

Blended Learning Policy

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Seconded by President Scott Heath

Purpose: This paper is to decide if Imperial College Unions supports the expansion of blended learning in the form of video podcasting and OpenCourseWare.

Background

Video podcasting refers to Imperial College lecture courses being recorded in the form of video and uploaded online internally for Imperial College students only.

Fellow IDEA League university member, "TU Delft" has an excellent video podcasting scheme (<http://goo.gl/QdegP>) with dual video streams. Both resizable video boxes, one displays the lecture notes and the other displays a video of the lecture (where the camera will zoom in and out depending on the lecture content).

From 2010-11 TU Delfts expenditure was €280,000 for approximately 1700 lecture video recordings.

In February 2012 the e-Learning Strategy Committee approved the recommendation to roll-out the video capturing product called "Panopto" after an extended 4 month pilot study across all faculties (in which time 229 successful recordings were made). The extended pilot feedback was positive with FoE, FoNS and FoM wishing to continue using Panopto, finding it useful for lectures, revision, lab experiments, tutorials and reaching students with disabilities. The feedback also stated that all faculties were pleased to see no noticeable decline in student numbers at recorded lectures.

Panopto is a completely different solution to TU Delfts video podcasting. TU Delft employs a student for every lecture, paying €10 an hour, to capture and edit every lecture course. Panopto is a far cheaper software solution that consists of "Personal recorders" and "Remote recorders". Personal recorders are what several lectures around the college already use, where the lecturer controls and records the lecture themselves. Remote Recorders are where recordings that are scheduled in advance that start/stop automatically.

OpenCourseWare (OCW) refers to a free and openly licensed digital publication of high quality university level education materials (including lecture notes, slides, problems and videos).

TU Delft has made significant investment into OpenCourseWare over the last year as have several more world leading universities in the United States of America. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for example has had its OpenCourseWare programme for over a decade (<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/>) and recently announced it plans to award diplomas to "virtual" students. Similarly Stamford excels in OpenCourseWare (<http://see.stanford.edu/>) with material publically available on YouTube, iTunes U and available for download.

Imperial College e-Learning Strategy Committee are keen to become UK leaders with OpenCourseWare by writing a proposal for management board to roll out an Imperial OCW (although UCL and Bristol are also planning on expanding their own OCW). A sample of what it could look like is available here (including a FoNS Chemistry course): www3.imperial.ac.uk/OpenCourseWare.

Believes

- Imperial College students will benefit from video podcasting use as an extremely practical revision tool.
- Imperial College students, with an active interest in other disciplines will benefit greatly with the opportunity to broaden their academic range. Students will have the opportunity to become more inter-disciplinary (i.e. students can study additional courses offered by Imperial College), for example, Physics students learning some EEE course or Chemistry students learning Advanced Quantum Mechanics from Physics.
- There is no currently available evidence that correlates video podcasting introduction to a reduction in attendance.
- The general public will benefit from having access to these materials.
- Imperial College will greatly improve their international reputation by providing lecture courses open-source as well as catch up with the world leading American universities in this area.
- OCW can boost the image of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects and inspire prospective and school students into pursuing a career in STEM subjects.
- OCW will allow students with an active interest
- OCW will allow prospective students to sample Imperial College lecture courses and allow Imperial College to showcase some its best lecturers.

Resolves

1. For Imperial College Union to support Imperial College establishing a video podcasting service for lecture courses.
2. For Imperial College Union to support Imperial College establishing an OpenCourseWare platform.