Proposal:

To establish a National Networking Initiative (NNI)

A joint initiative between:

The Australasian Council on Open, Distance and Elearning (ACODE)

and

The Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite),

Contact Details:

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Director, The Flexible Learning Institute
Professor of Higher Education

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President, ascilite

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President: Australasian Council on Open, Distance and Elearning (ACODE)

Project Rationale and Outcomes

This project will continue and further the key goals and objectives of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) following the disestablishment of the Council.

The proposal has arisen from a concern that the two partner organisations, the Australasian Council of Open, Distance and ELearning (ACODE) and the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite), share with other Australian organisations concerned with learning and teaching in higher education. ACODE and ascilite believe that the networking capability, together with the support and promotion of University Learning and Teaching, that ALTC offers will be lost or at the very least significantly diminished with the disestablishment of the ALTC. Networking and promotion of learning and teaching have been a hallmark of ALTC's operation and we believe there is a need to continue this work.

ACODE and ascilite as peak bodies in the Higher Education sector have representation in all Australian Universities in the domain of technology-enhanced learning and teaching. ACODE and ascilite have also a signed Memorandum of Understanding which strengthens their collaborative partnership and this proposal. The two organisations are strongly positioned to advance a 'National Networking Initiative' by drawing on their knowledge, expertise, and relationships in the area of technology-enhanced learning and teaching to facilitate the establishment of positive and collaborative relationships among kindred organisations and institutions across Australia.

The project will be informed by the ALTC's guiding principles of: Excellence; Sustainability; Collaboration; Diversity; and Inclusiveness. The National Networking Initiative (NNI) will be established to continue ALTC's critical roles of; facilitating the sharing of best practice; promoting collaboration and collegiality; and continuing to engage academic staff in the wider sphere of the scholarship of learning and teaching. Underpinning the NNI will be a focus on the four objectives of the Innovation and Development Grants Programme of: transparency, value for money, high impact and future looking.

There are two major inter-related streams to the proposal, each predicated on the support and enhancement of the networking role that is reflected by the ALTC vision that "changing cultural practice is best achieved by developing connections within higher education – working with, and building on, existing networks to address national and disciplinary priorities in teaching and learning" (ALTC 2010 Annual Report, P.2).

The first stream involves disseminating, promoting, and enhancing the outcomes and practices arising from the many projects ALTC has funded e.g. those being reported on in the current Good Practice Projects. The value of such projects will continue to be enhanced through the NNI.

The second inter-related stream involves the development of a mechanism for 'kindred' organisations focussed on teaching and learning in higher education to work together to establish priorities for the dissemination and operationalisation of research, strategies, ideas and initiatives arising from the ALTC projects. Without such a mechanism, there is a likelihood that such projects will only inform practice within the lead institution and fail to be applied to a wider cross-section of institutions outside the lead institution. There is also a risk that resources on current websites will be underutilised.

Project Goals:

A key goal of the NNI will be to work collaboratively with the kindred organisations of ACODE and ascilite, such as HERDSA, CADAD, and ODLAA, to enable a coordinated, collaborative, and integrated approach to enhancing and promoting the vision and goals established by ALTC.

A second goal is the dissemination of the outcomes of ALTC projects, fellowships and other initiatives through the NNI.

A sub goal within this broad goal will be to disseminate and build on the "Good Practice Reports" which ALTC has recently commissioned. An effective dissemination strategy is critical to enhancing the value of these syntheses as is facilitating opportunities to build on the outcomes of the projects reviewed.

A further NNI goal will be the establishment of collaborative relationships with the State-based Promoting Excellence Networks (PEN's) being funded by the ALTC in order to support, enhance and disseminate teaching and learning initiatives and good practice within States, and share outcomes and synergies nationally where appropriate.

A further sub goal of the NNI will be to maximise the opportunities for effective dissemination and adoption of innovations and good practices that have been generated by the national Promoting Excellence Initiative (PEI) to enable the sharing, and extension of PEI good practice across the sector.

Further goals will be developed to support and contribute to the dissemination, sharing and collaboration of the outcomes of other ALTC initiatives, where appropriate and relevant, arising from the Innovation and Development grants, Special Initiative grants, Strategic Priority grants etc.

Approach

A noted strength of the ALTC is its capacity to facilitate the establishment of positive and collaborative relationships between organisations involved in supporting and enhancing teaching and learning in higher education. This approach and philosophy is embraced by both ACODE and ascilite who are committed through their missions to further develop and expand their collaborative ethos. Given that there are a number of organisations that focus on enhancing teaching and learning, ACODE and ascilite through the NNI will initiate and host, as a key element and a starting point for this proposal, a meeting of the presidents of the 'kindred' organisations (i.e. CADAD, HERDSA, ODLAA) to be chaired preferably by the ALTC Director or nominee. At this meeting it is proposed to workshop and develop the operational details of a networking strategy to underpin and inform the National Networking Initiative (NNI). Such a strategy will have as its goal the development and enhancement of networking and collaborative activity supporting teaching and learning within the Australian University Sector.

An adjunct to this 'collaborative' objective is a proposal to establish relationships with Netspot[1] and AARNet[2] by inviting them to participate in the project. We see these relationships as being positive for all groups. The NNI will leverage off the capabilities of Netspot and AARNet to 'connect' institutions and organisations and to deliver support to ALL Australian Universities. In turn, Netspot and AARNet will be able to affirm and promote the value of their capabilities and technologies to institutions and the sector.

The second strand to the proposal will focus on the key ALTC initiatives as the basis for the operation of the NNI. The workplan encompassing projects to be focussed on will be prioritised by the NNI Board. However, as a first initiative it is proposed (as noted above) to disseminate and build on the current "Good Practice Reports" that ALTC has commissioned. Currently 11 Good Practice Reports are being developed as listed below:

1. Assuring graduate outcomes
2. Blended learning
3. Curriculum renewal
4. Supporting students' transition into higher education
5. Work-integrated learning
6. Assessment of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) students
7. Innovative Indigenous learning and teaching
8. Revitalising the academic workforce
9. Technology-enhanced learning and teaching
10. Clinical teaching
11. Support for international students

A second initiative will be focussed on supporting State-based initiatives such as the West Australian Networking and Dissemination event (WAND) and other activities such as the State-based Promoting Excellence Initiatives (PEI). We will also invite a representative from the State-based Promoting Excellence Networks to be involved. It is intended to engage immediately with these groups and consult with them on the type of support they need and how the NNI might contribute to their initiatives. Initially we see the NNI supporting the dissemination and the ongoing development of collaborative relationships and initiatives as being of significant value to the State-Based PEN's. In addition, we would offer similar support for those institutions and groups who have been involved in the National PEI initiatives.

Mechanisms

The NNI will incorporate a wide range of dissemination and support mechanisms and tools. Initially the project will explore the following communication and collaboration options with a view to establishing protocols and operational procedures available to all target groups:

- Face-to-face workshops in major centres
- Webinars
- Using and enhancing Video linkages
- Desktop conferencing
- Mini-conferences (Upto one for each major initiative)
- Regional events (face to face)
- Supporting collaborative initiatives between partners to disseminate project outcomes (collaborative events, shared outcomes, etc)
- Development of Networking Guidelines
- Other mechanisms will be added as the project evolves

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[1] NetSpot is a key eLearning Technology Services Partner to education organisations within Australia.

[2] Australia's Academic and Research Network

Participating organizations

Host Institution

Charles Sturt University (A letter of support from the University is attached Appendix 2)

Collaborative partners (with attached invitation and letters indicating provisional interest in the proposal)

- ACODE
- Ascilite
- HERDSA (letter of invitation and response attached Appendix 3C)
- CADAD (letter of invitation attached, - President is currently on leave so no response received)
- ODLAA (letter of invitation and response attached Appendix 3B)

Enabling partners

- Netspot (Letter of support attached Appendix 3D)
  Netspot is a long term supporter of ascilite and other such organisations. The CEO of Netspot is a long time seconded member of the ascilite Executive. As such the company has provided support and made its expertise widely available across the higher education sector. Netspot is also a sponsor of both ACODE and CADAD through hosting their websites.
- AARNET (Letter of support will be attached Appendix 3E)
  AARNet and ACODE are currently working together on several fronts. At the upcoming ACODE workshop, AARNet will be hosting an innovative technology session. In addition, the organisations are currently collaborating, together with REANNZ (in NZ), Massey University and Charles Sturt University to share in the process of developing an MoU.
- DEEWR
  No official approach has been made to DEEWR as yet, however, the project team will invite a DEEWR representative to participate as a Board member. The project would also establish clear and explicit lines of communication with DEEWR.

  In particular, the dissemination strategies will be linked to the DEEWR web site which it is understood is being developed to support higher education learning and teaching.

The NNI project entity will negotiate MoU's/agreements with the above kindred organizations clearly identifying their involvement and commitment to delivering integrated and coordinated programmes and support initiatives. These will be focussed on disseminating ALTC project outcomes and embedding ALTC funded good practice initiatives and enhanced collaboration across the Australian higher education sector and to showcase and introduce new and innovative educational technologies in a pedagogically robust manner

The role and contribution of the collaborative partners is critical. It is important that they have ownership of the programmes being developed and not simply 'inherit' a pre-ordained programme over which they have had no say. It is also important, however, that there be an operating framework established so that a clear plan of work providing direction and coherence is able to be established quickly. The NNI project proposes that the various collaborative groups (as mentioned elsewhere) identify ALTC projects of specific interest/relevance to them and for which they will then develop guidelines, business rules, support packages and implementation case studies to support and enable other groups to more easily implement the strategies and initiatives identified. These organisation-based projects will be supported by the NNI. This process is seen as iterative so that there is ongoing development and evolution of the project outcomes.

Operation

The NNI team is looking to develop an engagement matrix. This might look like the table below;

The engagement matrix will have a focus on levels of engagement with very well defined target groups.

	Target group	Type of Initiative			Support required	Lead Organisation	Participating organisations
		Collab.	Dissem.	Others			
Institution-focussed support							
Organisation-focussed support							
State-focussed support							
National-focussed support							
Discipline-focussed support							
Initiative-focussed support							

The rationale underpinning the NNI project is informed by the combined ACODE/CADAD event at Macquarie University in March, 2011. This collaborative approach to sharing expertise, experience, and good practice was seen by ALTC as an effective model and it is the sort of approach that needs to be kept in clearly in mind. The NNI will identify and support similar collaborative initiatives by providing resources to collaborating organisations to support such initiatives. There would be a proviso that these are collaborative initiatives focusing on the priorities identified by specific organisations. NNI will support the dissemination of the outcomes.

Value/Need for Project

Values and Principles

The project will be underpinned by the ALTC Values of:

- Transparency
- Value for Money
- High Impact
- Future Looking

And the ALTC principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Long Term Change
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Excellence

The Project will also incorporate and reflect the relevant principles and values of the lead organisations, all of which include in their strategic missions, statements regarding collaboration and networking agendas.

Objectives

The objectives of the NNI reflect the extreme concern that the two partner organisations, ACODE and ascilite share with similar Australian organisations that the networking capability together with the support and promotion of University Learning and Teaching which has been the hallmark of ALTC's operation will be lost in the forthcoming changes.

The NNI will:

- Support and maintain the dissemination of the outcomes of ALTC projects, fellowships and other initiatives. i.e. this project is intended to continue and further these key outcomes of the ALTC.
- Develop an integrated network in higher education to disseminate:
  - Higher education good practice principles and strategies
  - Enhance collaboration between 'kindred' organizations.
- Integrate, support, and disseminate state-based initiatives e.g. PEN's
- Facilitate and enable kindred organisations such as; ACODE; ascilite; HERDSA, CADAD, and ODLAA to work together to achieve synergies that will arise from a collaborative, and integrated approach to enhancing and promoting the vision and goals established by ALTC.
- Support these 'kindred' organizations in meeting their objectives with respect to Teaching and Learning e.g. To facilitate the key elements of ALTC Goal 2 and Goal 5:
  - #2 "identifying, supporting and disseminating innovations in learning and teaching"
  - #5 "to enable reciprocal national and international arrangements for sharing and benchmarking learning and teaching processes

Project management

Lead Organizations

- Charles Sturt University
- ACODE & ascilite

Project leaders

- Professor Mike Keppell (President, ascilite)
- Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby (President, ACODE)

APPENDIX 2: LETTER FROM CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

Charles Sturt University

15 June 2011

Ms Siobhan Lenihan
Head of Programs
Australian Learning and Teaching Council
PO Box 2375
STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

Dear Ms Lenihan

I write on behalf of Charles Sturt University (CSU) to endorse the application from Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby, (Massey University & President, ACODE) and Professor Mike Keppell (Director, The Flexible Learning Institute & President, ascilite) for an ALTC Innovation and Development Grants Program to establish the National Network Initiative (NNI).

The project will support key goals of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) following its disestablishment. ACODE and ascilite share a concern that the networking capability successfully created by the ALTC is not diminished. Networking and promotion of learning and teaching have been the hallmark of ALTC's operation and there is a need to continue this work.

ACODE and ascilite as peak bodies in Higher Education have representation in all Australian Universities in the domain of technology-enhanced learning and teaching. ACODE and ascilite have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their collaboration. The two organisations are strongly positioned to advance a 'National Networking Initiative' by drawing on their knowledge, expertise, and relationships in the area of technology-enhanced learning and teaching to facilitate the establishment of positive and collaborative relationships among universities across Australia.

CSU is pleased to provide time release for Professor Mike Keppell, Director of its Flexible Learning Institute to contribute to the leadership of the network. The Flexible Learning Institute is also able to provide support for the network through project leadership, project management, administrative support and office space.

Yours sincerely

(Professor) Ross Chambers
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

S:\Academic\Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic\Australian Learning and Teaching Council\altc_2011\15_6_endorse_Keppell.doc

www.csu.edu.au
CRICOS Provider Numbers for Charles Sturt University are 00005F (NSW), 01947G (VIC) and 02960B (ACT). ABN: 83 878 708 551

3A: GENERIC LETTER OF INVITATION SENT TO ODLAA, HERDSA AND CADAD

Dear President

I am writing on behalf of ACODE and ascilite with an invitation to ……… to participate in a proposal to ALTC for a National Networking Initiative (NNI).

We are sorry about the late notice. This initiative is a bit 'last minute'.

Some time ago ACODE and ascilite submitted an expression of interest in establishing a National Networking Initiative and it was only in the last week or so that we have been invited to submit a full proposal. Both Mike Keppell (President of ascilite) and myself have been working since then to produce a draft which we could present to you with this invitation.

The background to this proposal is that both ACODE and ascilite were extremely concerned with the Government decision earlier this year to close the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. This we believe is a concern which your organization and its membership will also feel. It is our view that once ALTC closes, there is potential for a great loss of knowledge, expertise and momentum with respect to the enhancement of learning and teaching across Australia. From ACODE's and ascilite's perspective, our organisations are particularly concerned with the loss of the networking capability that ALTC has built up among institutions and organizations such as ours. The establishment of positive and collaborative relationships between organizations in the higher education sector has been a real strength of the ALTC.

As you will see from the attached draft, should the NNI proposal be funded, we propose that an initial meeting of the presidents of what we are terming 'kindred' organizations i.e. ACODE, ascilite, CADAD, HERDSA, and ODLAA together with a DEEWR representative be called and the meeting be chaired preferably by the ALTC Director or nominee. At that meeting it is proposed we workshop and develop the National Networking Initiative (NNI) strategy to maintain and enhance networking and collaborative activity that supports teaching and learning within the Australian University Sector.

We see the purpose of the NNI to continue ALTC's critical roles of; facilitating the sharing of best practice; promoting collaboration and collegiality; continuing to enhance the engagement of academic staff in the wider sphere of the scholarship of teaching and learning, enhancing student learning outcomes; and other critical initiatives currently supported and promoted by ALTC. The programme would be developed and overseen by a board/steering group comprising the group noted above i.e. the presidents of the involved organizations, a DEEWR representative and with perhaps the one or two ALTC Fellows.

ALTC has suggested that the project should be of 2 – 2.5 years duration and that we should apply for $220,000. As our organizations are not able to hold funds, they would be held by Charles Sturt University and we are anticipating a letter of support from Professor Ross Chambers

We realize this is short notice and we are not asking for an unequivocal commitment to participation in the project. However we would appreciate an email indicating an interest in the project and agreement to participate in the workshop that will be called if funding in approved.

We will phone you tomorrow and try to answer any questions you may have.
Regards
Gordon Suddaby and Mike Keppell

From: Rod Sims [rsims@iprimus.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 17 June 2011 10:29 a.m.
To: Suddaby, Gordon
Subject: Support for

Dear Gordon and Mike,

I am pleased to write in full support of your proposal to establish a National Networking Initiative to continue the work of ALTC.

ODLAA would welcome the opportunity to join the project and for the President to be a member of the Project Board.

All the best,

Dr Rod Sims

President

Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia, Inc.

http://www.odlaa.org

E: rod.sims@faculty.capella.edu

Professor Mike Keppell, President Ascilite

Gordon Suddaby, President ACODE

17 June 2011

Dear Mike and Gordon,

HERDSA would be pleased to support and be involved in your proposed National Networking Initiative as outlined in your ALTC proposal. HERDSA is very supportive of activities that will continue the networking and dissemination work undertaken so well by the ALTC and which will be absent under the new arrangements being finalized with DEEWR. Shelda Debowski, the incoming President for HERDSA, and I are both very supportive of this application and HERDSA participation.

HERDSA is also submitting an application to the ALTC for advocacy, leadership and networking for learning and teaching in the tertiary sector and our two proposals will complement each other well as we all have particular networks and constituencies that, in total, would cover a significant proportion of the tertiary education sector. Ascilite and ACODE have a particular mandate in the area of technology in education and this would complement well the more general mandate of HERDSA covering all aspects of tertiary education research and development.

Regards

Professor Geoffrey Crisp

President, HERDSA

3D: NETSPOT RESPONSE

From: Allan Christie [allan.christie@netspot.com.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 15 June 2011 3:43 p.m.
To: Suddaby, Gordon
Cc: mkeppell@csu.edu.au; siobhan.lenihan@altc.edu.au
Subject: RE: Invitation to participate in proposal

Dear Gordon and Mike

I have read the draft proposal and I'm pleased, in principle, to commit
NetSpot's resources and expertise to the NNI. NetSpot has been a long-term
supporter of Internet-based networking activities within the Higher
Education sector having hosted the ascilite web site since 1993 and
currently providing secure online communication hubs for ascilite, ACODE and
CADAD members using the open source software, Moodle.

NetSpot is a subscriber to the Australian Access Federation
(http://www.aaf.edu.au/subscribe/subscribers/) which has the potential to
enable staff within subscriber organisations to easily participate in the
NNI using their institutional login details.

The use of open source software such as Moodle combined with the
professional services of NetSpot, a company that is authentically engaged
with the Higher Education sector, will ensure a robust online environment
that is cost-effective and sustainable.

I look forward to assisting in the development of this project as it
proceeds to the next phase.

Regards, Allan.
--
Allan Christie
Managing Director
NetSpot Pty. Ltd. ~ 183 Melbourne St. North Adelaide SA 5006
Ph: 08 8361 6800 (reception) | 08 7200 5342 (direct) | Mob: 0419 814 605 |
Fax: 08 8361 6811
Email: allan.christie@netspot.com.au | Web: http://www.netspot.com.au

Register now for Moodlemoot AU 2011 (17-20 July) – http://moodlemoot.org.au
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NetSpot - Enabling Technology for Education

-----Original Message-----
From: Suddaby, Gordon [mailto:G.T.Suddaby@massey.ac.nz]

Hi Allan
Please find attached a nearly completed draft of a proposal to establish a
National Networking Initiative to continue the work of ALTC after its
closure.

As you will note, it is the result of a collaboration between ascilite and
ACODE. As you will also note, we are very keen for Netspot to be a part of
the project. At this stage, we are interested in an email from you (if at
all possible) saying that you would be interested in principle in exploring
the possibility. We are happy to discuss in greater detail how the NNI and
netspot can collaborate should we be funded.

We will call you later today or tomorrow to discuss the proposal and to
answer any questions you will have.

Regards
Gordon and Mike

3E: AARNET Response

Mr. Gordon Suddaby
Director: Academic Development and eLearning
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North
New Zealand

President: Australasian Council on Open, Distance and Elearning (ACODE)
www.acode.edu.au

17 June 2011

AARNet expression of Interest in the National Networking Initiative

Dear Mr. Gordon Suddaby

I am writing to confirm that AARNet Pty Ltd (Australian Academic and Research Network) formally expresses in principle interest to the proposed National Networking Initiative (NNI) proposal that has been created as a result of collaboration between ASCILITE and ACODE.

AARNet looks forward to further discussions in greater detail on how the NNI and AARNET can collaborate together should the NNI be funded.

Best wishes

(On behalf of Mr. Chris Hancock, CEO, AARNet)

Mr. James Sankar
Executive Director,
Applications & Services
AARNet Pty Ltd

CADAD response forwarded to ALTC

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN
DIRECTORS OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Professor Denise Chalmers

President, CADAD

Phone: 08 6488 2603

Fax: 08 6488 1156

e-mail: denise.chalmers@uwa.edu.au

Gordon Suddaby (President, ACODE)

Mike Keppell (President, ascilite)

4 July 2011

Dear Gordon and Mike,

This is to confirm that The Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) is pleased to offer in principle support to the proposed National Networking Initiative as outlined in your proposal to the ALTC. If the funding is approved, CADAD would participate in the proposed workshop.

CADAD strongly supports activities that will continue the ALTC's networking and dissemination work, and has also submitted an Expression of Interest to the ALTC to extend our existing network of academic development units. This will facilitate bringing together links across the Discipline networks, Awards and Grants projects outcomes, activities, and dissemination programs as well as institutionally-based activities, and visiting scholars not directly linked to ALTC or DEEWR funded programs. These two proposals are complementary as, together, we have networks which cover a range of interests in the higher education sector.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Chalmers

President, CADAD