

Western Australia Network for Dissemination (WAND)

Final Report 2013

Lead university The University of Western Australia

Collaborating Universities Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University and The University of Notre Dame.

Project leaders and team members

Role	Curtin	ECU	Murdoch	Notre Dame	UWA
Directors	Sue Jones	Sue Stoney	Rick Cummings	Sophia Elliott	Denise Chalmers
Committee members	Allan Goody	Tony Fetherston	Linda Butcher	Ainslie Robinson	Sally Sandover
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<www.wand.edu.au>



Network summary

Background

The Western Australian Network for Dissemination (WAND) was established in 2011 to promote and disseminate the outcomes and work of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) initially, and subsequently the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), in the Western Australian region. WAND built on the individual institution-based Promoting Excellence Initiative (PEI) funding and was the result of a desire for increased collaboration and cooperation between WA universities.

WAND initially consisted only of the PEI group but over time has expanded to now include the Teaching and Learning Forum (TLF) and HERDSA WA.

The objectives of the network

WAND's overall goal is to facilitate sustainable, long-term enhancement of learning and teaching, nurturing a climate of collaboration and embedding innovation and good practice in WA.

More specific objectives are:

- Capacity building in areas consistent with OLT activities;
- Promoting and encouraging activities in L&T within WA;
- Disseminating outcomes of OLT grants and Fellowships;
- Sharing of OLT award winners' teaching practices;
- Sharing by successful OLT grant and Fellowship applicants to improve quality and volume of WA submissions;
- Providing networking opportunities for WA university colleagues;
- Engaging staff based at regional campuses in WAND activities;
- Providing a central database for L&T based stakeholders, activities, and relevant lists.

Contribution to learning and teaching

WAND has contributed to learning and teaching in higher education within Western Australia in the following ways:

University level

- Provided university staff with opportunities to enhance their skills in applying for OLT grants, fellowships and awards via workshop presentations;
- Increased awareness of OLT activities through presentations and workshops.

State level

- Consulted and collaborated with HERDSA WA;
- Promoted HERDSA WA events on WAND website;
- Hosted TLF Forum on WAND website;
- Promoted Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowships (ALTF) with a workshop presented in collaboration with ALTF.

National level

- Disseminated OLT grants via WAND workshops;
- Provided opportunities for senior OLT staff to present OLT information to WA staff.

Factors contributing to productive networking

- Committee members being team players with a commitment to the goals of WAND plus professional approach;
- Identifying clear role definition;
- Identifying university communities' needs;
- High-level support of WAND's goals from each institution and Directors;
- Good communication channels to staff so the message gets 'out'.

Achievements of WAND

- Ongoing collaboration between the 5 WA universities;
- Increased awareness of OLT within WA university community;
- Continuity of inter-university network established;
- WAND website established;
- Regional Travel Subsidy - policy in place with 2 offerings to date;
- 10 workshops/seminars held during 2013;
- Video of events created for future use, particularly for those that couldn't attend the events;
- Stronger and more visible connection between OLT and the WA universities;
- Stronger connections between TLF, HERDSA WA and PEI groups.

Outcomes and deliverables	Outcome can be located
Increase awareness of OLT within WA university community.	WAND workshop evaluation statistics held by WAND committee
Establish and maintain a inter-university network.	WAND committee meetings held monthly, minutes retained by WAND project leader
Establish WAND website.	WAND website < www.wand.edu.au >
Create a Regional Travel Subsidy policy.	Policy publicised on WAND website on 4 November 2013 and 2 November 2012
Provide workshops/seminars which enhance skills in applying for OLT awards, grants and fellowships.	Workshops advertised on WAND website < www.wand.edu.au >
Establish WA OLT Grants database	Under 'Resources' on WAND website
Create resources for OLT Award applicants	Under 'Resources' on WAND website
Create resources for OLT Fellowship applicants	Under 'Resources' on WAND website
Create resource for OLT Grant writers	Link available on individual university's websites eg. UWA's is available under < OLT Grant Resources >
OLT grant evaluators database established	Under 'Resources' on WAND website

Recommended methods of networking

- Complete a needs analysis to establish direction for activities;
- Hold a strategy meeting at beginning of each year;
- Define boundaries of collaboration;
- Define roles between differing contributor groups within the network;
- Hold regular meetings where minutes are taken;
- Ensure each university has email access to all staff;

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- Provide opportunities for written feedback to inform future direction;
- Gain high level buy-in from each university's senior T&L personnel;
- Apply for continued funding as opportunities arise.

Barriers to productive networking

- Unclear role definitions of committee members versus directors;
- Unclear mandate from university community;
- Time constraints due to committee work being additional to existing jobs;
- Fine line between collaboration and competitive aspects of award and grant success;
- Provision of in-kind support by universities;
- Physical distances between universities;
- Lack of easy parking and cost of parking at university campuses.

Specifically

- Pressures from main university roles not allowing committee members enough time to spend on WAND activities;
- Lack of clarity of committee roles versus directors' roles;
- Work load of project officer and committee was substantially more than anticipated;
- Not always easy to ensure that all HERDSA WA promotional materials are distributed to all 5 institutions;
- Increasing registration costs have an impact on TLF attendance;
- Sponsorship is increasingly difficult to obtain for TLF.

Solutions

- A needs analysis identified the areas in which WA academics' required information and support in learning and teaching;
- Defining committee and director roles clearly established 'who does what';
- Continuing evaluation of workshops and presentations provides feedback to determine future directions;
- Identify areas where collaboration cannot occur for competitive reasons.

What the network offers

The three different areas of WAND encompass the Teaching and Learning Forum, HERDSA WA and the PEI (Promoting Excellence Initiative) activities. Each of these entities aims to enhance Teaching and Learning with Western Australia and offers the following:

Teaching and Learning Forum

TLF brings together educators from universities around Perth and beyond to discuss, share, and develop their ideas on issues confronting teaching and learning in the Higher Education sector.

More specifically a two day forum is held annually encompassing:

- Keynote presentation;
- Panel discussion with facilitator;
- Opportunity to present research papers;
- Networking opportunities for the WA University community.

HERDSA WA

HERDSA WA is highly active in providing professional development and networking opportunities in Teaching and Learning for the WA Higher Education Community.

More specifically HERDSA WA offers:

- HERDSA Revisited – a mini conference where WA HERDSA members re-present their HERDSA conference papers to a local audience;
- A series of seminars during the year focused on topical teaching and learning themes;
- Networking opportunities for the WA University community.

Promoting Excellence Initiative

The activities of the PEI include the following:

- The annual WAND “Sharing Day” which began at Curtin University in 2009. During the funded period, WAND Sharing Days have been held at Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University and the University of Notre Dame;
- Linkages with state and national networks and organizations that also support the scholarship of teaching and learning;
- Supporting the engagement of regional campus staff to participate in WAND activities;
- Engagement of WA universities and staff with the Office for Learning and Teaching;
- Presentations from the Office for Learning and Teaching aimed at keeping staff informed and up-to-date with OLT programs;
- Workshops and seminars that are designed to enhance skills in applying for OLT awards, grants and fellowships;
- Dissemination of existing OLT grants.