming, f2f contact with students) to determine the best 'fit' of technologies

for each class. This can help with large enrolment classes and existing classroom space issues. (A6)

- establish research relationships with other units on campus (e.g., Computer Science—iphone apps; Engineering) (B4)
- disseminate research through regular f2f seminars/workshops, through provincial, national and international conferences, and through an online open source, peer-reviewed journal (C1)

A2 - Reaffirm our historic commitment to the liberal arts and sciences.

Objectives:

1. To advise on and collaborate with the Distance Learning Division and the Faculty of Nursing on Arts and Science courses in alternative delivery formats for the new Nursing Program—offerings to large groups of nursing students (e.g., English, Stats, Microbiology). (A3; A4; A6; B1)
2. To advise on and collaborate with the Distance Learning Division, Federated colleges, and First Nations University to determine complete programs and/or specializations that can be offered through flexible learning opportunities to meet learning needs of students. Especially, work with KHS and the Nursing Program to determine which courses and which delivery format is most appropriate for Nursing students. Explore flexible learning delivery programs. (A3; A4; A6; B1)

A3 - Align our array of program offerings to respond to the needs and interests of current and prospective students.

Objective:

Create a wide array of program opportunities in alternative and flexible delivery formats to attract students from different demographics.

Actions:

- work with the new Nursing program in collaboration with DLD, KHS, SIAST, and First Nations University, to plan, demonstrate, and implement alternative delivery opportunities for Arts and Science courses in the new Nursing program. (A2; A4; A6; B1)
- work with DLD and all faculties and Federated Colleges to determine program gaps and assist them in offering a complete Arts degree through distance/alternative delivery formats. (A6; B1)
- advise on and support credit articulation with other institutions to enable CTL/DLD in collaboration with the faculties to create a rich, interdisciplinary array of courses available through multiple institutions (both in and beyond SK). (A6)
- with DLD, actively advocate for and support PLAR as non-traditional learners will increasingly come to the university—or wish to take our distance options. (B2)
- promote service learning and community service learning—through seminars outlining its purpose—and then through working with different units, assist in creating SL and CSL opportunities for students (B2; B3)
- work with co-op programs and support alternative assessments/supervision (e.g., through Flip Cam, web conferencing, etc)—connect students to the field—less travel (B2; B3)

A4 - Enhance the University's distinctive programming and research profile. Capitalize on our research successes to benefit the institution, researchers, and our students.

Objective:

CTL will work to become a Centre for Research Excellence in Teaching, teaching that is actively researched (SoTL), actively disseminated through presentations and through our new online open source peer-reviewed journal. (A1; C1)

Actions:

- Some research that we will engage in:
 - Turnitin
 - Wii
 - Learning characteristics of today's students
 - New ways of teaching, with and without technology
 - Appropriate 'fit' of technologies and methods to the class content and students
 - New concepts in learning space design (LSD) for physical and virtual learning spaces
 - Lecture capture systems
 - Clicker system and use of cellphones for this purpose

A5 - Make the University a leader in environmental responsibility. Put sustainability at the core of our teaching, research, and campus life.

Objective:

Promote sustainable teaching practices (A1; A6)

Actions:

- guide instructors in teaching in sustainable ways—to minimize carbon footprint (e.g., UR Courses site for all courses; syllabus, notes, powerpoints etc posted to site—less paper)
- work with Facilities Management in the design of effective learning spaces that have a minimum carbon footprint; advise on “thin-client” technology (B3)

A6 - Take a programmatic approach to distributed teaching and learning.

Objective:

With reference to “popular alternatives for both on-campus students...” if we don't take responsibility for this we will lose a big opportunity to be relevant. It isn't going to be a popular alternative, it WILL be the future. Already alluded to in A1, A2, A3, and A4, CTL needs to be responsive to the needs of all students taking U of R courses.

Actions:

- work with DLD, the faculties, and Federated colleges to identify and create possibilities for students to complete programs through alternative modes of delivery
 - advise on the most appropriate courses to be launched in an alternative delivery format and advise on completing program gaps
 - advise on and create opportunities to demonstrate appropriate alternative delivery formats and appropriate technology for use in these classes
- collaborate with SIAST and U of S with respect to credit transfer opportunities

- advise Social Work of the most effective alternative delivery formats for use in their blended classes
- work with the new Nursing program in collaboration with DLD, KHS, SIAST, and First Nations University, to plan, demonstrate, and implement alternative delivery opportunities for Arts and Science courses in the new Nursing program. (A2; A4; A6; B1)

B. OUR PEOPLE: ENGAGEMENT, DIVERSITY, SUCCESS, AND ESTEEM

B1 - Build long-term relationships with First Nations and Métis communities.

Objective:

Through Campus Saskatchewan (which will close as of March 31st) CTL has had an affiliated partnership with all of SK's publicly-funded post-secondary institutions. We have build a relationship and have credibility. This will continue. CTL will continue this relationship through the following: (link to C2)

Actions:

- the new Nursing Program (collaborating with First Nations University, SIAST, and U of S) wrt courses, delivery formats, online resources
- create opportunities to learn about and effectively use a growing sophisticated provincial video-conference infrastructure—through appropriate teaching/learning workshops
- work closely with First Nations University and their TEL office in course/program planning wrt alternative/flexible delivery offerings for FN students—and for all students
- work with First Nations elders to identify aboriginal epistemologies that can be integrated into teaching/learning environments
- support First Nations instructors in adapting their teaching to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse learners—in ALL modalities

B2 - Make the transition into university seamless; enhance accessibility and flexibility; expand early-awareness and transitional programming; and ensure that appropriate supports are in place for students with special needs.

Objective:

- CTL does not work directly with undergraduate students but does work with faculties to support, promote and celebrate excellence in teaching, in all of its delivery formats. Effective teaching should have an impact of student engagement and eventually on student retention.

Actions:

- create a wide array of programs/courses available in alternative delivery formats (A6) to enable students who cannot, for economic (or other) reasons, physically come to campus
- work with Student Affairs to enable and support them as they work with writing and math support, create an online version of Univ. 101
- conduct research on Turnitin (especially as a writing tool) (A1)
- help instructors better understand principles of student academic misconduct and plagiarism (in order for them to help students understand these concepts)

- work with DRO to provide support to faculty with respect to teaching accommodations for students with special learning needs
- create a UR Courses practice course in order for students to feel comfortable with the CMS platform
- work with IS and DLD to create better UR Courses' support for students—outside of normal working hours
- conduct research on the characteristics of today's students to gain a better understanding of their learning needs (A1)
- conduct research into learning space design (LSD) and promote/disseminate this research (sometimes inbetween spaces—e.g., hallways where students naturally gather and learn) to Deans Council, Facilities Management, etc (B3)
- work with instructors to create a special UR Course for use in high schools, to enable students to attain some university credit while still in school. This course may need a different design/look-feel to make it more appealing to high school students.

B3 - Improve the university experience for students, promote their wellbeing, and foster a stronger campus community and spirit. Provide more scholarship and bursary support, and allocate the funding necessary to attract and retain highly qualified graduate students.

- For CTL B3 relates in part to B2—especially regarding learning space design—where do students naturally gather and talk, work, read, learn etc.

B4 - Increase our administrative efficiency and enhance productivity.

Objectives:

1. Work with DLD and the university administration to implement recommendations from the Distance Education Task Force
 - For the past 3 years CTL has had a two-fold mission, part of which was to engage in the provincial TEL initiative. This will continue, but with a much stronger focus on teaching and learning and less on the actual ID and GM work involved in full online courses.
 - CTL will move more in the direction of blended course development work, courses that require an online repository, resource bank etc
 - CTL will be responsible for researching, advising and implementing pedagogically sound alternative format tools and resources (e.g., lecture capture system; cellphone clicker system, iphone teaching apps, itunes university content repository, video-conference, etc)
2. CTL will continue to be engaged in the work of supporting all instructors in their efforts to improve their teaching, capture and collect evidence on their teaching, prepare for and (hopefully) attain awards/merit/recognition for their teaching, and celebrate teaching successes. (A1)
3. CTL will inform high-level discussions that take place around major infrastructure expenditures. Our knowledge of the many and widely varied applications of learning technologies can lead to highly creative solutions to both administrative and Facilities Management problems. (B3)
4. Regarding, "...do not unnecessarily hinder the productivity of faculty and staff." we should work very hard to enhance the teaching/learning experience in a manner that increases enjoyment while reducing time (A1)
5. Create CTL kiosks like cell phone kiosks in a mall, high profile and quick service—in physical and virtual spaces.

B5 - On a foundation of positive and open employee relations, provide freedom and opportunity for faculty and staff to excel, be esteemed, and be recognized.

Objective

- CTL is an open, trusting, caring environment where strengths are recognized and built on and where we share ideas openly, collaborate on projects and treat each other with respect and dignity.
- Links with A1: awards, profiles, faculty recognition, reduce process of tedium, freedom and opportunity for staff and faculty to excel.

B6 - Continue to build a friendly, diverse, safe, and welcoming campus that respects work-life balance and pays particular attention to the marginalized, the vulnerable, people with disabilities, and the disadvantaged.

Objectives:

- work with DRO to best meet the needs of not only students with disabilities, but also students with accessibility problems—in f2f and virtual environments (the Disability Office needs to be renamed the Accessibility Office, greatly staff-enhanced, and tied to CTL). (B2)
- work with/advise the student support office (helpdesk) which needs to be rationalized and enhanced. 7-11/7 coverage at a fully capable and responsive help-desk for supported technologies is a bare minimum.
- Regarding, “We will take measurable steps to enhance those aspects of campus life, and will promote a healthy work-life balance for all who work and study here” focus on flexibility with portable work/learning environment that allows life and work to mix in a most complementary way. CTL will research and advise on these kinds of environments. This should be a recruitment tool if we have a real focus on family.

C. OUR COMMUNITIES: PRESENCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

C1 - Raise the profile and increase the presence of the University regionally, nationally, and internationally. Promote community involvement of University personnel by redoubling our efforts to showcase the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and administration.

Objectives:

- Work with External Relations and the community to showcase examples of excellence in teaching (faculty and graduate students). (A1)
- Promote CTL as a centre for excellence in research on teaching and also promote a new journal, called _____ that will showcase examples of excellence in teaching (with and without technologies). (A1)
- Promote the work of CTL and the focus on teaching (and research on teaching) at local, provincial, national and international events—this will raise the U of R teaching profile. (A1)
- Work with other institutions in the collaboration and implementation of OOL (Orientation to Online Learning). (A1; A6)
- Work with recruitment personnel to help them optimize their use of technologies in their recruitment efforts in Saskatchewan and abroad.
- Support the creation of introductory online classes (both credit and non-credit) for students from afar - especially from India and China.
- Work with DLD and the Faculties to carve out niche online learning markets

C2 - Enhance collaboration with and among First Nations University of Canada, Campion and Luther Colleges, the Institut français, and the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Objectives:

- Continue to nurture existing strong connections with FNU, federated colleges, GDI and other provincial institutions through Campus Sask - TEL and SaskCAT
- Continue to seek collaborative partnerships for alternative program development and delivery.
- Develop a systematic delivery model for providing federated college Instructors with training in teaching with technology

C3 - Foster educational, research, and human resource development partnerships with other educational entities, businesses, professions and community groups.

Objective:

- Encourage and support not just networking opportunities but also concrete, project-based partnerships with SIAST's Instructional Designers and Graphics-media personnel