



ODL COMMUNIQUÉ 20, 30 JUNE 2010

1 A SHORT UPDATE

By the time the Soccer World Cup is finished by 11 July, we will have to get the different processes regarding the implementation of ODL going again. The following issues will need to be addressed by the ODL Task teams and smaller working groups.

- With the proposed new general admission requirement of an increase in the language of tuition *not* being approved by Senate, **ODL Task team 1** will have to go back to the drawing board by drafting a new proposal based on additional evidence and further consultation. There is also a crucial need for whatever proposal this team puts on the table, that there is maximum synergy between the team's proposal and Unisa's enrolment planning and management.
- Soon after the 11th of July, all departments, schools and colleges who are interested in the possibility of developing higher certificates will be invited to a general information session/workshop where we will interrogate the possibility of working together where possible. We will build on the work done by **ODL Task team 2: Higher Certificate** which was led by Prof Rosemary Moeketsi.
- The **Deputy Registrar Academic** has been tasked by Senate to develop criteria and processes that would guide the implementation of the proposal for alternative assessment practices as developed by **ODL Task Team 3** under the leadership of Dr Gugu Moche. Prof Singh will rely heavily on the expertises and experiences of **ODL Task team 3**.
- Dr Japie Heydenrych, the convenor of **ODL Task team 4: Student support** has resigned and will leave Unisa in mid July. I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for his leadership and hard work. At present my thoughts are not to reconvene the task team in its present format, but rather to get a number of smaller teams working on the outstanding issues like developing a sustainable and effective tutor system for Unisa based on the conceptual model developed by the task team (and accepted by senate); to further look at the use of technologies in the support of students; and also, crucially, to consult as widely as possible with the different regions on the implications of the conceptual model for the regions.
- There are a number of proposals that **ODL Task team 5: Technology enhanced teaching, learning and student support** tabled which will need to be finalised before the meeting of Senate in September. Mr Deon van der Merwe will meet with smaller working teams towards implementation of the approved recommendations.
- **ODL Task team 6: Student success and retention**, under the leadership of Prof Subotzky has formed a smaller working team which has already met several times since the Senate meeting.

All the different task teams (or smaller groups) will meet *as soon as possible* after 11 July to resume our mandates. While I will need to report back on progress made since the Senate meeting of 2 June at the next STLSC meeting of **19 July** (agenda closes on 5 July), **I have committed myself and the teams to provide the STLSC meeting of 23 August with a substantial progress report (agenda closes 10 August)**. At the STLSC meeting of 20 September (agenda closes 6 September) the different ODL Task teams will submit their next concrete proposals for approval for the last Senate meeting of this year which will take place in October.

The above time schedule means that in order to make progress we will have to work very focused and utilise time and resources optimally. While we have made huge progress since the start of the ODL implementation in 2010, a lot is still outstanding. I would like to thank all the ODL Task team convenors and different members of the teams again for their commitment and enthusiasm. Without them the implementation of ODL would not have progressed as it did.

By September 2010 we should have a much clearer understanding of

- The role admission requirements can play in enrolment planning and management as well as ensuring responsible access to quality teaching and learning.
- The opportunity a number of higher certificates offer for Unisa to increase our scope of comprehensiveness as well as to provide students with alternative pathways into higher education.
- Processes and criteria to guide alternative assessment practices.
- An appropriate and effective tutor system.
- Reconsidered the role our regional facilities play in supporting student retention and success.
- The role the appropriate and effective use of a variety of technologies can play in teaching, learning and student support.
- How to implement various strategies to increase student success and retention.

2 ODL REPOSITORY AND BLOG

All the ODL task team reports, the overview of the recommendations of the STLSC and other ODL documents are available on the Unisa Library's Institutional Repository at <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/dspace/handle/10500/3072> (accessed 26 June 2010). The repository is updated on a regular basis and if you register on the repository, you will get notifications of any new uploads.

You are also most welcome to comment on this (and previous) ODL Communiqués on the Unisa Staff website. On the right hand side of the Unisa Staff website, you will see a section titled “Important links” under which you must then click on “Blogs”. On the blog page, you will notice two links namely “E-connect” and “Open Distance Learning”. If you follow the latter you will be able to read and comment on the ODL Communiqués.

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