DRAFT REVIEW REPORT

January 2013

Macquarie University
Learning & Teaching Centre
Acknowledgements

The Review Panel acknowledges the work of Ian Solomonides and Judyth Sachs in establishing the review; Alison Cameron and Christa Jacenyik-Trawöger from LTC for organisational aspects bringing together everyone in the right place at the right time for the review; other staff of LTC for their honest appraisal of LTC’s activities; and the various staff of Macquarie University who made themselves available for interview or provided written submissions.
Executive Summary

The Panel of external and internal experts was invited to review the Learning & Teaching Centre for alignment of mission and goals with that of the university; effectiveness of the LTC leadership, governance, management structure, processes and resources in responding to University strategic planning directions; fitness for purpose - efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided in terms of the scale and scope of services, IT infrastructure, and staff capability; fitness of purpose – evaluation of and outcome metrics from service level agreements with Faculties and shared service providers.

Overall the Review Panel found high levels of satisfaction from stakeholders and substantial expertise within the Centre for:

- Professional Learning Programs
- Learning Systems Support
- Research and Research Training
- Institutional service expectations for the Centre
- Ability of Centre to meet future needs of tertiary education.

This report covers four commendations, four affirmations and seven recommendations for consideration by the LTC, Provost and Academic Senate.

The LTC is commended for the recent iLearn rollout; the Director’s leadership inside and outside the University; the commitment of LTC staff; and the relationship with Associate Deans Learning and Teaching.

Affirmations include the productive working relationship between Academic Development Group, Educational Development Group and Learning Systems and Services with LTC; the value of the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education; the collaboration between LTC and Informatics; and the initiation of cross-cutting portfolios as a means of managing across units within LTC.

Recommendations cover:

- New areas of focus for the Centre such as a focus on curriculum and standards; a focus on strategic analysis and evaluation of educational trends including a Research Strategy which ensures that research undertaken by the Centre feeds into advancement of the University’s educational strategies; a focus on the development needs of Heads of Departments and others in leadership roles in teaching, learning and curriculum
- Structural changes following from this renewed focus such as a new unit within the Centre for educational strategy, curriculum and evaluation, quality and standards; a newly created position of Deputy Director for management of the new unit; a newly created second Deputy Director focussed on technology enhanced learning; network models for delivery of LTC’s services in e-learning support, academic development and curriculum development
- LTC Management Board
- Review of Macquarie Accessibility Services
- University procedures for assuring completion of the Foundations course and incentives for further study in the postgraduate programs
- Alignment of data from LTC surveys with new focus on curriculum review and curriculum design
- New ways to measure the effectiveness of LTC work.
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1. Background

1.1 Review Panel

EXTERNAL CHAIR: Professor Sandra Wills
   Executive Director Learning & Teaching
   University of Wollongong

EXTERNAL: Professor Mike Prosser
   Former Executive Director at the Centre for the Enhancement of University Teaching
   University of Hong Kong

EXTERNAL: Professor Alf Lizzio
   Director, Griffith Institute for Higher Education
   Griffith University

INTERNAL: Prof Dominic Verity
   Department of Computing, Faculty of Science
   Chair, Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
   Macquarie University

INTERNAL: Mr Grant Sayer
   Technology Director, Informatics
   Macquarie University

1.2 Terms of Reference

1. Alignment of mission and goals of the Learning & Teaching Centre (LTC) with that of the university.
2. Effectiveness of the LTC leadership (both within the university and the broader profession) and governance, management structure, processes and resources in responding to University strategic planning directions.
3. Fitness for Purpose: efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided to support the learning and teaching goals of the University, especially in terms of the scale and scope of services, the Centre’s IT infrastructure, and staff profile and capability.

Within this broad framework the LTC has also identified some specific areas:

- Professional Learning Programs, including award programs.
- Learning Systems Support.
- Research and Research Training - review current research outputs, activity, and capability, including HDR research.
- Institutional service expectations for the Centre.
- Ability of Centre to meet future needs of tertiary education (especially online, open source etc.).

A fourth Term of Reference was added by the University’s Quality Enhancement Committee:

*Fitness of purpose* and the establishment of firm service level agreements and outcome metrics with the Faculties and other University organisational units which would serve to add definition and boundaries to the working relationships between shared service providers.
1.3 Procedures

The Learning and Teaching Centre prepared a Comprehensive Self Review Report of nearly 100 pages which addressed the terms of reference and provided data and information about the structure, management and services of the Centre. This was distributed to the Panel ahead of the review dates: December 12 – 14, 2012.

The Director of TLC coordinated a two day schedule of interviews preceded by a briefing from the Provost and Director on the night of arrival. In total, 40 Macquarie University staff were interviewed by the Review Panel.

A set of draft commendations, affirmations and recommendations was developed during the Review Panel’s visit. These were briefly outlined to the Director and Heads of LTC Units in the final session.

This report provides these commendations, affirmations and commendations in written form accompanied by commentary on how the Review Panel formed these views.

The Review Panel wishes to remind readers that our findings are based solely on the Self Review Report and interviews with a selected sample of stakeholders and clients. The external members thank the internal members of the Review Panel for helping us better understand the internal context of Macquarie University. However, a brief review can only be a snapshot at one point in time. Although backed by our expertise in other universities, we cannot pretend to understand the total situation at Macquarie University. We therefore offer these insights as a guide for further discussion by staff of the Learning and Teaching Centre, the University’s Senior Executive and Academic Senate.
2. Summary of Commendations, Affirmations & Recommendations

2.1 Commendations

Commendation 1:

The Review Panel noted the very positive evaluation and impact of the iLearn Project. The Review Panel noted that some of the underlying principles of the iLearn project management model might be usefully generalised to other aspects of the Learning and Teaching Centre’s functioning.

Commendation 2:

The Review Panel noted the high level of regard for the leadership of the Learning and Teaching Centre Director within the University. The Director’s active participation in higher education bodies such as ACODE and CADAD was also noted.

Commendation 3:

The Review Panel noted the significant organisational capital and goodwill that existed within the staff of the Learning and Teaching Centre. In parallel, it was also evident from the feedback of a range of stakeholders that the Learning and Teaching Centre is held in high regard for both the quality of its work and the active engagement of individual staff.

Commendation 4:

The Review Panel noted the functional working relationship between the LTC and Associate Deans Learning and Teaching.

2.2 Affirmations

Affirmation 1:

The Review Panel noted the productive working relationship between Academic Development Group, Educational Development Group and Learning Systems and Services within LTC but also noted some client concerns that they would prefer a seamless contact with LTC rather than being passed from group to group at different stages of projects.

Affirmation 2:

The Graduate Certificate in Higher Education received positive feedback for its value and its delivery. However, enrolment numbers of Macquarie University staff are low. Consideration should be given to policy changes that will provide stronger encouragement of further study after the compulsory Foundations course (see Recommendation 4). Being an online course is seen as a feature and positions it well for opportunities with potential expansion of Open Universities Australia in this discipline area.
Affirmation 3:

The Review Panel noted the successful collaboration between LTC and Informatics especially highlighting delivery of iTeach and the Units (unit guide) system. The Panel encourages LTC and Informatics to continue to engage in technology decisions together to avoid duplication of systems and services and notes that the operational requirements for technology solutions that are already deployed will require regular meetings to ensure the applications are sustained. The Panel suggests that LTC and Informatics organise regular technology horizon briefings to ensure mutual awareness of emerging technologies used in Learning & Teaching and for LTC to assist Informatics to develop a stronger systemic understanding of the Learning and Teaching environment and its emerging technology requirements.

Affirmation 4:

The Review Panel commends the LTC for developing a system of cross-centre portfolios, whose intention is to ensure better communication between, and workflow integration of, its functional units. It is the panel’s view that the completion of the iLearn implementation project provides LTC with an ideal opportunity to realign these portfolios and to reengage LTC staff with the portfolio process.

2.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Review Panel concluded that it is timely for a refinement of the LTC’s focus:

- There is a need for the LTC to expand their role in implementation of the university’s broader L&T strategies around curriculum and standards, for example, via active membership of course review teams and by working closely with Associate Deans in Faculties.

- There is also a need to provide the Provost and the University with strategic analysis and evaluation of educational trends and directions, feeding into and aligned to the forthcoming Macquarie Strategy.

- Related to this is a need for LTC to develop a Research Strategy which ensures that research undertaken by the Centre a. feeds into advancement of the University’s educational strategies and b. partners with other relevant Macquarie University research centres.

- It is recommended that the LTC focus on investigating the development needs of Heads of Departments and others in leadership roles in teaching, learning and curriculum and devise effective and sustainable means of providing support to this leadership group.

Recommendation 2:

Following from the refinement of LTC’s focus, the Review Panel recommends the following structural changes:

- LTC requires a new unit within the Centre, specifically targeting educational strategy, its enactment via the curriculum and evaluation of outcomes to feed into quality and standards reporting.

- The new unit should be managed by a newly created position of Deputy Director.

- The e-learning responsibilities of LTC are substantial and will increase not decrease therefore a second Deputy Director focussed on technology enhanced learning (or e-learning) should be created.
LTC should continue to explore with Faculties various network models for delivery of its services such as e-learning support, academic development and curriculum development.

**Recommendation 3:**

The review panel recommends the establishment of a formal LTC Management Board, chaired by the Provost and whose membership would include the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching of the Faculties, the Director of LTC and the Chair of Academic Senate.

**Recommendation 4:**

The review panel recommends that the University should conduct a review of the Macquarie Accessibility Services business unit. This review should encompass: analysis of MQAS’ alignment with University strategy and priorities; its business, operational and academic models; organisational effectiveness; and the processes it employs to identify and develop new business.

**Recommendation 5:**

The Review Panel recommends the University establish procedures whereby academics’ completion of the Foundations course is signed off in annual performance review and a report provided centrally from the LTC to the Probation and Promotions Committee to certify compliance or otherwise. Further, the Teaching Index which rewards departments should also be seen to reward individual academics for doing courses and producing publications. In addition, consideration should be given to more incentives for study in the postgraduate program and indeed consideration of whether it should become compulsory like the Foundations course.

**Recommendation 6:**

The Review Panel recommends that the Centre investigate ways of aligning data from LTC surveys with the new focus on curriculum review and curriculum design. It recommends that the Centre, working with the University, triangulate data from teacher level surveys with program level and/or whole of student experience surveys in order to provide an evidence base for curriculum review. Further, it recommends that the Centre improve academic understanding of pros and cons of student survey data versus other feedback data via for example “personal evaluation plans”.

**Recommendation 7:**

The Review Panel recommends that the Centre develop new ways to measure the effectiveness of LTC work. In addition to reporting what activity occurs, gauging the effectiveness of those activities by means such as is underway for FILT using the Teaching Preparation Program Effectiveness Indicator Framework.
3. **Review Findings in More Detail**

The following four commendations provide support for the Review Panel’s first Term of Reference\(^1\). Support for the work of the Centre was high and LTC staff understanding of the University’s mission was likewise high.

### 3.1 Commendations

**Commendation 1:**

The Review Panel noted the very positive evaluation and impact of the *iLearn project*. The project was considered by many staff and stakeholders to be an exemplar of engaged collaborative practice. In particular, the project facilitated agility in strategy, responsiveness to local context, opportunities for synergy of agendas, and ongoing development of working relationships between a range of staff groups. The Review Panel noted that some of the underlying principles of the *iLearn project* management model might be usefully generalised to other aspects of the Learning and Teaching Centre’s functioning.

**Commendation 2:**

The Review Panel noted the high level of regard for the leadership of the Learning and Teaching Centre Director within the University. Positive comment was made by a range of staff and stakeholders as to the authentic quality of his approach and the strategic focus of his thinking about learning and teaching. The Director has developed a significant network in support of the LTC’s agenda, strong and trusted working relationships with senior managers and has a respected role in key committees. It is particularly encouraging, in light of the changes impacting university education, that he demonstrates an approach to leadership that questions historical settings and facilitates transformation of practice. The Director’s active participation in national higher education organisations such as ACODE and CADAD was also noted.

**Commendation 3:**

The Review Panel noted the significant organisational capital and goodwill that exist within the Learning and Teaching Centre. **LTC staff** are clearly enthusiastic, motivated and energised in their work and feel a strong sense of commitment and contribution to significant University priorities. An ethos of ‘working with a strategic purpose’ was evident in staff accounts and this is to be strongly commended.

In parallel, it was also evident from the feedback of a range of stakeholders that the Learning and Teaching Centre is held in high regard for both the quality of its work and the active engagement of individual staff. There appears to be clear organisational consensus in support of the mission and work of the LTC. A culture of ‘working collaboratively and collegially’ was evident in both staff and stakeholder accounts and this is to be strongly commended.

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\(^1\) **TOR1:** Alignment of mission and goals of the Learning & Teaching Centre (LTC) with that of the university.
Commendation 4:

The Review Panel noted the functional working relationship between the LTC and Associate Deans Learning and Teaching. There were clear lines of communication between Deans and the LTC and, importantly, an ongoing commitment by all parties to strengthening this key strategic platform. The ongoing active exploration of working arrangements that optimise engagement and responsiveness (e.g., faculty-based LTC members) was regarded by the Review Panel as particularly useful strategic direction.

3.2 Affirmations

Affirmation 1:

The Review Panel noted the productive working relationship between the Academic Development Group, Educational Development Group and Learning Systems and Services within LTC. However, externally the relationship or difference is not always perceived as clearly. The panel heard from some clients that they would prefer LTC to operate as a “one stop shop”. For clients it is ineffective when contact with one of the groups is halted because the client now needs to be referred to the other group. The contact should aim to be seamless to avoid interruptions to workflow. Further consideration could be given to client management approaches.

The Panel noted that the Partnership Program aims to do this and has been well-received. However, some interviewees mentioned that they would also like other ways of accessing facilities such as video production, in order to support urgent ad hoc demands rather than only the long-term planned approach requiring a full written partnership proposal.

Affirmation 2:

A Postgraduate Certificate and a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education, and a Master of Higher Education, is offered by the LTC through the Faculty of Education. The programs are offered in two streams – Learning and Teaching (L&T) or Leadership and Management (L&M). The programs are offered in two modes – on-line and on-campus. The Postgraduate Certificate articulates with the Foundations in Learning and Teaching program, with completion of the FILT program with some specified additional work deemed equivalent to one of the core units.

Academic staff who had completed the program informed the Review Panel that the programs offered an evidence based, critically reflective approach to enhancing their teaching and learning or leadership and management. They reported that the programs provided a holistic view of learning which was readily applicable in their teaching in the T&L stream and a variation in views of leadership and management in the L&M stream. In particular, the programs led to changes in their understanding and ways of thinking about their practice. It also provided the bases of lifelong learning. The fact that the programs were offered on-line and on-campus was also reported on positively. Overall, the Panel affirmed the value and delivery of the postgraduate programs.

An analysis of enrolments in the programs was provided by the LTC in its Self-Evaluation, and it showed that enrolment numbers are low. In the Postgraduate Certificate, for example, the enrolments ranged from 5 to 14 in the years 2008 to 2012. These low enrolments raises questions about the viability of the program and the overall effect it has on teaching and learning in Macquarie University, and on staff new to teaching in the University. The University needs to look at ways in which it can encourage more staff to enrol in the programs and the LTC needs to look at ways in which it can market the program more successfully within the institution.
Being an online course is seen as a feature by staff enrolled in the course and this feature positions it well for opportunities with possible expansion of Open Universities Australia in this discipline area.

**Affirmation 3:**

The LTC, increasingly over the last few years, has demonstrated a greater reliance on technology in the delivery of teaching information via Internet enabled channels. This requires a close cooperation with the institutions’ IT provider: Informatics. Joint project work, in the delivery of iTeach and the Units (unit guide) system, is an instance of the success of the close cooperation between the two groups.

LTC highlighted in their Self Review Report that the relationship success with Informatics has evolved as a project outcome of the iLearn Moodle transition. Sustaining success is an ongoing LTC concern with the project closure and deployment of operational systems within the Institution. The ongoing application of technology highlights the on-demand requirements from a consumer base which wants access to systems at all times. The panel noted that LTC have incorporated Operating Level Agreements for infrastructure related technologies such as digital capture equipment. More emphasis is required for definition of the applications, which need support across organisational boundaries. This is especially true for the projects that produced the iLearn, iTeach and Units applications that have closed and moved to operational mode. Clarity of support requirements for technology has impact on resources and budgets for 2013 and the future.

The Review Panel suggests that LTC ensure continued collaboration with Informatics to extend the results of the Moodle project and the successful joint working of the two departments. Specifically it is recommended that:

- LTC and Informatics *engage in technology decisions together* to avoid duplication of systems and services.
- LTC and Informatics *continue regular meetings* for both groups to sustain increasing operational requirements for deployed technology solutions.
- LTC and Informatics *organise regular technology horizon briefings* to ensure mutual awareness of emerging technologies used in Learning & Teaching.
- LTC should assist Informatics to develop a stronger *systemic understanding of the Learning and Teaching environment* and its emerging technology requirements.

**Affirmation 4:**

The Review Panel commends the LTC for developing a system of *cross-centre portfolios*, whose intention is to ensure better communication between, and workflow integration of, its functional units. Those portfolios that have built a clear identity for themselves, and have been able to establish a sense of community and focus around their topic areas, are functioning very well and appear to be fulfilling their raisons d’être.

However, as one might expect from any novel management structure, some of these portfolios have been experiencing teething problems. While a number have built clear identities and workflow processes for themselves, others appear to have experienced problems in establishing effective leadership and organisational processes.

This variability in the success of these portfolios is highlighted in the self-assessment report and the Review Panel acknowledges that the LTC has put in place an effective process to ensure their regular review and reconstitution. It is our view that the completion of the iLearn implementation project provides LTC with an
ideal opportunity to realign these portfolios and to reengage LTC staff with the portfolio process. In short, this is an important management initiative which should be nurtured and developed further.

3.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

With regard to the Review’s Terms of Reference about scale and scope\(^2\), and the ability of Centre to meet future needs of tertiary education, the Review Panel concluded that it is timely for a refinement of the LTC’s focus.

The panel noted that the LTC currently serves well the needs of both academic development and e-learning and that it provides valuable curriculum advice. However, this third area of curriculum is somewhat hidden.

At a time of significant curriculum renewal within Macquarie University and substantial change in the Australian higher education sector due to TEQSA and AQF requirements, the University would benefit from stronger and clearer support from the LTC. Already LTC is well equipped to advise on aspects of course design involving e-learning, accessibility, research nexus, student feedback and learning environments but it became clear in interviews that they could take a more visible role in curriculum mapping of graduate capabilities and discipline standards and in issues of quality assurance, in conjunction with Associate Deans Learning & Teaching as well as Associate Deans Standards and Quality. There is a need for the LTC to clarify its contribution in implementation of the university’s broader L&T strategies around curriculum and standards, for example, via active membership of course review teams, development of unit outlines, co-ordination of PACE. There is an argument for LTC to be more strongly represented on the university’s Academic Standards and Quality Committee by LTC staff who have appropriate expertise in curriculum.

Since Macquarie University is currently embarked on developing a new educational strategic plan, and developing a Macquarie model of learning & teaching, the LTC is also well-placed to position itself as the strategic arm of the Provost. There is a need to provide the Provost and the University with strategic analysis and evaluation of educational trends and directions. One example of LTC’s capacity for a more visible focus in the area of educational strategy is their profile in Undergraduate Research via the national work of ALTC Fellow, Angela Brew. Devising means/incentives to guarantee national strategic work has practical impact on Macquarie’s core business will need to be a core concern for this new focus. The LTC should attract or develop similar expertise in research, development and implementation of other areas of educational strategy such as student engagement.

Related to the above focus on educational strategy is the need to develop an LTC Research Strategy. The Review Panel noted the engagement of the LTC in educational research and publication, in particular significant ALTC/OLT grants. These nationally competitive peer-reviewed grants will gain more credibility if OLT succeeds in obtaining agreement to have them classified equally with ARC grants. The panel considers it important that research underpin the work of centres like LTC. However, an LTC Research Strategy would aim to focus LTC research more clearly into areas that align with the Macquarie University Educational Strategic Plan to ensure that the University derives maximum benefit from involvement in external research projects. It would prioritise which researchers at which time were allocated research resources and address the contribution of professional staff as well as academic staff in LTC. As one interviewee said, it would provide “a research focus for the LTC as a group rather than a group of individuals”. The Research

\(^2\) TOR3: efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided to support the learning and teaching goals of the University, especially in terms of the scale and scope of services, the Centre’s IT infrastructure, and staff profile and capability.
Strategy would ideally also foster strong partnerships with other relevant Macquarie University educational research centres such as MELCOE.

The Review Panel noted that although the professional learning needs of academics seem well-served by the LTC programs, a missing group which could be specifically targeted is *Heads of Departments and others in leadership roles in teaching, learning and curriculum*. Many ALTC/OLT projects deal with the issue of educational leadership and capacity building. Indeed, LTC is involved in a number of those projects and teaches this topic as part of its post-graduate programs. It is recommended that the LTC focus on investigating the development needs of Heads and devise effective and sustainable means of providing support to this group who are so instrumental to educational change in any university. This renewed focus on educational leadership needs to be worked out in conjunction with Human Resources who have developed a Capability Framework for professional staff.

**Recommendation 2:**

With regard to the Review’s Terms of Reference about structure and resources\(^3\), the Review Panel noted that its above recommendations about focus will influence **structure:**

The Review Panel recommends that LTC builds a *new unit* within the Centre, specifically targeting:

- educational strategy
- its enactment via the curriculum and
- evaluation of outcomes to feed into quality and standards reporting.

This third aspect of the new unit in part relates to new ways of thinking about student surveys (see Recommendation 6).

A new unit providing a focus on strategy and curriculum may need to recruit or second one or two new high-level staff and/or additional part-time Professorial Fellows. However, many of the existing staff within LTC would be able to also contribute to its work plan on a part-time basis giving the unit a cross-cutting function. A unit providing leadership on strategic projects also needs to be resourced with project managers. A number of interviewees mentioned the need for project management to facilitate timely and effective deliverables.

The Review Panel noted discussion with several interviewees about the need for a *Deputy Director* to support the substantial range of services overseen by the current Director. The Panel suggests that this new role is an opportunity to launch the new educational strategy and curriculum unit by appointing the Deputy Director as the person in charge of the new unit instead of appointing a generic deputy.

Moreover, the Review Panel recommends a *second Deputy Director* focussed on technology enhanced learning (or e-learning). The LTC’s work in eLearning is substantial and will not decrease once the iLearn rollout is complete. Technology is ever-changing and demands from students and staff ever-growing. Technology is mainstream to the delivery of education at Macquarie University and with the Moodle transition complete, more emphasis can be placed on harnessing technology for transforming educational experiences. Transformation is always a goal of technical transition but a goal that is rarely fully achieved

\(^3\)TOR2: Effectiveness of the LTC leadership (both within the university and the broader profession) and governance, management structure, processes and resources in responding to University strategic planning directions.
due to the technical demands of transition. Therefore, the LTC educational strategy unit will need to stay on top of e-learning directions, including new generation learning spaces, and the LTC units involved in implementation will need to stay on top of new ways of service delivery, as well as keeping up their own professional development. This technology work must happen in partnership with Informatics (see Affirmation 3) and Property, and warrants a status equivalent to technology positions in Informatics and a status equivalent to the leader of the strategy unit.

The Review Panel commended LTC on its rollout of iLearn (see Recommendation 1). Of importance to this recommendation about structure, the “hub and spoke” model used for situating LTC staff (iMovers) in the Faculties to support academics was well-received by the Faculties as is the Partnership Program. It is also noted the Foundations program is run by two faculties themselves, using LTC resources, which is another model of faculty/LTC collaboration for service delivery.

It is recommended that LTC explore with Faculties further ways of “thickening the spoke” for other of its services such as academic development and curriculum development. Models could be developed collaboratively with the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching.

Models should define the role of the hub and role of the spoke or alternatively define itself more broadly as a network describing how that would be coordinated. Models explored should account for resourcing: some universities fund Faculty positions from the centre; some universities fund the positions 50/50; others fund the positions from the Faculty but build reporting lines for that position into a network coordinator. This works because if the number of faculty-based educational staff is low, their career development and workplace needs can be overlooked in a Faculty. A “hub” or network coordinator should have responsibility for these staff so they are not operating in isolation and are aligned to University directions. Faculties having some responsibility for funding can ensure that the service is more valued.

On the other hand, secondments and exchanges between Faculties and LTC can be a valuable means for career development of academics and their presence in a centre grounds the work of the centre in faculty realities. Executive Deans that were interviewed considered a task force or hit squad model to be effective, that is, a team of central people that can transfer across faculties when needed to be co-located with faculty staff for a period.

The Review Panel noted that over time Associate Deans Learning and Teaching have ended up with inconsistent position descriptions and in discussing hub & spoke/network models of service delivery between LTC and Faculties, it may be timely to revisit the position descriptions.

The agreed model should be approved via the new proposed Management Board (Recommendation 3).

A further two recommendations related to structure, management and processes follow.

Recommendation 3:

The LTC can find itself in an awkward position when the priorities of Faculties collide with those of the centre itself. For instance, it has experienced particular difficulties when established, long term, technology priorities contend for resources with projects that arise organically from within Faculties. Specific recent examples of this have included the development of the Units (unit guide) system and the pilot rollout of the Grademark online marking system. In both of these cases, projects that started as Faculty based initiatives have become ongoing resource commitments for the LTC.

It is the view of the Review Panel that the LTC should be supported by stronger governance structures to assist it in the effective setting and management of these priorities. Some of this should derive from its existing
relationship with the Academic Senate and its Learning and Teaching subcommittee. This could be strengthened, by making Academic Senate responsible for discussing and ratifying identified priorities and for reviewing new resource demands as they emerge from Faculties.

The review panel recognises, and highly commends, the strong collaborative relationships that have been built between the LTC and the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching of the Faculties. These have proved to be very productive and have clearly served to break down some of the barriers that can exist between any central service unit and academic Faculties.

To formalise this relationship, and to ensure continued alignment between the LTC and its Faculty stakeholders, the review panel recommends the establishment of a formal LTC Management Board. The core membership of this board would comprise the Provost and the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching and it would meet regularly to assist the Director LTC in setting priorities for the centre, in responding to emerging requirements as they arise from Faculty programs and in managing and enhancing the “hub and spoke” interactions between the LTC and the Faculties.

**Recommendation 4:**

Over the past 5 years, Macquarie Accessibility Services (MQAS) has established an enviable, industry wide, reputation as a facilitator of accessible learning practices. Its activities extend from the purely operational, in areas such as lecture transcription and resource conversion, to an active advocacy and leadership role in promoting the use of assistive technologies of all kinds (games, hardware devices, mobile platforms). There can be no doubt that MQAS’ activities in this period have done much to build Macquarie’s excellent reputation for accessibility within the sector.

As a start-up business MQAS has grown rapidly to meet latent demand for accessibility services, in an environment which has, for the most part, presented it with few direct competitors. More recently, however, changes to government funding models coupled with a greater systemic understanding of accessibility issues within the sector and changes to the local management of students with disabilities have challenged it to grapple with new competitors and new economic drivers. Its immediate response to these developments would appear to be one of rapid, but relatively unstructured, exploration of and diversification into a wide range of novel areas, including e-book publishing, educational game and virtual environment development, proposed contract research for organisations such as AusAID, and the validation of learning unit accessibility on a contract basis.

While this highly entrepreneurial approach has delivered significant benefits in the past, MQAS has now matured to the point that its future can only be secured through careful review and revision of its ongoing structure, role and operational management. At the same time, the University should take the opportunity of such a review to determine, and clearly articulate, precisely where it sees value arising from MQAS’ activities and how these could be better aligned to the University’s broader objectives and strategic plans in learning and teaching.

Given this analysis, this Review Panel recommends that a review of the MQAS business, operational and academic models be undertaken as a matter of some urgency. This review should task with articulating a clear business case to support each of MQAS’ core activities and of developing operating and financial plans whose purpose is to maximise the benefits, both financial and pedagogical, to be derived by the institution from those activities.

It is the view of the Review Panel that this review should, at the least, consider the following questions:
Is the current organisational model, which integrates MQAS’ ongoing operating businesses (such as its transcription and conversion services) and its more strategic activities in advocacy, leadership and educational development a sustainable one? Might it make more sense to divide these activities into separate units? If that were to happen, where should the resulting units sit within Macquarie’s organisational structure? Should its academic and educational development functions be more closely integrated with the corresponding units within LTC?

How should the MQAS operating businesses themselves be managed? Given their size and complexity, not to mention the competitive challenges these businesses face, the University may be well advised to appoint a dedicated operations manager (with appropriate industry experience) to guide their ongoing operations and development.

How might MQAS better align the services it delivers to suit the demands of Macquarie’s own Student Services and Wellbeing unit? Anecdotal evidence presented to the review panel tended to indicate that in some areas, such as lecture transcription, the volume of work being contracted from MQAS by University’s own Student Services and Wellbeing unit has dropped dramatically over the past year. What factors have contributed to this decline (cost, turnaround time, external competition)? What steps can be taken to re-establish MQAS as the University’s provider of choice in these areas? How can MQAS and the Student Services and Wellbeing unit work much more closely to develop a firmer collaboration to their mutual benefit?

What level of service does the University expect, and what can it afford, when contracting for services such as conversion and transcription? Some interviewees expressed the view that the provision of these services by MQAS had tended to suffer from a level of “gold plating”. This, it was said, had substantially escalated costs and had resulted in excess service provision to the benefit of only a small handful of individuals. MQAS and the Student Services and Wellbeing unit should collaborate to establish agreed baseline standards for the provision of these services, which may then be delivered consistently and sustainably to a growing cohort of supported students.

How can MQAS develop a stronger role in embedding accessibility principles into the University’s curriculum design and implementation processes at an earlier stage? The MQAS Green and Orange tools provide a platform which could be used more pervasively to ensure that accessibility principles are taken into account when the University’s educational programs and units are being designed and implemented. MQAS should be supported by Macquarie’s Academic Senate, through the vehicle of its Learning and Teaching Committee, to develop a stronger role in supporting systemic accessibility initiatives in curriculum design.

How should the MQAS financial model be revised to support its institutionally focused non-commercial activities? Should it continue to operate purely on a fee for service zero-cost basis, or should certain of its advocacy, curriculum development, leadership and management functions be funded by the University on the same basis as the rest of the LTC.

How should MQAS’ new business opportunities be prioritised? The routine development of robust business cases and operational plans to support each of these initiatives would serve to bring much greater clarity to the priority setting process. They would also assist the LTC in making a much stronger case for targeting the University’s financial resources towards the development of MQAS’ portfolio of services.
Recommendation 5:

As noted in Affirmation 2, the Foundations program and post graduate programs in Higher Education are highly valued by those who undertake it. However, interviewees perceived there were few incentives to do it. “There are no teeth in the policy which states that Foundations is compulsory”.

The “stick” approach to incentives requires the University to establish procedures whereby academics’ completion of the Foundations course is signed off in annual performance review and a report provided centrally from the LTC to the Probation and Promotions Committee to certify compliance or otherwise.

There was a perception from interviewees that there is no recognition for the individual academic that they have completed Foundations, nor recognition for further study in the postgraduate programs. The “carrot” approach would suggest that the Teaching Index which rewards departments should also be seen to reward individual academics for doing courses and producing publications. Academics asked for more incentives and time off for study of higher education.

The Review Panel noted above that enrolment numbers in the postgraduate programs are low for Macquarie staff. The panel recommends that consideration be given to more incentives for study in the postgraduate program and indeed consideration of whether it should become compulsory like Foundations.

Some interviewees also noted that Foundations and GCHE do not have visibility at orientation or induction and this may account for lower enrolments.

Recommendation 6:

The LTC is responsible for the administration, organisation and capability development of the University’s student evaluation of teaching. The survey systems, protocols and instruments have been substantially reviewed and redeveloped since 2009. The institutional demands on the service have increased substantially in that period. Some Faculties have mandated the use of student feedback, mainly for teacher feedback and review. The survey system as it has developed appears to be robust and efficient.

The Review Panel formed a view that the surveys have not been well used in the substantial curriculum change and development which has occurred within the University. The surveys have focused on individual teachers and individual units of study. The Review Panel recommends that the LTC engage with the University in supporting the use of student surveys in the curriculum renewal processes. In particular, in the use of survey results to support the evidence base upon which the new curricula are developed and reviewed. The Review Panel also noted that there did not seem to be any alignment (or triangulation) of teacher level surveys with surveying of the overall student experience at program level, and recommends that the LTC work with the University in exploring the integration of teacher level surveys with program level surveys and student experience surveys.

The Review Panel noted that the LTC did not use the results of the student surveys in design and implementation of its staff development programs. The results of such surveys can provide a substantial evidence base for such activities. As well, the use of the results as appropriate in staff development activities can help the participants see the value of such surveys and ways in which they can be used.

Overall, the Review Panel recommends that the LTC work closely with the University, supporting the teaching staff to better understand the value and use of such surveys, how the results of such surveys relate to other evaluation data, and develop ways in which the surveys can be used as part of the evidence base for the curriculum renewal processes. Further, it recommends that the Centre improve academic understanding of pros and cons of student survey data versus other feedback data via for example a “personal evaluation plan”.
Recommendation 7:

The Review Panel noted that the Self-Evaluation Report provided by the LTC presents a good analysis of the amount of activities undertaken by the centre, and the levels of participation in those activities. There was, however, little evidence of the effectiveness or outcomes of those activities. For example, even though the interviewees were overall very positive about their participation in the centre’s activities, and reported substantial outcomes from those activities, the Self-Evaluation Report itself did not provide such evidence. It was not clear whether the LTC collected evidence such as participant evaluations of workshops or seminars. For example, how do teaching units and academic staff use the results of the student surveys? How effective is the learning management system in supporting teaching staff and students in their teaching and learning.

An example of the sort of evidence that may be collected and reflected on is provided in the Teaching Preparation Program Effectiveness Indicator Framework being developed nationally.

The Review Panel recommends that the LTC develop ways of monitoring and critically reflecting on the effectiveness and outcomes of their activities.
## Appendix 1 – Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>Judyth Sachs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, LTC</td>
<td>Ian Solomonides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Systems</td>
<td>Terrence Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>Maree Gosper, Helen Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iLearn</td>
<td>Margot McNeil, James Hamilton, Elaine Huber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin, Budget, TEDS</td>
<td>Lyn Hammett, Michael Marston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Supervision</td>
<td>Nick Mansfield, (Dean, HDR), Robyn Dowling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (MQAS)</td>
<td>Sharon Kerr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC Staff</td>
<td>Andrew Lovell-Simons, Amanda Parker, Karina Luzia, Lilia Mantai, Sherri Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie University Academics</td>
<td>Peter Petocz, Mark Hancock, Lori Lockyer, Rebecca Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLT / Strategic Projects</td>
<td>Theresa Winchester-Seeto, Marina Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Providers (DVC Students &amp; Registrar)</td>
<td>Deidre Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Providers (Library, HR)</td>
<td>Jenny Peasley, Kylie Harrison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholders (Student Wellbeing)</td>
<td>Steve Bailey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholders (A/Deans, Learning and Teaching)</td>
<td>Mitch Parsell, Sherman Young, Leigh Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders (Executive Deans)</td>
<td>Janet Greeley (Human Sciences), John Simons (Arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni of the Foundations in Learning and Teaching program or the postgraduate program in Higher Education</td>
<td>Chris Bauman, Hien Tran, Kate Maitland, Amanda Parker, Daniel Terno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC Fellow</td>
<td>Angela Brew</td>
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