UQ BLACKBOARD IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT
JUNE 2004 – JULY 2005

Change Management and Communication Plan

Project Management Team
Draft 2.1 Oct 05, 2004

Introduction

This change management and communication plan has been developed by the Project Management Team for the Blackboard Implementation Project with input from the UQ Library. The team consists of The University-Wide Project Manager (Blackboard) Caroline Steel, The TEDI Project Manager, Beth Cavallari and The ITS Project Manager, Liz Coulter.

The aim of the plan is to provide a framework for managing and coordinating communication, and engendering UQ community engagement with and commitment to the implementation of Blackboard. The plan identifies the major stakeholders affected by the project, outlines the communication and change management approach and plan, and articulates a range of strategies and events to meet the objectives of this plan.

Communication is a critical aspect of the Blackboard Implementation Project. The Project Management Team aims to ensure that communication about the project is relevant, accurate, consistent and just-in-time. As communication is a two-way mechanism we plan to actively solicit and where possible respond to feedback from the stakeholder groups. In this way the planning document is both dynamic and ongoing. This document includes the following sections:
1. Project Stakeholder Analysis
2. Approach and Principles
3. Plan and Schedule of Events

It is envisaged that through effective change management and communication planning, the Blackboard implementation project teams will be able to successfully accomplish their objectives with the cooperation of the relevant stakeholder groups.

Section One - Project Stakeholder Analysis

This section contains a description of the various stakeholders who are considered in this change management and communication plan and an analysis of their expectations as they relate to the project aims. Many of the expectations listed below have been extricated from an ongoing log of enquires that relate to the project and as such will be added to as the roll-out proceeds. Stakeholders tend to fall into different groups with subsets according to experience with technology, and specifically eLearning systems. In order for change management and communication to be effective, we need to consider the expectations of the university-wide community generally as well as those of the specific subsets.

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
1. UQ Community	1.1 All	a. The reason for the change from WebCT to Blackboard b. The impact on staff and students (especially workload) of the WebCT upgrade and the move to Blackboard c. The features and functionality of Blackboard and what it has to offer staff and students d. More detailed information about the Blackboard system (such as FAQs) e. Details on training available to staff and students f. How training is going to be accessed by staff and students in regional, remote or international locations g. What help mechanisms will be available to staff and students h. The timeline for the implementation of Blackboard (such as dates for conversion, access to the system etc) i. The latest information on the Blackboard Implementation Project j. Changes to policies or new policies related to eLearning at UQ

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
2. Academics, Tutors and Sessional Staff	2.0 Teaching and Learning Committee Members	a. Regular updates on the project implementation and timelines b. Specific information for faculty groups c. Specific information about student support d. Specific details on staff development and training available e. Basic knowledge of the new system and its potential usages
	2.1 Pilot User Group	a. Rationale for a pilot b. Who will be included in the Summer Pilot and why c. The inclusion of courses with an early start for Semester 1 in the pilot d. When the migration to the new system will occur for this cohort e. The structural changes that will occur to a site due to migration f. The timeline for access to the new system for this cohort g. How to access the new system and request new Summer courses in Blackboard h. Access to training and support i. The rationale for a pilot evaluation j. The pilot evaluation strategy and the role of staff and students in the evaluation (especially related to workload issues)
	2.2 Current WebCT Users	a. The dates for conversion of all Semester 1 and 2 WebCT courses b. The timeline for staff to begin developing new courses in Blackboard c. The changes that will be made to a site after migration d. Access to training and support

	Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders	
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
	2.3 Experienced Blackboard Users	a. Changes to Blackboard from previous versions b. Whether there is to be an early adopters program or something similar c. The timeline for advanced Blackboard training and staff development d. Possible roles for experienced users in the implementation of Blackboard
	2.4 Advanced WebCT and Blackboard Users	As for experienced users and additionally: a. Possible roles for advanced users in the implementation of Blackboard
	2.5 New Adopters and those inheriting existing WebCT courses	a. Details of the staff development available support for designing eLearning environments b. The educational potential for using the new system c. The impact on workload when using online enhancements
	2.6 Users of non-WebCT online systems	a. The timeline and process for converting non-WebCT courses to Blackboard b. How the conversion will impact on current online course designs and staff workloads
	2.7 UQ Centres and Divisions; Remote campuses/facilities	a. Methods for accessing support, training and updates on the new system b. Any particular issues with Blackboard that rural and remote users may experience

3. Students	3.1 All Students	a. Understanding of the system and its purpose
		b. Particular issues with Blackboard that rural and remote users may experience
		c. What help and training is available and where to fine it
		d. Any technical requirements
		   i. Browser versions
		   ii. Required plug-ins
		   iii. Browser configuration
		   iv. System requirements

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
		e. Release dates

4. Technical Staff	4.0 All	a. Technical specifications for Blackboard regarding:
		  i. set up of lab computers
		  ii. development of graphics (e.g. Banners)
		  iii. required plug-ins
		  iv. system requirements (i.e. Memory)
		  v. browser versions and configurations
		  vi. items that can be customised
		 b. Any technical issues and how to overcome them
		 c. How the system integrates with UQ systems
		 d. The availability of specialised help or training for this group
		 e. Policies affecting the configuration and operation of the system

	4.1 Faculty/ School based	a. How the system will integrate with any Faculty or School based systems
	4.2 Central (ITS)	a. Any changes to the process, roles and responsibilities of Helpdesk and support functions b. Information affecting timetables for installations and integration c. Any building blocks being considered in order to evaluate (from a technical viewpoint) beforehand d. Agenda for information sessions/conferences on Blackboard which would assist in improvements in integration

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
	4.3 Central (TEDI)	a. Any changes to the process, roles and responsibilities of Helpdesk and support functions b. Information on timelines for migration and development c. Sufficient opportunities to meet with ITS technical staff to coordinate the efforts of both groups for planning and implementing preparation, testing and migration
	4.4 Help Desk Staff	a. Any changes to the process, roles and responsibilities of Helpdesk and support functions.
	4.5 ITLOs	a. Technical specifications for Blackboard regarding i. set up of lab computers ii. required plug-ins iii. system requirements (i.e. Memory) iv. browser versions and configurations
5. Library Staff	5.1 General Library Staff	a. How will Blackboard impact on their work and workload b. An understanding of the system and its purpose c. The possibilities for using the new system for teaching and learning d. Knowledge of how the system may be used to enhance/ facilitate/ change work practices of academic and library staff e. Integration of Cybrary resources into Blackboard courses

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**

	5.2 AskIT staff	a. How will Blackboard impact on their work and workload
		b. An understanding of the system and its purpose
		c. The possibilities for using the new system for teaching and learning
		d. Knowledge of how the system may be used to enhance/ facilitate/ change work practices of academic and library staff
		e. Any changes to the process, roles and responsibilities of Helpdesk and support functions
		f. Any changes to the process, roles and responsibilities of the training functions
		   i. New documentation
		   ii. New website content
		g. Information affecting timetable for release

	5.3 Library technology staff in addition to the general library staff section	a. Technical Specifications for Blackboard regarding:
		   i. Set up of lab computers
		   ii. Required plug-ins
		   iii. System Requirements
		   iv. Browser versions and configurations
		   v. Information affecting timetables for release

Table One – University-Wide Community Stakeholders		
Stakeholders	**Subsets**	**Stakeholder Expectations**
6. Administrative and General Staff	6.1 School Managers and Administrative Officers 6.2 Student and Administrative Services 6.3 Office of Marketing and Communication 6.4 Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education 6.5 Personnel 6.6 Equity Office	b. How will Blackboard impact on their work and workload c. An understanding of the system and its purpose d. Knowledge of how the system may be used to enhance/facilitate/change any current work practices of administrative and general staff
7. TEDI Staff	7.1 Instructional Designers 7.2 Graphic Designers 7.3 Academic Staff 7.4 Staff Development Administration	a. Information on timelines for migration and development b. Information on courses, course pro-formas, timelines, room requirements etc. for staff development Administrative staff c. Knowledge and testing opportunity for any building blocks being considered in order to evaluate (from an educational viewpoint) beforehand d. Understanding of system requirements so that scope documents can be prepared accordingly e. Training in Blackboard so that staff can assist/advise clients wanting to develop courses in Blackboard or wanting TEDI to develop courses for them

8. Senior Management	8.1 Executive Deans
	    Unit Directors
	    Heads of Schools
		a. An understanding of the system and its purpose
		b. An understanding of how the system can enhance current work practices of staff
		c. An understanding of the impact on staff workloads

Section Two – Approach and Principles

People rather than processes are the central focus of any successful change management and communication approach (Tierney 1998; 1999; 1999; McAlpine and Jackson 2000; 2001; Dawson and Jones 2003). For the Blackboard Implementation Project, our strategies are particularly aimed at supporting those who will be most affected by the change of Learning Management System (LMS) at UQ. At the core of our change management and communication approach are the ideas of empowerment and transformation. The philosophy underpinning the approach is to recognise and acknowledge the differing needs of individuals and create conditions and opportunities that enable the University's participants to engage with and enact the change (Tierney 1999, p.57).

We anticipate that the kind of consultative, participative and open processes that were experienced during the tender and evaluation stage of the LMS will continue throughout the project. Using two-way communication and an empowering people-centred approach we hope to engender broad levels of participation and engagement with the change, in combination with strategic visioning and strategies that assist to align and integrate critical support and services for our staff and students (McAlpine and Jackson 2000, Chapter 5).

For UQ community members who have been using WebCT to support teaching and learning there are likely to be a number of concerns about the move to the Blackboard LMS. The initial Blackboard implementation project is primarily focussed on successfully supporting UQ staff and students currently using WebCT to transfer to a new and stable Learning Management System. A further project will be planned to encourage uptake of the system for quality education across UQ. The objectives of the communication and change management plan are to:

- use communication mechanisms to be inclusive, empowering, open and transparent as well as providing the community with critical information, feedback mechanisms and support during the change of system
- assist with the operationalisation of the project objectives as stated within the project charter
- support the strategic eLearning objectives of UQ as articulated in the UQ Teaching and Learning Enhancement Plan
- engage with a broad spectrum of community stakeholders including senior management, academics, students and non-academic staff to develop an environment conducive to the successful implementation of the change.

To ensure successful communication a number of common principles should be followed. These are described in Table 2 below.

Table Two – Change Management and Communication Principles	
Principle	**Reason**
Transformational approach	Facilitates empowering opportunities for individuals to contribute to the shared values, mission and objectives (including UQ TLEP) enabling cultural change.
Consultative and open	Supports a transparent approach and stakeholder engagement with the project.
Credibility	A credible communication approach engenders the community towards a belief that the end goal is achievable.
To involve not just inform	Supports a transformational approach and stakeholder engagement with the project.
Visible management support	An active management commitment gives credibility to communication. Support from management must be visible.
Face-to-face communication	Facilitates audience involvement and feedback.
Avoid information 'overload'	Too much information leads to confusion and irritation. Accurate and timely information is essential.
Consistent messages	Consistency enhances the professionalism and credibility of the project.
Repeat messages and vary mechanisms	The more ways a message can be communicated, the more likely it is to be internalised. Using different mechanisms ensures repetition without individuals 'switching off' and has more chance to reach a wider audience.
Respond to information demand: Encourage team to seek the kind of information stakeholders need rather than management pushing it at them.	Ensures engagement with the change.
Tailor communication to audience needs	Makes information 'real' to the audience. The audience is more likely to listen if the information is pertinent to their current frame of reference.
Central co-ordination	Ensures consistent approach.
Manage expectations	Encourages audience to believe in what you to tell them. Need to be realistic not overly optimistic.
Listen and act on feedback	Encourages support in the approach by being responsive to the needs of the audience. Ensures approach meets changing audience needs.

Communication Process

1. As per communication schedule or in response to need, the relevant project team chair will draft a communication release and send it to a member of the Project Management Team a week prior to release date.
2. The Project Management Team members (or member) will check the draft and make any necessary changes (negotiating with the relevant team as required).
3. A member of the Project Management Team will send the final version back to the chair of the relevant team for distribution through the communication channels articulated in the events schedule or as negotiated.
4. A copy of the final version will be stored in the communications folder under the project on the central server.

Section 3 – Plan and Schedule of Events

In this section a number of mechanisms, strategies and events are detailed and mapped to the expectations articulated in the Section 1 stakeholder analysis. During project implementation further items will be added in response to stakeholder feedback to address interests and expectations not yet considered.

It is envisaged that communication and change management for the project will occur in relation to a number of phases. These phases do not necessarily occur in a linear way for all stakeholders.

Awareness:	Stakeholders develop knowledge of the change (this was also partially achieved through the tender process).
Understanding:	Stakeholders comprehend the nature and intent of the change and start to develop an understanding of what this will mean for them.
Positive Perception:	Strategies are implemented to try and engage stakeholders in developing a positive perception of the change.
Pilot Implementation:	The change becomes operational for a small select group of stakeholders in order to test strategies, support and systems. This will in turn inform full implementation.
Implementation:	The change is fully operationalised across the institution.
Adoption:	The change has been operational for long enough to evaluate its worth and impact (this phase is not within the timeframe of the current project).
Institutionalisation:	The change becomes embedded into routine operating procedures of the institution (this phase is not within the timeframe of the current project).

While particular communication events and strategies will be developed to support stakeholders through these phases and in relation to their expectations, a range of regular and ongoing initiatives will be employed to monitor stakeholder expectations, feedback and attitudes. These will include:
- Monitoring queries through the enquiry log (staff and students)
- Attendance by designated project team members at a broad range of meetings involving stakeholder groups
- Setting up a reference group for the project
- Supporting the formation of various critical peer networks throughout the University (e.g. Technical Administration group, Blackboard mentors group, Blackboard eLearning advanced user group)
- Conducting staff development sessions for staff who intend to use Blackboard
- Conducting student training and awareness programs
- Conducting focused evaluation forums (staff and students)

- Conducting targeted information sessions across campuses
- Disseminating of print material/brochures (staff and students)
- Creating awareness about the project on the UQ website and around campuses (posters)
- Updating information on the eLearning website
- Updating information on the ITS Helpdesk website (linked to the eLearning website and AskIT and vice-versa)
- Updating information on the AskIT website (linked to the eLearning website and ITS Helpdesk website and vice-versa)
- Targeting communication to specific stakeholders (print and electronic)
- Utilising existing UQ–wide communication channels such as UQ Update, UQI Update, Gatton Update.

Table 3 (below) maps particular events that will occur for each month and phase of the project to the stakeholder expectations outlined in Section 1.

Table 3 – Communication and Change Management Plan for UQ Community Stakeholders affected by change

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
Announcement of new LMS as Blackboard	Jun 04	1.1.a	- UQ Community (all) - T and L Chairs - Senior Management	*Awareness:* - To inform UQ staff of result of tender for new LMS	- Announcement in UQ update - Email from Professor Margaret Gardner to all academic staff - Announcement by Professor Margaret Gardner at Senior Staff Retreat
Blackboard Information Sessions	Jun-Jul 04	1.1.a, 1.1.b, 1.1.c	- UQ Community (all)	*Awareness and Understanding:* - To provide information about the tender process and result - To give a demonstration of Blackboard system - To show comparisons with WebCT - To make staff aware of the upcoming upgrade - To collect questions for initial FAQs	- Face-to-face sessions on all campuses
Upgrade to WebCT Campus Edition	Jul 04	1.1.b 3.1.a, 3.1.d,	- UQ Staff with WebCT course (particularly using	*Awareness and Understanding:* - To identify which staff and	- Emails to WebCT user list - Notice on UQ update - Notice on My.UQ

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
		3.1.e	LMS in Semester 2) - UQ students	students will be most affected (e.g. year long courses) to minimise impact for them - To inform staff of downtimes over weekend of upgrade - To inform staff of completion and need to check own courses - To inform students of upgrade, downtimes and help desk support	- Email to students - Notice to My.UQ to inform students
Training available to Summer Semester Pilot participants initially and UQ staff	Aug 04	1.1.e, 2.1.a, 2.1.b, 2.1.c, 2.1.h	- Summer Semester and year-long coordinators - Library staff - TEDI staff - UQ Staff Community	*Awareness, Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To collate a list of who will be affected and how they would like to be communicated with - To create an awareness of the change and the support available for these groups - To ensure that this group gets priority service and support - To encourage participants	- Email from Professor Margaret Gardner to Directors of Studies to collect information about Summer Semester Coordinators and intent for new courses (both Summer and Semester 1) - Email to all known Summer Semester coordinators outlining change and training available - Email to all Faculty Administrative Officers asking to distribute info to Summer Semester Coordinators

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
				to enrol in hands-on-training courses - To update UQ community on progress of Blackboard Implementation	- Email to Library Project Team asking to distribute info to all Library staff - Email to all TEDI staff giving copy of information distributed above - Face-to-face explanation of training and training dates given to TEDI staff at all TEDI staff meeting - Update on training and project implementation provided on TEDI website – link provided through UQ Update, UQI Update and Gatton Update
Stage 1 redevelopment of eLearning Website	Sept 13/15 04	1.1.a, 1.1.b, 1.1.c, 1.1.d, 1.1.e, 1.1.f, 1.1.g, 1.1.h, 1.1.i, 1.1.j 2.1.a – h 2.2.a - d 2.5.a - b	- All UQ Staff - All UQ Students Also specific information for: - Pilot User Group - Current WebCT Users - New adopters	*Awareness, Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To communicate the reason for the change to Blackboard and the background and evaluation process for the project - To communicate announcements related to the project to the UQ Community and	- Announcement of website going live was communicated via UQ Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting (Sept 15), UQ Update, UQI Update, UQ Gatton Update, WebCT users' email list, enquiries list, Pilot coordinators list, and at Faculty Administrative staff meetings. - A brochure/postcard may also be developed and sent to all

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
				stakeholder groups - To provide FAQs to staff - To provide information about the features and functionality of Blackboard - To provide more detailed information about the Blackboard system - To outline the timeline for the implementation project - To provide a link to staff training - To serve as a mechanism to respond to queries and feedback	staff when stage 2 redevelopment is complete
Preparation for Pilot Conversion	Sept 13 04	2.1.d, 2.1.e, 2.1.f, 2.1.g	- All Pilot coordinators	*Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To provide a timeline for conversion of pilot courses to Blackboard - To assist Pilot staff to plan their web site around the timeline - To inform staff of the role of TEDI, ITS and staff in the conversion	- Email to Pilot Coordinators list - Email to WebCT users list - Notice in UQ Update, UQI Update, UQ Gatton Update, and announcements page on eLearning web site. - Announcement at UQ T and L Committee Meeting (Sept 15) - Posting list of summer courses on eLearn website - Direct phone contact with

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
					coordinators to confirm details
Information update on Project	Sept 15	1.1.a, 1.1.b, 1.1.h, 1.1.i 2.0.a, 2.0.b, 2.0.d	- UQ T and L Chairs and Committee Members	*Awareness, Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To provide information on the background and progress of the project	PM Management Team members attended Central T and L Committee Meeting Briefing document distributed to T and L Members - Questions and feedback noted
Information for IT Support Staff at UQ	Sept – Oct	4.0.a,	- IT Support Staff at UQ	*Awareness, Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To provide information on technical requirements: Browser and Plugins	Develop Web Page with information on Browser and Sun Java Requirements – include ability to download Sun Java Client Develop UQConnect CD with Sun Java and distribute to Distance Education students - Announce information at ITCG/ITLO meeting - Send out an ITLO email.
Awareness for Administrative staff	Sept – Oct 04	6.a, 6.b, 6.c	- Faculty Administrative Managers, School Administrative Managers	*Awareness, Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To inform Administrative staff about the project - To give Administrative staff the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about Blackboard	Email to Faculty Administrative Managers with offer to attend a meeting with their staff to discuss Blackboard - Attendance at Faculty Administrative meetings as requested (distribution of information sheet and basic

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
				- To give Administrative staff an opportunity to see the system and develop an understanding of its purpose - To listen to any concerns or queries from Administrative staff - enhance/facilitate/change any current work practices of Administrative and general staff	demonstration of Blackboard System)
Information for Staff and Students	October	1.1.c, 1.1.g	- Staff and students	*Understanding and Positive Perception:* - to provide information on support and technical requirements	- Develop a brochure for staff and students outlining technical requirements and support
Communication with Teaching and Learning Committees and UQ Centres	October - February	2.0.a – e 2.7.a - b	- Teaching and Learning Committee Members - UQ Centres	*Understanding and Positive Perception:* - To give Teaching and Learning Committee Members an opportunity to see the system and develop an understanding of its purpose - To listen to any concerns	- Attendance at Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee or UQ Centre meetings as requested (distribution of information sheet and demonstration of Blackboard System)

Event/ Strategy	Timing	Expectation	Stakeholders Targeted	Purpose	Method
				or queries - To inform members of the progress of the project	

Blackboard Implementation Project – Change Management and Communication Plan

Ms Caroline Steel – University-Wide Project Manager (Blackboard), Lecturer in Higher Education (TEDI)

Ms Beth Cavallari – TEDI Project Manager, Head of Educational Resources (TEDI)

Ms Liz Coulter – ITS Project Manager, Associate Director (ITS)

References

This project plan is based on an example provided at 'The Project Management Planning Framework' website
http://www.dis.wa.gov/pmframework/planning/communications.htm

Dawson, M. J. and M. L. Jones (2003). Herding Cats: Human Change Management, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

McAlpine, I. and J. Jackson (2000). Implementing Online Delivery: A Study of Change Management. Brisbane, Australian National Training Authority.

Tierney, W. G., Ed. (1998). The responsive university: Restructuring for high performance. Baltimore, MD, John Hopkins.

Tierney, W. G. (1999). Building the responsive campus: Creating high performance colleges and universities. Thousand Oakes, CA, Sage.

Tierney, W. G. (1999). Faculty productivity: Facts, fictions and issues. New York, Garland.

Tierney, W. G., Ed. (2001). Faculty work in schools of education: rethinking roles and rewards for the twenty-first century. Albany, NY, SUNY Press.