



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Technology Enhanced Learning Forum (TELF)
2-4pm on Tuesday 21 January 2020
in the RCS Board Room

Present Jean-Marc Agius, PGLT Student Representative (via Adobe Connect)
Colin Broom, Jazz Coordinator
Caroline Cochrane, Head of Information Services (Convenor)
Lydia Demaison, Deputy Director of Human Resources
Clare Hibberd, Lecturer in Sound
Alistair MacDonald, Lecturer in Creative and Contextual Studies
Matthew McAllister, Lecturer in Guitar
Jesse Paul, Fair Access Manager
Louisa Ross, Lecturer in Modern Ballet
Steven Dunn, Learning Technologist
Claire Hibberd, Lecturer in Sound
Jamie Mackay, Head of PG Learning & Teaching Programmes
Yvonne McLellan, Transitions/WACI Coordinator

Apologies Josh Armstrong, Options Manager
Laura Bissell, Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice
Suzanne Daly, Academic Registrar
Yvonne Kennedy, Programmes Manager (Pre-HE)
Dr Lois Fitch, Assistant Principal
Hilary Jones, Lecturer, Voice
Rita McDade, Translation Lecturer and Coordinator
Gavin Rizza, Digital Film and Television Tutor
Professor Aaron Shorr, Head of Keyboard
Aidan Teplitzky, SU Vice President

In attendance Dee McCrory (Secretary)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Head of Information Services was confirmed as Convenor following last minute apologies from the Assistant Principal. New members were welcomed to their first meeting and members' apologies were noted.

2. Previous minute and matters arising

The minute was amended in respect of those present and was otherwise accepted as a confirmed record of the previous meeting.

It was confirmed that there would be a presentation from the WACI Coordinator at the meeting in April and the Convenor welcomed further ideas from both staff and students. Following a suggestion that there may be Continuing Education students

interested in presenting, the Lecturer in Guitar was encouraged to explore potential presentation ideas with the cohort that could be considered for future meetings.

The Convenor reported that there had been a disappointing response to the Digital Insights Survey for students conducted in November and confirmed plans for a relaunch in a few weeks' time to try to increase the response rate. It was noted that Programme Heads would be provided with the details of the relaunch to maximise the promotion of the survey and members were urged to do what they could to encourage cohort engagement.

The Convenor reported that it had not been possible to schedule Governors involvement in this meeting and confirmed the action would be progressed when more timely aligned to the development of the Strategic Plan and associated departmental operational plans. It was confirmed that the learning and teaching conference outcomes review had been completed and the emerging themes relevant to TELF had been incorporated into the TELF action plan, which will inform the development of these strategies.

Members of the subgroup, formed to improve the look and functionality of modules on Moodle, reported that this work was underway and would be progressed through the established module modification process.

3. Strategic Vision

The Convenor introduced the Digital Technology discussion paper which set out current thinking and the proposed approach to the shaping of the institution's digital vision. It was noted that this would be a shared remit between the IT Governance Committee and the Forum and the Convenor confirmed that digital technology would be a key element in the development of the new strategic plan. Members supported the view expressed that digital ambition was more about how the institution views technology and how it is assimilated and embedded into normal learning and teaching practice than merely an IT issue. It was agreed that using the JISC strategic four step process detailed in the paper was a sensible approach and that space should also be made for sharing ideas about innovation.

It was agreed that the participation of the Assistant Principal was crucial to the strategic vision discussion and members were content to support the Convenor's proposal to revisit the agenda item to the April meeting. Members were encouraged in the meantime to forward comments on the paper or ideas on the subject to the Convenor to inform this rescheduled discussion.

In terms of expected timeline, it was suggested that department operational plans would be required to be devised in Spring/early Summer ahead of the launch of the draft strategic plan. The Assistant Principal would be able to confirm this timeline.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources reported that digital competency was not currently assessed as part of the staff recruitment process and welcomed the opportunity to be involved in how this aspect of the plan is developed. The Learning Technologist advocated using the JISC diagnostic tool designed to help self-assessment of digital capabilities and agreed to provide a link to the service and enrol the Deputy Director.

Members discussed the merits, and potential pitfalls, of using ready packaged training tools. The Convenor explained that the self-assessment capability tool would provide a skills matrix to help staff identify where training is required and direct them to appropriate JISC training pathways that may be useful. The Convenor agreed to look into the availability of funding, and explore the potential for customisation of the diagnostic tool, to allow forum members to trial the service and gauge its suitability for wider use.

The Convenor reported that IT colleagues had begun to audit how Moodle is currently being used as the first step in determining what a compulsory skills set should include. The Deputy Director of Human Resources explained that a package of training opportunities was being devised to cover both compulsory training requirements and more specific specialist packages as required. The agreed compulsory training package would form part of the staff induction process. The Learning Technologist commented that there was an increasing demand from student groups for more in-depth training following the basic digital skills sessions covered in the new student induction programme. It was noted that students would often be more knowledgeable about digital technologies than their tutors and this useful resource should be capitalised on.

The PG Learning and Teaching Student representative reported that they had found the volume of information disseminated during the induction week quite overwhelming and commented that they had found the online technical support and resources more helpful. Members suggested that the number of digital platforms and variety of uses and expertise available across the Conservatoire should accommodate users across a range of different groups and preferences (notwithstanding the necessity for standardisation and institutional platforms for assessment and quality purposes).

The Fair Access Manager highlighted that students from a widening access background may not have access to the range of platforms available to others and emphasised the importance of finding a way to address the barriers this group faced first in order to create a level playing field.

Members agreed that the Conservatoire had to be cognisant of its moral responsibility to safeguard the online wellbeing of its staff and students. It was noted that the training programme would have to take account of this, such as stressing the dangers of trolling attacks in the online safety training package. The Forum also noted that while some groups are content to explore and utilise multiple platforms, there is also a desire amongst some staff to be guided and instructed about which platforms would be most appropriate for discussion groups and guidance provision.

It was agreed that the professional update model should be used to plot a visual representation of what digital technology is currently used and how it is being used. The data resulting from this exercise would be used to develop a training programme that includes compulsory and elective elements. TELF members agreed to participate in this exercise and the Learning Technologist was tasked with finding the best methodology to collate this information by the next meeting in April.

4 Presentation

The Lecturers in Sound and Creative and Contextual Studies delivered a presentation on [Learning Technologies in Practice at RCS](#) which highlighted:

- the focus on learning and teaching in relation to learning technologies
- the currently fragmented system of access to learning technologies
- the pressures on academic and professional services support staff related to the demand on learning technologies

It was highlighted that technical hardware is obtainable from three distinct areas (Venues, AV and IT), all of which have their own priorities and procedures. Examples were provided of instances where staff had experienced difficulties, for example when trying to use a Mac as a musical instrument or where a portable kit is held by AV but maintained by one of the Schools. It was stressed that colleagues in all three departments were very helpful but that difficulties arose because they were working to defined remits that did not always fully take account of the institution's core business. It was proposed that the institution look to find a way to unify these systems.

It was further noted that there was no AV support at Wallace Studios.

Forum members considered the following suggestions for action made in the presentation:

- Audit of current kit and cross-institution needs
- Transparent budgets and strategies for rolling out replacements and upgrades
- Cross institution curriculum planning for technology reliant subjects
- Removal of individual school responsibilities for learning technology in favour of TELF steering central academic led strategic planning for learning technologies

Discussion followed which confirmed members' support.

Anecdotally, it was suggested that staff had 'saved' equipment earmarked for replacement for their own teaching purposes and members considered the replacement policy and how this can be prioritised. It was reported that the IT department worked to a 4/5 year replacement policy. The Convenor confirmed that CapEx funding bids had to be submitted annually to manage the replacement cycle because there was no budget for this work. The Convenor also reported that IT colleagues were hugely concerned about network security and stressed the importance of raising awareness that the department was dealing with an increasingly high volume of cyber-attacks every day.

Members were informed that, although there was no specific budget allocated to the group for the development and implementation of ideas emerging from the Forum, the Schools and Directorate had been given an opportunity to submit requests for funding that could be presented with the group's support for consideration. It was reported that a template form had been circulated ahead of August planning meetings but that no bids had been received.

Discussion followed on how the Forum could best affect change. Members acknowledged that it would take time, investment and commitment to fully realise its ambition to see the institution's digital learning and teaching needs fully embedded in all elements of its strategic, operational and curriculum planning.

The Convenor thanked the Lecturers in Sound and Creative and Contextual Studies for the presentation, which generated a lot of thought and discussion. Permission was granted for the presentation to be shown to ITGC at its February meeting to prompt further discussion on this subject.

5 TELF Action Plan V1.5

The Forum received the technology enhanced learning priorities and action plan and noted progress. The Convenor highlighted progress made in relation to the action to develop strategic partnerships and connections. It was agreed that the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange should be invited to speak to the Forum in June about the EKOS report and Innovation Hub.

6 AOCB

Meeting Dates 2019-20:

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 8 April and that a number of members were likely to be on leave at this time. The Secretary to the Forum was asked to identify and confirm a replacement date as soon as possible.

- Wednesday 15 April 2020, 2.30-4.30pm *
- Wednesday 10 June 2020, 2-4pm

* confirmed replacement date

Table 1 – ACTIONS ARISING FROM JANUARY MEETING

Item No.	Person(s)	Action	By when
2	Lecturer in Guitar	To explore the potential for CE student presentations to future meetings	Immediately
2	All	To encourage student engagement in the Digital Insights Survey	Following its relaunch
3	Secretary	To reschedule Strategic Vision discussion to next meeting in April	Immediately
	All	To forward comments on the Strategic Vision paper and ideas on the subject to the Convenor to inform the rescheduled discussion	Immediately
3	Learning Technologist	To provide a link to the JISC self-assessment tool and enrol the Deputy Director of Human Resources	Immediately
3	Head of Information Services	To look into the availability of funding to run JISC training and explore the potential for customisation	Immediately
3	All	To find ways to create a level playing field by addressing barriers to technology experienced by students from a widening access background	As part of the development of the IT strategic plan
3	All	To make recommendations to inform decision making regarding the most suitable digital platforms for discussion groups and guidance	Immediately
3	Learning Technologist	To find the best methodology to collate technology usage data	By April meeting
4	All	To make recommendations to inform decision making with a view to streamlining access to learning technologies and unifying systems	As part of the development of the IT strategic plan
5	Secretary	To invite the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange to speak to the June Forum	Immediately
6	Secretary	To identify and confirm a replacement date in April for the next meeting	completed

Table 2 – ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Meeting	Item no.	Person (s)	Action	By when	Update (21/1/20)
20/2/19	2	All	Ideas for best practice sharing presentations to be directed to the Head of Information Services or the Quality Assurance Manager	ongoing	Keep on agenda
2/10/19	2	SU Vice President	to promote student presentations to the Forum	Immediately and ongoing	ongoing
2/10/19	3	Assistant Principal	To progress work to use responses to the survey to enhance recruitment and appointment processes in consultation with HR department	Immediately	Not yet progressed. Keep on the agenda

2/10/19	3	SU Vice President	To promote the JISC Digital Insights Survey for students and encourage responses	Following survey launch in November	Further promotion following relaunch required
2/10/19	4	Assistant Principal	To address LTC19 feedback on the digital estate and relationship between RCS systems in consultation with the Director of Finance and Estates	immediately	Being address as part of LTC follow-up
2/10/19	4	Digital Film and Television Tutor	To explore other possible leasing arrangements to equip smaller spaces such as ballet studios in consultation with the Principal and Director of Finance and Estates	immediately	Keep on agenda
2/10/19	4	All	To establish key areas for further discussion at future meetings	immediately	Members invited to forward suggestions to AP, HoS or S
2/10/19	4/6	Assistant Principal	to invite the Principal and members of the Board of Governors to attend the next meeting	immediately	To be progressed