

The VU/UTEP Relationship – 2009 Report

1. Background

The VU/UTEP Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2007 and provided the basis for the ongoing working relationship between the two organisations. In April 2008, a delegation of four UTEP senior staff visited VU for a week, running seminars and building connections with the VU community. The focus of the April 2008 seminar was 'From Conversation to Action' and a series of projects resulted. Dr Maggy Smith left UTEP in mid 2008 with her role as the relationship contact for UTEP passed to Dr Stephen Riter, Vice President Information Resources and Planning. The relationship manager for VU passed from the PVC Teaching and Learning to the Dean, VU College on the departure of Belinda McLennan in 2008, with Susan Young now in this role.

In June 2009, a delegation of VU senior staff visited UTEP in Texas, for a week-long series of discussions and strategic planning meetings.

2. Planning for the 2009 VU delegation to UTEP

The projects identified during the 2008 UTEP delegation to VU continued to be developed using regular video conferences and email interaction between the key contacts. A VU/UTEP SharePoint site was established for collaborative use between the two institutions, with limited success.

The following 'Tracks' were identified as having the potential to be developed prior to the VU delegation to UTEP in June 2009. The VU delegation members were known as VU Track Leaders, with other staff designations as follows:

Track	VU Leader	UTEP Leader	VU Link
Student Leadership	Colin Macdonald	Gary Edens	Liz Mordaunt
Students as Staff	Judie Kay	Gary Edens	Debra McDonald
Entering Students Program	Susan Young	Dorothy Ward	Amanda Pearce
The Library as a Learning Centre	Adrian Gallagher	Robert Stakes	Laura Maquignaz
Technological Innovation in Teaching and Learning	Ian Macdonald	Sunay Palsole	David Cummings

It was decided that whilst in Texas, the VU Track Leaders would work closely with the UTEP Track Leaders. Meanwhile, in Melbourne, the VU link staff, coordinated by Margaret Cook, would participate in video conference sessions at the conclusion of each UTEP working day. This methodology enabled a broader group of VU staff and students to be included in the activities of the week.

3. Actions resulting from the June 2009 VU delegation to UTEP

Although each Track leader was allocated to a specific theme or field of endeavour, it soon became apparent that there was an overlap and interrelation of activities, and various foci emerged.

Focus: **Student employment, leadership and exchange: Exchange of students as staff**

Activities:

- development of on campus student employment and participation in for credit studies
- establishment of a Global Student Leadership Institute
- development of collaborative training of students as Peer Career Advisers

Status:

- Planning almost complete for the first 10 student exchange positions to occur during Semester 2, 2010
- A group of 4 UTEP students travelled to Central Australia as part of the VU SWIRL program in June 2009
- Joint development of supervisor guidelines for students as staff planned for 2010
- Exchanges through video conferencing between VU PCA's and UTEP PCA's occurred in Semester 2 2009 with exchanges to continue in 2010

Focus: Curriculum development opportunities

- Activities:
- Global Learning Community pilot, involving students from the VU Liberal Arts program and the UTEP University 1301 program. The pilot was supported by both VU and UTEP library staff and underpinned by the learning technology staff from both organisations.
 - Establishment in collaboration with UTEP of a VU Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies
 - Establishment of VU Learning Communities

- Status:
- successfully completed the Global Learning Community pilot program in Semester 2, 2009 with another program being planned for delivery in Semester 1, 2010 (pilot report pending)
 - The VU Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies is in the work plan for 2010 through the VU Student Experience Strategy
 - VU Learning Communities is in the work plan for 2010 through the VU Student Experience Strategy

Focus: Library/Learning Commons cooperation and resource sharing

- Activities:
- collaboration has been built around training of students from the University Library (UTEP) and the Learning Commons (VU)
 - examination of options for extending Student employment to technical processes based on the UTEP model
 - VU and UTEP libraries to examine ways of sharing consortia intelligences derived from the CAUL Consortia and the University of Texas Consortia
 - VU will supply UTEP with expertise in the use and development of library applications in shared systems, including Serial Solutions ERM and Library guides
 - Exchange of development plans for the VU learning commons and the UTEP library incorporating the Student Writing Centre, Maths Resource Centre and Student Technology Services Centre at UTEP

Status: In August Robert Stakes established a Library Committee chaired by Nancy Hill to help advance the UTEP/VU relationship. On the 16th October 2009 the UTEP Library Committee met with member of the VU management group to discuss student employment issues, shared system developments, and providing information resources for joint programs.

Since October, there has been further exchange of consortia and benchmarking data including survey analysis for each library. A Library student employee video conference is also scheduled for mid- April 2010.

- Future Plans:
- exchange of design data, best practice, collection relocation models to inform refurbishment projects at the UTEP library and the VU Learning Commons
 - exploring of service models and connect educational services staff to improve collaborative service delivery among contributing educational services at each university
 - sharing of learning space assessment practices to demonstrate evidence of student learning at each Library/Learning Commons environment

4. Additional collaborative activities

In addition to these Track-based activities, a number of collaborative activities emerged:

Activity: Evaluation and assessment

UTEP Institutional Evaluation Director, Roy Matthew demonstrated a set of measures and tools to diagnose the impact of particular policies and programs on student performance – calibrating the impact of individual programs on the performance of various ‘risk’ categories of students.

Status: Dr Rob Brown, VU PVC Institutional Services to link by video conference to collaborate with UTEP on possible joint measurement tools. It is noted that the collection of data on student risk needs to be supported by a university approach to interventions to address the needs identified.

- Activity** **Collaboration between the Faculty of Business and Law at VU and the Dean of Business at UTEP**
An earlier visit by the Associate Director International, Prof Chris Robinson had mapped out an 8 point Action Plan with UTEP Dean of Business, Prof. Bob Nactmann. The plan included:
- online collaboration in MBA classes, through video conference case study discussions
 - international collaboration in development of International Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards
 - joint curriculum development of international units at under grad and post grad level
 - workplace learning projects
 - semester student exchange plans

- Activity:** **A visit to UTEP by the VU Dean, Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science in September 2009**
This resulted in the generation of a number of collaborative activities in both Health Sciences and Engineering areas:
- Links with the Border Biomedical Research Centre and VU in Community Health, Health Disparities – Border Community, Diabetes, Informatics, Herpetology, Infectious diseases, Heavy Metal Contamination
 - Links with the College of Health Sciences in Health Promotion, Nutrition, Obesity and Cardio-vascular Disease will be pursued during 2010
 - In the Engineering area, the Texas Board of Professional engineers and the Institute of Engineers Australia Agreement signed in 2008 provides for mutual recognition for licensure and registration and initiates under the auspices of the Australia/US Free Trade Agreement. Activities to be developed include: student success initiatives, undergraduate student exchanges and post graduate research student exchanges
 - Common areas of interest include; desalination, telecommunications and microelectronics and their applications and biotechnology and biomedical engineering

Status: Initial video conferences conducted at the end of 2009

- Activity:** **Collaboration between the VU Faculty of Arts Education and Human Development Faculty and UTEP**
The School of Education at VU has involved UTEP in the delivery of its Story Writing in Remote Locations (SWIRL) in Northern Australia, and also in research related to Access and Success. Additional activities are under development.

5. VU/UTEP relationship and future directions for 2010 and beyond

Proposed delegation from UTEP to VU in August 2010. – to be developed.

**Susan Young, Dean, VU College
January 2010**

Attachments :

1. Powerpoint presentation made to the VU Friday Forum Leaders
2. VU Report on the UTEP delegation 2008
3. February 2010 Connections article
4. 2009 article regarding the Global Learning Community