

Where to next for FULT? A background paper for the 2007 FULT review

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Foundations for University Learning and Teaching (FULT) is the first of a suite of three formal academic staff professional development programs at CSU¹.

Assoc. Professor Marian Tulloch, Director of CELT, has commissioned a review of the purpose, foci, conduct and administration of FULT. This document provides background to inform the review process.

The FULT program was last reviewed in 2005; however, two major changes have or are occurring within the University that make a further, more far-reaching review timely: a new institutional vision, and, from 2008, a new online learning environment:

- **a new institutional vision.** In 2006 the University adopted a new strategic plan, which declares that CSU is committed to becoming ‘a national university for excellence in education for the professions, strategic and applied research

¹ The three teaching development programs offered for CSU staff are described as follows in a promotional brochure for the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching:

‘The **Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT)**, offered by CELT, is a workshop and web-based program which provides a practical introduction to university teaching in a CSU context. Workshops are offered on several campuses during the first half of the autumn and spring sessions. FULT is targeted particularly at staff new to the academic environment including those from industry and the professions and casual academic staff.

‘The **Tertiary Teaching Colloquium (TTC)**, offered by CELT, is run as a series of campus-based sessions during the year and a joint two-day residential. The TTC, which is led by a range of experienced academic staff, aims to build on academics’ initial experience of university teaching by encouraging their development as reflective practitioners.

‘The **Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching** is a three-subject course offered by the Faculty of Education. Successful and certificated completion of the TTC with a small extra task gives proficiency credit for one subject, *EEL409 University Learning and Teaching*. Academic staff may complete the TTC concurrently with the other subjects but should indicate this on the Application for Admission form. Successful applicants will then receive Forward Credit (FCR) which will be converted upon successful completion of the TTC and certified documentation being forwarded to Student Administration. The rest of this paragraph refers only to those seeking credit for the TTC, and is not a requirement for entry to the course. The small extra task for TTC participants from 2006 onwards is a 1000-word paper reflecting on their learning from the TTC. Pre-2006 TTC participants should submit a 1000-word paper reflecting on their university teaching, which can include reference to teaching-active status, evaluations etc. These papers are to be submitted with the application form for the course.’

and flexible delivery of learning and teaching' (CSU 2006). CELT recognises that the University's teaching practices and culture leave an indelible mark on the quality of student learning and on course outcomes (or deliverables), and is committed to playing its part in the institutional transformation that will be required if CSU is to achieve its vision of being 'a national university for excellence in education for the professions'².

- **a new online learning environment.** *CSU Interact*, the University's instance of the Sakai community source learning management platform, will be launched in 2008. As subject coordinators become familiar with and confident in using Interact tools, CELT anticipates that subjects will be conceived and presented in new, more versatile and effective ways, *provided* that coordinators use the new technologies to achieve their teaching goals (rather than use technology simply because it's there).

The forthcoming review should aim to steer the FULT program such that it contributes to the realisation of this two-pronged vision. Two overarching questions thus frame the forthcoming review:

- The University seeks to transform the CSU teaching and learning culture in order to realise its vision of being a national university for excellence in education for the professions. How might FULT best equip new academic staff to play a constructive role in this change process?
- How might FULT best equip new academic staff to play their part in the University's thrust to become a national university for excellence in the flexible delivery of learning and teaching? In their own course and subject deliberations how will they advance that vision? How competent and creative do FULT participants need to be in the *CSU Interact* environment?

In a paper, *Professional development in learning and teaching: a framework*, the CELT Director identified the following objectives for the FULT review:

The aims of the review are to:

- assess the extent to which the current program is meeting the needs of the various target groups
- assess its articulation with the TTC
- evaluate the quality, currency and use made of online resources
- assess whether the pedagogical approaches used in FULT model good teaching practice
- assess the consistency of approach across campuses and the quality of supporting documentation provided to facilitators (Tulloch 2007).

Tulloch (2007) also offers the following description of principles to inform the review process:

It is recommended that the program should be conceptualised within a broader framework of continuous improvement that structures approaches to

² The University Strategy does not use the term 'transform', but in the writer's view the change envisioned in the document is so far-reaching and visionary that 'transformation' conveys the depth of change required.

leadership in teaching, provision of learning and teaching services, action research into teaching, teaching development and student learning.

The following principles are suggested to underpin the program development and implementation:

- developed in conjunction with stakeholders
- relationship building and task-oriented
- relevant and embedded (engage academic staff with the issues that they face in learning and teaching within a CSU context)
- authentic and outcome-oriented (engaged in meaningful tasks with outputs of value)
- collaborative and interactive not passive and transmissive
- transformative (challenge perceptions of university learning and teaching)
- facilitative (develop ongoing support for development in learning and teaching through professional communities of practice)
- challenging (CSU promote conversations about new ways of looking and doing)
- scholarly (supported by key literature around identified issues)
- exemplary (model good practice in facilitating learning)
- embedding technology support (use of CSU Interact)
- evaluative and reflective, develops in response to feedback.

The review process

The review will be conducted in three phases between now and December 2007. The first phase has already commenced: *seeking comment from interested parties*. These include recent participants, recent FULT presenters, heads of school and CELT staff. Coordinators of the TTC and GULT programs will also be invited to contribute. Comments received will be studied alongside participant feedback in 2007 FULT session evaluations.

The second phase will focus on *making sense of comment received* in the light of the review's two overarching questions and the aims of the review (see above). A meeting will be held between key contributors and CELT management to collate and interpret comment. Dr Jane Mitchell of the School of Teacher Education will act as critical observer at that meeting. A second meeting will be held to consider how FULT should be structured for the School of Policing Studies.

The third phase will be preparation of a report and recommendations to the Director of CELT by CELT's Acting Manager, Teaching Development. Major contributors to the earlier phases of the review will have opportunity to comment on the draft report before it is finalised.

An invitation

Any staff who have participated in FULT and any other staff who have particular responses to the overarching questions of this review are invited to send me comment – tmckenzie@csu.edu.au.

References

- Charles Sturt University (2006). *University strategy and plans 2007-2011*. Australia: CSU.
- Tulloch, M. (2007). Professional development in learning and teaching: a framework. CELT internal discussion document. Australia: Charles Sturt University.