26 May 2010

Competitive Grants Scheme
Australian Learning and Teaching Council
Level 14, Centennial Plaza Building C
300 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills  NSW  2010
Australia

Dear Sir

Re. ALTC Competitive Grant Application

Charles Sturt University strongly supports the proposed application entitled “Proposal for the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS)” to the Australian Learning and Teaching Council under its Competitive Grants Program.

This proposal addresses ALTC’s Priority 2 – that is, proposals that deliver strategic approaches to learning and teaching that address the increasing diversity of the student body. This proposal specifically focuses on student diversity in relation to ICT capability through developing a survey instrument and process that will provide information about ICT capability, use and experience of commencing higher education students in Australia. Its national, collaborative all-of-sector approach supports the ALTC objectives of identifying learning and teaching issues that impact on the Australian higher education system and facilitative national approaches to address these and other emerging issues.

As more and more higher education institutions engage in ICT-enabled learning and seek to strengthen the student experience, the complexity of accommodating differences in student preparedness, including ICT skills, for higher education study will increase. The availability of the information gathered by this survey will assist universities to appropriately invest in, and support ICT-enabled learning, and enable universities to better target their programs and services to support students’ success.

Yours sincerely,

(Professor) Ross Chambers
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Competitive Grants Scheme
Australian Learning and Teaching Council
Level 14, Centennial Plaza Building C
300 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Australia

Letter of Support - Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study

On behalf of the members of CAUDIT, I am pleased to confirm that CAUDIT supports the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS). The data from this survey will be of direct benefit to our members and will help them plan and tailor future ICT infrastructure investments and improve the services they provide to students.

CAUDIT will provide in kind support through our Manager of Strategic Initiatives and will act as a co-ordinating body to gain the necessary assistance from our members to facilitate this study.

Warm regards,

Richard Northam
General Manager
Phone: +61 2 6222 3521
Email: richard.northam@caudit.edu.au

26 May 2010
The Manager  
Competitive Grants Scheme  
Australian Learning and Teaching Council  
Level 14, Centennial Plaza Building C  
300 Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Australia  

Dear Sir or Madam  

This letter is in support of the application from Education Services Australia for funding for the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS).  

We understand that the intention is that New Zealand institutions would also be invited to participate in this survey.  

The New Zealand Ministry of Education believes that this survey would yield new and important information on the capability of students in ICT and on the value of the use of ICT in the delivery of tertiary education. This will be of considerable value in the design of educational programmes. The Ministry would also want to use the results of this survey to establish a baseline understanding of institutional capability in and use of technology in delivery.  

I am happy to discuss this matter further if you wish.  

Yours sincerely  

Roger Smyth  
Manager  
Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis and Reporting
28th May 2010

Competitive Grants Scheme
Australian Learning and Teaching Council
Level 14, Centennial Plaza Building C
300 Elizabeth Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to endorse the proposal being led by Charles Sturt University for the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS).

Education Services Australia is a national not-for-profit agency owned by all Australia’s ministers of education and training. We have been involved in the development of this proposal, and strongly support the initiative.

Our work for the DEEWR-funded Strategic ICT Advisory Service found that although there has been some research done on identifying the characteristics of Australian higher education students in relation to their digital literacy, ICT skills, experience and knowledge, this information is not comprehensive and is usually the result of one-off projects rather than a strategic approach to gathering data that will help us understand the diversity of the student body in relation to their usage of ICT for learning.

Changes in technology as well as government policy initiatives, which are referred to in the proposal, will have a significant impact on the nature of the student body. To efficiently and effectively direct ICT budgets the sector needs reliable data about the students.

This survey proposal has particular strength because its collaborative and consultative nature and its commitment to working towards a survey instrument that will satisfy the sector’s information needs

The involvement of sector-wide representative bodies, such as ACODE and CAUDIT, in the development of this survey as well the project’s objective of building on the work already undertaken by the project partners in pilot studies provides the opportunity to create a useful and sustainable survey tool that will provide important information about students’ use of technology for learning.

We strongly endorse this proposal.

Yours faithfully

FRANK TURNER
Executive General Manager
20 May 2010

To members of the ALTC Competitive Grant Selection Committee,

Re: ALTC Competitive Grant Application

Victoria University strongly supports the proposed project, entitled "Proposal for the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS)".

This project will develop a survey instrument and course of action for the implementation of a national Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study. The survey will provide information on the technology behaviours, preferences, and attitudes of higher education students, especially as it relates to their academic experience. In doing so, the project will serve an important purpose of providing sector-wide data that can be used for general ICT planning purposes and data that can be benchmarked across institutions.

I have every confidence in the project team of members from the lead institution (Charles Sturt University) and partner institutions (ACODE, CAUDIT, Education Services Australia, Macquarie University, UNSW-ADFA, and Victoria University). The project team brings a wealth of expertise to this project, including experience in evaluating new educational technologies in terms of their impact on learning and teaching.

I strongly support this collaborative application, which has significant and practical value for the Australian higher education sector.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Professor Greg Baxter
Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning
On behalf of the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and Elearning (ACODE) I am writing to endorse the Charles Sturt University-led proposal to establish the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS).

ACODE is peak body with all but 2 or 3 Australasian Universities as members and which has as its objective; “to enhance policy and practice in open, distance, flexible and e-learning in Australasian universities”.

ACODE and its membership have an overriding interest in the objectives of this study and in particular identifying and understanding the issues related to the digital literacies of students and their ICT skills, experience and knowledge as they become members of the higher education community. Currently, there is an incomplete body of knowledge available to inform institutions as they move into an increasingly digital and online environment. And much of the knowledge that is available is that which institutions are required to gather for themselves as the major survey tool, AUSSE, does not provide adequate information with respect to this area. Given the increasing familiarity and capability of the students with ICT and the digital world as they enter University, it has become increasingly important, in fact critical, that the resources and efforts of Universities are based on a sound and reliable evidence base rather than a series of one-off, ad hoc and unsystematic initiatives which are of limited and localised extent and which often have only limited strategic value. This study will gather data and provide information which is comprehensive and sector-wide and which will enable Universities to develop coherent and strategic approaches that will inform a better understanding of the diversity of the student body in relation to their usage of ICT for learning and facilitate the development of approaches and strategies that better meet their learning needs.

The study will also enable universities to anticipate, plan for, and better accommodate the changing nature of the student body resulting from the changing technologies and the ways in which these are used by learners. It will also enable better planning to accommodate the changes arising out of government policy initiatives and in fact will be valuable in informing
government policy development. Finally, the data will enable University’s to more effectively and efficiently focus their ICT spend much more effectively.

The collaborative and consultative nature of this proposal is a major strength, involving not only the lead university, but sector-wide organisations such as CAUDIT and Education Services Australia as well as ACODE. In addition, because ACODE is an Australasian organisation which includes all New Zealand Universities in its membership, it has also gained the interest of the NZ Ministry of Education who is likely to fund an extension of the study in NZ in a manner similar to the way the AUSSE reflects both Australian and NZ student characteristics.

This is an exciting, highly relevant and very timely project which ACODE strongly endorses.

Gordon Suddaby
President – ACODE
Dear Members,

Following our earlier efforts in this field, I am pleased to endorse, on behalf of UNSW@ADFA, the proposal to establish the Australian Annual Higher Education Student ICT Study (AAHESIS).

This project serves an important purpose as our student cohorts will inevitably be drawn from the 'Generation Y' population. The collection of comprehensive, sector-wide data will be of considerable benefit to future student learning as well as to informing a strategic approach to academic staff development in the field of technology enabled learning and teaching (TELT). The project is all the more relevant given that there is currently a paucity of data available to guide universities as we increasingly draw on more sophisticated, digitally rich learning and teaching technologies. Much is left to individual institutions and we recognise that AUSSE, although providing a blueprint for process, does not adequately collect the sort of information envisaged by this project.

I have every confidence in Dr. Eijkman and the other team members to achieve the project’s deliverables and outcomes given their levels of experience in this field. It is clear that Dr. Eijkman and other members of the team bring a wealth of expertise to this project, including the evaluation of TELT initiatives.

I strongly support and endorse this practical and strategic sector-wide project.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

David Blaazer