Learning and Teaching Board

Strategy Away Day, 8 March 2016

The Learning and Teaching Board held its Annual Strategy Away Day on Tuesday 8 March 2016. The main topics for the day were as follows:

- Graduate Attributes (students across all modes and locations)
- Academic Management Structures (staff across all modes and locations)
- Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching
- Student Union: ALP and IDL Student Representation

In addition to Board members, the following individuals participated in the Away Day discussions: Assistant Principal (International Development); Director of Academic Quality, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences; Director of Human Resources; Head of Academic Leadership and Development; Head of Careers Services; Student Induction and Transition Manager; Disability Service Manager; Director of Information Services; VLE Manager; IT Director, EBS.

The sessions were led by: Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching); Ms Ruth Moir, Assistant Principal (International Development); Ms Caroline Dobson, VLE Manager; Mr Mark Fowler, Director of IT, EBS; Ms Hannah Frances, Student President.

Selection of Discussion Topics
The Board had previously agreed that the focus of the Away Day should be on developing further current, key priorities related to the Learning and Teaching Strategy, particularly in relation to delivering student learning skills and staff academic development in One Global University. The themes of Graduate Attributes and Academic Management Structures had been selected as frameworks for discussion from the student and the staff perspectives respectively.

The session on Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching had been selected because of the forthcoming Thematic Review on this topic and also because it continued to be a recurrent, priority area for Schools. Additionally, the session was seen as providing an opportunity for the Board to find out about current developments in EBS and for the VLE Manager to highlight to the Board some of her key initial observations and findings after a few months in post.

The student-led session provided an opportunity for the Board to consider the purpose, type and format of ALP and IDL representation, and had been selected by the Student Union as an issue on which they would welcome the Board's input to take forward.

Participants were arranged in small groups to discuss the various topics, with a plenary at the end of each item which facilitated wider engagement. A discussion-based approach was adopted in dealing with the key topics, with the focus on trying to move forward with the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and, more generally, in identifying issues, ideas and actions, and also recommendations for the Board to take forward in due course.

M.King
Academic Registry
14 March 2016
A. Summary of Key Points from Discussions

A1. Graduate Attributes (Students) and Academic Management Structures (Staff)

1. The opening session on Graduate Attributes (Students) and Academic Management Structures (Staff) had been selected by the Board in order to re-start the discussion around moving forward with one of the Priority Areas for Development within two of the Strategic Objectives which frame the 2013-2018 Learning and Teaching Strategy (Enhancing Student Learning; Developing Staff): *learning skills development for students and academic development for staff*.

The purpose of the session was to provide an opportunity for an open, wide-ranging discussion on how the University could effectively deliver learning skills development for students and academic development for staff across all locations and modes, and, in doing so, contribute to the institutional vision of “one global University”. In addition, the session aimed to support the continued implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

In view of the above aims, the session focused on the theme of *Progressing the Learning and Teaching Strategy: One Global University*. The key institution-wide mechanisms for realising in practice one global University from a learning and teaching perspective had been identified as being:

- Graduate Attributes (students)
- Academic Management Structures (staff)

These two topics provided the basis for the presentation and discussion sessions. The intended outcomes of the session were to agree a series of key questions and principles which could be used as a basis for drafting proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Learning and Teaching Board and other groups as appropriate.

1.1 Overview of Graduate Attributes

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Assistant Principal (International Development) gave a presentation on Graduate Attributes, which was focused on a series of key questions for groups to consider. These key questions included:

- As a global institution, how can we ensure that all of our students have the opportunities to develop and achieve the four HWU Graduate Attributes?
- What do we need to do to deliver the acquisition of graduate attributes?
- We have established the minimum threshold for the student learning experience (The quality of the learning experience must always be sufficient to enable students to achieve all of the programme’s specified learning outcomes) – what is this for graduate attributes? Is it useful to think about it in this way?
- Could we agree a set of principles to underpin the way forward?

In summary, the key points were as follows:

*Key Themes from Group Discussions*
- Graduate Attributes should be embedded in programmes: they should be specified at the programme level, rather than all of them needing to be in every single course;
- The opportunity for self-reflection on the part of students would be critical – this could be facilitated by the Careers Service; online mechanisms for recording and reflecting could be used to inform the HEAR so that students could articulate to employers their academic and wider student experience;
- Questions on Graduate Attributes should be incorporated into surveys;
- Employers need to recognise the HWUGA’s;
- UG and PGT need to be differentiated: PGT could be seen as a continuation of UG, rather than trying to develop all GA’s in one year;
- If implementing the GA’s becomes a tick-box (for staff and students), then we will have failed;
• GA’s need to go beyond the programme/course to encapsulate the whole student experience: all staff have a role in helping students to understand the contributions made by different types of experiences;
• The HWUGA’s are intentionally aspirational: for both students and staff to work towards;
• “Global” was seen as one of the more difficult attributes to implement: the student population mix on campuses could contribute to this;
• The GA’s should be promoted from early marketing through to graduation, so that there is a consistent, constant message; they should be introduced in induction week; the Principal should make reference to the GA’s in his speeches in different locations/to different audiences;
• Key messages are around the strapline and the 4 attributes; there should not be too much emphasis on the text accompanying the attributes – these will mean different things at different times to students;
• The challenge will to ensure that all staff can deliver the GA’s consistently across all campuses: strong support from senior management will be needed to deliver the GA’s across all locations, particularly where Schools do not have direct line management of teaching staff;
• Teacher-led approaches will not be conducive to developing the GA’s – students need to be cultivated as independent learners; this could be contrary to the expectations and practices of different cultures;
• HWUGA’s can be used as an integrating influence across all locations, giving HWU its vision for the student learning, and wider, experience; this shared vision will enable all staff to work towards it;
• HWUGA’s should be seen as a framework, and not overly prescriptive, so that it meets the needs of different programmes/campuses/cultures;

The Board discussed the key principles of the HWU Graduate Attributes and their implementation; the following points were agreed by the Board:

1.2 Principles of Graduate Attributes

The Board endorsed the following key principles of the HWU Graduate Attributes:

1. The successful implementation of the HWU Graduate Attributes would be dependent on: a shared vision across the institution; all staff sharing responsibility for supporting the GA’s; all students taking ownership for their own individual development towards the GA’s.

2. Share vision and shared responsibility should also allow for diversity: there should be a framework within which Schools/campuses could contextualise according to location, mode or discipline; one size does not fit all.

3. The acquisition and development of Graduate Attributes should be seen as a journey: for staff, from marketing and student interviews, and staff induction – part of PG CAP); for students, beginning from the point of considering HWU as the university of choice through to employment and continuing professional/personal development.

4. If implementing the GA’s becomes a tick-box (for staff and students), then we will have failed;

5. Graduate Attributes need to be embedded in our thinking: there needs to be a managed process to effect this, including a communications campaign; the bullet point text accompanying each attribute provides a focal point for embedding, but the core is the 4 attributes.

1.3 Next Steps – Graduate Attributes

The Board agreed that the above key points and principles should be taken in to consideration in drafting the proposals and recommendations related to the HWU Graduate Attributes.
1.4 Overview of Academic Management Structures (Staff)

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Assistant Principal (International Development) gave a presentation on the Academic Management Structures, which focused at the staff level and was based around a series of key questions for groups to consider. These key questions included:

- What support and development can we, as an institution, provide for individuals in leadership roles across campuses, eg Director of Learning and Teaching; Director of Academic Quality; Senior Director of Studies?
- What support and development can we, as an institution, provide for academic staff in Dubai and Malaysia to take on curriculum development/design roles (eg designing assessment; collaborating on designing courses) and to take on leadership roles (eg Course Leader across all campuses; Senior Director of Studies for a programme across all campuses)?
- What do we need to do to move forward with the realisation of the potential of the Academic Management Structure?
- What support is required to create opportunities for programme innovation and design, curriculum development and academic leadership roles in all campus locations?
- Could we agree a set of principles to underpin the way forward?

In summary, the key points were as follows:

**Key Themes from Group Discussions**

- There needed to be an effective means of sharing good practice across Schools;
- The logistics of working with colleagues in other campus locations needed improvement;
- HWU staff had no skills in running a multi-national business, yet this was exactly what staff were having to do; HWU’s industrial partners could provide advice and practical experience;
- There was a need for consistency of processes and practices across Schools: the Academic Management Structures should not be difficult to realise in practice, as it was based on University policies, and not on School-specific policies;
- Academic Councils were not seen as a necessary part of realising the Academic Management Structures, as these were based at the School-level; the Academic Councils often caused confusion within Schools as to their exact roles; it was recognised that, as the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses matured and as interactions with the UK campuses became more integrated and seamless, the need for Academic Councils might disappear in future;
- All members teaching teams were equal (HWU Values: “Valuing and Respecting Everyone”), and UK staff should be more trusting of the capabilities of staff in overseas campuses: UK campus staff should not dictate approaches, nor should Dubai and Malaysia staff revert so readily to UK campuses for advice and answers;
- There would be merit in UK campus staff being involved in the recruitment of academic staff in Dubai and Malaysia so as to facilitate building an integrated team;
- It should be inculcated in all HWU staff that they are a member of a global team and they are required to develop working relationships with staff at other campuses; there should be a “Go Global” programme for staff: short visits, exchanges, job swaps, and not just whole semester or secondment type of opportunities;
- There was a need for senior managers/leaders to be self-aware when conveying messages about global teams, so that it did not seems as if they were dictating to overseas campuses; rather, this should be built into academic staff development and support, and should be linked into School structures (the tension between School structures/teaching team structures and line management by the Vice-Principal (Malaysia) was recognised);
- Dubai could help with development in Malaysia, supporting new academic staff members (issue of time difference was not as significant); this could also enhance the confidence and leadership of Dubai-based staff. Go Global Staff would also cultivate integration.

1.5 Principles of Academic Management Structures

The Board endorsed the following key principles of the Academic Management Structures:

1. All members of teaching teams are equal: HWU academic staff are members of a global team, and should think globally, act consistently and build trust between team members;
2. There should be a Go Global Programme for staff;
3. Processes and practices should be consistent across all Schools and all locations;
4. The AMS should be utilised as a means of sharing good practice across locations and between Schools;
5. Academic staff needed to be supported in developing the skills required to operate a multinational business.

A2. Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching

The second session was on Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching, which had been selected because of the forthcoming Thematic Review on this topic and also because it continued to be a recurrent, priority area for Schools. Additionally, the session was seen as providing an opportunity for the Board to find out about current developments in EBS and for the VLE Manager to highlight to the Board some of her key initial observations and findings after a few months in post.

The two presentations were followed by a whole group question/answer session and discussion of the key issues.

2.1 Presentation 1: An Overview of Technology-Enhanced Learning

The key points covered by Ms C Dobson, VLE Manager, in her presentation on An Overview of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) were as follows:

- **What is TEL?**
  - It was clear that HWU had all the systems/online facilities, but was inconsistent in using such technologies for learning and teaching

- **Why is TEL important for HWU?**
  - Offers students a cohesive rich teaching and learning experience
  - Enhances communication across the global University
  - Consistency of student experience
  - Develops new ways of studying and working
  - Enables HWU to compete with other UK HEI’s (incl. those with overseas campuses)

- **How to integrate TEL?**
  - Policy and Strategy: E-Learning Strategy; Staff Development/Skills; Promotion of the VLE: many of Blackboard’s features are not used, but their use needs to be properly managed;
  - Extend use of VLE: TEL teams in Schools, but inconsistent practice across HWU; VLE – “it’s what we do here” and is mission-critical, not something separate. What training do students and staff need?
  - Scalability: common processes, rather than School-specific; there is a need for governance, consistency and workflow;
  - Quality and consistency: minimum standards are in place, but these are not reviewed.

2.2 Presentation 2: Edinburgh Business School – A Case Study

The key points covered by Mr M Fowler, IT Director in EBS, in his presentation on Edinburgh Business School – A Case Study were as follows:

- **Levels of Adoption**
  - TEL is key for delivering the EBS approach, and a fully online model is being adopted for all modes of study offered by EBS.

- **A Unified Portal**
  - Same online services, information and resources are available across all modes.
• Inside a Course
  - Common format, including content and case studies, with videos for some topics which students continually find difficult;
  - Self-assessments with automated marking; used to build up a profile of student strengths and weaknesses;
  - Use of simulations has been designed for ALP and IDL students, but are also used by on-campus students;
  - Facilities for student-student and student-staff interaction, including asynchronous discussions; live tuition via Adobe Connect, with virtual breakout rooms and tutors dropping into discussions, then bringing group back together.

• Assessment
  - Bank of exam papers; now rolling out e-assessment: ALP students undertaking exams at a PC at six exam centres; not yet at the stage of enabling students to take the exam at any location/home, with online invigilation.

• Adaptive Learning Platform
  - For the future, EBS hopes its platform improves retention and the student experience.
  - Looking at Big Data and personalisation, eg personalised programmes, which can be adapted as students progress through courses.

• Where to Focus
  - Looking at the maturity of tools available v’s the effort required to develop tools.

Ms C Dobson, VLE Manager, provided some concluding points regarding the importance of: strategy, consistency and scalability, and resources.

2.3 Discussion on Technology-Enhanced Learning

The key points emerging from the discussions were as follows:

• Applicants have very high expectations of TEL based on their primary and secondary school experiences; there was a risk that HWU was now being seen as applicants as being very far behind in terms of TEL.

• EBS started from the perspective of the IDL student experience, but ALP and on-campus students will benefit from the online facilities, eg simulations are used by on-campus students.

• Resources should be part of the whole way of thinking about and planning for all academic programmes to be delivered via TEL, rather than each School/relevant Service specifying resources they are unlikely to be given. TEL should be embedded and part of normal activity at HWU.

• Students can use technology, but they don’t understand the context/purpose of the VLE: VLE usage stats indicate that student access is random; there is no indication that students are using the VLE in a planned approach, ie as a learning tool.

• There are elements of the EBS model which could be applicable for the rest of the University. The EBS context was, however, different: EBS had a specialist team focused on this project; academic staff were focused on teaching, unlike academic staff in the rest of the University who had to balance research and teaching.

• The EBS model had shown that TEL cannot be a sideline, something which you can easily build in to normal workloads; it has to be planned, managed and resourced.

• HWU would need to change its delivery model (eg fewer contact hours) and invest released resources into TEL; a strategic move to TEL will not happen otherwise. Alternatively, HWU could develop TEL as a recruitment tool, eg for 2000+ IDL students – this is the scale needed
to fund TEL investment; TEL should not be used to reduce on-campus contact hours or change on-campus models, but could be used to benefit on-campus provision (the EBS approach). Some Schools did not want to develop this sort of scale of IDL provision, but rather to use TEL to enhance learning and teaching, to provide support for staff in using the VLE for educational purposes.

- What types of models do on-campus students want, eg blended learning? Online learning opportunities benefit a wider diversity of students, eg students with caring responsibilities; students with disabilities.

- HWU needs to define what its overall objective is for TEL, ie what does the University want to achieve using TEL, eg is it to develop students as independent learners; is it to achieve excellence in learning and teaching technology; is it to expand IDL provision? Whatever it is, the objective cannot be “everyone must use technology for learning and teaching”. The University needs a clear TEL strategy.

- Many academics want to use the VLE more dynamically, but they don’t know how. At present, we do not know what the full capacity of the VLE is: there are enhancements which could: improve the student learning experience (eg Graduate Attributes); supplement face-to-face contact; develop students as independent learners; possibly provide time-saving opportunities for academic staff. For example, formative self-assessments which are automatically marked would benefit both students and academic staff.

- Without significant investment, of the magnitude which EBS has generated through its business model, enhancements are unlikely to be transformational. For Schools/the University to generate revenues for a similar scale of investment, there needs to be significant expansion in areas such as IDL.

- The critical issues of “income generation” and “enhancing learning and teaching” needed to be explored further as part of the forthcoming Thematic Review of Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching (12-13 May). There were key questions around whether University investment should be attached to recruitment of IDL and for other types of students or whether the University could make the investment on the basis that TEL would deliver improvements to the student learning experience which would in turn improve retention, NSS and the staff experience.

- There was a need to clarify that any investment in TEL was not in systems per se, but in fully utilising existing systems and in providing training for staff and students. Investment could be made for various reasons: educational, ie improving the learning experience of all students; transformational, ie building a model for recruiting significantly increased numbers of IDL students and delivering a wide range of benefits for all students.

2.4 Summary - Technology-Enhanced Learning

In summary, the Board agreed that, prior to any major developments being undertaken related to TEL, there needed to be a University-level discussion as to the overall objective is for TEL, ie what does the University want to achieve using TEL.

A3. Strategic Student Issues: IDL and ALP Student Representation

The President of the Student Union provided a presentation and series of questions for discussion on the theme of IDL and ALP Student Representation. This topic had been selected by the Student Union as an issue on which they would welcome the Board's input to take forward. The key areas covered the presentation were as follows:

- Current representative structures
- Reasons for the focus on IDL and ALP student representation
- Possible directions
- Implications for the Student Union and for the University
3.1 Key Points from Presentation

The key points from the presentation were as follows:

- Student representation implies meaningful engagement, the collective student voice being heard at all levels and being acted upon.

- The Student Union proposed a system of academic representation for ALP students via a student rep system, with advocacy and support being provided by the Advice Hub. ALP’s could act as regional hubs, with an ALP rep appointed with whom the Student Union President would have regular contact to ensure that issues were resolved. ALP reps would resolve minor issues, as did School Officers, so that only the more significant issues would be escalated to the Student Union President. The Student Union would provide training to ALP reps so that they understood exactly what their role entailed.

- The concept of regional hubs for representation, as envisaged for ALPs, would not work for IDL’s: at most, the SU could provide only advice and support via its Advice Hub; the IDL experience was much more individualistic, which made the concept of gaining a collective voice much more difficult.

- For the Student Union to provide ALP representation, this would require additional staffing; there would also be implications for the Sabbaticals’ workload; an increase in the block grant would also be required, as the SU would be representing an increased number of students. There would be implications also for the University, particularly related to funding; however, engagement with ALP students would be improved, and ALP students were likely to be more satisfied with their overall experience.

3.2 Discussion

In relation to the discussion, the following questions were offered:

- What exactly is it we want to deliver?
- What influence does/can the university have on ALPs?

ALP Questions
- What structure would be best at ALP level?
- How would the relationship between the University & ALP need to change?

IDL Questions
- What support would schools need from SU to support IDLs?
- What kind of support should/do Schools offer to IDLs?

The key points emerging from the discussion were as follows:

- The Partner Annual Monitoring Reports (PAMR) made it clear that partners were receiving, and acting upon, feedback from students; was a representative system really needed?
- Schools who engage well with ALP students could provide models of good practice for the Student Union to draw upon;
- ALP’s deal with local issues and if there are University-level issues, then these are highlighted via the PAMR; it was not clear that additional/different issues would be identified via a representative system, which were not already being captured. A representative system could end up being overly bureaucratic and could slow up issues being resolved.
- The Student Union could complement existing provision for ALP and IDL students – there could be a role for the Union in helping ALP and IDL students feel that they belonged to the HWU community, and the Union could be used as a mechanism for cultivating that sense of identity;
- At present, for many of the issues identified by students do not come via student surveys, but via the representative system; evidence suggests that there need to be multiple channels for the student voice;
• Most ALP students will probably identify with the partner organisation on a day-to-day basis, so we would need to be very clear what an ALP rep for HWU would do and how the Student Union could support them;
• There were different models of ALP’s, and so a single type of representation would not work in all cases;
• There was a need to identify and document the types of issues on which ALP and IDL students would seek representation. For IDL students in particular, there was no clear mechanism for hearing their collective voice, nor indeed any sense as to what that collective voice might look like. The IDL-active Schools should meet with the Student Union to discuss what might work as regards capturing the collective IDL voice.
• The IDL voice would be so disparate and how could 6,000 students be effectively represented; however, IDL students should have the opportunity to be heard at every level and should be able to get a response to their views.

3.3 Summary – ALP and IDL Student Representation

In summary, the Board agreed that the Student Union and key individuals on Learning and Teaching Board whose Schools were active in IDL and ALP activity should meet as a short-term working group to propose a common view of how to respond to the issues and questions identified above. In this way, the issues would not just be the responsibility of the Student Union to resolve.

B. Actions

The Key Actions and Points of Agreement emerging from the Away Day were as follows:

**Graduate Attributes**
1. The points of agreement regarding Graduate Attributes were specified in terms of a series of key principles (see sections 1.2).
2. The points of agreement should be reflected in the proposals and recommendations to be submitted to the Learning and Teaching Board.

**Academic Management Structures**
3. The points of agreement regarding the Academic Management Structures were specified in terms of a series of key principles (see sections 1.5).

**Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching**
4. HWU needs to define what its overall objective is for TEL, ie what does the University want to achieve using TEL, eg is it to develop students as independent learners; is it to achieve excellence in learning and teaching technology; is it to expand IDL provision? Whatever it is, the objective cannot be "everyone must use technology for learning and teaching". The University needs a clear TEL strategy.

**IDL and ALP Student Representation**
5. The Student Union and key individuals on Learning and Teaching Board, whose Schools were active in IDL and ALP activity, should meet as a short-term working group to propose a common view of how to respond to the issues and questions identified above. In this way, the issues would not just be the responsibility of the Student Union to resolve. Directors of Learning and Teaching and Student Union to volunteer to be part of a short-term working group (2 meetings) to take this forward and to report to the Learning and Teaching Board at its meeting on 15 June 2016.

**Action for Learning and Teaching Board**
The Learning and Teaching Board is invited to consider and approve the above actions and points of agreement.