

***Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
in Australian Higher Education:***

***Review of the Australian Learning and Teaching
Council (ALTC) Program 2006-2008***

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Acknowledgements

A striking feature of this review was the enthusiasm, energy, creativity and passion with which Project Teams were undertaking their work. Many were dedicating time to their Projects well in excess of that documented formally (both on a day-to-day basis and, more specifically, during Long Service Leave or Study Leave). All were very willing to share their experiences and findings with the system more widely and were very frank and open in their communications with the author. A considerable number went to some trouble to ensure that as many members of their Project Team as possible participated in the interviews associated with this review, including setting up of national or international videoconferences to capture the perspectives of those not in the Lead Institution. Similarly, in cases where Senior Executives were available during visits, they also were very generous with their time and the sharing of their insights. Many participants have commented in communications during the past six months that the process of this review had itself contributed to the advancement of their thinking and the broadening of their perspectives in relation to their Projects and, in addition, elevated their level of confidence about the value of their work.

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Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Australian Higher Education: Review of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Program 2006-2008

Executive Summary

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the ALTC Leadership Program¹ and its 22 constituent Projects in operation during 2006-2008. In responding to the commission provided by the ALTC in December 2007, this Report

- presents an overview of each of the 22 Projects
- draws together the synergies and learnings from the Projects
- identifies areas of strength and weakness and the limitations of approaches
- discusses operational and strategic issues of importance to the sector, individual institutions, policy developers, the ALTC and other key groups
- examines implications in the context of a diverse sector
- recommends ways in which the ALTC can build on the work undertaken in Projects.

Approach of this Review

This work was undertaken during the period December 2007-June 2008, with the author gathering information from each of the 20 universities involved as a Lead Institution in an ALTC Leadership Project and from the ALTC itself. The data consisted of reports and other documents, together with information obtained during semi-structured interviews. For 18 of the universities, the interviews took place during organised visits to the campus and involved members of the Project Team and also, if available, an appropriate university Senior Executive (usually the Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) but in two cases also the Vice-Chancellor). For the other two universities, communication took place by other means, e.g. at off-campus meetings or through telephone interviews.

In the interviews, all participants were asked to reflect on the extent to which their Project had built leadership capacity in ways consistent with its stated aims. Specific questions put to the participants captured aspects of the brief provided by the ALTC (e.g. learnings from their Project, possible synergies with other ALTC Projects, strengths and weaknesses of their approach and potential for further development). Discussions explored also participants' perceptions of the extent to which the broader objectives of the ALTC Leadership Program (see Part I, Section 1.2.2) had been met through their Project, in relation, for example, to raising the profile of learning and teaching, implementing university-and system-wide strategic change, embedding good practice and demonstrably enhancing learning and teaching. Nearly all interviewees commented spontaneously and positively on the ALTC's

¹ In August 2004, the Commonwealth Government established the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. This was renamed the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) in May 2008, so the latter title is the one used throughout this Report. The Leadership Program (outlined in Part I of this Report) was established in 2005. The 2008 change of name to ALTC did not affect the initiatives investigated for the purposes of this report.

administration of and support for the Leadership Program, so matters raised in this context are also included in this Report.

In cases where a university was also a partner in another Leadership Project, the opportunity was taken to ask questions about the partnership. Similarly, if interviewees had other relevant experience beyond their own Project or institution (e.g. with overseas initiatives, or as a member of the ALTC Standing Committee for the Leadership Program, or as an assessor of Project proposals), these perspectives were also included. The author also gained additional insights into the ALTC Leadership Program through invited participation in specific purpose seminars at national or local levels.

This analysis also took into account the large amount of written material produced by the Projects and by the ALTC itself, both online and in hard copy. At the time of completing this Report, six Projects had submitted their final reports, all of which were substantial documents providing considerable detail and insight. A further four Projects had final reports in early draft form and, in some cases, made these available and welcomed any feedback. All Projects had also produced a range of interim documents for a variety of audiences, including the Project Team and Project participants, the university as a whole, national seminars or forums and the ALTC. In the latter case, all Projects were obliged to submit regular progress reports approximately every six months.

Data were analysed and interpreted progressively during the six-month period of the review and interim findings shared with participants and other stakeholders. For each Project, the individual report on the Project (see Part II) was checked for accuracy by the Project Leader and shared also with any members of the university Senior Executive who had contributed to the data gathering. The interpretive phase of this analysis evolved as an iterative process, in that the interim reports and related discussions appeared in many cases to influence the thinking of the Project Teams, while, at the same time, the feedback from the Project Teams informed this review and Report.

Strategies for building on work undertaken in the projects were developed and shared informally with interested parties across the sector. In this Report, operational questions, issues and possible strategies are discussed and reported in ways intended to inform the work of a variety of stakeholders and the future operations of the Program by the ALTC. Strategic questions, issues and future directions are also discussed and, in this case, possibilities and imperatives for future action are drawn to the attention of the ALTC in the form of recommendations.

Structure of this Report

This Report is in two Parts. Part I presents the findings of the review in three sections, the first of which provides a context for the review, describing the background, rationale, aims and structure of the ALTC Leadership Program. Section 2 then presents an overview of the operation of the Program in 2006-2008, including stakeholders' perceptions of the application and selection processes, funds allocated to Leadership Projects, the scope of the Projects funded and the diversity of higher education institutions involved. It concludes with a short discussion of the gradual emergence of understandings of academic leadership during the program to date. Section 3 goes on to address some key operational and strategic questions that have arisen and develops recommendations for the future (see below). Part II of the Report provides overviews of the 22 individual Projects.

Summary of Findings

The establishment of the ALTC Leadership Program in 2005 was received with warmth and enthusiasm by Australian higher education providers. From a total of 87 applications (including both short Expressions of Interest and Full Proposals) received by the Program during 2005-2007, 22 Projects were funded, with a total investment of a little over \$4.1 million². The selection processes were (and remain) demonstrably fair and rigorous and were accepted as such by those who applied. The funded Projects include a reasonable balance of topics and areas and of different types of universities. Some possible gaps in this regard are noted in the Report and may need to be addressed, depending on the outcomes of other ALTC Programs.

This review has revealed that, at the outset of the Program, “leadership for excellence in learning and teaching” was a tantalisingly elusive goal for Australian higher education. The first round of applications demonstrated that the Program was not understood well. This situation prevailed despite the acknowledgement that the Program’s Guidelines³, although demanding, were clear and easy to follow and despite the on-going support provided by the ALTC (also acknowledged with enthusiasm). By February 2008, however, by which time three Projects had been completed and several others were in their final stages, conceptual clarity in relation to leadership in learning and teaching had emerged, at least amongst those involved in Projects and to some extent also more broadly across the sector. Given the relative recency of sector-wide attention specifically to leadership in learning and teaching this slow evolution of understandings is not surprising, especially in the context of what has emerged as a deeply entrenched association of leadership with hierarchy and authority. What is remarkable is that the investment to date is producing, in just under two years, a new understanding of leadership in universities which is inclusive and distributed – an understanding which is linked to a willingness by this new cohort of leaders to initiate and take action aimed at enhancing learning and teaching.

Some Projects have gone about building capacity for distributed leadership very directly, addressing gaps in the provision of leadership development for key, but previously somewhat neglected staff (particularly middle-level leaders) and producing programs or frameworks to support this. Others have focused more on the need for paradigms of academic leadership to be transformed, in particular to include the values and cultural perspectives of Indigenous staff. Another group have gone about exploring the possibilities of a distributed leadership approach, especially in relation to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching and making more systematic use of student feedback. And a further group, mainly discipline-based, have addressed problems related to curriculum leadership and, in some cases, developed national networks as a means of sharing solutions to these problems in an ongoing sense.

In undertaking these Projects, those involved raised a number of operational questions, particularly about ways to maximise the Project’s success in achieving its own and the ALTC’s aims in a sustainable way. Permeating all of these discussion were issues associated

² Further Projects were funded following the 2008 round of applications. This review encompassed only those funded in 2005-2007.

³ *Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program: Guidelines and Supporting Information.* www.altc.edu.au

with competing demands on the time of academics: it became clear that, unless Projects address these issues realistically (e.g. through adequate budgetary arrangements to enable academics to buy themselves out of other commitments) both the immediate and the enduring benefits of individual Projects (and ultimately, the Leadership Program as a whole) will be jeopardised. Operational questions raised by participants are discussed in Section 3.1 of this Report, with a focus on stakeholder buy-in, project management, theoretical frameworks, the role of evaluation and the role of previous experience.

At the same time, the Projects collectively highlighted strategic questions, concerning the extent to which the Leadership Program as a whole has contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the ALTC. These are discussed in Section 3.2, with a focus on leadership capacity-building (and its contribution to the demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching), strategic change, the institutional and public profile of learning and teaching, the effective dissemination and embedding of good practice and the identification of emerging key issues in Australian higher education.

Contemporary demands in relation to learning and teaching in universities are clear in the recent Discussion Paper made available as part of the Higher Education Review⁴. There are clearly stated expectations in relation to the role of universities in “developing high level knowledge and skills”, in preparing “a highly productive, professional labour force, alongside the vocational education and training sector”, and in “transform[ing] the lives of individuals and through them their communities and the nation...” (p.1), all of which are integrally connected to excellence in learning and teaching. All of these dimensions of the perceived role of universities point towards a need for leadership in curriculum reform.

In this context, it is pertinent to consider the extent to which the Leadership Program is positioned to be genuinely transformative. In that sense, this Report provides examples of some Projects that are concerned explicitly with the leadership of renewal of higher education and are taking the opportunity to be innovative and future-oriented, positioning university staff to work towards the genuine transformation of Australian universities in the ways envisaged by the Discussion Paper. Many others, however, are somewhat anchored in the present, addressing gaps and fixing immediate problems. For these Projects, although their outcomes in the immediate sense are extraordinarily valuable, dissemination of those outcomes will be the key to the Projects’ capacity to help transform the sector as a whole. Fortunately, the ALTC has always placed a very strong emphasis on dissemination, knowing from previous research and experience that, without effective dissemination, projects are of very limited value. That emphasis will need to be retained and strengthened.

Overall and despite uneasy beginnings, there is evidence from many sources that the ALTC Leadership Program, in concert with the ALTC’s other activities, has injected much life and vitality into learning and teaching in Australian higher education. Alternative models of academic leadership have been conceptualised and trialled, support materials have been produced and networks have been established. There is undoubtedly a growing understanding of the goal of “leadership for excellence in learning and teaching” (and how to achieve it) amongst those who have been part of any of the 22 Projects reviewed here and amongst those who have supported them.

4 Review of Australian Higher Education. Discussion Paper, June 2008. www.dest.gov.au/HEreview

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

That the ALTC considers the operational questions addressed in Section 3.1 of this report and, particularly in light of experience from other Programs in the Grants Scheme, gives due consideration to the provision of support activities or the revision/strengthening of the Program Guidelines along the lines suggested

Recommendation 2:

That the ALTC gives consideration to the broader implications of its defined position on leadership and, if remaining committed to supporting distributed leadership in Australian higher education, invests appropriately in embedding this notion sector-wide

Recommendation 3:

That the ALTC considers strategies for engaging the next generation of “leaders for excellence in learning and teaching” through the involvement of early career academics and possibly also students in the Leadership Program

Recommendation 4:

That, as part of the *Consolidating Leadership Outcomes* priority within the Leadership Program, the ALTC places specific emphasis on the wider application, testing and evaluation of the frameworks and tools for building leadership capacity developed during the first two years of the Program

Recommendation 5:

That the ALTC commissions initiatives aimed at exploring the impact of staff leadership development on student learning outcomes

Recommendation 6:

That the ALTC considers the balance between Institutional and Discipline-based Projects, and takes appropriate action to ensure the involvement of a wider range of disciplines in the Leadership Program

Recommendation 7:

That the ALTC ensures that at least half of the Projects funded through the Leadership Program are future looking and/or address issues of emerging importance to the higher education sector as a whole

Recommendation 8:

That the ALTC remains alert to opportunities to enhance community perceptions of excellence in university teaching and pursues such opportunities as appropriate

Recommendation 9:

That the ALTC enforces more strongly its requirement for all Projects to include systematic dissemination processes

Recommendation 10:

That, as a matter of urgency, the ALTC moves to ensure that its ALTC Exchange provides the best possible on-going support for dissemination activities

Recommendation 11:

That, the ALTC, in selecting the future key areas for the Leadership Program

- (i) continues to provide support for Projects focused on leadership in the education of Indigenous students, clinical education and advances in online teaching and learning
- (ii) considers naming some new priority areas, selected from:
 - those not addressed to date (e.g. the role of academic boards; rural/regional higher education)
 - those emerging in conjunction with the Higher Education Review (e.g. leadership in curriculum reform associated with the vocational education and training sector/ university interface, the match between graduate outcomes and industry needs and retraining or re-skilling)
 - those associated with the highest levels of leadership in Australian universities

Part I Findings of the Review

1. Description of the ALTC Leadership Program

1.1 Background

This section of the Report draws on previously published ALTC documents⁵. It is included here to provide the appropriate context for the Report, especially in terms of the alignment of the Leadership Program with other initiatives put in place by the ALTC.

The ALTC's mission is "to promote and advance learning and teaching in Australian higher education". It has seven designated responsibilities, which include the following two that are particularly relevant to this review:

- Management of a competitive grants scheme for innovation in learning and teaching
- Development of mechanisms for the dissemination of good practice in learning and teaching.

The ALTC also has six objectives and a stated value position, which are referred to below (see 1.2.2).

In 2005, five strategic priority areas were declared for 2006-2008, committing the ALTC to the establishment of a Grants Scheme, a Fellowship Program, a Resource Identification Network, a scheme for Discipline-Based Initiatives and an Awards Scheme. The Grants Scheme included three programs, supporting Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (referred to in this report as the "Leadership Program"), Competitive Grants and Priority Projects. Details of the latter two Programs can be found at www.altc.edu.au. This report focuses on the development and outcomes of the Leadership Program during its first two years of its operation (2006-2008).

1.2 Rationale, Aims and Structure

1.2.1 Rationale for the Program

During its early strategic planning (2005) the ALTC identified the need for systematic, structured support for academic leadership as a key focus for its activities in 2006-2008. Evidence from many sources, including reports commissioned by the former Australian Universities Teaching Committee⁶, identified academic leadership as critical to successful learning and teaching in universities. There were also indications that leadership capacity building in higher education was uneven across the sector and that academic leaders tended to rely on "learning on the job". By contrast, the ALTC's position is that academic leadership is a specialised and professional activity requiring, in the current context, specific and targeted support.

⁵ Op.cit (3)

⁶ Southwell, D.M., Gannaway, D., Orrell, J., Chalmers, D. & Abraham, C. (2005, April). *Strategies for Effective Dissemination of Project Outcomes*; McKenzie, J., Alexander, S., Harper, C. & Anderson, S. (2005, May). *Dissemination, Adoption and Adaptation of Project Innovations in Higher Education*. Both reports available on www.altc.edu.au

1.2.2 Aims of the Program

The ALTC Leadership Program aims to support projects that build leadership capacity in ways consistent with the promotion and enhancement of learning and teaching in contemporary higher education, and which reflect the ALTC values of excellence, inclusiveness, diversity, collaboration and commitment to long-term, systemic change. It has stated clearly, on many occasions, that it sees excellence in learning and teaching, in the current dynamic environment of Australian higher education, as best supported through approaches to leadership that are distributed and multi-level. All activities within the Program are expected to be underpinned by a scholarly and evidence-based approach, building actively on initiatives and ideas both within Australia and internationally. The major outcome of Leadership Projects is expected to be a demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching.

The Leadership Program is designed to address the following ALTC objectives, to:

- promote and support strategic change in higher education institutions for the enhancement of learning and teaching, including curriculum development and assessment
- raise the profile and encourage recognition of the fundamental importance of teaching in higher education institutions and in the general community
- develop effective mechanisms for the identification, development, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice in learning and teaching in Australian higher education
- identify learning and teaching issues that impact on the Australian higher education system and facilitate national approaches to address these and other emerging issues.

1.2.3 Structure of the Program

For 2006-2008, the Leadership Program had two major priorities focused on institutional leadership and disciplinary/cross-disciplinary leadership⁷, with the expectation that projects could take a national, institutional, discipline-based or specific project perspective on these priorities. Within these contexts, the Program also provided scope for examining both formal, continuing leadership roles (as encapsulated in position titles and descriptions) and less formally defined roles that may be context-dependent, possibly quite short-lived and possibly even unrecognised. Further, the need for cross-context teamwork and integration of the various contexts was seen as fundamental. The Program also had some emphasis on investigating the appropriateness of various models of leadership (with a particular emphasis on distributed leadership) and on examining models of leadership that enhance community partnering (including partnering with professional communities) and that contribute to institutional and community recognition of the fundamental importance of teaching in higher education.

⁷ A third priority, entitled Consolidating Leadership Outcomes, was introduced in 2008, but all of the 22 Projects reviewed for this report pre-dated the introduction of this priority.

2 Operation of the ALTC Leadership Program 2006-2008

2.1 The Application Process

A call for expressions of interest and proposals for projects within the Leadership Program was issued in each of the years 2005-2007, indicating that funding in the region of \$80 000-\$220,000 over approximately two years was available for each project. Comprehensive guidelines⁸ were developed for the Program, providing details of the Program rationale and priorities, directions for applicants, advice on selection criteria and other supporting information. In general, those interviewed for the review considered the *Guidelines and Supporting Information* very helpful. Applicants indicated that the preparation of a full proposal required a substantial investment of time and energy, particularly if partner universities were involved. Hence they appreciated the opportunity to test their ideas through a three-page "expression of interest".

2.2 The Selection Process

In 2005, selection of projects was carried out by a subcommittee of the Board, on the basis of advertised criteria. Two Projects were approved for funding starting in November of that year and a number of others were provided with advice relevant to subsequent submission of full proposals.

By 2006, Standing Committees had been established by the Board for Programs within the Grants Scheme and responsibility for selection of projects was given to these Standing Committees, based on the advice of expert panels who provided reports on all of the submissions. The whole selection process was regarded widely as exemplary in its rigour and fairness.

In 2006, a total of 62 applications were received, from which, ultimately, 17 full proposals were funded. In 2007, a total of 25 applications, including 22 expressions of interest and three full proposals were received, from which three proposals were funded, using the same process as in 2006.

2.3 Total Funds Allocated 2005-2007

The ALTC funded 22 Leadership Projects for implementation in 2005-2007 in 20 different universities, with a total allocation in excess of \$4.1 million. The original grant per project ranged from a low of \$93,160 to a high of \$219,808. The majority of Projects were in the \$185,000-\$195,000 range and were funded over two years. A small number of Projects received "top-up" funding in addition to the original grant to cover particular unforeseen contingencies or worthwhile additional developments. In nearly all Projects, considerable university-level support was also provided (in some cases exceeding the ALTC funding), sometimes in kind, sometimes in the form of the university forgoing its institutional levy and sometimes in the form of participants' salaries (or part thereof) or funding of spin-off activities. Financial reporting requirements were stringent, with comprehensive financial acquittals required annually.

⁸ Op.cit (3)

2.4 Scope of Projects Funded

As in a previous ALTC report (December 2007)⁹, this Report is categorising the 22 Leadership Projects, in accordance with the Program Guidelines, as

- Institutional Leadership, with a further division into Positional/Structural Leadership (focused on various levels of academic leadership, or on frameworks for academic leadership) and Distributed Leadership (focused on operationalising approaches that are multi-level and institution-wide)
- Disciplinary/Cross-disciplinary Leadership, focused mainly on building leadership capabilities through learning and teaching communities, in some cases at a national level. Disciplinary concerns were addressed through three Projects focused on Clinical Education in Health Sciences, one on Law, one on Mathematics/Statistics support and one on the teaching of Science. Cross-disciplinary concerns were addressed through one Project focused on Indigenous women and one focused on rich-media technologies.

While there are some synergies between Projects across these categories, and while some Projects do not fit precisely into any one category, the classification is nevertheless useful for the purposes of this review.

2.4.1 Institutional Leadership – Positional/Structural

There were nine Projects¹⁰ in this category:

- LE 519 *Cultivating the Roles of Associate Deans and Course Coordinators* (II, p.29)
- LE 61 *Academic Leadership Capabilities for Australian Higher Education* (II, p.31)
- LE 62 *An Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming Practices, Structures and Conditions in Indigenous Higher Education* (II, p.32)
- LE 613 *Leadership for Implementing Improvements in the Learning and Teaching Quality Cycle* (II, p.34)
- LE 610 *Enhancing the Student Education Experience through School-based Curriculum Improvement Leaders* (II, p.35)
- LE 611 *Improving the Leadership Capability of Academic Coordinators in Postgraduate and undergraduate Programs in Business* (II, p.36)
- LE 64 *Building Academic Leadership Capability at the Course Level: Developing Course Coordinators as Academic Leaders* (II, p.38)
- LE 65 *Closing the Gap in Curriculum Development Leadership* (II, p.39)
- LE7-355 *A Strategic Leadership Model for the 21st Century* (II, p.41)

2.4.2 Institutional Leadership - Distributed

Five Projects were funded in this category:

- LE 68 *Development of Distributed Institutional Leadership Capacity in Online Learning and Teaching* (II, p.42)
- LE 518 *Promoting Learning and Teaching Communities* (II, p.43)
- LE 69 *Distributive Leadership for Learning and Teaching : Developing the Faculty Scholar Model* (II, p.46)
- LE 612 *Leadership and Assessment: Strengthening the Nexus* (II, p.47)
- LE 67 *Developing Multi-level Leadership in the Use of Student Feedback to Enhance Student Learning and Teaching Practice* (II, p.49)

⁹ *What's Happening in Leadership?* Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 1 December, 2007

¹⁰ Projects are listed in order of their actual or anticipated completion date

2.4.3 Disciplinary/Cross-disciplinary Leadership

Eight Projects were funded in this category

- LD 66 *COMPASS™: Leading the Integration of a Competency-based Assessment Tool in Speech Pathology Learning and Teaching* (II, p.50)
- LD 615 *Quantitative Diversity: Disciplinary and Cross-disciplinary Mathematics and Statistics Support in Australian Universities* (II, p.52)
- LD 614 *Leading for Effective Partnering in Clinical Contexts* (II, p.54)
- LD 63 *Australian Law Postgraduate Network* (II, p.55)
- LE 616 *Raising the Profile of Teaching and Learning: Scientists teaching Scientists* (II, p.57)
- LE 617 *Tiddas Showin' Up, Talkin' Up and Puttin' Up: Indigenous Women and Educational Leadership* (II, p.58)
- LE7-377 *Leading Rich Media Implementation Collaboratively: Mobilising International, National and Business Expertise* (II, p.59)
- LE7-356 *Using Team Management Systems to Identify and Build Leadership for Quality Learning in Clinical Health Care Teams* (II, p.60)

2.5 Range of Higher Education Providers Involved

The 20 universities named as Lead Institutions for the Leadership Projects cover a diversity of universities in the major capital cities or large regional cities, with institutions varying considerably in size and culture. Of universities that fall into the “rural and remote” category, only two have been or are Lead Institutions. None of the Projects has involved a non-university higher education provider.

In line with collaborative ethos supported by the ALTC, 13 Projects took the opportunity to involve Project partners – in all but two cases the partners were other universities, sometimes chosen because of similar size and culture but in other cases selected deliberately to test applications of an approach in quite diverse contexts. Although, as discussed later, in this report, the concept of a “partnership” was implemented in a variety of ways, nevertheless, if declared partnerships are taken into account, then an additional six universities and five non-university bodies (the Australian Council for Educational Research; Queensland Health; Speech Pathology Association of Australia; two firms from the IT and Telecommunications industry) were involved directly to some degree in a Leadership Project. Nine Projects chose to undertake their Projects without partners. Even in these cases, however, most Projects, in their dissemination phase, planned to involve other universities, demonstrating a clear awareness of and ambition to impact at the system-wide level.

2.6 Emerging Understandings of Academic Leadership, 2006-2008

After the 2006 round of applications to the Leadership Program, the Standing Committee commented on the enthusiasm for learning and teaching that was evident but, at the same time, identified a lack of clarity around the concept of “leadership” itself, especially in relation to how leadership would be developed by the proposed projects and how leadership capacity would be sustained. Areas such as missing or inadequate evaluation strategies and clear specification of outcomes were also identified as needing attention by applicants.

Subsequently, to address some of these shortcomings, the ALTC provided support for the Program as a whole by means of a special Colloquium in November 2006, followed by a National Leadership Forum for current project leaders in February 2007, with papers from these events available on the website.

At the November (2006) Colloquium, two commissioned papers were circulated¹¹. One provided a scholarly overview of models universities might pursue in their efforts to support leadership in learning and teaching. The other presented an analysis of 39 of the 62 proposals (27 full proposals and 12 expressions of interest) received in 2006. The analysis indicated that most of the proposals addressed leadership at middle or department levels of the university structure. Only one focused on the top level and only two included students as participants. A few did not discuss leadership at all. The conclusion of the analysis was that the applications displayed a relatively narrow range of concepts of leadership, with two views predominating. One view sought to develop the leadership qualities of people in positions within university structures and the other equated leadership to competence in a disciplinary field. Only a few of the applications were regarded as showing “a clear understanding of the complex elements of leadership and the ways to develop them” (Anderson & Johnson, 2006, p.10).

Against the background of these papers, discussion at the Colloquium focused on a set of questions designed to engage participants with defining effective leadership, and coming to grips with alternative understandings of it and how it might best be developed and supported. In addition, it was hoped to generate an overall picture of how different constructs of leadership are reflected in the structures, systems and policies of different universities and, indeed different Leadership Projects. Although discussion moved towards clarification of some of these questions, at the end of the day, many ambiguities remained.

The National Leadership Forum in February 2007 built on learnings from the November (2006) Colloquium. Discussion was guided by a paper¹² which put forward some very searching questions, framed around

- Issues around structures for learning and teaching in universities
- The nature, context and scope of “leadership”
- Quality issues in leadership in university teaching and learning.
- The notion of “teaching only” staff.

Subsequent discussions with participants at the Forum revealed that, in general, it was regarded as having been a most enjoyable and informative event. Although some pervasive lack of clarity and ambiguity about “excellence in leadership for learning and teaching” remained, a number of participants indicated that the Forum had helped to increase their confidence about the value of their Projects in relation to capacity-building in leadership. In at least two cases (LE 611 and LE 64) synergies were discovered, which led to the development of lasting relationships and additional joint activities building on the original Projects.

In May, 2007, a new round of applications came forward, involving a new group of academics who had not been part of the Colloquium and Forum described above. The pervasive lack of clarity about the concept of “leadership for excellence in learning and teaching” was again evident in this 2007 round and, in reporting on that round, the Standing Committee rated the overall quality of applications as medium. Again, weaknesses were identified in relation to understandings of and focus on leadership and clear definition of leadership outcomes. Applications were considered also to be loaded with too much jargon. Once again, these weaknesses were amongst matters followed up by the ALTC in a *Project Ideas* workshop (December, 2007).

11 Marshall, S.J. (2006, November). Issues in the Development of Leadership for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education; Anderson, D & Johnson, R. (2006, October). A Review of Proposals from the Leadership for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Program. www.altc.edu.au

12 Dow, K.L. (2007, February). Leadership for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. National Leadership Forum. www.altc.edu.au

In February, 2008, the ALTC made another opportunity available for Project Leaders and Managers to share ideas and progress and to also participate in a workshop led by the Project entitled *Learning Leaders in Times of Change* (LE 61 (II, p.3)). At that time, three groups had completed their Projects and many others had made significant progress. Discussion at the workshop revealed that conceptual understandings of academic leadership had come a long way. In a practical sense, participants had begun to see themselves (and those involved in their Projects) as empowered to lead their institutions and, in some cases the sector as a whole, towards enhancement of learning and teaching. Section 3.2.1 of this report discusses this progress in more detail.

This progress was reflected further in the 2008 round of applications. The assessors commented that these applications (30 expressions of interest and 16 full proposals) were of much higher quality than those of previous years and demonstrated improved and more comprehensive understanding of approaches and issues. Despite some individual weaknesses (e.g. diffuseness of scope, lack of clarity in partnership arrangements, limited grasp of previous work in learning and teaching, limited understanding of what constitutes a meaningful outcome, and poor budget preparation), it was considered that the Leadership Program as a whole was functioning very effectively, with sustained involvement from a broadening community.

3. Answering Key Questions

The questions addressed in this section are of two main kinds:

- operational questions concerning the conduct of Projects and the factors that appear to facilitate successful outcomes and sustainability
- strategic questions concerning the extent to which the Leadership Program as a whole has contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the ALTC

During the course of this review, the author developed answers to these questions progressively and shared them with participants at various levels.

In the following discussion, both kinds of questions are addressed with reference to the individual reports provided in Part II and to the ALTC brief for this review, which, as indicated earlier, required a focus on:

- synergies and learnings
- strengths and weaknesses of different approaches
- potential for further development
- implications for a diverse sector
- building on work undertaken to date

3.1 Operational questions

In general, operational questions were of two main kinds:

- what are the characteristics of a “successful” Project, with “success” defined as a Project’s capacity to meet its own and the ALTC objectives?
- what makes a Project sustainable?

For participants, it proved to be useful for consideration of the questions to be clustered in terms of five factors, discussed below:

- stakeholder buy-in (3.1.1)
- project management (3.1.2)
- theoretical framework (3.1.3)
- role of the evaluator (3.1.4)
- the role of previous experience (3.1.5)

Two major issues permeated the discussions that underpin this section of the Report and are evident also in the descriptions of individual Projects in Part II. One concerned the competing demands on the time of academics: as indicated in the discussion of “participant buy-in” below, it became clear that, unless Projects address these time-related issues realistically (e.g. through adequate budgetary arrangements to enable academics to buy themselves out of other commitments) both the immediate and the enduring benefits of individual Projects (and ultimately, the Leadership Program as a whole) will be jeopardised. The second issue related to dissemination, given its critical place in sustainability. However, because of its strategic, as well as operational significance, discussion of dissemination is presented in Section 3.2.4 of this Report.

3.1.1 Stakeholder buy-in

Buy-in at various levels proved to be of overwhelming importance to a Project’s capacity to achieve its aims and to be at least positioned to have a lasting effect. Depending on the kind of Project, buy-in can be considered at a number of levels, from the immediate, participating target group through to those in other universities or relevant professional communities nationally or internationally. At all levels, however, the Project needed to be able to demonstrate its value, in terms of the direct benefits to participants or partners and/or in terms of the return to stakeholders for their investment of time or resources.

(i) Participant buy-in

Quite a number of Projects experienced difficulties in securing buy-in from their target group. While the aims of the Project may have been clear, and the Project may well have had support from university senior executive, obtaining on-going commitment from participants could prove problematic. In some cases, the Project Team’s perceptions of the “need” being addressed by the Project was not shared by participants, while in others, the investment of time required of participants was the obstacle, especially in the context of competing institutional priorities. The latter was especially the case when there was no budgetary provision for time release for participants. It is important for these issues to be addressed by proposers during the development of the Project proposal, through, for example, a needs analysis, or a clear and explicit statement regarding how much time will be required of participants and budgetary provision to cover this. They can also be taken into consideration by the ALTC during the selection process.

One example of difficulties in obtaining participant buy-in was particularly interesting in relation to the concept of “leadership” itself: in the early months of a considerable number of Projects, participants rejected the notion of seeing themselves as leaders. The precise reason for this was difficult to pin down. Suggestions were that “leadership” was identified typically in ways consistent with an authoritarian, hierarchical model (of which participants had negative impressions or experiences), and that the position of the participants was that they were dealing with colleagues or peers, in which case the authoritarian model was seen as inappropriate. It emerged that academics’ preconceived ideas about “leadership” (especially their equating of leadership with managerialism) can prove to be a barrier to progress, unless taken into account systematically and

insightfully. These situations required considerable preliminary and well-timed work to define the kind of “leadership” the Project was aiming for and for participants to appreciate the many ways in which a leader can operate.

(ii) Institutional buy-in

Institutional buy-in proved to be critical to the success of all Projects. This applied most clearly to those in the Institutional category, but also, as discussed below, is important in the longer term to those in the Disciplinary category. Clear links to the university's strategic plan for learning and teaching are fundamental to institutional buy-in and to obtaining the active support and endorsement of senior executives. As demonstrated in Part II of this Report, there were numerous examples of ways in which the support of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or equivalent and at times also of the Vice-Chancellor gave Projects status, credibility and even additional resources and provided the added incentive for participants to also buy in.

As implied above, the necessity for institutional buy-in in the short term was not quite as clear in the case of Disciplinary Projects. Indeed, some of these appeared to be operating in virtual isolation from their own university, seeing their major audience as the professional community with which they were affiliated. In the final analysis, however, the funding to embed the outcomes of the Projects needs to come from within the university. If senior executives have not been committed to or informed adequately about the Project, this may jeopardise the allocation of such funds when required and curtail its sustainability.

In relation to selection processes, it therefore remains important for the ALTC to require a statement of institutional commitment, backed up by commitments of time and resources and by conditional commitment to subsequent relevant policy reform (e.g. the reform of academic promotions policy, an area relevant to the sustainability of many Projects).

(iii) Partner buy-in

The message from several Projects was that the way a “partnership” is to be operationalised in Projects needs careful thought, budgetary consideration and prior agreement at the senior executive level. There was a continuum evident in these Projects, from those partners who appeared to be mentioned in name only and were, in a sense, just endorsing the Project as a good idea and not expecting to play any further role, through to those who played a relatively low key role (possibly limited to representation on the Project Reference Group), through to those who were fully participating and funded partners, in some cases replicating the Project in their own institution. While any model along this continuum may be acceptable, it remains important for the model to be agreed formally amongst partners and explicit in the proposal, so that there is no confusion of expectations.

The need for such agreement can become particularly critical at various points where authored publications or other intellectual property are produced. At least one Project has addressed this issue successfully through developing a publication protocol, setting out authorship rights and other relevant matters.

Overall, in the interests of all parties, the current requirement, as stated in the Guidelines for the Program¹³ needs to be adhered to, namely the inclusion of “the type of collaboration, the project collaborators and their anticipated contributions” (p.21)

¹³ op.cit (3)

(iv) Buy-in from the Project Reference Group

Project Reference Groups, like “partners” came in many guises. In some outstanding cases, the members of the Reference Group became champions of the Project and played an invaluable role in relation to on-going progress, dissemination and embedding. The most successful Reference Groups were those that existed already as a high level committee (such as the university’s Teaching and Learning Committee) or those that included a carefully selected mix of key stakeholders and audiences of the Project and experts in the area. Whatever the model, the expectations of the role the Reference Group will play need to be clear (e.g. through agreed Terms of Reference) and if the group is specific to the Project, it needs, from the outset of the Project, a regular schedule of meetings with appropriate administrative support to provide agendas, minutes and the like. Some of the less effective Reference Groups appeared to exist in name only (perhaps solely for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the application process), while others met in a fairly uncommitted way and were not really supportive or constructive. A Reference Group should be seen as an opportunity to obtain, at relatively low cost, an extraordinary range of benefits for the Project. An opportunity is lost if this does not happen. What emerged from these Projects was that it was part of good Project leadership and management to ensure effective operations of Reference Group.

(v) Buy-in at the system wide level

Obtaining buy-in at the system-wide level can be highly resource-intensive. Some Projects made provision for this kind of buy-in a priority both throughout the Project and, in particular, in the final phase of the Project, when it was clear that the Project was providing a product or outcome of value. System-level buy-in is linked to effective dissemination processes (discussed further in Section 3.2.4), including, for example, networks, regular and targeted interim reports, the active involvement of partners or the Project Reference Group, the establishment of functioning and well-supported communities of practice or a series of on-going national seminars. This was the case for many of the Discipline-based Projects. Institutional Projects varied, however, with some becoming influential even during the life of the Project, while others were not alert to or seemed unable to initiate processes in this regard.

It was apparent from these Projects that system-wide buy-in is facilitated by skilled report writing, involving an appreciation that dissemination is about audience needs and receptivity, not solely about what the Project Team thinks the system “should” know. System-wide buy-in can involve three levels of audiences for reports:

- The audience that there is an obligation to inform (e.g. the ALTC) and any specific stakeholder who has invested in the Project
- The audience that will welcome information about the Project, perhaps because they share perceptions of the need the Project is filling or because the information is timely for them in some other way
- The audience that “should” know about the Project, because it is likely to enhance their activities

Each of these requires a report with a different emphasis, which can be challenging for Project Teams.

During the past two years, dissemination and reporting have been a focus of a number of ALTC supporting activities (in some cases replicated in local seminars) and, as recommended in Section 3.2.4, it would be desirable for this focus to be retained and strengthened.

(vi) Student buy-in

It is salient to recall that the major outcome of the Leadership Program is expected to be a “demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching” As discussed later (Section 3.2.1), few Projects focused directly on this outcome and very few attempted to link the Project outcomes directly to student learning outcomes and to student perceptions of whether their own learning had been enhanced. In a few cases, students were participants in the Projects, with one Project (focused on the use of student feedback) providing a voice for students, others including students in the methodology (e.g. in focus groups in some Disciplinary Projects) or in the evaluation activities (e.g. some clinical education Projects).

At this point in the life of the Leadership Program, it is too early to say whether student buy-in contributes significantly to the success of a Project. Arguably, however, if students are to benefit in a sustainable way from the outcomes of a Project, there is a need to include their feedback and commitment at appropriate stages and there is room in the guidelines to remind applicants of this.

3.1.2 ***Project Management***

A major learning from these Projects is that all Projects need a designated Project Manager and that the approach to Project Management must be robust and flexible enough to handle unforeseen contingences such as the departure of key personnel. This was recognised by the ALTC in the early stages of the Program and a special national workshop for Project Managers was organised in 2007. This workshop has been refined and has now become a formal and embedded component of ALTC support. Many of those involved in these Projects indicated that they had found the workshops highly beneficial, especially in relation to budget management. The continued provision of these workshops is essential, particularly given the discovery, by many of the Project Leaders and Managers, that the skills they learnt in those roles in these Projects (through, for example, negotiating across the university for ethics clearances, budget allocation and acquittal, and senior-level support) enhanced considerably their own leadership development.

There are some aspects of project management that warrant specific discussion here. These concern the Role of the Manager, Stewardship of the Project, Managing workshops, Relationship Management and Documentation/Information Management.

(i) **Role of the Manager**

The Manager’s role may be undertaken by the Project Leader in smaller, less complex Projects and if appropriate time allowance has been budgeted for the Leader, but in this case an administrative assistant is also needed. There needs to be an appropriate budgetary provision for the Manager’s level of appointment and time specification. Ideally, the appointment should be at relatively high level and require previous experience, because the Manager needs sufficient influence within the University (and perhaps beyond). It is critical for the Project Manager to have an accurate position description, to ensure clarity of expectations on the part of both the Manager him/herself and the other members of the Project Team and fairness for all concerned. It was apparent that asking a Project Manager to carry responsibilities in excess of what had been expected or what is consistent with the level of remuneration can have dysfunctional consequences for the Project as a whole and for the person in the Manager’s position. Depending on the structure of the Project, the Manager does not need to be on site – there was at least one example of a Project Manager who worked online very effectively – but the person appointed does need to be familiar with culture and structure of the campus(es) and sensitive to political nuances.

Because the Manager's position is usually fractional time, some people were able to carry this role on more than one Project, in different universities. Similarly, some universities with several ALTC Projects were able to support project management very effectively by designating one staff member to carry responsibility for several projects. It was noted, however, that this can place an unreasonably heavy load on an Academic Development Unit (ADU) or specific staff within the ADU.

Overall, it was clear that good Project Managers were extremely valuable in these Projects and several Projects experienced delays because of the time taken for recruitment, both at the beginning of the Project and at other points if the Project Manager left for some reason.

(ii) Stewardship of the Project

One of the Projects linked the issue of good Project management to the choice of where the Project resides in the university structure. In many cases, institutional Projects were placed in the ADU or similar functional area, in part because the proposal had come forward from this centre in the first place. It was argued also, however, that ADUs are well-placed to provide experience and expertise with cross-university activities or to work in partnership with a faculty in this regard. Others favoured the latter model and argued that the Project stewardship should reside in a faculty.

(iii) Managing Workshops

One of the commonest strategies employed across these Projects involved the organisation and conduct of a group activity of some kind – with titles varying according to the emphasis within the Project (e.g. workshop, seminar, forum, colloquium). The term “workshop” is used in this discussion, while recognising that there are subtle differences in these various titles, and that it would be useful for the ALTC to clarify these differences.

In some cases workshops were integral to the Project methodology. In others, they were used for needs analysis or dissemination purposes and in others, to share experiences and enhance future activities. Whatever the place and purpose, it was clear from feedback that participants really valued them, especially as opportunities that gave them the space and time to think and reflect. It was also clear that conducting effective workshops is an important and expensive dimension of project management and that more needs to be known about this. Some projects, for example raised questions about whether one workshop was enough or whether a series of workshops is required to get maximum value. It would be useful for the ALTC, as it has done in other areas, to develop some guidelines on the conduct of effective workshops, in consultation with Project Leaders who have used this strategy.

(iv) Relationship Management

One of the Project Leaders confessed that his most salient learning had been that “good leadership is about relationship management”. While he spoke in the context of outcomes of the actual Project he was leading, he pointed out also that this is equally true of management of the Project itself.

Good relationship management is dependent in part on the skills of the Project Leader/Manager in managing up and managing down in the University. It requires a range of sophisticated attributes involving foresight, insight, flexibility, negotiating skills, sensitivity to differing and competing perspectives and the capacity to resolve differences tactfully. It is also dependent on the quality and appropriateness of communication

associated with a Project (e.g. the clarity of and wide circulation of the Project's deliverables and outcomes; and, as indicated above, the clarity of and agreement about expectations of Project Team members and other key staff).

Many found that relationship management needed considerable patience and persistence in the face of the high staff turnover referred to earlier. If a project's "champion" at senior executive level left, much time was required to build relationships and garner support from the replacement person. Similarly, if any member of Project Team was lost, then dealing with the vacuum left by that departure could lead to loss of momentum for the Project and, even when a replacement was found, bringing a new member on board was time-consuming. Some Projects chose not to replace Project Team members in these cases, because of the risk associated with introducing a new and possibly disrupting influence. This of course had the disadvantage of placing extra load on remaining members of the team.

Relationship management was especially important in collaborative Projects. Several Projects discovered that collaboration does not come cheaply – it needs trust to be built and maintained, good continuing management and expert communication, including online as well as face-to-face. It also needs an agreed plan, setting out roles, obligations and responsibilities, together with protocols (e.g. publication authorship).

- (v) Documentation/Information Management (including Budget-Tracking)
- Excellent documentation and information management is a crucial aspect of good Project Management. In an operational sense, budget tracking was essential to the progress and completion of a Project. In a more general sense, comprehensive record keeping also became important in the context of departure of key members of the Project Team, because continuity was difficult to maintain if records could not be located. The ALTC requirements dictate a certain level of effective information management, assuring reports every six months or so and financial acquittal statements at annual intervals, but this is not often enough to constitute an on-going practical record to the Project. Of course, it is recognised that, no matter how detailed the documentation, there will be subtleties that are difficult to capture or may not even be recognised until later. As one Project Team indicated, the path a project takes is not necessarily linear and sequential, but can be quite convoluted – a situation that poses a challenge for information management.

Some of these Projects addressed the task of information management very effectively, establishing a structure for regular and frequent interim reports, typically associated with Project Team meetings. Many also found effective ways to store and circulate these interim reports, but success varied here, usually according to the choice of online information management systems. A significant number of Projects spent valuable time establishing the best system for electronic management of information. It was apparent that many were addressing this problem simultaneously and there was much duplication of effort. This could be avoided to some extent if the ALTC provided examples of successful practice and back-up expertise. For example, a document setting out the limits and possibilities of various information management systems could be developed on the basis of a workshop which brings together representatives of Projects which have dealt with this matter, to share experiences and identify solutions, with the addition of expert guidance in this regard.

3.1.3 Theoretical Framework

ALTC Projects are required to have a strong theoretical framework. Some Projects struggled with this requirement, indicating that their Project was focused on the achievement of essentially practical “how to” outcomes, and viewing discussion of theory as unnecessary “clutter” (a perspective which is perhaps associated with comments from the Standing Committee about Projects being overloaded with jargon). A few provided a theoretical framework (usually one of the more popular ones associated with terms such as “action research”, or “community of practice”) but did not really build the project on this. Some provided a comprehensive literature review which, while not including a theoretical framework in the traditional sense, nevertheless provided a solid foundation for the Project. In the best examples, however, Projects went to considerable trouble to build their approach and methodology on a particular theoretical framework. The theoretical framework was quite fundamental to the Project, adding strength, clarity and rigour and contributing to generalisability of the outcomes.

3.1.4 The Role of the Evaluator

The ALTC requires all projects to present an evaluation framework and, for those with funding in excess of \$150 000 to commission an independent evaluation. An excellent supporting document to assist in this regard is provided on the ALTC website¹⁴. Despite the ALTC requirements and support, however, awareness amongst Projects of the key role of project evaluator only began to emerge widely and consistently during 2007. Some began to appreciate that they would obtain the best value from an evaluation if it was a formative process, involving the evaluator as an on-going participant observer in the project. For some evaluators, this presented an as yet unresolved dilemma associated with being close enough to understand the issues (and assuming more of a critical friend’s than a traditional evaluator’s role), but maintaining enough distance to be able to comment objectively. In some Projects, managing the feedback from the evaluator became yet another dimension of relationship management.

3.1.5 The Role of Previous Experience

There was a consistently strong message from these Projects about the importance of previous successful experience of the Project Leaders/Manager in relation to successful Project outcomes. Chances of success appeared to be optimised if the Project built already on a smaller scale trial and if the Project Leader/Manager was experienced in this role. If this is not the case, then the ALTC should consider seriously the provision of a Project mentor, with responsibilities to guide and support the Project in areas where experience is lacking.

Recommendation 1:

That the ALTC considers the operational questions addressed in Section 3.1 of this report and, particularly in light of experience from other Programs in the Grants Scheme, gives due consideration to the provision of support activities or the revision/strengthening of the Program Guidelines along the lines suggested.

¹⁴ Cummings, R. & Chesterton, P. (2007). *Carrick Institute Grants Scheme – Evaluating Projects*.

3.2 Strategic questions

The key strategic questions addressed in this Report reflect the Aims of the Leadership Program, as promulgated through ALTC documents. Essentially these concern whether the Leadership Program has contributed significantly to:

- the building of leadership capacity focused on the demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching in Australian higher education (3.2.1)
- promotion and support for strategic change in Australian higher education (3.2.2)
- a raised profile for learning and teaching in institutions and the community (3.2.3)
- the development of effective mechanisms for dissemination and embedding of good practice (3.2.4)
- the identification and addressing of emerging key issues in Australian higher education (3.2.5)

3.2.1 *Contribution to the building of leadership capacity focused on the demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching in Australian higher education*

This question needs to be taken in two parts: one concerning the building of leadership capacity and the other concerning that building in the context of a demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching.

(i) Building of leadership capacity

There is little doubt that these Projects collectively are contributing to the building of academic leadership capacity in a number of different ways. Even those Projects in their early stages are showing considerable promise in this regard. Some have gone about this very directly, addressing gaps in the provision of leadership development for key, but previously somewhat neglected staff (particularly middle-level leaders) and producing programs to support this. Others have focused more on the need for paradigms of academic leadership to be transformed, in particular to include the values and cultural perspectives of Indigenous staff. Another group have gone about exploring the possibilities of a distributed leadership approach, especially in relation to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching and making more systematic use of student feedback. And a further group, mainly discipline-based, have addressed problems related to curriculum leadership and, in some cases, developed national networks as a means of sharing solutions to these problems in an ongoing sense.

Most of the more mature Projects can point to outcomes that indicate leadership capacity-building. There is, for example, a growing understanding of the goal of “leadership for excellence in learning and teaching” (and how to achieve it) amongst those who have been part of many of the 22 Projects reviewed here and amongst those who have supported them. Section 2.6 of this report outlined chronologically the development of understandings of academic leadership, noting the initial pervasive ambiguity and lack of conceptual clarity. Compared with those uneasy beginnings two years ago, there is now some clarity emerging. As indicated in Section 3.1.1 (i), at the beginning of many of these Projects, it became apparent that the participants in the target groups defined leadership, possibly even tacitly and unconsciously, as equated with hierarchy and authority. Many of them resisted the notion of being, themselves, designated as “leaders”. After two years, however, many Projects have been successful in expanding understandings of leadership to a point where participants’ conceptual understanding is now more aligned with the ALTC’s stated position. Participants now see themselves as empowered to lead and as having being given, in their own words, “permission to lead”.

They have begun to describe leadership as distributed, networked, inclusive and action-oriented, associated with:

- creativity, innovation, initiation, and modelling change and good practice
- a sense of “agency”, linked to a willingness to initiate and take action and confidence to speak out and to influence practice

On a rough estimate, however, the pool of people who have had the opportunity to grow in understanding is probably no more than around 3,000 staff in 26 universities (of a possible 92,000 staff in 39 universities), together with a handful of people in professional groups beyond universities. Comments volunteered by many of those engaged in Projects indicated that understanding beyond that immediate group is still quite limited.

Given the changes outlined above and others evident in many of the Project Overviews in Part II of this Report, it is timely for the ALTC to consider the implications of its defined position on leadership. If the ALTC is committed to sustaining distributed leadership, then considerably more investment appears to be required to embed the notion institution-wide and sector-side. Such embedding is likely to require meeting challenges associated with institution-wide re-alignment of perspectives and transformation of roles at the senior executive level.

Recommendation 2:

That the ALTC gives consideration to the broader implications of its defined position on leadership and, if remaining committed to supporting distributed leadership in Australian higher education, invests appropriately in embedding this nation sector-wide

Finally, if the Leadership Program is seriously concerned with building leadership, then one important piece of information not available currently is the age range of the participants in the target groups of these Projects. Many recent documents, including the Discussion Paper released recently as part of the Higher Education Review¹⁵, draw attention to the aging of the Australian academic workforce and the major problems universities face in terms of succession planning for leadership positions. It goes almost without saying that leadership will only be built for the future if the cohorts being developed in the present are young enough to make a future contribution. Only one project (LD 66 (II, p.24)) takes this issue explicitly into consideration, involving students as “the clinical educators of the future”. Project Leaders perhaps need to be reminded of this when selecting groups to participate in their Projects and, in a broader sense, the ALTC needs to consider how to engage the next generation of leaders through the involvement of early career academics in the Leadership Program.

Recommendation 3:

That the ALTC considers strategies for engaging the next generation of “leaders for excellence in learning and teaching” through the involvement of early career academics and possibly also students in the Leadership Program

- (ii) Building of leadership capacity focused on the demonstrable enhancement of learning and teaching in Australian higher education

The majority of these Projects bore on the enhancement of university teaching, developing staff, or providing tools to develop staff, to lead and respond to change. Once the final reports of all of these Projects are available, which, for most Projects will

¹⁵ *Op.cit* (3)

be by February 2009, the ALTC will have at its disposal an impressive array of frameworks for developing institutional and discipline-based leadership to support teaching and learning. Many of these are well-grounded in theory and have been developed on the basis of widespread input and evaluation nationally (and in some cases also internationally). Hence, their validity is considerable, as is their potential for generalisability, given that many have been tested to varying extents in a range of contexts during the life of the Projects (e.g. as part of partnership arrangements). It would be advisable therefore for the ALTC to focus in the future, not on the development of more programs or frameworks, but rather on the wider application, testing and evaluation of the available frameworks. This activity would be an appropriate priority area for the future, as part of the now third area in the Leadership Program – Consolidating Leadership Outcomes.

Recommendation 4:

That, as part of its Consolidating Leadership Outcomes priority within the Leadership Program, the ALTC places specific emphasis on the wider application, testing and evaluation of the frameworks and tools for building leadership capacity developed during the first two years of the Program

Some of the initiatives funded under this new priority could also address a significant gap which has emerged, associated with the so far limited focus directly on the link between Project outcomes and the demonstrable enhancement of student learning. Many Projects appeared to assume that if staff were developed as academic leaders, then eventually students would benefit. Intuitively this may be acceptable, but at this point it is not really evidence-based. As indicated earlier, only a few of the Projects involved students and, for most, particularly in the Institutional category, the immediate target group was a group of staff. This is not to question the dedication of all of those involved and their actual commitment to enhancing student learning outcomes. What this is saying is that the links or the cause-effect relationships are untested.

One Project (LE 519) made a particularly valuable attempt¹⁶ to come to grips with the challenge of exploring the impact of staff leadership development on student learning outcomes. The Project report provided a possible model, entitled *Framework for Developing an Institutional Leadership in Teaching and Learning Program*, to assist such exploration. It would be useful to develop this framework more fully, or develop and test other frameworks, using actual examples with evidence from empirical research.

Recommendation 5:

That the ALTC commissions initiatives aimed at exploring the impact of staff leadership development on student learning outcomes

In relation to the question of whether Projects are positioned to directly affect student learning, the outcomes of some of the Discipline-based Projects are particularly relevant. As indicated earlier, some of these actually involved students in, for example, focus groups or evaluation activities, so were extraordinarily well-positioned to impact on the students' learning outcomes. Several of the Discipline-based Projects were quite conscious of their value in this regard, to a point where they argued the need for

¹⁶ See Southwell, D., Quadrelli, C. & Bow, L. (2008, January). *Caught Between a Rock and Several hard Places: Cultivating the Roles of the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and the Course Coordinator*. www.altc.edu.au, p. 17-19

the ALTC to ensure a balance between Institutional projects (located in a central staff development unit) and Disciplinary projects (located in a department or faculty). Given that, as indicated in Section 2.4, the Leadership Projects have involved a relatively small number of discipline areas to date, the ALTC, depending on the sample of disciplines in other areas of its activity, should give consideration to the disciplinary balance of its funded activities and take appropriate action to ensure an appropriate balance. Further, this Report acknowledges that the considerable work carried out as part of the Discipline-Based Initiatives Scheme has begun to raise leadership issues, some of which could be explored through the Leadership Grants.

Recommendation 6:

That the ALTC considers the balance between Institutional and Discipline-based Projects, and takes appropriate action to ensure the involvement of a wider range of disciplines in the Leadership Program

3.2.2 Contribution to promotion and support for strategic change in Australian higher education

The majority of these projects support strategic change as envisaged currently within the known world of Lead and Partner Institutions or a specific discipline area. Most of them demonstrate clear links to their existing institutional strategic plans and, perhaps for this reason, most appear to be anchored in the present. They tend to be concerned, for example, with

- testing a model or scaling up a previous pilot test of a model
- filling an existing gap (e.g. in support for academic leadership development for key levels of staff)
- profiling academic leaders in terms of their current needs and preferred ways of learning
- solving an existing problem (e.g. unsystematic use of student feedback).

The invitation has always been there from the ALTC for Projects to be “future looking” and to address “emerging” issues, but, while there are exceptions amongst these 22 Projects, very few have taken this up explicitly. The exceptions include some Projects with more of a future orientation associated with further development or renewal of strategic plans for teaching and learning; one that is linked clearly to national benchmarking of assessment procedures; two that investigate genuinely strategic use of student feedback on teaching; and another, developing distributed leadership to support on-line learning, which is described as having “shifted the University’s direction” dramatically. In relation to sustained strategic change, there also is a particularly pertinent observation made by one Project Team, namely that thinking and talking in terms of a “project” can be very limiting, because projects, by definition, have limited life. The Project Team now speaks in terms embedding an initiative (rather than a “project”) across the institution.

Beyond the institutional level, however, there is at present limited evidence that the Projects are supporting strategic change in Australian higher education as a whole. That evidence may well come during the dissemination and take-up stages, but may require additional support from the ALTC, given the resource intensiveness of systematic dissemination and the incentives that may need to be provided for take-up.

At this point, the two Projects concerned with Indigenous higher education come closest to impacting on strategic change in higher education as a whole, envisaging as they do, new institutional paradigms that take serious account of a diversity of values and perspectives and

link to community-building. In addition, the youngest of the present group of Projects, focused on rich-media technologies is also positioned well to support strategic change in learning and teaching at the national level. Again, this is an emphasis that the ALTC could support further, particularly in the context of the current Higher Education Review and some of the possibilities that it is likely to raise, as discussed in Section 3.2.5

Recommendation 7:

That the ALTC ensures that at least half of the Projects funded through the Leadership Program are future looking and/or address issues of emerging importance to the higher education sector as a whole

3.2.3 Contribution to a raised profile for learning and teaching in institutions and the community

People involved in this review were extremely enthusiastic about the extent to which the ALTC Projects and, indeed, the ALTC in general, are continuing to raise the profile of learning and teaching in their institutions. The availability of large grants, the publicity given to grantees and to Projects, the institutional recognition of teaching as important, all work together to raise the profile of teaching within institutions and in the sector as a whole. This change is welcomed warmly.

This review was not in a position to establish whether the enhanced perception of university teaching has permeated into the wider community, but the impression is that it has not. Criticism of university teaching is quite deeply entrenched in the wider community. It seems likely that this will only change through a concerted, evidence-based campaign linked to partnerships with community groups. For example, activities could build on the sentiments expressed in articles such as that appearing in *The Australian* earlier this year¹⁷, urging universities to remember that one of their primary goals is to teach, and emphasising the perspective that universities' role in building human capital receives too little attention. The ALTC needs to remain alert to such opportunities, especially in the context of the Higher Education Review, with its major focus on student learning and students' experience in higher education.

Recommendation 8:

That the ALTC remains alert to opportunities to enhance community perceptions of excellence in university teaching and pursues such opportunities as appropriate

3.2.4 Contribution to the development of effective mechanisms for dissemination and embedding of good practice

The ALTC was established at a time when there was an acute consciousness that much valuable activity carried out under the auspices of its predecessor bodies (e.g. the Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching and the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC)) had been limited in its impact because of insufficient resources for systematic, sector-wide dissemination. In fact, the two last commissions awarded by the AUTC were for studies of dissemination. The two reports from these studies (McKenzie et al; Southwell et al¹⁸) proved to be extraordinarily valuable to the ALTC, underpinning its "Dissemination Framework" and other activities to fulfil its objective "to develop effective mechanisms for the identification, development, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice in learning and teaching..".

¹⁷ Slattery, L. (2008, April 16). *This is innovative: teach*. Higher Education, 24.

¹⁸ op.cit. (6)

The term “dissemination” in ALTC Projects is interpreted as follows:

dissemination is understood to be more than distribution of information or making it available in some way. While embracing this aspect, dissemination also implies that some action has been taken to embed and upscale the innovation within its own context (discipline or institution) and/or to replicate or transform an innovation in a new context and to embed the innovation in that new context. (McKenzie et al, p.2)

In the design of their Project, applicants are advised to give serious consideration to potential adopters of the initiative being developed, ensuring consultation and collaboration with these groups throughout the Project and devising appropriate methods for engaging them. The ALTC has been active in supporting this advice, through a variety of seminars or forums that have covered matters such as identification of audiences and their needs, communication of potential benefits to these audiences and the range of means of communication that might be employed for this purpose.

Some Projects have taken serious heed of the ALTC’s advice and benefited from the support. The design of at least half of the 22 Projects has incorporated the consultation, collaboration and engagement of potential adopters in the ways envisaged above. Indications from the group of projects collectively are, however, that this requirement needs stronger enforcement.

Recommendation 9:

That the ALTC enforces more strongly its requirement for all Projects to include systematic dissemination processes

To date, some projects have built specific and extensive networks and websites as the major outcomes of their Projects and currently, mainly as an interim arrangement, these are being hosted on the Lead Institutions’ websites. For others, workshop and Project reports and accompanying materials are the major vehicles for dissemination, and these are being made available in limited hard copy and on the ALTC website. These reports represent an extraordinarily valuable resource, rich with detail and with scholarly discussion. The challenge for dissemination is to ensure that they are read and built on, not replicated.

At present the ALTC website is adequate to handle the variety and amount of information, because only a few Projects have been completed. This is likely to become very demanding in the near future, however, especially given the total number of Projects in the Grants Scheme as a whole. An additional demand will also come in the form of specialised products of the Projects (including extensive networks) referred to above. Given the limited life of the arrangements for hosting of products on Lead Institutions’ websites, these products also will need to be easily accessible on the ALTC website if they are to have an impact.

For the future, to get the best value from the growing collection of valuable reports, materials and networks, web-based access will need to be very sophisticated, with provision for rapid and easy cross-referencing. What was called originally the *Resource Identification Network* was intended to handle this dissemination task. The ALTC has indicated that a completed version of what is now called the “ALTC Exchange” is available and is being appraised currently on the basis of feedback from users. There is a critical need, from the point of view of long-term, effective dissemination, for a usable and sustainable version of the Exchange to be made widely available as soon as possible.

Recommendation 10:

That, as a matter of urgency, the ALTC moves to ensure that its ALTC Exchange provides the best possible on-going support for dissemination activities.

3.2.5 Contribution to the identification and addressing of emerging key issues in Australian higher education

These Projects are only 22 of many funded by the ALTC through its Grants Scheme, so discussion in this section needs to be interpreted in the context of other contributions made by the Competitive Grants and Priority Projects Programs and through activities in some of the other ALTC strategic priority areas (such as the Fellowship Scheme and the Discipline-Based Initiatives Scheme).

Having said that, there is no doubt that the Leadership Program has to date addressed some of the major emerging key issues in Australian higher education. Clinical education in the health sciences, for example, has needed attention for some time and the possibilities are boundless for extending the learnings from the clinical education Projects to other areas where work-based learning is essential (e.g. teacher education, engineering). Similarly, Indigenous higher education is an area demanding increasing attention, given the under-representation of Indigenous students in higher education and the under-representation of Indigenous staff members in senior positions in universities. In addition, one of the key areas addressed by the Leadership Projects has focused on support (including leadership training, recognition and better position definition) for previously much-neglected middle-level teaching-and-learning staff such as Associate Deans and Course coordinators.

Online teaching and learning has also been addressed very effectively by one Project (LE 68), but ongoing success in this area depends on leadership that encourages understanding and utilisation of rapidly changing technology – technology with which today's students, but less often today's academics, are familiar on a day-to-day basis. Exploration of the potential of emerging technologies for online teaching and learning is essential for the future.

Although all of these areas and more have been addressed through the Leadership Program to date, it comes as something of a surprise to find two areas which would seem to be important to explore, namely

- the role of academic boards (and the like) in leadership of learning and teaching, and
- leadership for excellence in learning and teaching in rural and remote universities.

In addition, opportunities appear to be arising in relation to other emerging priorities in Australian higher education, brought into sharper relief by the Higher Education Review's Discussion Paper. While the Discussion Paper touches on many areas, some of which have already been alluded to above, some of those of relevant to the future of the ALTC Leadership Program concern the need for leadership in curriculum reform focused on the articulation between the vocational education and training sector and the higher education sector; the match between graduate outcomes and industry needs; and retraining or re-skilling.

Finally, there is evidence that, at the highest levels of appointment in Australian universities, there is room for action by the ALTC. While not specific to leadership in learning and teaching as such, evidence from a recent survey of 1200 academics from 21 Australian universities¹⁹ indicates a disturbing perception that institutions are characterised by cumbersome administrative procedures, inadequate internal communication systems and

¹⁹ Reported in *The Australian, Higher Education*, 19 March 2008, p.35.

support structures in teaching research and management that leave much to be desired. If Australia is to move towards a system of “compacts” between universities and government as a principle for governing and funding higher education, then it is crucial for any problems of this kind to be addressed. The ALTC Leadership Program has a role to play here, building on the extensive national Project reported in *Learning Leaders in Times of Change* (LE 61) and other explorations of models of distributed leadership.

Recommendation 11:

That, the ALTC, in selecting the future key areas for the Leadership Program:

- (iii) continues to provide support for Projects focused on leadership in the education of Indigenous students, clinical education and advances in online teaching and learning
- (iv) considers naming some new priority areas, selected from:
 - those not addressed to date (e.g. the role of academic boards; rural/regional higher education)
 - those emerging in conjunction with the Higher Education Review (e.g. leadership in curriculum reform associated with the vocational education and training sector/ university interface, the match between graduate outcomes and industry needs, and retraining or re-skilling)
 - those associated with the highest levels of leadership in Australian universities

Part II Overviews of Projects

This Part of the Report provides overviews of the 22 ALTC Leadership Projects funded in 2005-2007, with Projects categorised, as indicated in Section 2.4.1 of Part I of this Report, as

- II A Institutional Leadership – Positional/Structural**
- II B Institutional Leadership – Distributed**
- II C Disciplinary/Cross-disciplinary Leadership**

and listed within each category in order of anticipated or actual completion date.

II A Institutional Leadership – Positional/Structural

1. LE 519 *Cultivating the Roles of Associate Deans and Course Coordinators* (II, p.29)
2. LE 61 *Academic Leadership Capabilities for Australian Higher Education* (II, p.31)
3. LE 62 *An Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming Practices, Structures and Conditions in Indigenous Higher Education* (II, p.32)
4. LE 613 *Leadership for Implementing Improvements in the Learning and Teaching Quality Cycle* (II, p.34)
5. LE 610 *Enhancing the Student Education Experience through School-based Curriculum Improvement Leaders* (II, p.35)
6. LE 611 *Improving the Leadership Capability of Academic Coordinators in Postgraduate and undergraduate Programs in Business* (II, p.36)
7. LE 64 *Building Academic Leadership Capability at the Course Level: Developing Course Coordinators as Academic Leaders* (II, p.38)
8. LE 65 *Closing the Gap in Curriculum Development Leadership* (II, p.39)
9. LE7-355 *A Strategic Leadership Model for the 21st Century* (II, p.41)

1. LE 519 “Caught between a Rock and Several Hard Places”: Cultivating the Roles of the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and the Course coordinator

Lead Institution: Queensland University of Technology

Partner Institutions: The University of New South Wales; Charles Darwin University

Project Team Leader: Ms Deborah Southwell

Commencement date: 16 November, 2005

Completion date: 1 December, 2007

Final Project Report and Financial Acquittal submitted : January, 2008

Availability of Final Report: www.altc.edu.au

The aim of this Project was to develop and implement a comprehensive Curriculum Leadership Program for two levels of leadership in learning and teaching (Assistant/Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) and Course Coordinators). The problem addressed in this Project concerned the general lack of preparation of staff at these levels for the complex roles they are required to perform, and the lack of availability of programs designed specifically to assist them.

The Project was operationalised through activities associated with a community development model of change, which was seen to be very effective. This model underpinned the three residential workshops conducted in each of the universities over a two-year period. The

success of the workshops, in terms of outcomes and participant satisfaction, increased considerably as the Project progressed. The Project Team learnt more about what resonated with participants and the participants themselves became more receptive learners, with a developing awareness of the benefits of the workshops (in terms of increased knowledge and personal efficacy).

Synergies exist between this Project and several others in the Positional/Structural Leadership category (LI 61, LI 64 and LI 610) and Distributed Leadership category (LI 69 and LE 612). The contribution of Professor Geoff Scott from Project LI 61 to the final residential workshop of this Project highlighted these synergies and was particularly welcomed by participants.

The Project was structured and funded to enable each participating university to participate as a full and active partner, while allowing also for individual university cultures and priorities.

The concept of “leadership” in this Project was most clearly associated with the developments evident in the target group of middle managers. The major learnings from the Project in terms of its aims were that effective curriculum leadership development programs have three enabling conditions:

- Strongly supportive organisational culture and conditions
- Comprehensive induction to, and mentoring in, the role of curriculum leader
- Planned curriculum leadership development.

The Project report presents and discusses each of these, in association with some immensely practical recommendations for future action. The report is supplemented by an additional document providing a Framework of three Modules, including examples of handouts, for use by others wishing to provide a program for distributed institutional leadership in teaching and learning.

There were also particular learnings from this Project related to the conduct of ALTC Projects generally, namely

- The expense of collaborative projects and partnerships in terms of project management, participants' time and travel/accommodation (especially if rural or remote universities are partners)
- Despite the expense, the value of collaborative projects to project participants, in terms of broadening their view of how different institutions go about their business.
- The potentially debilitating effect of considerable staff turnover
- The necessity for and benefits of strong institutional commitment (by all universities involved in a project)
- The need for roles and expectations of participants to be fully clarified
- The need for comprehensive and detailed record keeping and information management, especially critical in the context of high staff turnover in projects.

The long term impact of the Project looks very promising. Already, at the institutional level in the Lead Institutions and at least one of the Partner Institutions, where it has strong support from the DVC (Academic), it has led to more systematic approaches to the induction of Associate Deans and Course Coordinators. It has also highlighted the needs of Heads of School in this regard, a problem which one of the Partner universities is aiming to address by means of another ALTC project.

The Project is eminently scalable to the national level, because most universities have appointed middle management educational leaders (such as Associate Deans), all in need of the kinds of professional support provided through the program designed by this Project. The

long term impact of the Project is enhanced by the provision of the Framework document referred to above and potentially, also, through the networks of Associate Deans (T&L) and the like established by the Project Team. The sustainability of the latter network (at present available through the UNSW website) is not clear at present and ideally should be linked to the ALTC Exchange.

2. LE 61 Academic Leadership Capabilities for Australian Higher Education

Lead Institution: University of Western Sydney

Partner Institutions: Australian Council for Educational Research

Project Leader: Professor Geoffrey Scott

Commencement date: 30 May, 2006

Completion date: 17 June, 2008

Report available *Learning Leaders in Times of Change*, www.altc.edu.au

The purpose of this Project was to define the capabilities that make an educationally effective higher education leader and to produce resources to develop and monitor these leadership capabilities. The problem addressed by the Project concerned the limited research-based understandings of the role of academic leaders in contemporary Australian universities and the relative dearth of empirically-based leadership material developed specifically for the operating context of higher education.

The Project aimed to

- profile academic leaders (and their roles) at seven levels (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Dean, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), Head of School/Department, Head of Program, Director (Learning and Teaching))
- clarify the meaning of leadership in an academic context
- illuminate the daily realities, influences, challenges and most/least satisfying aspects of learning and teaching roles in Australian universities
- identify the perceived markers of effective performance in each role
- identify the capabilities that leaders see as the most important for effective performance
- identify the forms of support that are perceived to be the most important for developing these capabilities
- determine key similarities and difference between roles, and
- compare the Project's findings with the existing literature on higher education leadership and the outcomes of parallel studies in other educational contexts.

The approach of the study and its methodology drew on five years of previous research that had developed and validated a leadership capability framework for use with school principals in the NSW Department of Education and Training²⁰. This grounding in previous research, together with the partnership with Australia's premier educational research organisation, gave the Project tremendous strength. Additional strengths came from the active involvement of over 500 academic leaders in 20 universities; the guidance of an effective National Steering Committee; the progressive validation of findings through an extensive series of sector-wide workshops and a national forum involving a further 490 leaders; and, the further validation of findings through international workshops (involving South African and Canadian leaders) and

²⁰ Scott, G. (2003). *Learning principals: Leadership capability and learning research in NSW DET*. www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/leadership/docs/Learning_principalnewb.pdf

international benchmarking with studies undertaken by the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

This was a logistically and conceptually challenging Project, undertaken in a highly professional and rigorous manner. The final report is a substantial document providing an overview of relevant literature and setting out clearly the key findings of the study. It provides an invaluable basis for those planning future leadership development activities that take into account emerging issues in higher education.

As documented in the Project's final report, the outcomes of the Project include

- a validated capability framework for effective leadership in higher education
- a functional prototype of an online tool to enable future leaders to complete the same survey as those participating in the Project
- a set of role-specific case studies and proven methods for handling the key challenges identified for each role
- a mechanism to revise leadership selection and its development in universities
- a set of quality checkpoints for ensuring academic leadership learning programs are productive and engaging
- a set of checkpoints for shaping and developing a change-capable university culture
- a set of slides summarising the Project's field-tested findings
- a tested methodology for eliciting sector feedback and engagement with the outcomes of such studies.

Even during the two years of its life, this has been a highly influential Project. The Project Teams involved in a number of other studies have referred to it as a seminal undertaking and have utilised either its interim findings or the Project Leader himself in their own work. Already, it is clear from discussion with other universities that several are planning initiatives or Projects based on the findings of this Project.

3. LE 62: An Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming Practices, Structures and Conditions in Indigenous Higher Education

Lead Institution: Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education

Partner Institutions: Australian Catholic University

Project Leader: Associate Professor Lyn Fasoli

Commencement date: 2 June, 2006

Completion date: 31 December, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant Indigenous teaching and learning programs. The problem addressed in this Project concerned the lack of a framework of guiding principles, values and philosophies to inform institutional practices in higher education programs for Indigenous students. The ultimate intention of the Project was that the application of the framework in the work of academics, students and administrators, would bring about change and transformation in institutional leadership practices, that would then lead to excellence in teaching and learning for Indigenous students, the generation of new knowledge and enhanced capacity in the community.

The approach of this Project was framed in participative action research, with collaborative development and evaluation of an Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP). Five Australian universities (including the Lead and Partner institutions) and three North American universities, all with significant numbers of Indigenous students, participated fully in the

Project. Communication primarily took place either through Working Seminars held in Australia (a crucial dimension of the Project) or by teleconference. Communication was supported by detailed records of Project events and progress shared either by email or through a website using Basecamp.

The ILP devised through the action research was underpinned by eight key values negotiated amongst participant – cultural integrity, openness, enduring leadership, empowerment, partnerships, communication, inclusion and transformation. The Project itself, which progressed in an impressively democratic, responsive and inclusive manner, also appeared to be underpinned implicitly by these values. All participating institutions produced action plans for the implementation of the ILP and it was apparent from these action plans that the ILP was flexible enough to allow for considerable institutional differences. ILP application was assisted considerably by the use of a non-linear, graphic and creative strategy that enabled participants to articulate new ideas and represent them in powerful ways.

Dissemination and formative evaluation have been integral to the Project. Dissemination has been assisted by the information management strategies referred to above and by the development of explicit frameworks for collaborative writing, setting out clearly the goals, expectations, timelines and individual responsibilities for various written products of the Project. This kind of procedural rigour was particularly evident in planning for the production of a special refereed edition of Batchelor's *Ngoonjook: A Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*.

Through dedication, sensitivity, effective and agreed guidelines and hard work, this Project has overcome a number of challenges associated with distance, lack of time, different time zones, cross-institutional impediments and identification of an appropriate information management system. One challenge yet to be met involves getting formal recognition of the Project's findings by the National Indigenous Higher Education Network or an equivalent organisation, without which the Project Team considers the credibility and acceptance of the ILP may be jeopardised.

The impact of this Project has been felt in the participating institutions to varying degrees, with the strongest impact in institutions where senior institutional support is strong (as in the Lead and Partner institutions). In the Lead Institution, the Vice-Chancellor's view is that, in some ways, it is not possible to separate out the impact of this Project from the impact of other initiatives underway in the university and the community. In other words, she saw these initiatives, collectively, as beginning to have a positive impact on Indigenous higher education.

In terms of building on the outcomes of this Project, the Project Team is planning to consolidate and refine the outcomes, extending the Project to a further eight universities in Australia and accordingly, is putting together an application for another ALTC Project. The Project Teams in the Lead and Partner institutions are also engaged in joint research projects in this area and the two universities have drawn up a Memorandum of Understanding covering research, scholarship, establishment of networks and partnerships, and provision of services to professions and Indigenous communities. In addition, there are some synergies between this Project and another ALTC Project on leadership for Indigenous women in higher education (LE 617) which could be explored further, particularly in terms of the similarities in the approaches used.

4. **LE 613: Leadership for Implementing Improvements in the Learning and Teaching Quality Cycle**
Lead Institution: Monash University
Partner Institutions: none
Project Leader: Dr Lorraine Bennett
Commencement date: 3 August, 2006
Completion date: 15 June, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to assist faculties to link data collection, reporting and analysis to actions targeting the improvement of learning and teaching. The Project was undertaken by the University's Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) in collaboration with the Centre for Higher Education Quality and selected teaching areas of the University. It involved the testing and evaluation of an approach encapsulated in the "Engaging Leadership Framework" (ELF) which had been developed initially in the Faculty of Education during the previous four years.

The problem addressed in this Project concerned the need for a University-wide cultural shift towards a more systematic approach to the use of the large amount of data available about student learning. The Project aimed for the ELF to be integrated with the University's existing "quality cycle" in ways that enabled faculty leaders

- to read, analyse and interpret student satisfaction and performance data systematically and easily
- to identify and act on areas of improvement in a systematic way
- to identify the leadership drivers such as policies, procedures, systems, strategies and resources that need to be put in place at both university and faculty levels to facilitate improvements.

The approach of the Project was grounded in action research, enacted through cycles of group reflection, action and revision. The model was robust enough to enable the Project to cope with significant changes occurring within the University, including some affecting CALT directly and some affecting the institutional leadership of learning and teaching.

During successive discussions between the Project Team and Project participants and stakeholders (including students), the ELF went through many different iterations, some initially very complex both substantively and diagrammatically, until a final simple, elegant and widely applicable version of the tool was generated. The ELF approaches the pursuit of excellence from three core perspectives: scholarship, engagement and management. Its strengths lie in the interrelatedness of these three areas of excellence, their location both within and beyond the quality cycle and the potential for diverse leadership inputs (operational, institutional and external).

The ELF is supported at the university's senior executive level, especially in terms of its focus on evidence-based action, its integration with the university's quality cycle and its potential for use in leadership training at many different levels.

The Project dealt effectively with a number of challenges encountered typically with initiatives aimed at bringing about a cultural shift, especially in a multi-campus institution (in this case with two overseas campuses as well as a number within Victoria). These challenges were associated mostly with workload, difficulties in accepting evidence that levels of performance could be improved, professional development/promotion and competing priorities for academic staff. They were overcome through engaged dissemination procedures, characterised by persistence, good communication and skilful relationship management.

There are synergies between this Project and other ALTC Leadership Projects, both substantively and methodologically. Substantively, at least one other Project focuses on the systematic use of student feedback on teaching (LE 67). Methodologically, there are a number that, like this one, have adopted an action research approach with considerable success (e.g. LE 612, LE 62). These synergies have not been explored at this point but discussion with teaching and learning leaders beyond the University have revealed interest in the ELF. For the future, the Project Team is alert to the possibilities for wider application of the ELF and hopeful of pursuing these.

5. LE 610: *Enhancing the Student Education Experience through School-based Curriculum Improvement Leaders*

Lead Institution: Murdoch University

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leader: Dr Rick Cummings/Professor Jan Thomas

Commencement date: 30 June, 2006

Completion date: 30 September, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to facilitate sustainable long-term change in learning and teaching, through developing the capacity of a group of key staff to lead curriculum improvement within their Schools and across the University. The broader problem addressed by the Project concerned the sector-wide need for high quality educational environments that cater appropriately to the diverse needs of today's students.

The Project was based on research indicating the benefits of a distributed layered model of professional development in higher education and on practical experience with an approach to educational development that distributes leadership and responsibility to Schools while still retaining central oversight. It involved working with a group of exemplary teaching staff drawn from nine different Schools and providing them with intensive training in curriculum development with reference also to the specific needs of their School (e.g. in relation to assessment practices, teaching of large groups or flexible delivery). These "Curriculum Improvement Leaders" (CILS) then worked with other staff within their Schools, motivating and facilitating colleagues to improve the curriculum, in line with School priorities. Specific developmental needs were drawn to the attention of the University's Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC), which assisted in meeting these needs.

The Project Team demonstrated considerable collective energy and passion about teaching (and its recognition within the University) and the group as a whole, which included several TLC staff, was large enough for significant peer-mentoring to occur. The group has essentially evolved into a functioning "community of practice". The participants clearly appreciated the time and "headspace" afforded to them by the Project and, while initially unwilling to describe themselves as "leaders" (a phenomenon common to several of these ALTC Leadership Projects), they indicated that the Project had made them feel empowered to act as change agents.

The Project has been implemented during a period of significant structural change within the University, including a reorganisation of the academic faculties. The need for senior managers and senior executives to dedicate time and attention to this restructure has affected the capacity of this Project to impact on the University in the way envisaged initially. Other challenges met by the Project were centred on the lack of time available for CILS to spend on their Project-related activity. In addition to the high workload carried by academics,

the buy-out time provided through the Project was not sufficient to release a CIL from a whole unit of teaching, so they were not always able to give priority to Project activities.

Despite these challenges, the Project has progressed well in terms of its original aims. It is able to cite evidence of gains in knowledge, skills and confidence-to-lead amongst the CILS and is planning an analysis of curriculum material and student feedback to establish the extent of any resultant curriculum-related effects. Formative feedback from the Project Evaluator has been of value to the Project Team and the CILS.

This has been a complex but very well-managed Project. It has been supported throughout by an internal Steering Committee of critical friends drawn from the various Schools and by an external Reference Group, several of whose members have, on occasion, travelled interstate to make their contribution. For example, interstate members of the Reference Group played a key role in a forum on Leadership and Sustainability organised as part of this Project in March 2008.

Sustainability is the major issue facing this Project as it nears completion. The on-going provision of resources to support the CILS and their community of practice is not assured at this stage. The participants in the Project have suggested that it would be beneficial for the outcomes of all the sub-Projects, across the nine Schools, to be woven into a coherent account of “learning and teaching at Murdoch”. In addition, the Project is well-positioned to inform the on-going debate concerning what it means to be a “leader” in a “collegial” environment, a debate which is at the heart of models of distributed leadership.

There are many synergies between this Project and others exploring the possibilities of distributive leadership, especially, for example, LE 69, which is developing a “faculty scholar” model. Further, in many ways, this Project represents a microcosm of the sector as a whole. The Schools involved and their individual cultures vary considerably, in much the same way as individual universities vary throughout Australia. Successes within the context of this Project may well be scalable to the sector as a whole.

6. LE 611: *Improving the Leadership Capability of Academic Coordinators in Postgraduate and Undergraduate Programs in Business*

Lead Institution: University of South Australia

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leaders: Professor Patricia Vilkinas

Commencement date: 14 June, 2006

Completion date: November 2008

This Project focused on academic leadership, defined in terms of activities that develop and maintain quality teaching. Its purpose was to enhance the quality and effectiveness of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the University’s Division of Business by developing the leadership capacity of academic coordinators, known in this Project as Program Directors.

The problem addressed concerned the demanding and complex nature of Program Directors’ roles, especially in the context of on-going changes in Australian higher education and the lack of clearly defined roles and systematic support for this group.

The aims of the Project were to identify the key leadership skills and abilities required for effective academic leadership of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Business and,

based on this analysis, to develop frameworks and resources for use in the professional development of Program Directors.

The Project built on a small pilot study which had indicated that frequently, Program Directors felt frustrated and incapable of performing effectively on the full range of functions required of them. The Project also built explicitly on existing literature and theory. Fundamental to it was the well-established Integrated Competing Values Framework (ICVF), a model framed initially in terms of a manager's five operational roles: Innovator, Broker, Deliverer, Monitor and Developer. The model also included a sixth role – the Integrator – which allows individuals to critically review their own performance, to reflect on those observations and to learn from these reflections. One of the strengths of the Project has proved to be the structure and intellectual depth which a solid grounding in theory gives to the Project Team's activities and reflections. The Team's regular meetings were described as "providing opportunities for intellectual challenge and creative dialogue".

The approach of the Project involved interviews with Program Directors and other significant figures within their sphere of activity, based on the ICVF. From the analysis of the interview data, a map of Program Director's current situation was drawn up, validated with participants and others and used as a basis for individual feedback, questionnaire development (and translation to a web-based tool) and two workshops. Although not envisaged initially as part of the project, the Programs Directors have formed a "community of practice", which supports the achievement of the project's second aim, namely the building of the framework for professional development of Program Directors.

The Project Reference Group has consisted of a variety of key stakeholders drawn both from the Division of Business and more widely across the Lead University and another university. It has met biannually and has played a key role in guiding the Project, enhancing the Project Team's work and commenting on the possible scope of the professional development program and framework. The input from the Project's External Evaluator has been found to be similarly useful.

Although located in the Division of Business, the Project has had impact University-wide. It relates directly to a number of the University's teaching and learning priorities and, in this regard has received strong support from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The high credibility and multi-disciplinary nature of key members of the Project Team has also helped to increase the University-wide impact of the Project and one member of the Project Team is actively engaged in the Program Directors' Review Group, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Project Team is engaging in a number of wider dissemination activities, including preparation of conference presentations and journal publications. They have been active in identifying and developing synergies with other ALTC Leadership Projects and have received additional funding to pursue further joint activities with LE 64. In addition, the Project Leader is a member of the Reference Group for another ALTC Leadership Project framed in terms of the ICVF (LE7-377). Planned future activities include making the web-based tool available sector-wide, developing staff at other universities in the delivery of the Professional Development Framework and applying the Framework to other key learning and teaching roles in universities.

7. **LE 64: Building Academic Leadership Capability at the Course Level: Developing Course Coordinators as Academic Leaders**
Lead Institution: Curtin University of Technology
Partner Institutions: Queensland University of Technology, University of South Australia, RMIT University, University of Technology Sydney
Project Leaders: Ms Sue Jones, Associate Professor Rick Ladyschewsky, Dr Beverley Oliver
Commencement date: 25 August, 2006
Completion date: November 2008

The purpose of this Project was to design and implement an experiential academic leadership development program for course coordinators. The aim was for the program to enhance course coordinators' capabilities, to enable them to improve course quality, to strengthen peer relationships, to operationalise distributed leadership across the University and ultimately to improve the students' experience of learning. The problem addressed by the Project concerned the critical middle-level leadership role of course coordinators in the achievement of quality learning and teaching outcomes for students and the sector-wide dearth of initiatives to support both the development of course coordinators as academic leaders and the embedding of distributed models of leadership.

One strength of the Project is that its approach is grounded in the literature pertaining to academic leadership development. A further strength was injected in the design and development of the actual academic leadership development program, because this program was based on an award-winning model in use in the University's Graduate School of Business. It targeted the developmental needs of course coordinators at the three levels of personal leadership, conceptual understanding and skills, through modules delivered in both hard copy and online, and supported by sessions conducted by the Project Team.

The Project was conceptualised in four phases conducted over two years. Phase 1 involved the establishment of the Project, the completion of the literature review and the determination of course coordinators' developmental needs. In Phase 2, the academic leadership program was designed and developed, in consultation with the Project Reference Group. Phase 3 saw the program piloted and evaluated on the basis of feedback from participants. Phase 4, which is still in progress, has involved the preparation of the revised program package for dissemination, embedding of the program within the University and external evaluation of the Project. In effect, a "Phase 5" has been added to the Project, building on synergies with LE 611. With provision of additional funding from the ALTC, this phase is focused on activities carried out jointly with the University of South Australia (the Lead University in LE 61).

The Project was advised on regular bases by an Internal Reference Group, with representatives from across the University. It also had an External Reference Group consisting of the directors of Teaching and Learning Centres at the Partner universities, but the contribution of this group was quite limited because of many staff changes and the difficulty of maintaining regular meaningful consultation. To date in the Project, the involvement of the Partner universities has been less than that envisaged initially, but it is anticipated that they may be involved more in Phase 4.

The major learning from the Project is that academic leadership development in higher education is no simple matter. Complexities arise because of a host of contextual factors associated with the need for accurate position descriptions, the need for institution-level recognition and the increasing pressure on academics, in terms of both time and creative energy, to contribute to a range of teaching, research and administrative areas. In addition,

academics' preconceived ideas about "leadership" (especially their equating of leadership with managerialism) can prove to be a barrier, unless taken into account systematically and insightfully. As in several other Projects, this Project found that the participants were initially resistant to identifying themselves as "leaders", because their previous experience had led them to associate leadership with "authority", which they did not see themselves as having. In this sense, even the use of well-known frameworks for leadership (such as the Competing Values Framework used in this Project and in LE 611) can be problematic, because of perceptions that their language is managerial and is therefore the antithesis of academic culture. (In the event, the additional joint activities with LE 611, referred to above, will address in part the need to express the Competing Values Framework in language more aligned with academic culture.)

This Project also learnt the value of support from the senior executive level in the University. It was particularly timely for the Lead University, coinciding with changes to and strengthening of the strategic priorities for learning and teaching. Tangible expressions of this support came in the form of resources provided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for additional cohorts to undertake the program in 2008 and the inclusion, in the University's new Teaching Performance Index, of rewards for successful completion of the program. In addition, the program is now a key component within the suite of leadership courses offered through the University's Organisational Development Unit.

The success of the Project in the Lead Institution augurs well for its future. In this context, the Project Team have found that language can play an important role in long term sustainability. Thinking and talking in terms of a "project" can be very limiting, because projects, by definition, have limited life. The Lead Institution now speaks in terms embedding the academic leadership development program across the institution. Clearly, internal dissemination activities have worked well, supported by the institutional context referred to above. Other University initiatives are also building on the experiences of this Project (e.g. the development of a Heads of School Leadership Program and the inclusion of two of the Project Leaders in the reference group for the University's Leadership Development Framework).

There has also been some wider dissemination activity, particularly through scholarly papers delivered at conferences or in journals. It is anticipated that sector-wide dissemination will increase during Phase 4 of the Project and already, overtures have been made to the Project Team to participate in follow-up Projects led by other universities.

8. LE 65: *Closing the Gap in Curriculum Development Leadership*

Lead Institution: The University of Queensland

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leader: Professor Fred D'Agostino

Commencement date: 25 May, 2006

Completion date: 15 June, 2009

The purpose of this project was to design systems, including staff development programs, to support and enhance leadership skills for staff in charge of sequences of study in student programs. The problem addressed concerned the need for more structure and sequencing within student studies, and the lack of programs available to support middle-level academic leaders responsible for embedding this kind of curriculum rigour. In addition, there was seen to be a lack of university-level acknowledgement for the significant contribution required of staff in this regard. The Project was designed to "close the gap" between the strategic

importance and institutional neglect of these staff, through structured leadership support that could, potentially, also be packaged for utilisation in other universities.

The Project involves a University-wide collaboration, together with a more specific-purpose collaboration between the Project Leader (an experienced member of staff in the Faculty of Arts) and a staff member from the Teaching and Educational Development Institute (TEDI). It is progressing in accordance with its original timetable, and at this point has resulted in the development and delivery of a program on curriculum leadership to an initial cohort of staff drawn from across the University. The Project has been able to leverage off the University's internal Teaching and Learning Strategic Grants program to provide funding for related "spin-off" projects. It has also led to the development of applications for ALTC funding for other curriculum-related projects – one demonstration that the participants are paying additional serious attention to their leadership responsibilities and building on their personal capabilities as leaders.

The Project is supported strongly at the institutional level and is seen to be particularly timely in terms of consistency and alignment with the overall directions and needs of the University. The University's Teaching and Learning Committee acts as the Reference Group for the Project, receiving regular reports and providing high level, University-wide support and profile for the Project. It also provides feedback and suggestions in relation to progress and assistance in recruiting participants for the program. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) has provided matching funding for the Project, together with valuable in-kind support in the form of her own social capital. All of this augurs well for the policy-level changes necessary to provide appropriate incentives for staff and to embed the program for the future.

At the national level, the Project is also having some impact. For example, it is contributing to a multi-institutional development of an on-line Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and the possible provision of a national workshop on strategic curriculum development.

There are synergies between this Project and other ALTC Projects that focus on the development of middle-level leaders in learning and teaching (e.g. the QUT Project LE 519 addressing the needs of Associate Deans and Course Coordinators) – synergies which, at this point remain unexplored. Both projects, for example identified early the need for clear specification of position descriptions for middle-level leaders and both covered somewhat similar issues in their staff development programs. This UQ Project began with a fairly specific focus on various kinds of knowledge that staff would need to be effective curriculum developers. For example, knowledge of curriculum, of School/Faculty/University curriculum-related processes and procedures, of student characteristics and background and of content and pedagogy associated with courses in a major field of study (including, the role and value of "gateway" and "capstone" units). It has, however, developed in ways that are now more generic. The Project Team now sees the outcomes as scalable to different levels of curriculum (ranging from an individual module through to a nested suite of programs).

The major learning for this Project concerns the benefits of securing high-level support, in the form of patronage (e.g. support of events sponsored by the Project), additional financial support, visibility and legitimacy. The Project Leaders have also learned valuable lessons in terms of flexibility and openness to emerging opportunities and responsiveness to the differing needs and situations of those within the target group for the Project.

The Project looks particularly promising in relation to its outcomes for students. In this sense, the ultimate test of the efficacy of the staff development program will be the

demonstrable enhancement of the coherence and logic of students' programs of study through improvements in staff understanding of curriculum. It will be important for this to be addressed during the evaluation of the Project and, wherever possible, in the Project's final report.

9. LE7-355 A Strategic Leadership Model for the 21st Century

Lead Institution: Deakin University

Partner Institutions: Macquarie University, Monash University, RMIT University, University of New England, University of Newcastle

Project Team Leaders: Dr Dale Holt

Commencement date: 3 October, 2007

Completion date: 1 December, 2009

The purpose of this Project is to investigate the forms of leadership emerging in university Centres for teaching and learning. The aim is to develop a Teaching and Learning Strategic Leadership Framework to guide the professional development of personnel in these Centres. The problem addressed in the Project concerns many pressures perceived to be operating on these Centres (in terms of leading and supporting improvements in learning and teaching) and the need for greater clarity in terms of the changing and multiple roles personnel in the Centres are expected to play.

The approach of the Project involves a collaboration amongst six universities, each with different characteristics in terms of size, mission, demography, educational profile, tradition and culture. The collaboration will build on a major literature review of the work of Centres, capabilities, modes of leadership, and contribution to quality improvement and quality assurance in learning and teaching. A set of institutional case studies will then be developed, based on a mixed methods research approach.

Key questions for the case studies to address will include those put at a previous ALTC Leadership Forum (February, 2007), such as:

- Where do institutional Centres for promoting teaching and learning fit into the different levels of leadership in universities?
- How should the role of "head" of such a Centre and the staff of the Centre relate to the actual teaching activities of the institution?
- How effective can such Centres be if they appear to be set apart from the mainstream action?

The Project is still in its early stages but has already completed:

- The literature review, made available as an "Occasional Paper"
- 37 interviews for the case studies, with two discussion papers presenting the findings of this research
- The survey to be administered to participating institutions in the next stage of the Project

Lessons learnt to date are mainly at the operational level and include several related to issues encountered typically in complex collaborative, multi-institutional Projects (for example, the need for an experienced Project Manager from the outset of the Project, and the need for clear and mutual understanding of the contributions expected from partner institutions).

There are some synergies between this Project and others that have grappled with the challenges of collaborative Projects (e.g. LE 519, which was a collaboration amongst three geographically dispersed universities, exploring the roles of Associate Deans in these institutions) and those that have raised issues about the role of Centres for teaching and learning (e.g. LE 518 which investigated the application of a communities of practice approach, led by the university's Centre).

The Project has appointed a small, but high level and multi-institutional Reference Group, which is positioned to provide relevant feedback and support. It will be important, however, for the evaluation of the Project to ensure that the perspectives of groups other than those in Centres are taken into account.

II B Institutional Leadership – Distributed

1. LE 68 *Development of Distributed Institutional Leadership Capacity in Online Learning and Teaching* (II, p.42)
2. LE 518 *Promoting Learning and Teaching Communities* (II, p.43)
3. LE 69 *Distributive Leadership for Learning and Teaching : Developing the Faculty Scholar Model* (II, p.46)
4. LE 612 *Leadership and Assessment: Strengthening the Nexus* (II, p.47)
5. LE 67 *Developing Multi-level Leadership in the Use of Student Feedback to Enhance Student Learning and Teaching Practice* (II, p.49)

1. LE 68: *Development of Distributed Institutional Leadership Capacity in Online Learning and Teaching*

Lead Institution: Australian Catholic University

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leader: Associate Professor Paul Chesterton

Commencement date: 30 May, 2006

Completion date: 30 December, 2007

Final Project Report and Financial Acquittal submitted : 31 January 2008

Availability of Final Report: www.altc.edu.au

The purpose of this Project was to develop distributed institutional leadership capacity in the pedagogical and evaluative dimensions of online learning and teaching across the University. The immediate problem addressed by the Project concerned how best to implement the University's decision to no longer outsource its online teaching provision. At a broader, more philosophical level, the problem addressed concerned how to operationalise the University's commitment to ensure equitable and optimum learning opportunities for all students, across all of its six campuses, distributed amongst three States and the Australian Capital Territory.

As indicated in Project reports, the approach taken was to develop leadership capacity among six academic staff (Online Advisers) for application at a University-wide level, taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of a variety of campus, faculty and disciplinary contexts. The Project was grounded in a model of distributed leadership, operationalised in terms of networks across campuses, Faculties and Schools. It defined leadership as linked to two major dimensions: providing direction and exercising influence.

The Project was conceptualised in three Phases. Phase I saw the Online Advisers engaged in specialised training in the pedagogy of online learning (principles and practices for both

design and implementation) and in the evaluative dimensions (quality, effectiveness and impact of the online learning and teaching outcomes such as materials and practices). The Online Advisers gradually came to accept themselves as “leaders” in this activity and they slowly gained confidence in their own credibility in this regard. In Phase II, the Online Advisers carried out a range of activities across the University in which they applied their emerging leadership capacities. They developed and applied skills in time management and in communicating and building relationships with staff at all levels of the University. They cascaded their learnings from both Phase I and Phase II to other academic staff, guiding and supporting them through training and development activities. In Phase III, the approach was essentially no longer a “Project” as such. Rather, it was embedded across the University, with funding dedicated by the Faculties. The project is regarded as having facilitated a dramatic shift in the University’s direction, in terms of both leadership and online learning.

The strengths of the Projects stemmed from

- Its powerful strategic alignment with University needs and priorities, which brought with it strong Executive-level support, additional resources (both tangible and in kind) and legitimacy;
- Its outstanding leadership and management (despite the absence of an official “project manager”), as detailed in the Project Evaluator’s report;
- Active and well-utilised support groups (internally, the Project Support Group and externally, the Project Reference Group);
- Committed participants, operating in a context of tremendous goodwill across the University;
- Its solid grounding in relevant theory and literature and its clear articulation of the underpinning model of distributed leadership.

The kinds of weaknesses that emerged were all addressed in the course of the Project, e.g. the need for clarity of roles and expectations, the initial inexperience of the Online Advisers in relation to University-wide perspectives, the limited face-to-face contact amongst the Advisers and the lack of provision for appointment of a Project Manager.

This Project has some synergies with several others in the Institutional Leadership-Distributed category, particularly LE 69 based on a “Faculty Scholar” model), LE 612 which focused on distributed leadership to enhance assessment) and LE 67 which developed multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback). These synergies are unexplored at this stage. Quite apart from cross-Project and cross-sectoral synergies, however, the approach of this Project is clearly transferable to other institutions, providing these institutions are prepared to learn from this University’s experience.

The Project Report (and the associated report from the independent Evaluator) are both being disseminated through the ALTC website. Additional dissemination strategies, such as those outlined in the final report, would be valuable, but may need the provision of further assistance from the ALTC.

2. LE 518: *Promoting Learning and Teaching Communities*

Lead Institution: Australian National University

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leader: Dr Linda Hort

Commencement date: 16 November, 2005

Completion date: 1 December, 2007

Final Project Report/Financial Acquittal submitted: April, 2008

Availability of Final Report: www.altc.edu.au

This project had four aims:

- (i) To determine whether a community of practice (CoP) approach is effective in developing leadership qualities for learning and teaching excellence in university staff
- (ii) To develop leadership skills and capabilities in individuals within CoPs
- (iii) To support the further development of institutional, national and international groups and networks beyond those in the initial groups
- (iv) To develop an approach to educational planning, evaluation and reward customised to research intensive universities

The immediate problem addressed in this Project concerned whether the CoP approach can work in a university to facilitate leadership for the enhancement of learning and teaching. The broader problem concerned the imperative to align initiatives for enhancing learning and teaching with the strategic directions of the University. (In the planning phase of this Project, the specific University strategic directions being targeted were those associated with rewarding, enhancing and managing academic staff performance for promotion purposes, but this focus changed as the Project developed).

The approach of the Project was to establish and support a number of CoPs, five of which survived into the second year of the Project. This work impacted to varying degrees (depending on the life of a CoP) on around 100 staff in all. The influence of the Project was also spread more widely, through the conduct of a national "Practice in Leadership" workshop involving 60 people from 10 universities. The full report (www.altc.edu.au) provides details of the changes and challenges encountered by the Project. This overview focuses on the lessons learned during that encounter.

This Project was implemented in a context of major change within the Lead University, associated with a University-wide restructure that gave senior executives in seven colleges responsibility for educational quality and standards, with central units (such as CEDAM²¹) providing support. There were also significant changes within CEDAM staff, that impacted on the Project.

Lessons learned

(i) Implementing communities of practice is not simple – it involves intellectual, cultural and practical challenges and can be highly resource intensive. In this Project, the implementation required a high degree of conceptual clarity amongst participants and, even after this began to emerge, ongoing, expert and consistent support from CEDAM. Further, it became clear that, without congruence between the culture of the University and the approach of the Project, then progress would be slow. At the start of the Project, participants perceived the existing culture and reward structure at the University as individualistic, competitive and research-oriented and, in these senses as inimical to CoPs. Hence, in the early stages of the Project, it was difficult to obtain ongoing commitment from participants, especially because, in the context of the institutional restructure referred to above, they were experiencing other distractions and demands on their time. In the later stages, this problem appeared to be overcome to some extent through high level recognition of some CoPs, which came in a number of forms, including regular meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and provision for CoPs to make input to policy development (for example at the annual retreat of senior executives). At the same time, the very public success of the University in gaining

²¹ Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods; the Director of CEDAM was the Project Leader

learning and teaching awards and additional funding gave credibility to this area and to those actively associated with promoting it. This credibility was reinforced by the University's decision to appoint a Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

(ii) The CoP approach can assist in the building of a model of distributed leadership in a university. This Project involved supporting a concept of leadership that was other than positional or hierarchical. During the course of the Project, the model evolved as one which was seen as distributed, networked, inclusive, voluntary, action-oriented and engaged with change, in the context of professional responsibility. By the end of project participants were describing leadership in terms associated with creativity, innovation and initiation and modelling of change and good practice. They had, in the words of a member of the senior executive of the University, acquired a sense of “agency” – a willingness to initiate and take action, and the confidence to speak out far more and to influence practice. In the context particularly of promotion policies, a challenge for the Project (and, indeed, for models of distributive leadership that operate “under the radar” of institutional hierarchies and structures) is to develop ways to ensure legitimacy and official recognition for this kind of leadership.

(iii) National workshops are highly resource-intensive – their impact on system-wide change needs careful evaluation. The national workshop conducted as part of this Project was very well-received by participants. Feedback indicated that it was timely and covered issues that resonated with people from other (similar) universities, especially those involved in other ALTC Projects. Its impact at the level of individual personal growth and reflection was also appreciated by those who attended.

(iv) A large university is a complex system – the impact of one project or initiative is difficult to assess in isolation and may take some time to be evident. There were two contexts in which this learning was particularly salient. One (already referred to above), involved the concurrent structural and cultural changes that impacted on the Project. The other involved the context of higher education in Australia as a whole, especially the influence of the ALTC. In the words of the Project Leader, “[l]eadership Grants appear not only to investigate aspects of leadership but actively encourage leadership to emerge and be fostered by the Grant's process”. Further, the kudos accruing from ALTC Grants and the attention this focused on learning and teaching itself also impacted on the success of the Project, both supporting and fuelled by the tangible and intangible support of senior executives. The time taken for outcomes to evolve in complex situations can be frustrating to participants. However, in this case, the Project Team was able, by the end of the Project, to document examples of what they called “ripple effects” and “momentum” in transforming teaching and learning across the University.

(v) The long term impact of this Project is likely to be dependent on resource allocation and staffing flexibility within CEDAM. In some ways, this Project required CEDAM to reconceptualise its role. The resource-intensiveness of the initial model of supporting CoPs, for example, needed reassessment, as did the repertoire of staff skills required for this task. This kind of reconceptualising may be most appropriately undertaken in the context of a Project involving a number of universities, such as, for example LE7-355, which is aiming to develop a strategic leadership model relevant to the future needs of Australian universities.

For those planning to implement CoPs in the context of distributive leadership, there is much of value in the final report of the Project and in the complementary report from the Project Evaluator.

3. LE 69: *Distributive Leadership for Learning and Teaching : Developing the Faculty Scholar Model*

Lead Institution: University of Wollongong

Partner Institutions: University of Tasmania

Project Leader: Dr Geraldine Lefoe

Commencement date: 26 July, 2006

Completion date: 31 July, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to develop a distributive leadership framework for teaching and learning through a faculty-based scholars' network. Drawing on several sources in the literature, the Project defines distributive leadership as a distribution of power through the collegial sharing of knowledge, practice and reflection within the social context of the university.

The problem addressed in this Project is central to the ALTC view of emerging leadership for learning and teaching, namely that:

- contemporary universities need to develop models of leadership for managing change and leading institutions in new directions – models that are alternatives to traditional hierarchical models
- frameworks are needed for capacity-building to support these alternative kinds of leadership.

One of the strengths of this Project is that it is grounded thoroughly both in relevant literature and in the practical experience of the Project Team. In relation to the latter, the Project builds on experience within the Lead and Partner Institutions, each of which was already implementing a Faculty Learning and Teaching Scholars program to achieve strategic change initiatives. The existing program partnered a small network of faculty-based academics with a mentor in a central academic development unit. This Project expanded that approach to include the development of leadership capacity through cross-institutional consultation and collaboration, involving also “cascading” the approach to two more universities (Flinders and La Trobe). Thus, the aims of the Project were:

- to develop and trial a leadership capacity-building framework for teaching and learning and to make this available across the sector
- to develop cross-institutional networks to support the adoption and adaptation of this leadership framework for multiple contexts
- to develop resources to support this framework and to make these available and accessible sector-wide

This is a complex Project, involving a relatively large number of participants across several universities. It has required (and it has had) strong and supportive leadership and, although the original schedule has proved to be unrealistic and has been revised, the Project is making excellent progress in terms of its deliverables. The framework has been developed, trialled and modified on the basis of feedback and is now being implemented in the two cascade universities. The Faculty Scholars in the Lead and Partner universities have established action learning projects related to assessment and aligned with institutional strategic goals. They are, at the same time, approaching their work as leaders with increasing confidence and success and are sharing their strategies and experiences with peers, in particular at a National Assessment Roundtable, where they hosted 45 people from around Australia and New Zealand. Dissemination has also been assisted by a number of publications and presentations and by a series of regular online Bulletins reporting on the progress, activities and developments of the project.

The lessons learnt in this Project reflect those from numerous other ALTC Projects, especially in relation to the key role played by support from university leaders. For example, in the Lead Institution, regular meetings between the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Faculty Scholars have added tremendously to the success of the Project and helped to ensure that it remains on track in a strategic sense. At the institutional level, the Project, although described as very resource-intensive in terms of staff time, is seen as delivering valuable outcomes.

Overall, good communication has proved to be essential to the Project. Face-to-face communication has been very good, but barriers have been encountered with online communication, which had been intended to play a significant role in this Project. Given that similar difficulties have been encountered in other ALTC Projects, explication of these barriers and the ways they have been surmounted will be an important part of the Project's final report.

Insights into implementing mentoring arrangements have also been revealed by the Project, to the extent that skills in mentoring are now seen as an essential component of leadership. Again, sharing of these insights in the final report will be important in terms of sustainability and further adoption of this approach.

This Project has some synergies with several others in the Institutional Leadership-Distributed category, particularly LE 68, which developed a cadre of Online Advisers to lead the implementation of online learning and teaching, LE 612 which focused on distributed leadership to enhance assessment and LE 67 which developed multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback. These synergies have not been explored fully at this stage. Quite apart from cross-Project and cross-sectoral synergies, however, the approach of this Project is clearly transferable to other institutions, providing these institutions are prepared to learn from this University's experience.

4. LE 612: *Leadership and Assessment: Strengthening the Nexus*

Lead Institution: Macquarie University

Partner Institutions: None

Project Leaders: Dr Sharon Fraser (until February 2008), Dr Marina Harvey

Commencement date: 1 August, 2006

Completion date: 30 September, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to develop, through a distributed leadership model, multi-level leadership across the University, to promote and support the strategic and systematic enhancement of assessment and the development of transparent and coherent policy frameworks at all levels. The problem addressed in this Project concerned the need to incorporate, into a coherent institution-wide framework, the existing, valuable assessment-related work of individual lecturers.

The Project has been underpinned by a Participatory Action Research approach, targeted at empowering practitioners to be leaders in assessment practice. Like several other Projects in the Institutional Leadership-Distributed category (see below) this Project has rejected the notion of hierarchical, authoritarian leadership in favour of a distributed model, driving what the Project Team described as "a trusting, collaborative approach".

The project was conceptualised in three Phases. Phase 1 involved the identification of three Departments wishing to review their assessment procedures, and the formation of a multi-level “Leaders in Effective Assessment Practice” (LEAP) group, which includes an “action research enabler” and an “influencer” from each Department. The LEAP group was a forum for providing the Departmental representatives with support and knowledge relevant to leadership in assessment reform. Phase 2 involved cascading this approach to three additional Departments, using members of the Phase 1 group as mentors for the newcomers. Phase 3 (still in progress) involves active dissemination of the approach to the rest of the University and to the sector as a whole.

Although the Project started slowly (with delays due in part to obtaining ethics clearance and in part to the institutional restructure) it is making good progress and is on target in terms of its deliverables and outcomes and the submission of its final report. The Project methodology and implementation strategies have been robust and flexible enough to handle changes associated with attrition of staff (both in the Project Team and in the LEAP groups). It has been a complex exercise, managed very well, with excellent record keeping, information management and clarity of roles and responsibilities. Identifying the most appropriate information management system was a challenge and it would be valuable to share across the sector the Project’s experience in meeting this challenge.

Throughout the Project, the Project Team has been quite active in dissemination, using a variety of means of communication, including production and presentation of scholarly papers. These dissemination activities have enhanced the impact of the Project within the Lead University, an impact that has itself been enhanced by a new commitment from the senior executive level. Specifically, the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor and Provost appointed in 2007 has voiced a strong commitment to University-wide alignment and consistency of policies and sees this Project as contributing to that. She has prioritised the need for an assessment policy and, within the context of the University Learning and Teaching Plan and the new Curriculum Renewal Program (begun in 2008) the area of assessment and feedback has been targeted for attention. The Project Leader has been appointed as the chair of the newly formed Assessment and Feedback Working Party and other key participants in this Project are already undertaking leadership roles in relation to the development of institution-wide policy. In addition, there have been “spin-off” Projects, initiated by the participants in the LEAP group.

This Project is also positioned to have sector-wide impact and is alert to the exploration and building of synergies across the sector. Indeed, part of the initial vision of the Project was to establish a national community of practice in higher education assessment, hosted at Macquarie University. For the present, links have been made with an ALTC Associate Fellow working on building capacity for leadership in assessment and there appear also to be some synergies with several other Projects in the Institutional Leadership-Distributed category. This applies particularly to LE 68, which developed a cadre of Online Advisers to lead the implementation of online learning and teaching), LE 69 which developed a distributive leadership framework for learning and teaching through a faculty-based scholars’ network and LE 67 which developed multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback. The Project Team indicated that they had valued the opportunity to explore some of these synergies at the national “Practice in Leadership” workshop organised by LE 518. They described their participation in the workshop as a “turning point” in their work – a point at which they became more comfortable with the approach and progress of their Project.

A Project Evaluator has been involved since the beginning of the Project, providing regular feedback in a formative sense, and poised also to provide a summative evaluation. Because

of this dual formative/summative role, the Evaluator has functioned less as a neutral inspector of the project and more as a critical friend, an approach which to date appears to have worked well in the context of this Participatory Action Research Project. Comment on the tensions inherent in the dual role and the resolution (or otherwise) of these tensions will be a valuable inclusion in the final report of the Project.

5. LE 67 *Developing Multi-level Leadership in the Use of Student Feedback to Enhance Student Learning and Teaching Practice*

Lead Institution: RMIT University

Partner Institutions: none

Project Leader: Professor James Barber

Project Manager: Associate Professor Sandra Jones (initially Associate Professor Robyn Lines)

Commencement date: 25 May, 2006

Completion date: 31 January, 2009

The purpose of this Project was to foster, develop and implement an academic leadership model with a focus on the effective use of student feedback to improve the quality of learning and teaching and to enhance students' educational experiences. More specifically, the Project aimed to significantly empower academic teams to take initiatives in the use of student feedback.

The broad problem addressed in this Project is one identified in a previous ALTC report (Stevens, 2005)²² namely that "managing student feedback and managing the actions taken in response to this feedback are most important areas for assuring the quality of teaching and learning" (p.87). Considerable room for improvement was also identified in this regard. The more immediate problem addressed by the Project was at the institutional level, and concerned the lack of clarity in relation to leadership and responsibility for use of student feedback, the multiplicity of staff involved in this exercise and the possibility that many of these staff members lacked appropriate leadership skills to undertake the task effectively.

The approach taken in the Project is collaborative, broadly based and participatory. It involves three action learning research teams (in Business; Science, Engineering and Technology; and, Design and Social Context), whose work is supported by small incentive grants. The model of leadership underpinning activities is one premised on "collaboration, dialogue, inquiry, facilitation and conflict resolution skills" (RMIT proposal, p.8). The outcomes emerging from the Project are:

- A distributed leadership framework in the use of student feedback to improve teaching and learning
- Multi-level approaches and strategies to effect change management in leadership practices
- Development of resources for dissemination across the higher education sector

The support and leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) has been crucial to the achievements of the Project to date. His leadership of the Project Team and his personal participation in events and Plenary sessions associated with the Project has had both symbolic and practical value. At a symbolic level it has given the Project credibility and has been taken as a tangible demonstration that the University is taking learning and teaching

²² Stevens, K/ (2005). Promoting and Advancing Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Messages from the AUQA Reports. (www.altc.edu.au)

seriously. At a practical level, it has facilitated essential links to the university-wide Strategic Plan and links to critical areas of infrastructure (and the integral involvement of senior staff from Property, Information Technology and Survey Services). His leadership, in association with the highly effective and strategic approach of the Project Team, and the emerging outcomes of the Project, has facilitated the beginnings of an institution-wide change from a view of student feedback as the individual teacher's problem, to a view of student feedback as an organisational problem requiring strategic initiatives supported at a senior level. This has had the effect of reducing the blame and stress felt previously by individuals and has led to creative approaches within the action research teams and empowerment of those teams to begin to effect change.

Within the University, there is growing interest in the Project. It is, however, recognised that embedding across the University will have costs in terms of staff time and that an appropriate compromise between group independence and institutional authority will need to be found, a difficult challenge in a large, diverse institution, with many different disciplinary traditions.

At a sector-wide level, there is considerable interest in this Project, because all universities face problems in the collection and use of student feedback. There are some synergies with Project LE 613, which is focused on the incorporation of student feedback in a learning and teaching quality cycle. To maximise the sector-wide benefit of the Project, these kinds of synergies, together with effective strategies for disseminating the Project outcomes across the sector need to be investigated.

II C Disciplinary/Cross-disciplinary Leadership

1. LD 66 *COMPASS™: Leading the Integration of a Competency-based Assessment Tool in Speech Pathology Learning and Teaching* (II, p.50)
2. LD 615 *Quantitative Diversity: Disciplinary and Cross-disciplinary Mathematics and Statistics Support in Australian Universities* (II, p.52)
3. LD 614 *Leading for Effective Partnering in Clinical Contexts* (II, p.54)
4. LD 63 *Australian Law Postgraduate Network* (II, p.55)
5. LE 616 *Raising the Profile of Teaching and Learning: Scientists teaching Scientists* (II, p.57).
6. LE 617 *Tiddas Showin' Up, Talkin' Up and Puttin' Up: Indigenous Women and Educational Leadership* (II, p.58)
7. LE7-377 *Leading Rich Media Implementation Collaboratively: Mobilising International, National and Business Expertise* (II, p.59)
8. LE7-356 *Using Team Management Systems to Identify and Build Leadership for Quality Learning in Clinical Health Care Teams* (II, p.60)

1. LD 66: *COMPASS™: Leading the Integration of a Competency-based Assessment Tool in Speech Pathology Learning and Teaching*

Lead Institution: University of Newcastle

Partner Institutions: University of Sydney, Charles Sturt University, Flinders University,

Project Leader: Associate Professor Alison Ferguson

Commencement date: 1 August, 2006

Completion date: 30 January, 2008

Report available www.altc.edu.au

The purpose of this Project was to build the capacity of speech pathology academic and clinical education leaders to integrate COMPASS™, a newly developed competency-based

assessment tool, within their learning, teaching and assessment practices. The problem addressed in this Project concerned the lack of substantive evidence regarding assessment and curriculum development in speech pathology.

The aims of the Project were:

- To enhance learning and teaching by leading and supporting the integration of COMPASS™ within the curricula of speech pathology professional education programs nationally
- To build the capacity of speech pathology leaders to use COMPASS™ to enhance learning and teaching for the development of clinical competence in the discipline
- To build the leadership capacity of academic and clinical speech pathology educators to develop the research base or future enhancement of learning and teaching

This Project ran concurrently with an ALTC Priority Project, focused on the benchmarking of clinical learning in speech pathology. Both Projects built on an ARC Linkage Grant (2002-2004) which produced a validated and reliable tool for assessment of workplace competence in speech pathology students. Although only three partner universities are named for this Leadership Project, both ALTC Projects together involved collaboration between all nine Australian universities and all three New Zealand universities providing speech pathology programs, together with the National University of Singapore and the Speech Pathology Association of Australia.

The approach of the Project was premised on a multilevel model of leadership, which included several layers: Heads of units, Directors of Clinical Education, University Clinical Educators, Workplace Clinical Educators and Students. All of these layers were represented on the three national Reference Groups for the Project and provided very effective forums for discussing and guiding progress.

The project began with its core focus on the national dissemination, embedding and evaluation of the COMPASS™ assessment tool, and with a tacit understanding that leadership is necessary to effect this kind of assessment/curriculum change. The major implementation strategies were to support and train participants using a “train the trainer” approach and to facilitate collaboration, resource sharing and problem solving amongst partner universities. This was accomplished by means of field visits, telephone/email support, website and listserve (using EdNA and Elluminate), teleconferencing, national summits and the development and dissemination of resources for training, assessment and learning. As the project progressed, it became clearer that the driving force behind the curriculum/assessment change was derived from the peer relationship between the Project Team, leaders in the professional association and the University academic and clinical education coordinators. Towards the end of the Project, participants identified leaders as enablers and facilitators, using descriptors such as “guides along a path”, “providing direction” and “showing the way”.

Because dissemination was at the core of the Project, it was an integral part of the activities. It involved two major strategies – “engaged dissemination” in line with the ALTC Dissemination Framework, linked to on-going consultation and collaboration and broader strategies associated with national and international presentations.

The strengths of the Project lie in:

- The involvement of all universities teaching speech pathology and the relatively high level of consensus within the community of scholars in this area
- The strong support of the professional association, Speech Pathology Australia

- The involvement of students and the perspective that the students are the clinical educators of the future
- The grounding of the Project in previous research
- The experience and level of cohesiveness within the Project Team, which combined to give the Project Team extraordinarily high credibility with their professional community
- The systematic use of Project Reference Groups
- The active synergies between this Project and others addressing issues in clinical education in the health sciences (LD 614 and LE7-356), synergies which are enhanced by the engagement of the same Project Manager by this Project and LE7-356

Sustainability remains an issue for this Project, linked to the need for on-going resources. The Project Team grappled from a relatively early stage with ways to say “over to you” and to “wean people off” the Project Manager and the Project’s resources, but no answers were forthcoming. Thus, although the Project built a number of networking resources for university-level clinical education leadership, the Project Team considers that this network is at risk for the future, due to the non-availability of infrastructure and high level leadership to sustain it. There is some hope that this problem may be resolved by additional resources from heads of programs and by the yet to be completed translation of Project support materials to an online version.

There is much to be learnt from the achievements of this Project in embedding an assessment tool nationally and even internationally. Apart from the benefits to the discipline of Speech Pathology, there is considerable potential for further investigation of whether this approach to adding rigour to assessment/curriculum and to benchmarking is scalable to larger discipline-based communities.

2. LD 615: *Quantitative Diversity: Disciplinary and Cross-disciplinary Mathematics and Statistics Support in Australian Universities*

Lead Institution: Queensland University of Technology

Partner Institutions: None

Project Leader: Professor Helen McGillivray

Commencement date: September, 2006

Completion date: June, 2008

The aim of this project was to develop national capacity and collaboration in disciplinary and cross-disciplinary mathematics and statistics learning support, to enhance student learning and confidence. The problem addressed in this Project concerned the increasing student demand for learning support in mathematics/statistics and the desirability of networking and collaboration across Australia to meet this in a systematic and sustainable way.

Building on the capability already developed through the QUT Mathematics Access Centre (MAC), the Project has achieved and continues to achieve its aims through:

- An audit of current needs in mathematics/statistics learning support (MSLS) in Australian universities, and an audit (and benchmarking) of services available to meet these needs, both audits supported by knowledge gained from overseas practitioners and consolidated at a national symposium
- Establishment of a national network and website for sharing resources, expertise and information

The initial and on-going activities for this Project have been informed by a diversity of perspectives from 26 Australian universities, together with two from NZ and one from the UK. Amongst these universities, there were significant differences in student cohorts, courses, size (and number of campuses), mode of provision of MSLS (in some instances through Mathematics/statistics departments but in other cases through student services groups), and level and continuity of resourcing. While it was seen as beneficial to have a wide range of universities participating, the diversity brought with it significant management challenges for the Project, in terms of reconciling competing perspectives. Despite these differences, however, common problems fundamental to the Project were identified, including, for example, the difficulties of meeting students' increasing MSLS needs with uncertain funding, stretched personnel and scarce space.

The Project website, with its bank of catalogued resources was seen as helping to address the common problems. The establishment of the website is complete apart from updating of contacts across universities. It proved, however, to be a very time-consuming and challenging task, with a very large number of resources (many more than anticipated) identified and catalogued. In this and other tasks, there was mutual dependence and sharing of benefits between this Project and the QUT MAC.

There was no specific model of leadership capacity building per se followed by this Project. The approach taken was based on a model set out in Good Practice in the Provision of Mathematics Support Centres²³. There is strong leadership and clear commitment from the Project Leader and, in addition, Project outcomes in terms of more distributed leadership capacity building are becoming evident through the involvement and growing commitment of MSLS providers throughout Australia. The concept of "leadership" in this Project is taking on dimensions associated with a growing willingness of participants in many universities to take and sustain initiatives in sharing resources, sharing good practice and sharing the benefits of the national network and website.

Throughout the Project, feedback has come from key players in the field, both nationally and internationally. These people include members of the Project Reference Group who have provided invaluable assistance and advice as individuals. Some of these individuals are also involved in the more formal evaluation of the Project.

The long term impact of the Project at the institutional level looks very promising, given the existing institutional commitment and reputation of the QUT MAC. Further, given that scalability to the national level was fundamental to the design of the Project, it is positioned to also have significant national impact. The wider impact is highly likely to be enhanced by the scholarly and thorough approach evident in reports coming from this Project, and effective dissemination of these will be important. The view of the Project Team is that the long term impact would be dependent to some extent on the continuation of the networking amidst the uncertainty and pressures for MSLS services and staff, and the variety of professional links. Hence the long term impact also depends on university leadership taking cognisance of the *Guide to MSLS* produced by the Project. Further development of resources on the website will be governed by use and by other projects building on the work of this Project. Sustaining and maintaining the website will be associated with continued support of the QUT MAC in its work in providing leading models for the provision of MSLS and in national and international collaboration.

²³ Lawson, D., Croft, A.C. & Halpin, M., (2003), published through the UK Learning Teaching support Network (Mathematics and Statistics).

3. LD 614: *Leading for Effective Partnering in Clinical Contexts*

Lead Institution: Griffith University

Partner Institutions: Princess Alexandra Hospital and District Health Service, Logan Hospital and District Health Service, Gold Coast Hospital and District Health Service

Project Leaders: Dr Marie Cooke and Professor Amanda Henderson (initially Professor Debra Creedy)

Commencement date: 3 August, 2006

Completion date: 30 September, 2008

The purpose of this project was to develop an effective partnering model between university and the health care sector, to foster more effective clinical education for students. The immediate problem addressed in this Project concerned the perceived lack of “work readiness” of graduates. At a broader level, the problem concerned the significant differences in culture between university and clinical learning environments and the impediments this places in the way of effective educational outcomes. The design of the Project is strong, in that it is structured to benefit both staff and students – for staff, the building of leadership capacity at different levels and for students, the direct and demonstrable enhancement of learning outcomes.

The Project adopted a “learning circle” approach to leadership capacity building, an approach with which the Project Team already had considerable familiarity. This model sees learning circles as enabling the sharing of a vision of good practice in clinical leadership and the development of agreed strategies for achieving this vision.

The five learning circles set up for this Project involved a variety of combinations of representatives of students, clinical facilitators, clinicians, course convenors, clinical coordinators, nurse unit managers and the Project Team. Through the learning circles, major concerns were identified and, where possible, strategies were developed to address these concerns. Issues and strategies were shared at a mini-conference, with 86 diverse participants (including members of the Advisory Board for the Project), who provided feedback and comment that informed the development of the following outcomes, available, where possible on the Project website:

- a student progression portfolio, to facilitate communication between students and supervisors
- a set of 12 “student tips” to assist with initial and ongoing engagement of students
- a “buddy” workshop for nurses, focused on interactions, coaching and relevant experiences for students
- prompt cards for facilitators covering a range of supervision activities
- trialling of innovative placement and supervision models

This widespread representation and the synthesis of a diversity of views from participants, together with the systematic and regular input from a representative/expert Advisory Board underpins the strengths of the Project and the credibility of its outcomes.

The approach of this Project was consistent with a distributed and layered concept of leadership, in that it recognised that academic staff and clinicians at all levels actually “lead” in their respective roles and that their leadership impacts directly on the learning culture of the organisation. The Project Team therefore developed an organisation culture learning survey focused on four factors that measure this impact: Accomplishment, Affiliation, Recognition and Influence. Results from this survey, together with results from a survey of student feedback on the clinical learning environment, will be analysed and reported.

This Project is replicable in other universities, given that all of its proformas will soon be available on the web. It also shows great promise in terms of the future embedding (and possibly further development) of its outcomes in clinical education practice, both institutionally and nationally. The view of the Project Team, however, was that this embedding and sustainability is dependent to some extent on resource allocation to enable the appointment of clinical coordinators. It may also be dependent to some extent on the maintenance and updating and continuing accessibility of the web-based material.

There are synergies between this Project and others that focus on clinical learning (e.g. LE7-356 and LE66) and there has been productive communication between the Project Teams for these Projects. All build to some extent on learnings from a previous AUTC Project²⁴. All address a crucial issue in Australian higher education – the quality of students' clinical experience – an issue that has relevance not only to many areas in the health sciences but also a variety of areas that structure “work-based” placements into their curriculum (e.g. engineering, teacher education). Given this situation, the scalability of this Project both to other disciplines and nationally appears promising. Already, the Project Team is involved in the development of a similar project for medical students.

4. LD 63: Australian Law Postgraduate Network

Lead Institution: The University of New England

Partner Institutions: The Australian National University, Bond University, Charles Darwin University, Deakin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, Monash University, Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology

Project Leader: Professor Stephen Colbran

Commencement date: 13 July, 2006

Completion date: 14 November, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to improve the methodology and supervisory arrangements for PhD courses in Law across Australian universities. The problem addressed concerned low rates of PhD enrolments, limited supervisory capacity, narrow methodology, limited collaboration within and between Law schools, and tendency towards duplication of effort rather than cultivation of synergies amongst Law schools in Australia. The intent of the Project is to provide, through a purpose-designed website, supervisory training, lists of qualified expert supervisors, methodological and statistical support and the promotion of modern, collaborative supervisory strategies.

Specifically, the Project aimed initially to:

- Promote a culture of collaboration across Law education in Australia
- Disseminate information about ALPN
- Initiate a National Postgraduate Law Research and Supervision Conference
- Encourage a national and international research culture amongst postgraduate research students and their supervisors

²⁴ Edwards, C.J., Brown, H. and White, D.(2003). *Evaluating clinical learning environments: Creating education practice partnerships and clinical education benchmarks*. Canberra: Australian Universities Teaching Council.

The Project is now close to its final stages and has accomplished to date:

- The creation and delivery of an online training package for postgraduate Law students, using an expert web developer, informed by consultation amongst relevant stakeholders in universities
- The creation and delivery of an online training package for postgraduate supervisors in Law faculties, matched to the student package and underpinned by a sector survey and literature review
- A website providing details relevant to postgraduate studies in Law (e.g. supervisors, universities etc)
- The production and distribution of the first two of a series of the quarterly Australasian Law Postgraduate and Research Bulletin

These accomplishments are remarkable, given that the Project Leader has been acting as the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for at least half the life of the Project. In addition, difficulty in obtaining and retaining project officers has proved to be a major challenge for the Project, linked in part to the relative isolation and small size of the University. The University's appointment of a staff member as coordinator for ALTC Projects and other activities has facilitated the identification of solutions to these problems (e.g. re-allocation of workloads, inclusion of the Project officer in a "community" of project officers who can be mutually supportive of one another). Despite these efforts, however, the Project is running somewhat behind schedule and is working on a revised timeline.

In terms of sustainability, the outcomes of this Project look promising. The design of the website is such that there is very little expense in updating and maintaining it and, within UNE, the intention is to absorb the costs of operating and using the website in the recurrent budget, supplemented possibly by a small charge to staff or the Faculty. It is hoped that eventually, the network will be run through the ALTC Exchange.

In terms of dissemination, this Project was conceptualised as a national project and there has been on-going commitment (including additional financial commitment) from the large group of Partner universities with Law faculties. The benefits are linked to relationship management and the maintenance of trust amongst the Deans of Law in these universities, both of which the Project Leader has been in a position to facilitate. For example, the ALPN is a regular item for discussion at meetings of the Australian Council of Law Deans.

Feedback to the Project Team indicates that the ALPN is perceived as very useful. Dissemination to potential users, however, remains a challenge. A major dissemination strategy for the Project was intended to be a National Postgraduate Law Research and Supervision Conference in 2007. In the event, this was cancelled and the Project Team is now of the view that a series of "Roadshows" to be held in 2008-2009 will be a more effective dissemination strategy. They will be amending their proposal accordingly. Given the somewhat limited value of on-off conferences demonstrated in other Projects, this appears to be a wise decision.

There are also possibilities in relation to the more widespread use of the ALPN. It could, for example, be duplicated or adapted for use in other disciplines. In addition, it could, as a package, be taken up by other universities for inclusion in their Graduate certificate. It could also be marketed overseas and sold as a package.

5. LE 616: *Raising the Profile of Teaching and Learning: Scientists teaching Scientists*

Lead Institution: Flinders University

Partner Institutions: The University of Adelaide; University of South Australia

Project Leader: Ms Karen Burke Da Silva

Commencement date: 15 August, 2006

Completion date: 30 September, 2008

The purpose of this Project was to change the culture of science teaching by increasing scientists' capacities for leadership in science teaching and learning, initially in the biological sciences. The problem addressed concerned the perceived need for improvement in scientists' teaching skills. This problem was identified through student surveys and was linked to evidence of scientists' relative lack of awareness of teaching innovations, in comparison to the awareness shown by academics in other disciplines.

The fundamental assumption of this Project was that high quality leadership would lead to high quality teaching, which, in turn, would promote high quality learning and increased student retention. The Project involves collaboration amongst three Adelaide-based universities, each with very different structures and ideologies. The approach being taken is to identify exemplary science teachers and to empower them to act as leaders within their disciplines in order to transform existing science teaching and learning.

Despite time and expertise lost through staff turnover (e.g. of two academics involved and of the Project Manager and evaluator), the Project is progressing according to its initial plan and to date has resulted in:

- Two workshops, which have been received positively by participants and which have enabled the establishment of collegial networks and also provided support and ideas for new and current leaders in science education
- A "developing future leaders" program that is proving to be beneficial to those involved, in terms of measurable improvement in their own teaching
- On-going work to establish and foster communities of practice in science education

Lessons learnt to date pertain mainly to addressing some of the challenges of collaborative projects, as identified elsewhere (e.g. LE 519), which was a collaboration across three universities in different States). For example, although the Project Team members from the three Adelaide universities operates harmoniously and productively, obtaining full commitment from the Partner universities is a challenge, as is the issue of reconciling competition and collaboration between the universities.

This Project is still grappling with the tasks of dissemination and embedding of its outcomes. Perhaps more than some of the other discipline-based Leadership Projects, this Project depends for its success on the "buy in" from senior academics in the three universities (for example, Heads of School, Deans and Associate Deans) who need to support both the participation of staff in the Project and their on-going attempts to involve other science staff.

Avenues for wider dissemination are also being explored, for example, possibly through the Australian Council of Deans of Science or through links to the UniSERVE network (neither of which, at this point, is involved in the Project). Dissemination amongst scientists (or perhaps, more accurately, amongst science educators) will be facilitated during the next phase of the Project. The latter sees the scientist-leaders reporting, through conferences and journal articles, their activities as science educators in this Project and becoming, essentially, independent scholars within the field of science education.

Methodologically, there are, as indicated above, synergies between this Project and others that involve a collaborative approach. There are also some synergies between this Project and the other discipline-based Leadership Projects, although few of the others focus quite so specifically on bringing about a culture change amongst a specific discipline-based group of academics. It will be important for the final report of this Project to address, in detail, the extent of the culture change associated with the Project.

6. LE 617: *Tiddas Showin' Up, Talkin' Up and Puttin' Up: Indigenous Women and Educational Leadership*

Lead Institution: Flinders University

Partner Institutions: Australian Catholic University

Project Leaders: Associate Professors Tracey Bunda and Nerida White

Commencement date: 15 August, 2006

Completion date: 28 February, 2009

The purpose of this Project was to add to existing understandings of leadership through the generation of knowledge that informs Indigenous women's leadership, with that knowledge actually coming from Indigenous women. The Project aims specifically to advance Indigenous women's leadership in education and, through that, to impact on leadership development in the students with whom these women engage and in Indigenous communities more widely. It is premised on the view that the specific educational leadership needs of Indigenous women cannot be addressed within existing paradigms of leadership development, because the latter do not take account of or incorporate any intersection with Indigenous cultural knowledge. The concept of "Tiddas (sisters) showin' up (networking), talkin' up (participating) and puttin' up (articulating project outcomes)" is seen as fundamental to Indigenous academic women's leadership capacity building.

The Project is national in scope, given that no critical mass of Indigenous women exists at any one university. It has therefore drawn Indigenous women from across the sector. This has had implications for the Project budget and for the number of participants involved, given that, in some cases, the women's own universities provide only partial support. The approach of the Project is framed around four workshops conducted over a two-year period, focused respectively on research, teaching, administration and community service. Input from and perspectives of Indigenous women academic and community leaders, contextualised to some extent in the experiences of non-Indigenous women leaders, is the basis of the workshop processes and outcomes.

The outcomes emerging from the first two workshops (identified by on-going evaluation of the Project) and outcomes anticipated from remaining workshops represent "leadership" as enacted through this Project, for example:

- Benefits to participants in terms of their personal and professional self-image and their empowerment in academic environments
- The transformation of the concept of educational leadership as a result of growth in participants' cultural and professional knowledge
- Conference papers and presentations for dissemination nationally and internationally, with impact potentially on programs provided for and by the next generation of Indigenous women

These outcomes are enhanced by the establishment of an Indigenous women's academic network, supported by a website, which provides information about the Project and its constituent workshops, provides a forum for discussion, and allows for on-going interaction amongst workshop participants.

The Project has been supported strongly by senior academics in the Lead and Partner Institutions and by a circle of senior Indigenous women. The support of these groups has been critical to the Project's success to date.

While there are some synergies between this Project and another ALTC Project on leadership in Indigenous higher education (LI 62), this Project is unique and ground-breaking in that it addresses explicitly the topic of leadership for Indigenous women in higher education and, at the same time, is conceived, developed and led by Indigenous women. The outcomes of this Project have potential to be of enormous significance to the Australian higher education. The report of the Project will, however, need to document the major anticipated outcome of the Project, namely, the development of a model for leadership training and capacity building of Indigenous women, for future application nationally and internationally. It will also need to incorporate effective strategies for disseminating and embedding the outcomes across the sector.

7. LE7-377: *Leading Rich Media Implementation Collaboratively: Mobilising International, National and Business Expertise*

Lead Institution: The University of New England

Partner Institutions: University of Wollongong, The University of Queensland

Project Leader: Dr Robyn Smyth

Commencement date: 1 June, 2007

Completion date: 1 September, 2009

The purpose of this Project was to develop the capacity of key stakeholders within the higher education sector to utilise rich-media technologies such as videoconferencing. The problem addressed by the Project concerns the limited efficiency and effectiveness with which rich-media technologies are utilised to enhance learning and teaching in Australian higher education. This problem is linked to the current situation in Australia where the expert stakeholders in the area of rich-media technologies are spread thinly and widely across the sector, frequently working in isolation, without a collective voice either in their own institution or in the sector as a whole.

The approach taken in this Project is to establish the Australian Community of Rich Media Expertise (ACRME) encompassing people with responsibility for learning and teaching, technical support, administration and the Australian higher education sector, together with people in related national and international organisations. The role of ACRME will be essentially to provide support for the development and use of new, enhanced rich-media technologies. The Project has two Partner universities, whose involvement is based on the expertise of selected staff in terms of experience and research in rich media technologies. A unique feature of the Project is its commitment to engaging key associates from the corporate sector to develop scalable business models for the implementation of rich-media technologies in higher education.

This Project's model of leadership capability-building is grounded in the concept of a "professional community" and the values required for its success – expertise, collegiality, professional obligations and commitment to sustainable change. In terms of its leadership framework, this Project has some synergy with another Project led by Professor Patricia Vilkinas (LE 64 (II, p.10)), with whom there has been communication and who is a member of the evaluation group for this Project.

The tasks being accomplished by the Project include a comprehensive audit of current literature and practice in regard the use of rich-media technology in higher education and the establishment of ACRME. At the time of writing, the Project was in its early months of implementation, but was showing promise in terms of achieving its aims and delivering its outcomes.

8. LE7-356: *Using Team Management Systems to Identify and Build Leadership for Quality Learning in Clinical Health Care Teams*

Lead Institution: The University of Adelaide

Partner Institutions: Flinders University, University of South Australia

Project Leader: Associate Professor Maree O'Keefe

Commencement date: 16 October, 2007

Completion date: 1 December, 2009

The purpose of this Project was to explore the utility of Team Management Systems (TMS) as a means of identifying and building leadership capacity within health service clinical teams. The ultimate aim is to enhance students' experience in clinical placements. The immediate problem addressed by the Project concerns the need for staff members in clinical teams to be fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in the team, in order to be able to contribute effectively to the achievement of high quality outcomes for students. At a broader level, leadership capacity-building and clarification of roles is seen as a means of addressing some of the quality-related challenges of clinical education, arising, for example, from needing to cope with large numbers of students, wide variety in clinical teams and the unpredictable nature of day-to-day learning opportunities.

The approach taken in the Project is focused on implementation of TMS (a well-developed business model for leadership development within work teams) in selected areas of clinical education, building on Project Team members' previous experience with this methodology.

The Project is still in its early stages but it appears to have made a strong beginning, due to a number of factors:

- The extensive preliminary work by the Project Team in the developing the proposal and negotiating relationships with stakeholders
- The commitment of all universities involved, explicit in the alignment of the Project with their stated priorities for learning and teaching
- The active participation of the Partner universities, bringing experience to the Project from a comprehensive range of health discipline programs
- The strong support from the Lead university, in terms of staff salaries
- The experience of the Project Manager on a previous ALTC Project (in another university) that also addresses the improvement of students' clinical experience
- The establishment and operation of the Reference Group, with clear terms of reference
- The appointment of an independent evaluator, who has attended all Team meetings and provided formative guidance and support to the Team

Major learnings from the Project to date are mainly at the operational level. For example, in a complex Project of this type, involving many stakeholders with priorities and deadlines that may not match those of the universities, the Team has learnt the need for flexibility, particularly in relation to timing and the management of different phases of the Project. The experience to date has also reinforced the Project Team's awareness of the need for excellent communication and the maintenance of trust and goodwill amongst all stakeholders.

Finally, the Team has learnt the benefits of valuing the contribution of all members of the Project Team and providing a non-threatening environment for these contributions to be made.