CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN ACTION
A sub-project within phase two of the UQ Educational Leadership Project funded by the Carrick Institute (2006-2009)

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Invitation to Participate

Are you involved in a curriculum leadership role within your school or faculty? These would include (though not limited to) such tasks as:
- convening a major or program of study;
- contextualising/developing major or program specific graduate attributes;
- responding to school evaluation reports for the UQ curriculum review or TQA process;
- implementing a ‘whole-of-program/school’ approach to assessment or other teaching/learning initiative;
- consolidating and embedding an initiative across the first year/final year;
- realigning course objectives and assessment within a major or program;
- aligning program/major courses and assessment with external accreditation bodies/requirements;
- embedding technology and flexible approaches to learning and teaching within the major or program.

If so, you are invited to nominate for participation in this curriculum leadership in action project. Please use the attached template to provide details of your curriculum leadership task, and your nomination must include an endorsement from the Head of School or Director of Studies (and the program convenor where relevant).

Proposed Timeframe

June 2007 – July 2008 (timeline is flexible and will give consideration to school/faculty timeframes where possible)

Why nominate (what’s in it for you)?

Curriculum leadership is a highly under-recognised activity. Often people involved in curriculum leadership tasks have little opportunity to formally prepare for such roles nor much to draw on in the way of experience, resources, guidelines, and support. Most importantly, the outcomes of these activities are rarely acknowledged and formally recognised as significant contributions and scholarly achievements.

This project is part of a larger project on curriculum leadership, recently funded by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching (see footnote). Our aim is to document the complex suite of knowledge, expertise and activities involved within curriculum leadership

tasks, and to make recommendations for the enhancement of curriculum leadership practice and policy at UQ.

This ‘sub-project’ has been designed as a pilot, in which some of the best practices in leadership and curriculum development will be embedded within a program that supports you in your curriculum leadership task. Participation in this project will enable you to:

- develop expertise in curriculum leadership tasks;
- develop and extend your leadership capabilities;
- receive direct support, guidance and mentoring for the range of activities that you may be undertaking;
- access strategies, tools, resources and examples for use within your projects;
- develop your own leadership capabilities;
- hear from experienced colleagues and engage in themes and some literature on leadership and curriculum development;
- become part of a cohort of emerging curriculum leaders at UQ;
- contribute directly to a Carrick-funded educational leadership project.

The project leaders will provide you with support to extend your leadership activities towards any of the following outcomes:

- reporting of outcomes to TLC’s or relevant school/faculty forums;
- documentation of leadership role/outcomes in Academic Portfolio (as evidence of teaching achievement);
- development of teaching award submissions (UQ/Carrick);
- development of teaching and learning grant submissions (UQ/Carrick);
- writing of scholarly papers for refereed conferences/journals.

Project Aims, Objectives and Deliverables

Aims
This sub-project aims to inform the parent project of the range of key curriculum leadership tasks that major and program convenors may encounter, and describe the capability requirements such tasks entail. In doing so, the sub-project aims to facilitate a leadership development opportunity for participating convenors.

Objectives
The objectives of this project are to:

- Engage a group of program/major convenors from a range of disciplines/faculties currently, or soon to be, participating in a key curriculum leadership task (as described above);
- Identify and document the key curriculum leadership tasks, activities, issues and challenges faced by the program/major convenors;
- Define these key tasks in terms of:
  o Drivers (external/internal; policy/top-down; data/ground-up; other)
  o Processes undertaken
  o Knowledge and capabilities required/developed
  o Resources and data drawn upon
  o Outcomes and deliverables
- Identify, examine and provide support for significant curriculum dilemmas and professional challenges faced by curriculum leaders and curriculum teams in the implementation of these tasks;
- Document and report on the activities and outcomes of each group and the project’s activities;
- Compile a synthesised review of the curriculum leadership tasks, processes and outcomes

**Project Design and Implementation**

The design and implementation plan for this project is based on a facilitative action learning process, illustrated in the diagram here:

**Parent Project: Closing the Gap on Curriculum Leadership**

Sub-project: Curriculum Leadership in Action

Project Leader & AL Facilitator
Input and support for curriculum leadership tasks

Convenor

Curriculum Leadership Task

Action Learning Cohort

Strategies, tools and resources for curriculum leadership
Action learning activities
Collegial support and review of projects
Mentoring and invited guest leaders
Contribution to Carrick leadership project deliverables (policy/practice)

Convenor

Outcomes for Convenors/Participants
Support for:
- development of leadership capabilities
- completion of curriculum leadership tasks;
- reporting of outcomes to TLC’s or relevant school/faculty forums;
- documentation of leadership role/outcomes in Academic Portfolio (as evidence of teaching achievement)
- development of teaching award submissions (UQ/Carrick)
- development of teaching and learning grant submissions (UQ/Carrick)
- writing of scholarly papers for refereed conferences/journals

Identified convenors/curriculum leaders
Individual convenors and their curriculum development team will nominate/be nominated from across each faculty within the UQ. The team will articulate a specific curriculum leadership task that will provide the basis for their participation within this project.
Assistance from the project leader will be available for this task, and a template has been provided (attached).

The project leader will meet with the convenor and curriculum development team to negotiate a set of timelines, key tasks, milestones and deliverables. These tasks can include consultation with/involvement by the project leader/s in the curriculum development activities.

Regular meetings of the action learning cohort (project participants)

Convenors (as curriculum leaders) will be invited to meet regularly as a project cohort. The meetings will take the form of action learning meetings, which will entail two key purposes:

1. Collaborative investigation of the particular curriculum leadership tasks at hand;
2. Development of individual convenor’s curriculum leadership capabilities.

The project leader will facilitate these sessions, design tasks and activities of value for the individual projects and for development of individual capabilities, and invite experienced leaders from across the university to act as guest speakers/mentors on occasion. It is anticipated that these will include the following activities:

- Engagement in collegial discussions of curriculum leadership activities across the group;
- Seeking of assistance and advice from cohort colleagues, the convenor or invited others;
- Engagement in professional learning on topics of relevance (leadership, curriculum renewal and development, assessment and course alignment, graduate attribute development) as needed/requested;
- Contribution to the parent project aims and objectives;
- Undertaking of peer review and analysis of the individual project activities.

This will also be a forum for vetting the findings from this project as they may inform the parent project ‘Closing the gap on curriculum leadership’ (Carrick/UQ Educational Leadership Project).

The participatory action learning design that anchors these activities has been devised because such processes best enable the achievement of a key aim – the development of curriculum leadership capabilities for participants. The action learning cohort is grounded in a distributed leadership approach (Ancona, 2005; Senge, 1996) which facilitates engagement and sharing of expertise across a range of contexts. Such approaches are characterised by their potential to foster “leadership as an emergent property of a group or network of individuals” (Harris, 2003:3).

The regular meetings of the action learning cohort, together with the highly focused nature of each meeting (leadership development and learning) should directly facilitate the development of leadership expertise amongst all participants; in addition to providing targeted support for specific curriculum leadership tasks.

Tools for engagement in the project

Educational Leadership at UQ (website)

Planned for Semester 2, 2007. An open website linked to the UQ Teaching and Learning website (or TEDI website) that reviews educational leadership activities at UQ, some relevant leadership literature/themes and key contacts. This will include an overview of the parent project (Carrick/UQ Educational Leadership Project), this project (and participants), and key
contacts. This will provide recognition to project participants and contribute to their profile as an emerging curriculum leader at UQ.

Curriculum Leadership in Action – Blackboard Communities Site
Planned for Semester 2, 2007. A password protected site for project participants and invited guests. The community site will showcase details of each curriculum leadership task as stand-alone case studies, house resources of relevance to curriculum leadership tasks/leadership generally, facilitate blogs and discussion amongst project participants, guests, and the project leader, and host links to other relevant sources.

Leadership Development Journal
The final tool within this project design is the completion of a leadership development journal by individual convenors and nominated curriculum team members.

Journaling has received extensive attention within educational practice development, and has been shown to facilitate deep engagement with individual practice. The particular strength of journaling for professional development purposes is the capacity to bring to light deeply ingrained practices that have remained unquestioned, implicit or unexamined for some time (Boud, 2001). Regular journaling of experience and learning can stimulate greater willingness to self-analyse, to self-monitor and self-correct. Semi-structured or thematised journals can also stimulate and support the incorporation of new knowledge and ways of thinking into existing practice in ways that enable greater consolidation and sustainability of learning within individuals.

The leadership development journal will take the form of a concise, semi-structured template to ensure ease of access and completion on a regular basis. Each convenor will be asked to make regular entries into their learning journal, and to reflect on critical incidences and key themes related to their role as curriculum leader. While these journals are initially personal, their value for the project also lies in the documentation of personal learning journeys and development of key capabilities. Participants will be encouraged to discuss journals and/or submit anonymised entries for further analysis. This significant activity provides the basis for empirical examination of leadership development and will be of immense value to the project and parent project. Since curriculum leadership is highly under-theorised, we anticipate that the journals will provide a valuable form of data and make a significant contribution to current understandings of this role. Ethical clearance and permission from individual participants will be sought prior to collection and analysis of this data.

Since this project (and the parent project) also elicits a leadership experience for the project leaders at the ‘meta-level’ – project leaders will also maintain a learning journal throughout this phase.
Project Phases and Timeline

**Phase One – Project Formation (April -May 2008)**
Formation of project curriculum leadership groups (cases) – up to six, across different disciplines;

Initial meeting to describe project and to introduce action learning/action research processes

**Phase Two – Project Implementation Stage A (May – November 2008)**
Individual case project implementation – supported and mentored by project leader
Regular cohort meetings - collegial discussion and peer review of progress, processes, experience and outcomes for project to date;
Ongoing and progressive development of deliverables – via project templates and tools
Mid-project formative evaluation

**December 2008 – Interim Report and Preliminary Findings**

**Phase Three – Project Implementation Stage B (February – June 2009)**
Ongoing individual case project implementation – supported and mentored by project leader
Continued regular cohort meetings - collegial discussion and peer review of progress, processes, experience and outcomes for project to date;

**July 2009**
Completion of individual cases – documentation and presentation of case studies;
Final cohort meeting – evaluation and peer review of individual cases; collegial discussion, evaluation and review of project findings/deliverables;
Development of deliverables from above;
End-project summative evaluation

**July 2009 – Project completion, evaluation and report**

**References**


