



Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions

Final Report 2012

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List of acronyms used

AALL	Association for Academic Language and Learning
ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ERGA	Education Research group of Adelaide
FYE	First year experience
FYHE	First Year in Higher Education
MSLE	Monitoring student learning engagement
OLT	Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching

Executive summary

The commitment of institutions to students is a critical factor in retention—universities need to initiate, support and promote student personal, social and academic engagement, particularly for those students who face the greatest challenges in transition. Many Australasian universities are cognisant of the importance of this and several have adopted and implemented comprehensive strategies for monitoring student learning engagement (MSLE).

There is pressure on the higher education sector for wider participation and improved retention of students from social groups currently under-represented in the Australasian higher education sector. To be consistent with these national imperatives requires constructive alignment between on the one hand policy and practice aimed at widening participation and, on the other, efforts aimed at increasing the retention of these same students. Therefore activities designed to monitor student learning engagement must be founded on a philosophy of social justice and equity.

The principal aim of this project has been to lead the establishment of good practice for the Australasian higher education sector in monitoring student learning engagement. Therefore, the aim of this project has been to lead the design of a suite of resources to guide good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement that are consistent with the notions of equity and social justice. Specifically the objectives were to:

- Design and develop a set of guiding principles for MSLE, which will support an institutional leader implementation strategy by describing and explaining examples of good practice and making available a set of resources to support learning and teaching policy and practice for monitoring student engagement
- Design and develop a *Good Practice Guide* for MSLE that reflects the expertise of personnel in existing good practice programs.

The key outcomes of the project are:

Literature

- An annotated bibliography of relevant literature related to: perspectives of social justice; descriptive examples of the application of social justice to higher education and; national and international discussions about social justice and equity in higher education
- A full review and synthesis of the literature on social justice and higher education.

A good practice guide for safeguarding student learning engagement

- A *Good Practice Guide* that reflects the expertise of personnel in existing good practice programs; and is based on the guiding principles developed during the project. The guide describes and explains examples of good practice and makes available a set of resources to support learning and teaching policy and practice for initiatives that seek to monitor student learning engagement. The guide contains:
 - A set of social justice principles to guide institutional leaders and implementation strategies for monitoring student learning engagement activities

- A *Social Justice Framework* inclusive of the principles. This *Social Justice Framework* is expressed as a set of interconnected and co-dependent principles that are designed to safeguard the people and processes involved in monitoring student learning engagement
- A comprehensive examination of each principle inclusive of implications for MSLE programs and challenges and examples of good practice
- A series of eight case studies of each of the participating institution's MSLE activities
- A summary of the good practice examples as they relate to the principles
- A summary of artefacts that have been made available by the participating institutions for the *Good Practice Guide*.

A good practice website—Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement

[<safeguardingstudentlearning.net>](http://safeguardingstudentlearning.net)

- A project repository containing project information and the resources developed for the sector around safeguarding student learning engagement, specifically:
 - An overview of the project, participating members and dissemination activities
 - The *Social Justice Framework* and information on the set of social justice principles
 - The *Good Practice Guide* (downloadable as a whole document or as parts)
 - Eight institutional case studies (downloadable)
 - Good practice examples and artefacts (downloadable)
 - Blog site to continue and encourage ongoing dialogue in the sector.

A total of eight institutions with MSLE programs were involved in this project: Auckland University of Technology (FYE Program and START); Charles Sturt University (Student Success Team—SST); Curtin University (JumpSTART Program); Edith Cowan University (Connect for Success—C4S); QUT (Student Success Program—SSP); RMIT University (The Student Success Program); University of New England (Early Alert Program); University of South Australia (Enhancing Student Academic Potential—ESAP).

Recommendations for further work include:

- Application of the *Social Justice Framework* and examination of the principles to other aspects of higher education, including: learning analytics, the design and enactment of curriculum, HEPPP-funded projects and activities
- Applying the framework and principles to the design and implementation of forthcoming MSLE initiatives to be encapsulated as a series of case studies
- Using the framework to evaluate existing MSLE initiatives to identify areas for quality improvement.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
List of acronyms used	4
Executive summary.....	5
List of Figures	9
Chapter 1: Introduction	10
Overview.....	10
Rationale for the project	10
Project aims and objectives.....	11
Scope of the project	12
Chapter 2: Development of the Social Justice Framework	13
Annotated Bibliography.....	13
Literature Review	13
Chapter 3: Project approach.....	15
Project methodology	15
Project participation.....	16
Stakeholder engagement	17
Workshop design.....	19
Deliverables	20
Critical success factors and challenges.....	21
Chapter 4: Project outcome: The Good Practice Guide	23
Social justice principles and framework.....	23
Piloting the Good Practice Guide	24
Case studies	24
Exemplars and artefacts	25
Chapter 5: Project dissemination	27
Website.....	27
Conferences.....	27
Forums.....	27
Invited presentations	27
Good Practice Workshops 2012	28
Chapter 6: Project linkages.....	31
Chapter 7: Evaluation	33
Formative evaluation.....	33
Summative evaluation.....	33

Evidence of impact	33
Conclusion.....	35
References	36
Appendix 1: Workshop Schedules and Evaluations.....	38
Appendix 2: Social Justice Framework.....	45
Appendix 3: Evaluation Framework.....	48
Appendix 4: Evaluator’s Report	53

List of Figures

Figure 1: Modified Action Learning Approach

Figure 2: Overview of project approach

Figure 3: Project membership organisation

Figure 4: Conceptual model: A Social Justice Framework for good practice in safeguarding student learning engagement.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The project *Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions* commenced in late 2010 as a Competitive Grant with funding provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. The project is now overseen by the Office for Learning and Teaching within the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. The project was completed in December 2012.

The project was lead by QUT and comprised of the project team: Professor Karen Nelson, (project leader), Ms Tracy Creagh, (project manager) and Adjunct Professor John Clarke. Commencing in late 2010 the project invited a total of eight institutions across Australia and New Zealand (including QUT) who had either: existing programs and activities that monitored student learning engagement (MSLE); were in the early stages of implementing MSLE programs, or; who were piloting MSLE activities. As well, the project involved an advisory group and project evaluator comprising of academic and professional staff across two additional universities.

Rationale for the project

The concept of student engagement is a key factor in student achievement and retention and Australasian universities have a range of initiatives aimed at monitoring and providing supportive interventions for students who appear to be at risk of disengaging. In this project we refer to these initiatives as *monitoring student learning engagement (MSLE)*. Given the aspirations about widening participation, it is absolutely critical that MSLE initiatives are designed to enable success for all students, particularly those for whom social and cultural disadvantage have been a barrier. Consequently, these types of initiatives need to be consistent with the concepts of social justice and be guided by a set of principles that provide a philosophical foundation for MSLE program design and implementation.

The value to the sector of a project focused on leading the establishment and piloting of good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement is that it attends to the notion of social justice and equity and thus is aligned with and explicitly supports national imperatives for higher education reform. Additionally, the project has been a timely response to the widening participation imperative facing the sector which includes performance funding based on the participation and retention of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Accordingly, this project has produced a suite of practical resources to assist in safeguarding institutional MSLE activities.

Many international and Australasian universities have introduced a variety of specific initiatives aimed at monitoring and intervening with students who are at risk of disengaging. On the international scene, the most well-known intervention program is Purdue University's Signals project. Within Australasia, Auckland University of Technology (Australian Universities Quality Agency, 2007), the University of New England (Office for

Learning and Teaching, 2011) and Queensland University of Technology (Office for Learning and Teaching, 2012) have been recognised for their initiatives in this space.

Good practice in these types of retention initiatives is described by Coley and Coley (2010) as institutions that 'have determined a clear methodology to define and identify 'at-risk' students, to reach out to students with appropriate resources and support, and to track and monitor student engagement' (p. 6). Monitoring student learning engagement, therefore, involves the consolidation of existing corporate data with a range of descriptive and academic indicators including attendance, assessment submission details and participation in face-to-face and online activities. These types of early intervention strategies have been reported in first year experience literature and range from isolated case studies (e.g. Johnston, Quinn, Aziz & Kava, 2010; Potter & Parkinson, 2010) to reports of institution-wide programs (e.g. Carlson & Holland, 2009; Nelson, Quinn, Marrington & Clarke, 2011; Wilson & Lizzio, 2008).

Two examples of early intervention programs are illustrative of MSLE programs. The Signals project at Purdue University in the United States of America operates as an early warning of potential student attrition and actively demonstrates the potential of applying academic analytics with the provision of 'near real-time status updates of performance and effort in a course ... (providing) the student with detailed, positive steps to take in averting trouble' (Arnold, 2010, para. 5). The Student Success Program (SSP) at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia utilises a custom-built Contact Management System (CMS) to retrieve data available within other student systems and to import data from external sources. In the SSP,

Proactive highly individualised contact is attempted with all students identified as being at-risk of disengaging. A managed team of discipline-experienced and trained later year students employed as Student Success Advisors (SSAs) makes the outbound contact by telephone. ... When at-risk students require specialist support, the advisors refer them on (e.g. to library staff) or in some cases, manage the referral process with the student's permission (e.g. to a Counsellor).

(Nelson et al., 2011, p. 86)

Early evidence of the impact of the SSP has been documented (Nelson, Duncan, & Clarke, 2009). Nelson et al. (2011) provide qualitative and quantitative data that shows that the impact of the SSP interventions on student persistence has been sustained and has positively influenced student retention at the university (p. 83). Nevertheless, programs such as SSP and Signals, while actively monitoring student learning engagement, need to be mindful of the diverse student cohort and not make assumptions about the conditions that may lead to a student indicating as 'at risk'. Thus this project sought to develop a social justice framework to guide good practice in MSLE program design and enactment.

Project aims and objectives

The principal aim of this project has been to lead the establishment of good practice for the Australasian higher education sector in monitoring student learning engagement. Therefore, the aim of this project has been to lead the design of a suite of resources to guide good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement that are consistent with the notions

of equity and social justice. Specifically the objectives of the project were to:

- Design and develop a set of guiding principles for MSLE, which will support institutional leader implementation strategy by describing and explaining examples of good practice and making available a set of resources to support learning and teaching policy and practice for monitoring student engagement
- Design and develop a *Good Practice Guide* for MSLE that reflects the expertise of personnel in existing good practice programs.

Key outcomes of the project have been:

- A set of social justice principles to guide institutional leaders and implementation strategies for monitoring student learning engagement activities
- A *Good Practice Guide* that reflects the expertise of personnel in existing good practice programs; and is based on the guiding principles. The guide describes and explains examples of good practice and makes available a set of resources to support learning and teaching policy and practice for initiatives that seek to monitor student learning engagement
- A website accommodating the project deliverables and dedicated to MSLE good practice.

Scope of the project

In order to achieve the project aims and objectives the following activities were undertaken:

- The development of an annotated bibliography of relevant literature related to: perspectives of social justice; descriptive examples of the application of social justice to higher education and; national and international discussions about social justice and equity in higher education.
- A full review and synthesis of the literature on social justice and higher education.
- The development of a set of social justice principles.
- The development of *Social Justice Framework* inclusive of the principles. This Social Justice Framework is expressed as a set of interconnected and co-dependent principles that are designed to safeguard the people and processes involved in monitoring of student learning engagement.
- A comprehensive examination of each principle inclusive of implications for MSLE programs, challenges and examples of good practice.
- The development of a series of eight case studies on each of the participating institution's MSLE activities.
- The collection of a set of good practice examples that exemplify the principles in action.
- The collection of a set of artefacts made available by the participating institutions for use in the *Good Practice Guide*.
- The development and release of a website containing the project information and all of the resources developed for the sector for safeguarding student learning engagement.

Chapter 2: Development of the Social Justice Framework

In this project defining and developing a set of social justice principles was an essential foundation for developing guidelines for sector good practice. The framework arising from the principles needed to:

- reflect the notions of equity and social justice
- provide a strategic approach for safeguarding MSLE activities
- be supported by resources for practice in the sector.

The social justice principles and the framework are discussed comprehensively in Chapter 4. Fundamental to the development of the *Social Justice Framework* was undertaking a scoping activity in the literature—specifically around social justice issues in higher education. This was facilitated by the development of an annotated bibliography and literature review.

Annotated Bibliography

The annotated bibliography presents a summary of the literature accessed as part of the development of a literature analysis and synopsis for the project and includes a brief synopsis of 96 individual items including websites, journal articles, conference papers and presentations, book chapters, government and organisation reports and various media articles. The focus of the collection of literature was on perspectives of social justice, descriptive examples of the application of social justice to higher education and national and international discussions about social justice and equity in higher education. Relevant literature also focused on issues associated with participation in higher education, otherwise known as social inclusion or widening participation, and examples of activities designed to support and monitor student engagement. Not all of the references in the bibliography are included in the final literature analysis. Several references were utilised as points of interest or for further reference. The annotated bibliography is available on the project website at https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=97.

Literature Review

The aim of the literature review was to examine the literature on social justice and equity in the higher education sector in order to develop the set of social justice principles which form the foundation for the *Good Practice Guide* and resources. Principally, the review examines and defines ‘social justice’ and then applies this knowledge to monitoring student learning engagement in higher education. In this sense the analysis provides a starting point for understanding the theoretical underpinnings and issues related to social justice in higher education and provides the foundation for the formulation of a set of principles for guiding institutional policy and programs.

The literature on social justice and education exists in a complex domain that focuses on the development of society and the role of education in that process. Therefore, in order to

extrapolate a set of social justice principles it was necessary to first investigate the concept of social justice before examining the literature on social justice in education, and specifically higher education. Participation in higher education, from both an international and national perspective, with reference to the widening participation agenda in particular is discussed next in the literature review. Internationally, the issue of widening participation has mirrored policy developments determined by broad political and democratic movements for social or human rights. Finally, the review highlights recent discussions about social justice and equity in higher education, both in Australia and internationally and proposes a suite of themes (drawn from the literature) that are then used instructively in the formation of social justice principles.

A synopsis of the literature review forms part of the *Good Practice Guide* (Part 4). The full literature review has been made available on the project website at https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=97.

Chapter 3: Project approach

Project methodology

The overall approach to the project has been a participatory action learning project involving teams from eight Australasian higher education institutions being cooperatively engaged in the production of the theoretical and practical outcomes. The participatory action research model is summarised in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Modified Action Learning Approach

Project phases

It was envisaged that achieving the overall project aim (establishing and leading good practice for MSLE) would require three macro-level action cycles and that the activities within each of these will inform the others and overlap in terms of time. Within the project stage 1/year 1 of the project focused on cycles 1 and 2 to develop the social justice principles and the *Good Practice Guide* and stage 2 focused on cycle 3 which pilots the *Good Practice Guide*. Each of the three macro-level cycles relates to one of the objectives and deliverables and are summarised in Figure 2.

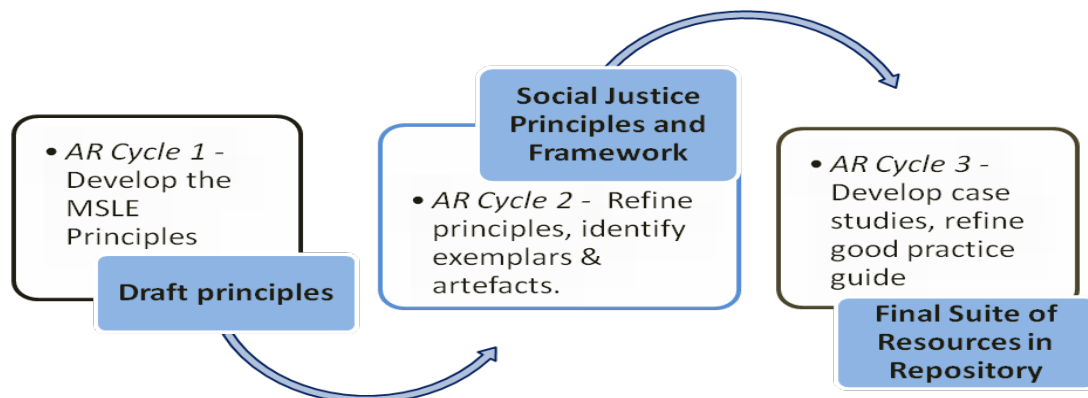


Figure 2: Overview of project approach

Project participation

The project invited domain experts from across the sector to form the advisory group: Mr John Carlson, Director of Student Services and Academic Register, Auckland University of Technology (2011); Mr Kitea Tipuna, Manager University Performance, Planning, Auckland University of Technology (2012); Professor Trevor Gale, Chair in Education Policy and Social Justice, Deakin University (formally National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education); Mr Victor Hart, formerly Queensland University of Technology; Ms Mary Kelly, Equity Director, Queensland University of Technology and Professor Beverley Oliver, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Learning Futures, Deakin University. The project team and advisory group met at strategic points throughout the project to inform the project’s direction and focus and to assist with the evaluation process.

Eight institutions, identified according to their involvement in MSLE activities, were invited to participate in the project with key representatives from each institution forming a working party. The working party consisted of staff members with responsibilities for student engagement within their own institutions. These working party members then formed working groups in each of their institutions bringing together both professional and academic staff involved in particular MSLE initiatives. Figure 3 details the project structure and organisation.

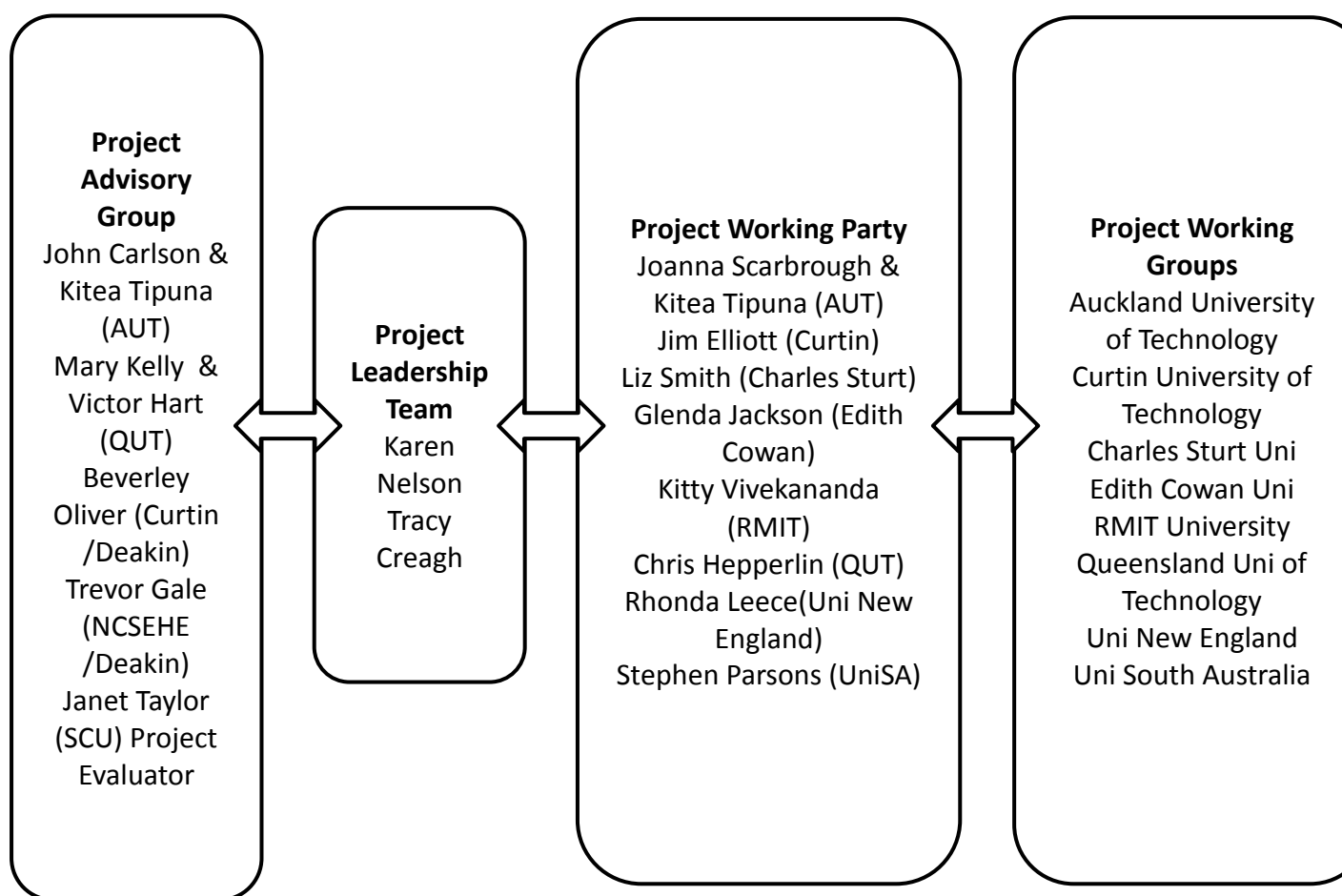


Figure 3: project membership organisation

Professor Janet Taylor from Southern Cross University was the project evaluator and was included in all advisory group meetings. Professor Taylor was also included in all correspondence with the working party members and provided formative feedback at key stages in the development of the *Social Justice Framework* and *Good Practice Guide*.

Stakeholder engagement

A principal focus of the project has been around the development of working relationships with the working party leaders and working groups, the advisory group and the project evaluator—who are the key project stakeholders. Logistical and organisational aspects of engagement activities have been a significant undertaking due to the dispersed nature of the members but this has also been a critical factor for maintaining the momentum of the project. This intensity of engagement will be crucial to the take up and dissemination of the project outcomes after the project concludes.

Advisory group and project evaluator

Phone meetings with the advisory group, including the evaluator, were organised twice yearly (four formal meetings over the life of the project). In addition to formal meetings the advisory group were provided with project reports and updates and received requests for feedback, specifically during the development of the *Social Justice Framework*. Monthly

progress reports were also made available to the advisory group members via a project wiki site (replaced in 2012 by the website, see Chapter 3: Critical success factors and challenges for further explanation). The planned approach to engagement with the project evaluator throughout the project, rather than at the completion, has proved beneficial. The action learning approach allowed for feedback to be incorporated into project activities during cycles and early, ongoing engagement with the evaluator as a critical friend has helped guide the project as well as providing objective advice to the project team.

Working party and working group

During cycle 1 (Developing the MSLE Principles) the project team engaged directly with the project's working party (project representatives from each of the eight participating institutions) in a full day workshop to explore the initial set of five social justice principles in relation to their own institutional MSLE activities and consider possible alignment and critical considerations for applying the principles. Data collected during this workshop resulted in the development of an early draft of the social justice principles, each accompanied by a rationale and description and a brief summary of the possible implications of the principle (for programs), as well as possible challenges relating to the principle.

Following this workshop the working party members were invited to form working groups in their own institutions to consider and discuss the principles in terms of their institution-specific MSLE activities and programs and to discuss the potential value of the principles within each institution's context. The working group members included both academic and professional staff directly engaged in MSLE activities and programs. These discussions were guided by a set of guiding questions including:

Which of these principles do you see are a part of your institution/program?

Which of these principles do you think your program could/should aspire to?

What challenges do you face in carrying out MSLE activities?

Each working group met for one or more meetings to review the social justice principles and provide feedback to the project team via the working party member. These comments, along with feedback gathered at three dissemination activities in 2011 (Critical Discussions about Social Inclusion Forum presented by the Association for Academic Language and Learning [AALL] at the University of Wollongong 10 June, 2011; 14th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education [FYHE] Conference held in Fremantle, WA, 28 June – 1 July, 2011; 6th ERGA Conference, Adelaide, SA, 28–30 September, 2011) were collated to draft an interim Social Justice Framework for safeguarding student learning engagement inclusive of the social justice principles and descriptors and a conceptual model summarising the principles and the relationship between them.

Cycle 2 involved the development of the *Good Practice Guide*. The development and drafting of the *Good Practice Guide* was a result of the data collected via the working party members in cycle 1 and the feedback from the cycle 1 dissemination activities and the advisory group. As the major output of the project it contains the social justice principles, the *Social Justice Framework*, case studies, examples of good practice and accompanying artefacts.

This cycle also saw the launch of the project website [Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement](#) specially developed to facilitate public dissemination of the *Good Practice Guide* and to allow other universities wishing to initiate MSLE initiatives to draw on the resources being created by this project. The website also accommodated collaborative activities (such as the drafting of institutional case studies) with all project members in a secure log-in area.

The final project phase, cycle 3 focused on piloting the *Good Practice Guide*, specifically with the project working groups. The process involved visiting each of the eight institutional working groups and conducting a half day workshop, the purpose being to provide an opportunity for stakeholders involved in MSLE to discuss the initiative/s and to identify and determine how their MSLE practices aligned with the social justice principles. Proposed outcomes of the workshops included: a shared understanding of the *Good Practice Guide* and how it can be used for safeguarding student learning engagement; a common understanding about the roles of stakeholders and stakeholder groups and their contributions to institutional initiative to monitor student learning engagement (MSLE) and, an opportunity to elicit examples of MSLE good practice that reflect the principles in the draft *Good Practice Guide* that exemplify this good practice. The design and evaluation of the workshops is detailed in the following section.

Workshop design

The workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders involved in the institutional MSLE program to discuss the initiative/s and determine how their practice may align with social justice principles developed as part of this project. Each workshop was led by the project leader and chaired by the working party leader. Participants included program stakeholders, student advisors, and professional and academic staff involved in the MSLE program. The workshop involved participants working in small groups using two prepared worksheets—the first to assist in the development of the institutional case study, and the second to encourage discussion of practice and identification of good practice exemplars and artefacts using questions related to the social justice principles as prompts.

A total of 73 academic and professional staff participated in the eight workshops between April and October 2012. A short, anonymous evaluation survey was emailed to each participant at the conclusion of the workshop. Of these, 45 responded to the evaluation survey (61%). The vast majority of the comments received were positive and supportive of the development of the principles and the *Good Practice Guide*. Comments included:

I feel this initiative is well overdue and is vital in maintaining the integrity of the university sector

... The workshop was very useful for furthering internal discussions about such issues.

I think the workshop also allowed for the Social Justice Framework to be applied to some other initiatives, which greatly interested participants...

Details of the good practice workshop activities and the evaluation summary are included in Appendix 1.

Deliverables

The project has produced significant resources for the sector.

- A set of social justice principles and the *Social Justice Framework*

The key social justice themes emerged through an analysis and synthesis of existing and informing literature and these were further refined through the examination of qualitative data collected by the project forming the basis of the set of social justice principles. Consistent with the literature, the social justice principles reflect general notions of equity and social justice, embrace the philosophical position of recognitive social justice, and are presented in an interconnected and co-dependent way as a conceptual model within a strategic framework.

The principles, interpreted for good practice in MSLE, are summarised briefly below.

Self-determination

Students participate in program design, enactment and evaluation, and make informed decisions about their individual participation in the program.

Rights

MSLE initiatives should ensure that all students are treated with dignity and respect and have their individual cultural, social and knowledge systems recognised and valued.

Access

Programs are designed to serve as active and impartial conduits to the resources of the institution (e.g. curriculum, learning, academic, social, cultural, support, financial and other resources).

Equity

Programs are designed to demystify and decode dominant university cultures, processes, expectations and language for differently prepared cohorts.

Participation

MSLE programs lead to socially inclusive practices and students experience a sense of belonging and connectedness.

- The Good Practice Guide

The guide is organised in a top-down theory to practice way to assist with the understanding and then application of the framework to monitor and therefore safeguard, student learning engagement. The guide contains:

- A synopsis of the relevant and informing literature on social justice, widening participation and student engagement to provide context for development of the guide;
- The *Social Justice Framework* and principles that emerged from the literature and were refined through the action learning cycles and project case studies;
- A comprehensive examination of each principle inclusive of implications for staff and students, challenges and examples of good practice;
- A series of eight case studies of each of the participating institution's MSLE activities and artefacts that illustrate their good practice (The institutional working groups have given their permission to share these artefacts);
- A summary of the good practice examples as they relate to the principles
- A list of the complete set of artefacts that have been made available by the participating institutions for this guide; and finally
- A full review and synthesis of the literature on social justice and higher education

It is proposed the guide will be a practical resource as well as an informative document and thus it includes a suite of activities to help readers engage in a practical way with the framework, examples and case studies—these activities are located throughout the guide under the heading 'Reviewing Practice'. The guide is discussed further in Chapter 4.

- Website: [Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement](https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/)

The website accommodates information about the project and all the resources developed for the sector around safeguarding student learning engagement. This includes the *Good Practice Guide*, the eight institutional case students, artefacts collected from each MSLE initiative and a summary of the examples of good practice. The site essentially acts as a good practice repository for MSLE, inclusive of a blog page to share and highlight good practice in the sector https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=2. Arrangements have been made to maintain the site for at least three years following the closure of the project.

Critical success factors and challenges

- A proactive and professional relationship between the project leader and the project Manager

All projects require an organised and consistent trajectory if they are to maintain momentum throughout the life of the project and complete objectives on time and budget. In this project both the project leader and project manager were intellectually engaged in the project process and content. Roles and expectations of both team members were clearly defined and there was a shared responsibility for the project's success. In particular, the project manager was critical to the success of the project through rigorous attention to the details of project execution, the maintenance of clear and constant communication channels with stakeholders, and the management of project documents and records and meetings.

- Selection and early engagement with the advisory group and project evaluator.

The planned mode of engagement with the project evaluator throughout the project, rather than at the completion, and on the project deliverables rather than process has also proved beneficial. The action learning approach allowed for the evaluator's feedback to be incorporated into project activities in successive cycles. The principal lesson is that early, ongoing engagement with the evaluator as a critical friend helped guide the project and provided objective advice to the project team.

The inaugural advisory group meeting in March provided an excellent opportunity, not only to gauge the level of support for the project, but gain perspectives on how the project team was progressing with their interpretation of the literature around social justice—which in turn defined the key set of principles that would guide the project. The principal lesson is that early by-in and engagement with key project advisors is critical to the smooth progression of the project.

- Early and persistent engagement with the working party and working groups.

Communication between the core project team and working party members dispersed across Australia and New Zealand has primarily been accommodated via email. Both Skype and Elluminate have been utilised for some meetings with mixed results. Organising a face to face meeting with working party leaders in a central location has presented a challenge in regards to the administrative processes of organising travel and accommodation for members. However, the value of face-to-face contact, particularly in exploring the social justice perspectives (May 2011 working party workshop) and reflecting on MSLE practice (May–October 2012 good practice workshops) proved invaluable.

- Communication with team members.

While communication activities within the core project team have been consistent and productive, access to project resources through a dedicated project wiki space set up by the lead project team continued to be problematic for some project and advisory group members in regards to secure access. Although the project team were assured that access to the Wiki was possible for staff in all the participating institutions, this was not the case in practice. The issues to do with access and permissions to university IT systems were beyond the control of the project team. The development of an external project website in the second half of the project (with secure, private access for members) rectified these access issues. However there is a risk that a proliferation of disparate project web sites may dilute the potential of project outputs (such as those produced by this project) to be taken up and for resources to be made readily available or searchable by the sector.

Chapter 4: Project outcome: The Good Practice Guide

Social justice principles and framework

Principles often provide the basis for a strategic approach to a process that supports good practice. The benefit of identifying quality principles has previously been advocated by Nicol (2007, p. 2) who developed a set of principles for assessment and feedback in higher education. Describing what he believed to be the qualities of principles, Nicol noted that principles should capture research evidence to support implementation; that the principle should be broad enough and flexible to guide a practitioner; that if in a set they should be 'defined independently' and be synergistic when operationalised; and they should assist with evaluation. Following Nichol's work on assessment other examples of the higher education sector employing a set of principles as benchmarks for good practice can be found in *Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008); the *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities* (Universities Australia, 2011) which elaborates on a set of five guiding principles for Indigenous cultural competency in Australian universities and most recently, *Principles to promote and protect the human rights of international students* (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012).

Examination of themes in the social justice literature and its applications in education, and research and practice about widening participation and student engagement in the higher education sector enabled an initial conceptualisation of a set of five principles: Self-determination, Rights, Access, Equity and Participation. Each principle was then defined and accompanied by a rationale and descriptions of the implications of the principle for practice.

Verifying the principles

Early work with project representatives from each of the eight participating institutions (the project working party) explored the social justice principles in relation to their own institutional MSLE activities and considered possible alignment and critical considerations for applying the principles. A conceptual *Social Justice Framework* for safeguarding student learning engagement was proposed and feedback was solicited from both academic and professional staff participating in project-related activities and sector forums, and by gathering qualitative data through a series of workshops in the participating institutions (the project working groups). The institutional working groups considered the principles in terms of institution-specific activities and programs that monitor student learning engagement and discussed their potential value within each institutional context. These discussions were guided by questions such as:

Which of these principles do you see are a part of your institution/program?

Which of these principles do you think your program could / should aspire to?

The conceptual framework and the principles within it, were considered in light of new confirmatory or conflicting data and were further refined. The significant adjustment was that the principle 'Participation' was repositioned as an outcome of safeguarding MSLE within the conceptual framework. Figure 4 indicates the current conceptualisation of the principles and the relationships between them.

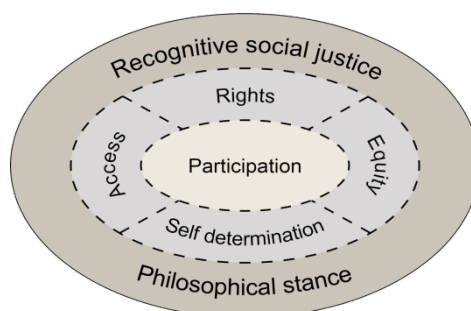


Figure 4: Conceptual model: A Social Justice Framework for good practice in safeguarding student learning engagement

The principles, therefore, articulate the philosophical stance of the Social Justice Framework which ultimately defines the good practice guidelines. The *Social Justice Framework* is located in Appendix 2.

Piloting the Good Practice Guide

Piloting the *Good Practice Guide* involved re-visiting the participating institutions (the working groups) and exploring how each principle and the *Social Justice Framework* applied to their particular initiative. This activity also assisted in identifying and unpacking the various artefacts (resources and tools) used in the particular program and assisted in the identification of good practice examples. The *Good Practice Guide* is therefore documentation of the various MSLE initiatives currently in place across the sector.

Case studies

The good practice case studies are included in the *Good Practice Guide*. These case studies have been contributed by each of the eight participating institutions and describe the institutional initiatives underway to actively safeguard and monitor student learning engagement. Working party leaders and members of their working group worked with the project team to develop the case studies during cycle 3 of the project. Each case study provides an overview of the institutional initiative: the scale of the activity, organisational processes, outcomes, critical success factors and challenges and any key resources associated with the activity. The case studies also present program artefacts (resources and tools) that exemplify the good practice in each institution's MSLE program.

Exemplars and artefacts

Examples of good practice in various activities and programs that actively monitor student learning engagement have been identified throughout this project but particularly in the good practice workshops. A summary of these practices and the principles they illustrate are provided in the *Good Practice Guide* (Part 2: A social justice framework for safeguarding student learning engagement) and are summarised on the website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=94.

Examples offer a prescriptive approach to program activities and process, exemplify the principles in action and offer a practice-based interpretation of the *Social Justice Framework*. Good practice exemplars include training of student advisors (including communication methods), the development of action plans for students and protocols to engage with institutional stakeholders.

Featured examples of good practice include:

The development of an ‘Action Plan’ with contacted students involves students and helps self-identification of learning and non-learning issues impacting on their studies and assists in the design of individually useful and relevant support activities.

(Consistent with the Self-determination principle)

Information gathered in the program is confidential and there is explicit training and published guidelines for maintaining confidentiality.

(Consistent with the Rights principle)

Programs adhere to ethical protocols around the use of student information.

(Consistent with the Rights principle)

The Program focuses on making connections to support engagement. The Program has strong relationships and/or service agreements with support programs across the institution—such as mentoring, counselling and academic skills development programs.

(Consistent with the Access principle)

Training of advisors involves understanding the institutional support ‘map’ and services available to students both within and outside of the university.

(Consistent with the Access principle)

Students working as advisors help to normalise the ‘student experience’ via the use of student ‘language’ and may be effective in dispelling myths or preconceptions around approaching academic staff for assistance. Often the student advisor is recruited from a pool of student mentors who has prior knowledge of processes and protocols. As well, a student advisor who has previously completed the same course of study will be better equipped to talk through issues to do with a particular subject. Consider matching advisors to particular cohorts of students when scheduling outreach activities.

(Consistent with the Equity principle)

A ‘Welcome Call’ to students not only assists in inviting a dialogue about the hidden curriculum but it also offers a friendly voice—assists in breaking down or alleviating pre and misconceptions about university life and creates a sense of belonging.

(Consistent with the Participation principle)

Participating institutions also contributed artefacts (tools and resources) utilised by their MSLE initiatives to highlight good practice and to share with the sector. The artefacts and descriptors (including how they relate to the social justice principles) are made accessible on the project website https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=420.

Artefacts included:

- Institutional policies specific to MSLE
- Training resources for staff (student advisors)
- Service Level Agreements, or equivalent, with subject coordinators
- Phone script (for student advisors doing outreach calls)
- Email script (sent to students)
- Action plan email
- Program evaluation materials
- Interactive feedback mechanism (e.g. University of New England's VIBE word cloud)
- Additional mechanisms embedded in student portals
- Reporting systems
- Websites that disseminate information about the program.

Chapter 5: Project dissemination

Our approach to the development and dissemination of the project has focused on active engagement with the sector, publications, open access to project resources and purposeful engagement with the participating institutions.

Website

Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement <https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net>

Project blog page https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=2

Conferences

Creagh, T., Nelson, K., & Clarke, J. (2011, June/July). *Acknowledging social justice and equity through good practice for monitoring student learning engagement in FYE*. Presented at the 14th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference. Retrieved from http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/content/pdf/13B.pdf

Creagh, T., Nelson, K., & Clarke, J. (2012, June). *Development of a good practice guide to safeguard student learning engagement*. Presented at the 15th International First Year in Higher Education Conference. Retrieved from http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers12/Papers/6E.pdf

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2011, September). *Applying a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in monitoring student learning engagement*. Presented at the 6th Annual Conference of Education Research group of Adelaide (ERGA). Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/46528>

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2011, December). *Developing a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in higher education*. Presented at the 2011 Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association Biennial Conference (ANZSSA 2011). Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/46529>

Forums

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2011, June). *Developing a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in higher education*. In James, Bronwyn (Ed.) *Association of Academic Language and Learning: Critical Discussions about Social Inclusion*, June 10, 2011, University of Wollongong. Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/42092>

Invited presentations

Nelson, K. (2011). *Developing a Social Justice Framework for monitoring student learning engagement (MSLE)*. My Inclusive University Seminar Series, 4 October, 2011.

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2012). *A Social Justice Framework to safeguard monitoring student learning engagement*. Making a Real Difference: Learning and Teaching Grants Showcase, Queensland University of Technology, 25 October, 2012.

Good Practice Workshops 2012

30 April	Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia
1 May	Curtin University, Perth, Australia
2 May	University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
30 May	RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
31 May	Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia
20 August	University of New England, Armidale, Australia
22 August	Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia
2 October	Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

The following is a breakdown to project dissemination activities:

Date/s of the event	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants	Number of Higher Education institutions represented	Number of other institutions represented
22–23 March 2011	ALTC Project Management Workshop, Sydney, NSW, Australia	'Leading and Managing Projects': A workshop to provide high quality management training specifically designed to suit the needs of collaborative academic projects.	22	15	15
28 March 2011	ALTC Project Leaders Teleconference	2010 Project Leaders Teleconference—Key lessons from the Grants Scheme 2006–2009: Issues and Challenges for Projects.	7	6	1
29 March 2011	Inaugural Advisory Group Meeting—teleconference	To introduce the project, terms of reference, scope of activities, draft principles and guidelines and project endorsement.	8	3	1
3 May 2011	Inaugural Working Party Meeting—Pre-Workshop Meeting, via Elluminate	To introduce the project, terms of reference, scope of activities, draft principles and guidelines and project endorsement—as well as discuss the activities and expectations for the upcoming full day workshop.	11	8	0
10 May 2011	Working Party Workshop, Adelaide, SA, Australia	Full day workshop for the Working Party members—introduction to the social justice themes attributed to MSLE and discussion of institutional activities.	8	6	0
10 June 2011	Association of Academic Language and	Critical Discussions in Social Inclusion Forum—Project team presented a roundtable	12 at roundtable (total of 80)	9	0

Date/s of the event	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants	Number of Higher Education institutions represented	Number of other institutions represented
	Learning (AALL) sponsored CDSI Forum, Wollongong, NSW, Australia	discussion on social justice principles: Developing a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in higher education. One hour roundtable inclusive of workshop.	people registered for Forum)		
28 June – 1 July 2011	14th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference, Fremantle, WA, Australia	Nuts and Bolts Presentation: Acknowledging social justice and equity through good practice'. 30 minute presentation including workshop.	100 (360 attended conference)	49	6
28–30 September 2011	6th Education Research Group of Adelaide (ERGA) Conference, Adelaide, SA, Australia	Workshop Presentation: Applying a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in monitoring student learning engagement. One and half hour workshop examining the social justice principles.	130 (14 attended workshop)	8	1
4 October 2011	My Inclusive University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia	Invited Presentation: Developing a Social Justice Framework for monitoring student learning engagement (MSLE). The <i>My Inclusive University</i> series of seminars is an initiative of the QUT Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Project One and half hour presentation with mini workshop.	34	3	0
4–7 December 2011	2011 Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association Biennial Conference, Sydney, NSW, Australia	A two-hour workshop to discuss the social justice principles— <i>Developing a Social Justice Framework to ensure good practice in higher education.</i>	12	18	4
30 April 2012	ECU Good Practice Workshop, Perth, WA, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional—identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	9	2	0
1 May 2012	Curtin Good Practice	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify	11	2	0

Date/s of the event	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants	Number of Higher Education institutions represented	Number of other institutions represented
	Workshop, Perth, WA, Australia	and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.			
2 May 2012	UNISA Good Practice Workshop, Adelaide, SA, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	5	2	0
10 May 2012	Soft Launch of Project Web Site	All participating institutions will be notified of the launch of the project Web Site. The Advisory Group and Evaluator will also be informed of the release.	N/A	N/A	N/A
30 May 2012	RMIT Good Practice Workshop, Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	23	2	0
31 May 2012	QUT Good Practice Workshop, Brisbane, QLD, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	9	1	0
20 August 2012	UNE Good Practice Workshop, Armidale, NSW, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	12	1	0
22 August 2012	CSU Good Practice Workshop, Bathurst, NSW, Australia	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	7	1	0
2 October 2012	AUT Good Practice Workshop, Auckland, NZ	Work through a draft <i>Good Practice Guide</i> and identify and discuss alignment with the individual institutional— identifying any artefacts that exemplify this good practice.	12	2	0
27 June	15th International	A Nuts and Bolts presentation	35 (340)	44	3

Date/s of the event	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants	Number of Higher Education institutions represented	Number of other institutions represented
2012	FYHE Conference Brisbane	entitled 'Acknowledging social justice and equity through good practice'.	attended conference)		
25 October 2012	Making a Real Difference: Learning and Teaching Grants Showcase. QUT, Brisbane, Australia	A Social Justice Framework to safeguard monitoring student learning engagement.	75	4	0

Chapter 6: Project linkages

The project has conceptual links to current and potential teaching and learning initiatives both nationally and internationally.

At a national level the project is conceptually and philosophically aligned with the recently completed OLT project, *Effective teaching and support of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds: resources for Australian higher education*, in terms of developing initiatives and strategies consistent with widening participation strategies in Australian universities. (Project website: <http://www.lowses.edu.au/index.htm>)

Additionally, the project team are aware of MSLE initiatives or proposed MSLE initiatives in a number of additional institutions not involved in this particular program. It is anticipated the dissemination of the project's principal resource—the *Good Practice Guide*—will precipitate further interest across the sector as well as elicit opportunities for further engagement.

At an international level there has been an emerging interest in the area of learning analytics and the implications of mining and analysing student data within the higher education context. Parallel scoping activities during the life of the project indicate that a dialogue has begun in the sector and issues about the ethical application of analytics have been raised by participating institutions at various stages of this project. The very nature of MSLE programs involves accessing a wide range of student data and draws heavily on analytics. There is potential for the *Social Justice Framework* to be interpreted and used to guide the ethical development of learning analytics and project team members are engaged in discussions with national and local colleagues about progressing this opportunity.

Recent references include:

Learning Analytics and Knowledge Conference in Vancouver, Canada:
<http://lak12.sites.olt.ubc.ca>

Blog post on Edudemic:

<http://edudemic.com/2012/04/grades-2-0-how-learning-analytics-are-changing-the-teachers-role/>

Educause Library—Learning Analytics:

<http://www.educause.edu/library/learning-analytics>

Office of Educational Technology Report (US)—Enhancing teaching and learning through educational data mining and learning analytics:

<http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/research>

Also, possible synergies are also being explored between this project and a project commissioned by DEEWR that produced a design and evaluation matrix (DEMO) for university outreach in schools (Gale, Sellar, Parker, Hattam, Comber, Tranter & Bills, 2010). Possible commonalities between the model and framework will be further explored in light of implications for the development of a teaching and learning standards framework.

Chapter 7: Evaluation

Formative evaluation

The project was managed in accordance with the *QUT project Management Framework* and directly informed by the *ALTC Grants Scheme—Evaluating projects*. The project's formative evaluation processes included:

- Regular meetings (weekly) and ongoing monitoring of project management activities between the core project team (project leader and manager).
- Monthly status reports for all project members available on the wiki (and now website).
- Meeting agendas and minutes/notes of advisory group meetings.
- Planned and ongoing engagement with the project evaluator around expectations and feedback.

Formative evaluation activities involving the project evaluator, Professor Janet Taylor has included:

- Preliminary meeting with the project evaluator to ascertain interest in the project.
- Engagement with the project evaluator around progress and data collection (August 2011) with the development of an action list.
- Engagement with the project evaluator around progress of activities and conclusion of year 1/stage 1 (November 2011).
- Inclusion of project evaluator in advisory group meetings (1, 2 and 3).
- Inclusion of project evaluator in all advisory group and working party communication.

Appendix 3 provides a summary of the evaluation framework utilised for the project

Summative evaluation

A summative evaluation was completed by the project evaluator Professor Janet Taylor, Director Teaching and Learning, Southern Cross University. The full report is located in Appendix 4.

Evidence of impact

There are several activities that provide evidence of the impact of the project to date:

- Two of the participating institutions (ECU and UNISA) submitted proposals to their respective universities to fund institutional wide monitoring student learning engagement activities. The proposals aligned the draft social justice principles to the proposed program. Principles found to be absent from their draft proposals have now been incorporated. Both programs have since been approved and have received significant funding. The implementation of these programs with the embedded principles will prove fundamental in the providing artefacts for the good practice repository.

- One of the participating institutions has been able to maintain their program to a particular standard due, in some part, to their involvement in the project. Curtin University's JumpSTART program was unsuccessful in attaining an additional budget for their 2012 program. The program director (and working party member) advised staff that the program would not be able to proceed to a particular level of activity without the necessary resourcing and raised concerns that this would also affect their participation in the OLT project. Since these concerns have been raised the member has reported a renewed interest from the institution and in further resourcing the program where required.
- The project leader has provided advice to four of the eight institutions about MSLE program policy and direction.

Conclusion

This document has reported on the key activities involved in the project *Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions*.

The project adopted a three cycle action learning method to develop and refine a *Social Justice Framework* consisting of a set of interrelated and interconnected principles and a *Good Practice Guide* for safeguarding monitoring student learning engagement activities.

The project has been completed on-time and on-budget and the project aim and objectives have been met.

Representatives from a total of ten institutions were involved in the project which included the project leader and manager, the working party, working groups, the advisory group and the project evaluator. Critical to the success of the project were; the proactive and professional relationship between the project leader and the project manager; selection and early engagement with the advisory group and project evaluator and; the early and persistent engagement with the working party and working groups.

The project has engaged in ongoing and multifaceted dissemination and engagement activities including: conference and forum presentations and publications; open access to project resources via the project website and purposeful engagement with the participating institutions in the form of good practice workshops.

Forthcoming activities include the launch of the *Good Practice Guide* at a one day forum that will include all project team participants and will be promoted to academic and professional staff engaged in, or considering the development of programs or activities that monitor student learning engagement. The forum will be organised in a way to provide specific sessions for the various MSLE practitioners as well as disseminate the guide.

Recommendations for further work include:

- Application of the *Social Justice Framework* and examination of the principles to other aspects of higher education, including: learning analytics, the design and enactment of curriculum, HEPPP-funded projects and activities.
- Applying the framework and principles to the design and implementation of forthcoming MSLE initiatives to be encapsulated as a series of case studies.
- Using the framework to evaluate existing MSLE initiatives to identify areas for quality improvement.

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Appendix 1: Workshop Schedules and Evaluations

Good Practice Workshops

Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions

Description:

The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders involved in the institutional MSLE program to discuss the initiative/s and determine how their practice may align with social justice principles developed as part of this project. Each workshop was chaired by the Working Party leader and participants included program members (including student advisors), professional and academic staff involved in the program. A short evaluation survey was emailed to each participant at the conclusion of the workshop

Workshop goals:

- A shared understanding of the Good Practice Guide and how it can be used for safeguarding student learning engagement;
- Common understanding about the roles of stakeholders and stakeholder groups and their contributions to institutional initiative to monitor student learning engagement (MSLE).
- Examples of MSLE good practice that reflect the principles in the draft Good Practice Guide are identified with artifacts that exemplify this good practice.

Workshop Schedules for 2012:

ECU Workshop April 30, Curtin Workshop May 1, UniSA Workshop May 2, RMIT Workshop May 30, QUT Workshop May 31, UNE Workshop August 20, CSU Workshop August 22, AUT Workshop October 2.

Workshop outcomes:

A total of 73 academic and professional staff participated in the eight workshops between April and October 2012. Of these, 45 responded to the evaluation survey (61%). A large majority of the comments were positive and supportive of the development of the principles and the Good Practice Guide.

Workshop session plan (Note: times and some details varied according to availability of Working Group and their level of engagement with the Project):

Focus	Activity and details	Time
Welcome and introduction	Welcome and introduction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Apologies • Overview of Workshop. 	(10 minutes)
Institutional Case Study (Worksheet 1)	Institutional Initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Group leader summarises the institutional initiative • Each member of the Working Group will outline their role/link to the institutional initiative 	(30 minutes)
Good practice at <insert institution> (Worksheet 2) Preview the draft Good Practice Guide Identifying activities /good practice in the MSLE initiative Alignment of resources/artefacts with social justice principles	The Guide, Principles and Examples of Good Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Group members will have previewed the draft Good Practice Guide and considered their institutional initiative, particularly with respect to the social justice principles. • Members will be asked to consider the MSLE process steps or activities that they are responsible for / involved in and to identify how their MSLE activities reflect or align with the social justice principles. 	(1 hour, 15 mins)
Reflections: 2012 Piloting activities for <insert initiative>	Revising the Guide / GPP / Practices: Possible topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which elements of your MSLE activity will you review as a result of considering the GPG? 2. Which practices need to be changed to ensure alignment with the GPG? 3. What elements of the GPG need changed to suit your MSLE program/activity? 4. What are the implications of this change for your MSLE activity? 	(35 minutes)
Summary	Review and Close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of main outcomes/discussion • Overview of next steps 	(10 minutes)

Institution	Date/details	Participants¹	Evaluation survey summary	Notes
ECU	April 30 - 1-3.30pm	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 of the 8 (50%) participants responded to the evaluation survey ▪ All respondents answered 'Yes' to Q1-Q4 ▪ Two respondents answered 'Unsure' to Q5 (two answered 'Yes') ▪ No comments were recorded 	
Curtin	May 1 - 1-3.30pm	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 of the 9 (55.5%) participants responded to the evaluation survey ▪ All respondents answered 'Yes' to all questions except Q3 ▪ One respondent answered 'unsure' to Q3 ▪ Two respondents added positive comments (see comments below) 	
UniSA	May 2 – 1.30-4pm	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only 1 of the 3 (33%) participants completed the evaluation survey ▪ Respondent answered 'Yes' to Q1, Q4, Q5 and 'Unsure' to Q2 and Q3 ▪ Respondent added a positive comment 	A key Working Group member was absent from this workshop but provided feedback and responses via email to the worksheet material and participated in the development of the case study
RMIT	May 30 – 10.30-12.45pm	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14 of the 21 (66.6%) participants responded to the survey ▪ The majority (10 plus) of respondents answered 'Yes' to Q1-Q5 ▪ 2 respondents each answered 'No' to Q1 and Q3 	

¹ Participants exclude the Project Leader and Project Manager

Institution	Date/details	Participants ¹	Evaluation survey summary	Notes
QUT	May 31 - 10-12.30pm	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 of the 7 (90%) participants responded to the survey ▪ All respondents (100%) answered 'Yes' to Q1-Q5 ▪ One respondent commented on the workshop (see comments below) 	
UNE	August 20 – 1-3.30pm	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 of the 10 (60%) participants responded to the survey ▪ All respondents (100%) answered 'Yes' to Q1-Q5 ▪ No comments were recorded 	
CSU	August 21 – 11-1.30pm	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 of the 5 (90%) participants responded to the survey ▪ 2 respondents each answered 'No' to Q1 and Q3 ▪ 1 respondent added a comment 	
AUT	October 2 – 10am-3pm	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 of the 10 participants responded to the survey ▪ All respondents (100%) answered 'Yes' to Q1-Q5 	
		Total = 73	Total = 45 respondents to the evaluation survey (61%)	

Evaluation survey Questions:

1. Was participating in the Good Practice Workshop useful in increasing your general awareness about the project *Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions*? (Yes/No/Unsure) **Yes=95%**
2. Was the workshop useful in helping you consider your institution's monitoring and intervention initiative in terms of the social justice principles? (Yes/No/Unsure) **Yes = 97%**
3. Did discussion of the social justice principles help you identify any issues or activities specific to your initiative that may need further consideration - (for example, strategies to embed the program in policy, training manuals etc. (Yes/No/Unsure) **Yes=88%**
4. Do you believe the Good Practice Guide will be a useful resource for institutions involved in setting up or refining MSLE initiatives? (Yes/No/Unsure) **Yes=100%**
5. Do you believe a MSLE Forum involving the participating institutions would be useful for advancing good practice across the sector? (Yes/No/Unsure) **Yes=97%**

6. Please provide any additional comments on the Workshop and/or the Good Practice Guide. (All comments below)

Comments:

I think the guiding principles will be very useful as a basis for developing Professional Development for student advisors and other staff who interact with student identified through monitoring processes. Some staff need upskilling in the student background and challenges in the light of increasingly diverse cohorts.

I feel this initiative is well overdue and is vital in maintaining the integrity of the university sector. It concerns me that universities may be taking students' money without providing adequate support, especially if we consider international students and HEPPP targeted students. If students meet entry they should be able to pass the course.

The workshop was a good exploration of the Good Practice principles and therefore valuable in affirming and challenging practice.

It was helpful having clear direction in this workshop and a strong chair keeping everyone on task.

Very worthwhile -- it would be great if more staff attended!

Good to flesh out and understand the principles further. The range of roles in the uni that were present provided various perspectives.

Karen is a delightful speaker and managed strong competitive participants with expert ease and good humour. I look forward to the next time I have the opportunity to learn from her.

Very good, very interesting

Great concept that has fabulous motivation. Needs work to achieve the outcomes it argues it wants to achieve.

I would like to see the rating of success of the program, correlated with evaluation of the success of interventions that student engagement projects refer students to. The data would be much richer with a broader analysis of what the students do after that have been contacted. The workshop was very useful for furthering internal discussions about such issues. It would have been interesting to explore the data in relation to English language a little more fully as well.

I think the workshop also allowed for the social justice framework to be applied to some other initiatives, which greatly interested participants.


Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions

Participating in this Workshop has reinforced that as an institution we are on the right track in terms of good practice in student support. However there is still plenty of scope for the faculties and Student Services to work together to enhance our best practice. Thank you for sharing your project with us. It's been enlightening and stimulating at the same time.

I found the workshop very useful, particularly understanding how social justice principles can be used to underpin the development of effective retention strategies.

Appendix 2: Social Justice Framework

- A Social Justice Framework for Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement

PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE	CONCEPTUAL MODEL	INTENT OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK	APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK
<p><i>This social justice framework adopts a recognitive approach to social justice.</i></p> <p>A recognitive stance values all members of society, has positive regard for social difference and is achieved through socially democratic processes that involve individuals and groups determining outcomes that impact on them.</p>		<p>This social justice framework is designed to challenge thinking about dominant power structures, cultures and ways of knowing in higher education. The framework provides a set of principles that when considered together enable the reconstruction of existing relationships based on an examination of identity and needs.</p>	<p>For this project the social justice framework has been interpreted for initiatives or activities that actively monitor and intervene with students to promote learning engagement. Thus the social justice framework is expressed as a set of <i>inter-connected and codependent</i> principles that are designed to safeguard the people and processes involved in monitoring of student learning engagement (MSLE).</p>
Social Justice Principles for Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement			
The principles of recognitive social justice:	Interpreted through the lens of safeguarding MSLE initiatives:	Adapted for good practice in MSLE:	
<p>SELF-DETERMINATION: Fundamental to recognitive social justice; individuals participate in democratic processes to ensure self-control over their lives.</p>	<p><i>In the context of monitoring student learning engagement this principle is interpreted to mean that students are actively involved in the design and enactment of programs and in the review of program outcomes.</i></p>	<p>SELF-DETERMINATION: Students participate in program design and enactment and evaluation, and make informed decisions about their individual participation in the program.</p>	
<p>RIGHTS: Individuals have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to have their individual cultural, social and knowledge systems valued.</p>	<p><i>MSLE activities are mindful of the rights of students to be treated fairly with dignity and respect, as well as their rights to obtain information ...and to have these rights recognised by institutions that expect compliance with institutional policies.</i></p>	<p>RIGHTS: MSLE initiatives should ensure that all students are treated with dignity and respect and have their individual cultural, social and knowledge systems recognised and valued.</p>	
<p>ACCESS: All individuals have access to social, cultural, political and economic resources.</p>	<p><i>Access is intentionally determined by inclusive structures, systems and strategies that promote learning engagement, particularly for students whose access to higher education has been previously compromised by their social, political and/or economic backgrounds.</i></p>	<p>ACCESS: Programs are designed to serve as active and impartial conduits to the resources of the institution (e.g. curriculum, learning, academic, social, cultural, financial and other resources)</p>	
<p>EQUITY: Social difference is understood so that responses can be designed and applied to particular situations to counteract the barriers that impede participation.</p>	<p><i>In the context of monitoring student learning engagement the focus is on counteracting barriers to participation such as finances and broadening knowledge and experiences of higher education to previously under-represented groups.</i></p>	<p>EQUITY: Programs are designed to demystify and decode dominant university cultures, processes, expectations and language for differently prepared cohorts.</p>	

<p>PARTICIPATION: Participation is not predicated on previous opportunity or privilege.</p>	<p><i>All students have the opportunity to succeed and complete their qualification(s) in ways that are harmonious with their individual backgrounds and circumstances.</i></p>	<p>PARTICIPATION: MSLE programs lead to socially inclusive practices and students experience a sense of belonging and connectedness.</p>
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Appendix 3: Evaluation Framework

Project Evaluation Framework
Office for Learning and Teaching Competitive Grant CG10-1730 2010-2012
Good practice for safeguarding student learning engagement in higher education institutions

This project aims to lead the development of good practice for monitoring student engagement in higher education:

The objectives of this project are to **lead the design and development of a suite of resources** that will provide a shared foundation for good practice for monitoring student engagement in higher education – specifically:

- lead the establishment of good practice for the Australasian HE sector in monitoring student engagement and;
- provide a foundation for embedding good practice for MSLE in the sector, by developing institutional leaders capacity to implement good practice in MSLE through the participatory action learning approach and the pilot study, which will;
 - design and develop a **good practice guide** for MSLE that reflect the expertise of personnel in existing good practice programs;
 - and based on these principles **design and develop a set of guiding principles** for MSLE, which will support institutional leader implementation strategy by describing and explaining **examples of good practice and making available a set of resources** to support learning and teaching policy and practice for monitoring student engagement.

Project activity and deliverables	Development	Review	Dissemination
Project scoping			
<i>Annotated Bibliography</i> <i>Literature Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examination of social justice, specifically from the higher education perspective 		Journal article in progress Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=97

Project activity and deliverables	Development	Review	Dissemination
Good Practice Guide			
<i>Social Justice Principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compilation of an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Party 	Forums:

Project activity and deliverables	Development	Review	Dissemination
Good Practice Guide			
	<p>annotated bibliography to scope the social justice literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis and review of the available literature on social justice in education (specifically, higher education) 	<p>Inaugural Workshop May 10, 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Group activities 2011 ▪ Advisory Group Meetings: November 1, 2011; June 21, 2012 ▪ Good Practice Workshops April-October 2012, eight in total) 	<p>Nelson, Karen J. & Creagh, Tracy A. (2011) Developing a social justice framework to ensure good practice in higher education. In James, Bronwyn (Ed.) <i>Association of Academic Language and Learning: Critical Discussions about Social Inclusion</i>, June 10, 2011, University of Wollongong.</p> <p><i>Conference presentations:</i> Creagh, Tracy A., Nelson, Karen J., & Clarke, John A. (2011) Acknowledging social justice and equity through good practice for monitoring student learning engagement in FYE. In <i>14th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference</i>, 28 June – 1 July, 2011, Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, WA.</p> <p>Nelson, Karen J. & Creagh, Tracy A. (2011) Applying a social justice framework to ensure good practice in monitoring student learning engagement. In <i>6th Annual Conference of Education Research Group of Adelaide (ERGA)</i>, 28-30 September 2011, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA.</p> <p>Nelson, Karen J. & Creagh, Tracy A. (2011) Developing a social justice framework to ensure good practice in higher education. In <i>2011 Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association Biennial Conference (ANZSSA 2011)</i>, 4-7 December 2011, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW.</p> <p>Invited Presentation: Nelson, K. (2011). Developing a social justice framework for monitoring student learning engagement (MSLE). My</p>

Project activity and deliverables	Development	Review	Dissemination
Good Practice Guide			
			Inclusive University Seminar Series, 4 October, 2011. Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=39
<i>Social Justice Framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compilation of an annotated bibliography to scope the social justice literature ▪ Analysis and review of the available literature on social justice in education (specifically, higher education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advisory Group Meetings: November 1, 2011; June 21, 2012 ▪ Working Party Inaugural Workshop May 10, 2011 ▪ Working Group activities 2011 ▪ Good Practice Workshops (April-October 2012, eight in total) 	Journal article in progress <i>Conference Presentation:</i> Creagh, T., Nelson, K., & Clarke, J. (2012 June). Development of a good practice guide to safeguard student learning engagement . In <i>15th International First Year in Higher Education Conference</i> . Sofitel Hotel, Brisbane, QLD. Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=39
<i>Case Studies</i>	Developed via the Good Practice Workshops conducted April-October 2012, eight workshops in total – 3-4 hours each in length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Party leader and Working Group members in consultation with Project Leader and Project Manager 	Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=64 QUT Learning and Teaching Unit Event – Grants showcase, October 25, 2012 Launch of the Good Practice Guide – March 26, 2013.
<i>Exemplars/examples of good practice</i>	Developed via the Good Practice Workshops conducted April-October 2012, eight workshops in total – 3-4 hours	Working Party leader and Working Group members in consultation with Project Leader and	Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=94 QUT Learning and Teaching Unit Event – Grants showcase,

Project activity and deliverables	Development	Review	Dissemination
Good Practice Guide			
	each in length	Project Manager	October 25, 2012 Launch of the Good Practice Guide – March 26, 2013.
<i>Good Practice Guide: Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement</i>	Developed via the Good Practice Workshops conducted April-October 2012, eight workshops in total – 3-4 hours each in length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advisory Group ▪ Working Party leader and Working Group members in consultation with Project Leader and Project Manager 	<p>Conference Presentation: Creagh, Tracy A., Nelson, Karen J., & Clarke, John A. (2012). Development of a good practice guide to safeguard student learning engagement. In <i>15th International First Year in Higher Education Conference</i>, 26-29 June, 2012, Sofitel Hotel, Brisbane, QLD.</p> <p>Project website: https://safeguardingstudentlearning.net/?page_id=94</p> <p>QUT Learning and Teaching Unit Event – Grants showcase, October 25, 2012</p> <p>Launch of the Good Practice Guide – March 26, 2013.</p>

Appendix 4: Evaluator's Report

Evaluation report: Professor Janet A Taylor, Southern Cross University

3 December 2012.

This project utilised a participatory action learning model in which the evaluator and evaluation were integrated into each stage of the project. This model was enacted through the evaluation framework detailed in Appendix 3 which focused on the development, review and dissemination of the deliverables. The key deliverables were:

- Annotated bibliography and literature review
- Social justice principles
- Social justice framework
- Case studies
- Exemplars of good practice
- Good Practice Guide

The deliverables and the cross institutional engagement across 8 universities ensured that the principle aim of leading the development of good practice for monitoring student engagement in higher education was achieved.

The project was managed in accordance with the *QUT Project Management Framework* and directly informed by the *ALTC Grants Scheme – Evaluating Projects*.

Formative evaluation

The formative evaluation ensured that the project processes were sound and informed change through detailed group-based reflection with project institutions and the Advisory Group members. They were successful due to focused leadership and experienced project management strategies.

The project's formative evaluation opportunities included:

- Regular meetings (weekly) and ongoing monitoring of project management activities between the core project team (Project Leader and Manager).
- Monthly status reports for all project members available on the wiki (and now website)
- Meeting Agendas and Minutes/notes of Advisory Group meetings
- Planned and ongoing engagement with the project evaluator around expectations and feedback.

As evaluator I participated directly in the following activities:

- Preliminary meeting with the Project Leader to ascertain interest and expertise for the project.

- Engagement with Project Leader and Manager around progress and data collection (August 2011) with the development of an Action List (attached)
- Engagement with the Project Leader and Manager around progress of activities and conclusion of Year 1/Stage 1 (November 2011)
- Advisory Group Meetings (1, 2 & 3)
- Advisory Group and Working Party communication
- At least one of the dissemination events (FYHE pre-conference workshop, June 2012)

Key to the formative evaluation was the project engagement with a total of eight universities in the development and refinement of the deliverables. The activities revolved principally around workshopping the Social Justice Principles and Framework and discussing relevant exemplars. Evaluation of this process through participation figures and a satisfaction survey confirmed the direction and usefulness of the project. These workshops also served as the first step in the dissemination of the 'safeguarding' approach to student success. I note however that there was limited academic/teaching staff engagement with these workshops. Appendix 1 details the workshop process and presents the evaluation results.

Despite the large number of participating universities this project has successfully managed the huge logistical task of working simultaneously across eight institutions - a significant achievement.

The second key formative evaluation involved the engagement with the Project Advisory Group. This group was composed of six internationally respected researchers and practitioners who provided insightful feedback through many stages on the development of the deliverables. Although some group meetings were achieved successfully, synchronous meetings proved to be logistically difficult and feedback was mostly provided through written or individual oral comments. Such results were collated by the Project Manager and distributed to the entire Advisory Group to ensure group consensus on recommended directions.

Summative evaluation

All planned deliverables were achieved within the timeframe of the project. Appendix 3 displays evaluation process and accompanying dissemination.

- **Annotated bibliography and literature review**
The literature review is extensive and will continue to evolve beyond the reach of the project. The Advisory Group rigorously engaged with and critiqued the review to ensure that all perspectives were included. The literature review combined with practice-based views ensured a social justice framework that was underpinned by research and fit for purpose.
- **Social justice principles and framework**
The principles and framework were developed through theory and practice and verified through collegial discussions through eight university-based working groups and dissemination opportunities. The framework went through approximately five

refining iterations as all groups engaged in its development. At the end of the project there was significant satisfaction with the principles and the framework across all participants.

- **Case studies and Exemplars of good practice**

Case studies and exemplars were catalogued and refined in the institution-based workshops. There was significant consensus that the resulting case studies and selected exemplars were appropriate. All are displayed and accessible from the project web site.

- **Good Practice Guide**

This guide is a composite of the above deliverables and is available on the project website. The guide is the major deliverable from the project and a national launch of the guide is planned for February 2013 to further disseminate the outcomes.

Dissemination

The project team have ensured that the outcomes and deliverables of the project have been widely viewed and critiqued through the dissemination process. The team has led approximately seven presentations across Australia and New Zealand about the project and the project leader, Professor Karen Nelson is frequently invited to present on the topic. I anticipate referred journal articles will be prepared through 2013.

Evidence of impact

There are several activities that provide evidence of the impact of the project to date:

- Two of the participating institutions (ECU and UNISA) submitted proposals to their University to fund institutional wide monitoring student learning engagement activities. The proposals aligned the draft social justice principles to the proposed program. Principles found to be absent from their draft proposals have now been incorporated. Both programs have since been approved and have received significant funding. The implementation of these programs with the embedded principles will prove fundamental in the providing artefacts for the good practice repository.
- One of the participating institutions has been able to maintain their program to a particular standard due, in some part, to their involvement in the project. Curtin University's JumpSTART program was unsuccessful in attaining an additional budget for their 2012 program. The program director (and Working Party member) advised staff that the program would not be able to proceed to a particular level of activity without the necessary resourcing and raised concerns that this would also affect their participation in the OLT project. Since these concerns have been raised the member has reported a renewed interest from the institution and in further resourcing the program where required.
- Southern Cross University is considering the principles as the ethical framework for a Student Centred Systems Project.
- The project leader has provided advice to four of the eight institutions about MSLE program policy and direction.

Future Directions

This project has filled a very prominent gap in research and practice of student success programs. The concept of safeguarding through a philosophical and ethical framework is more important today than ever before. The rise of 'big data' and the use of such data to analyse students' participation, engagement and possibly learning (learning analytics) needs to be subjected to the moderating influence of a social justice framework. The success of this framework across the participating institutions, with their diverse approaches to student success, means that it will fit well into discussions and actions now taking place around 'learning analytics'. I encourage Office for Learning and Teaching to consider this perspective in their future deliberations.

Final Comments

Like all large teaching and learning grants this project faced a number of challenges.

- The challenge of managing a large number of partner institutions was overcome by tight project management. However, although the size of the project team did not interfere with the production of the deliverables the endeavour took its toll of the project team.
- The challenge of engaging a reference group of high profile researchers and practitioners was significant. Synchronous meetings were difficult to arrange and occurred rarely. The project team overcame this by seeking input individually from the advisory group and the collating and distributing to all.
- The participating universities principally involved sections and staff who were non-teaching staff and approached the framework from the professional student support perspective. The engagement of academic staff and active teachers in the project was limited and the project team should consider this in the future developments for the framework.
- The social justice principles and framework will be a useful charter for many universities who explore student success strategies. The project team have gone to some length to ensure that the document is clear to all. However it does still contain language and concepts that will be new to many and the project team should consider this in any ensuring work and roll-out.
- The evaluation methodology was a strength of the project as it allowed continuous improvement throughout the project, engaging the evaluator in each cycle of change to ensure both formative and summative components were captured, considered and implemented.

Overall I confirm that the project has achieved its stated aims and deliverables in a timely manner. The outputs of this project are now desperately needed as higher education moves to its next phase of endeavour.