This report, which is presented by the e-Learning Standing Committee, provides an update of the issues that have arisen and discussed in relation to e-Learning policies and practices at UWA in 2008.

e-LEARNING AT UWA
The e-Learning Standing Committee was established by the Teaching and Learning Committee in May 2005 and its purpose and terms of reference were endorsed (R11/05). The main aims of the Standing Committee are to review existing practices and policies at UWA that relate to eLearning and to advise the Pro Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and Teaching and Learning Committee about current needs and requirements. The terms of reference include the following aims:

- To develop appropriate mechanisms for the central support of eLearning, including both mainstream and alternative systems and approaches;
- To examine the student learning experience in relation to online teaching and learning, and the provision of IT and computer literacy that are useful and tailored as appropriate to area of study;
- To develop an appropriate eLearning strategy, incorporating good practice approaches to eLearning based both in the sharing of existing information and experience between and within faculties, and analysis of useful international trends that best fit the UWA context;
- To review cognate policies and guidelines that intersect with eLearning matters, including evaluation of any policies or procedures that may advance or inhibit pedagogically sound innovation in online teaching and learning.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), (Associate Professor Jane Long) - Chair
Nominee of the Chair of the Board (Dr Nick Spadaccini)
Director of Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (Professor Denise Chalmers)
Representative of the eLearning Development and Support team (CATL) (Mr Stephen Sheely)
University Librarian and Director (Information management) (Mr John Arfield)
President of the Guild (Mr Nik Barron),
Director of Student Services or Nominee (Mr Jon Stubbs)
Associate Professor Sally Sandover (Co-ordinator of Regional Programs)
Professor Geoff Hammond (Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences)
Mrs Eileen Thompson (Faculty of Economics and Commerce)
Dr David Glance, (Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics)
Mr Brian Greene (Strategy & Governance Manager, ITS)
Dr Chris McDonald (Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics)

Executive Officer:
Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy, (Education Policy Services)

By Invitation:
Ms Sue Smurthwaite, (Manager, Education Policy Services)
ISSUES, OUTCOMES AND FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- **‘ONLINE COURSE’, ‘DISTANCE EDUCATION’, BLENDED LEARNING:**
  - UWA’s ‘Blended’ Learning Policy, which was approved by Academic Council at its meeting held in April 2008, has been formulated with a view to:
    - reflecting the diversity of practice in course delivery and
    - stressing the key principle that teaching should be conducted in a way that was student-centred, appropriate and effective.
  
  Following its adoption in April 2008, the e-Learning Standing Committee’s next step is to focus on the future directions of UWA’s ‘Blended’ Learning policy, specifically relating to its dissemination across the University and taking into consideration of the following: resourcing issues, workload considerations, and the quality of student learning experience.
  
  One suggestion has been to make ‘Blended’ Learning policy available on the Teaching and Learning website so that faculties could readily access it. It is also worth noting that the ‘Blended’ Learning report is currently being reviewed by Education Policy Services with a view to formulating appropriate policy within the University’s approved legislative and policy framework and existing templates. Another method of dissemination is to include the ‘Blended’ Learning policy in the University’s OPP. This may enable faculties to become aware of not only the policy but also its implementation strategy.

**Future Objectives:** One of the implementation strategies of the University’s OPP’s primary objective for 2006-2008, which is to extend good teaching approaches and improve learning outcomes, is to “implement an eLearning Strategy to simultaneously support sound pedagogy, reliable access and delivery, and appropriate creativity and innovation. Such a strategy should target, for example, an increase in the availability of online learning materials for students in UWA courses, including postgraduate research.” The OPP, which is currently being reviewed for 2009-2011, should be revised to “further support the vision established within UWA’s ‘Blended’ Learning policy (2008), and its commitment to reliable and efficient delivery, appropriate creativity and innovation within, and well informed approaches to, online learning modes at UWA”.

- **e-Learning Strategy at UWA:**
  - One of the main aims of the eLearning Standing Committee is to develop an eLearning strategy, which specifically focuses on the growing challenges that lie ahead for teaching in the next five – ten years and the role new learning technologies will play in improving the administration and quality of teaching and learning, and the overall student experience at UWA. These challenges have created not only a need to review the current mode of teaching but also to develop an eLearning strategy that would “incorporate good practice approaches to eLearning based both in sharing of existing information and experience between and within faculties, and analysis of useful international trends that best fit the UWA context”.

  **Future Objectives:** A small working party convened by the Chair has been established to prepare a draft e-Learning strategy which will be considered in the December meeting of the e-Learning Standing Committee.

- **WebCT and Blackboard:**
  - In 2008, the Asia Pacific Regional Manager (Australia & New Zealand) Blackboard (Australia) Pty Ltd., Mr Tony Maguire, presented a briefing to UWA on WebCT and Blackboard. WebCT and Blackboard have been the pre-eminent suppliers of the Learning Management System (LMS), and they have been merged as part of a maturing and centrally supported online learning environment at UWA for some time now. As an online teaching tool, the WebCT system is used in many teaching areas throughout the University. It is used, for example, to place lecture notes online or to administer the selective release of academic results and other related information. Additionally, it is also used to support more sophisticated teaching models and pedagogy. The briefing session presented by Mr Maguire noted the company’s initiative to develop a new project known as ‘Project NG (Next Generation)’ which would:
    - focus on not only offering new products but also providing services to clients with a
view to incorporating client feedback and research in the development of the platform
- be increasingly moving into the production of an interface that would allow the possibility of going beyond the current Learning Management systems.

Future Objectives: The eLearning Standing Committee will review the progress of WebCT and Blackboard once every quarter.

- iTunes University Australia:
  In April 2008, necessary integration processes were undertaken to align UWA with iTunes University Australia. UWA is one of the first Australian universities to offer public access to educational materials through iTunes University. iTunes University compliments UWA’s ongoing commitment to flexible teaching and provision of educational resources in ways that meet the changing needs of students. As one of the initial steps of the integration process, 800 potential threads (individual podcasts) from existing UWA materials held in the Lectopia system were reviewed. Following negotiations and a review of these threads for copyright purposes, 90 threads were made available through iTunes U Australia.

Future Objectives: A second phase of this project has been established to investigate how to best use iTunes University to achieve beneficial outcomes for UWA and its students.

FUTURE MEETINGS
It is worth noting that the eLearning Standing Committee will from 2008 meet once every quarter. It would be scheduled on the first Wednesday of each quarter. The future meeting dates are listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Dates</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd December 2008</td>
<td>12.30 pm – 2.00pm</td>
<td>Old Senate Room, Irwin Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th March 2009</td>
<td>10.30 am – 12.00pm</td>
<td>Senate Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd June 2009</td>
<td>10.30 am – 12.00pm</td>
<td>Senate Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd September 2009</td>
<td>10.30 am – 12.00pm</td>
<td>Senate Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd December 2009</td>
<td>10.30 am – 12.00pm</td>
<td>Senate Room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr K Krishnasamy
October 24, 2008