

BULLETIN

May 2014

From the guest editor, Sherrill Whittington

Once again, I have the privilege of being the guest editor for the ODLAA Bulletin. This Bulletin is a little delayed as we wanted to provide information about the latest developments ensuing from the April e-AGM and our follow-up strategic planning meeting held in Melbourne on 5 May. There is also some information on forthcoming events that may be of interest to ODLAA members.

As noted in our earlier Bulletins, we are happy to provide information about employment opportunities that may be available in the area of open and distance education, so do contact us regarding opportunities that arise. Send any information to executive@odlaa.org. We also like to offer a review of any open and distance education publications, so do let us know what is in press or what has been published, and if possible send in your review of what you find.

We would also like to profile practitioners in this area so please send in any bios of yourself or of key members of your organisations so we can help to raise the profile of educators in open and distance education.

If you do have any views on these matters, you can send information or feedback to executive@odlaa.org.

Sherrill Whittington

Secretary, ODLAA Executive Committee

eAGM

The 2014 e-AGM took place between 7 and 11 April with above the required quorum participating. Following the President's Report, three special resolutions for constitutional change were accepted, which confirmed positions elected to the executive committee for a 2-year period, with half the executive positions elected in alternate years. This clarifies that any person who is elected to a position on the executive committee will remain on the executive for 2 years and that in a given year only one of president or vice president retires, only one of treasurer or secretary retires, and two of the member representatives retire.

Changes were also agreed to the reduction of the number of members of the executive required to sign/authorise payments to just one, but still requires a second person, who will be a nominee of the Secretariat. It was also agreed that the financial year will be aligned with the calendar year, which also will mean that the AGM will need to be held between January and April each year hereafter, unless special exemption is sought.

A new category of membership for institutions and organisations was added to the existing membership allowing institutions and organisations to join ODLAA. This will be open to institutions or organisations with goals that are aligned with that of ODLAA. However, institutions or organisations shall not have the right to vote on matters brought before ODLAA or be eligible for election to the executive committee.

The audit and treasurer's reports for the financial year 2012–2013 were accepted. They highlighted two points:

1. While the 2013 Summit was an academic success, it was at a cost to ODLAA. That has meant that the current executive members have taken on a greater share of the running of the organisation that had been done by the secretarial services. This has significantly reduced the administrative costs and an increase in savings putting ODLAA in a stronger financial position.
2. The appointment of a new auditor has highlighted the issue of the registration of ODLAA. The first resolution in the treasurer's report is to provide the organisation with security and flexibility in the registration that is more appropriate for an Australia-wide organisation. To do that the recommendation is that ODLAA members confirm that we remain registered under the WA *Associations Incorporation Act*.

The *Distance Education* journal report was accepted, with members responding that the DE Journal report was comprehensive and the editorial board had maintained quality of the publications.

Nominations to the executive committee

Uncontested nominations were received for the president, the treasurer, the vice-president (which was vacant due to a resignation), and the two general member representatives. The current executive committee comprises the following:

- Som Naidu – President (appointed until the 2016 AGM)
- Mutuota Kigotho – Vice-president (appointed until the 2015 AGM)
- Sherrill Whittington – Secretary
- Shane Moore – Treasurer (appointed until the 2016 AGM)
- Antonina Petrolito – Publications officer
- Diane Hockridge – Member representative

- Jo Osborne – Member representative
- Stephen Relf – Member representative
- Jenny Roberts – Member representative
- Barrie Todhunter – Member representative (appointed until the 2016 AGM).

In closing the eAGM, the president congratulated the new executive committee and expressed optimism in the future of ODLAA and urged members to give them the support they needed to carry on with the affairs of the organisation. The president thanked members for their active contributions to the eAGM and encouraged them to remain engaged with their association:

ODLAA is here to serve our professional interests. And like any professional organisation, it is an organisation of those people, for those people, and by those people (if I can adopt that classic line here from JFK). It will not work as well without your engagement! (Som Naidu)

ODLAA members were encouraged to attend the ODLAA Summit in 2015 and to suggest themes or topics for the summit. He also informed everyone that the ODLAA website will be going through some changes in the future, with some new looks and interesting items, with everyone encouraged to continue visiting the website.

ODLAA executive committee planning meeting

The new ODLAA executive committee held a day long face-to-face planning session in Melbourne on 5 May in order to workshop ideas and issues in order to produce a clear program of activities for ODLAA in the near and in the long term.



Face-to-face meeting of the ODLAA Executive on Monday, 5 May 2014, at Melbourne Airport. From L to R: Som Naidu, Mutuota Kigotho, Jo Osborne, Shane Moore, Stephen Relf, Sherrill Wittington, and Jenny Roberts. Present at the meeting but not in the photo were Diane Hockridge and Barrie Todhunter. Also Antonina Petrolito was unable to attend.

Four key focus areas were examined:

- ODLAA's branding and image, linking with the new website development and how ODLAA members can become more engaged both with each other and other experts in the field of open and distance learning
- Membership, research, grants – the type of institutional membership to be offered, linkages with non-university affiliated institutions as well as different categories of individual membership. Linkages with international ODL associations, exploring opportunities for discourse, reciprocal membership benefits, professional development programmes and access ODL resources.
- Continuing professional education – the role ODLAA could undertake via interactive platforms such as webinars, possibility of offering more formalised professional education courses, and repackaging open educational resources. The possibility of partnering with and accessing other programmes run by other professional associations such as DEANZ and utilising ODLAA's professional expertise were raised for further consideration.
- Partnerships with a variety of academic, non-academic, and private providers of open, flexible and distance learning. Broadening ODLAA's base to incorporate a mixture of national, regional and international partners to encourage cross- fertilisation and develop a wide community of practice.

Each of these four areas will be further developed into a long-term strategic plan and be explored in a dynamic environment of the 2015 Summit.

Webinars

Our webinar held on 15 April was well attended, with participants tuning in from locations as far apart as Darwin and Hobart to hear our guest speakers presenting on the theme of Professional Development for Practitioners in Open and Distance Learning.

Gerry Kregor spoke on the University of Tasmania experience with the Quality Matters program for peer review of online units; and Janet Buchan from James Cook University told us how the CMALT Australasia program operates for the provision of professional accreditation.

If you missed the original webinar, or would like a closer look at some of the slides, you can view the recording, which is now available from the ODLAA website – look for the newsflash on the home page.

Coming up next

Scheduled for July – we're thinking about a slightly different webinar format and are planning a panel discussion on a current issue impacting open and distance learning.

Watch for more information!

If you would like to help refine (or diversify) the proposed topics and/or suggest possible presenters, please contact Jo directly at Jo.Osborne@utas.edu.au.

Conferences and other events

ICDLE 2014

ICDLE 2014: 5th International conference on Distance Learning and Education, October 8–9 2014, Geneva Switzerland <http://www.icdle.org/index.html>

Due date for full papers June 20, 2014. Broad themes: Open & e-learning technological issues; and Distance Education and ethics.

Federation University to host Learning and Teaching Conference

Federation University Australia's inaugural Faculty of Education and Arts Learning and Teaching Conference will be held on 6 and 7 June.

The conference aims to inspire, challenge and transform understandings of learning and teaching in a regional community.

"The conference will provide an opportunity for individuals and community organisations to participate in a broad open dialogue on education that is workshop-based, dynamic and interactive," Jeremy Smith, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, said.

"The conference will take place across Ballarat's central business district, incorporating FedUni's Camp Street Campus, the Town Hall and the historic Ballarat Mechanics' Institute."

This district features both new and historic buildings which have been cleverly integrated to create a dynamic and vibrant arts and cultural environment right in the heart of Ballarat.

The conference is open to the public. Students also will be able to attend for free on Friday, 6 June.

Anyone wishing to attend can contact Jeremy Smith on 0429 334 938 or at jeremy.smith@federation.edu.au.

2014 ICDE Standing Conference of Presidents (SCOP)

The 2014 ICDE Standing Conference of Presidents (SCOP) will be held in Bali, Indonesia 19–21 November 2014, hosted by Universitas Terbuka. This follows their hosting of the 24th ICDE World Conference in 2011. The Standing Conference of Presidents (SCOP) is a body of policy level decision makers from ICDE member institutions and co-operating organizations.

The annual Standing Conference of Presidents meeting provides a unique opportunity for Rectors, Presidents, and Chief Executive Officers of open and distance education universities from around the world to meet to exchange information, share expertise, establish benchmarks, and determine advocacy directions. The meetings are entirely confidential, in camera meetings affording institutional executive leaders the opportunity to speak freely in a peer-to-peer environment on a wide range of critical and extraordinarily sensitive subjects.

SCOP gives unique access to transnational and global views and to invaluable and detailed information about policy, strategic thinking and development in open and distance education around the world. It offers strong opportunities for exploring partnerships and strategic cooperation with other ICDE member institutions from around the world. It also offers opportunities to participate in setting the international priorities and agenda for the future of open and distance education.

Current ODLAA executive committee

ODLAA is managed by an executive committee elected every 2 years from ODLAA members. The current executive is as follows:

- President and Executive Editor, *Distance Education*: Associate Professor Som Naidu
- Vice-president: Dr Mutuota Kigotho
- Secretary: Sherrill Whittington
- Treasurer: Mr Shane Moore
- Publications officer: Antonina Petrolito
- Member representative: Diane Hockridge
- Member representative: Jo Osborne
- Member representative: Mr Stephen Relf
- Member representative: Dr Jennifer Roberts
- Member representative: Associate Professor Barrie Todhunter
- Executive officer: Joanne Scott, J & J Bookkeeping

Communications with members of the executive committee can be sent to executive@odlaa.org.