

ALT Research Committee DRAFT Minutes

Minutes of the ALT Research Committee held on Wednesday 16/10/2013 at 1100 at Lakeside Centre, Aston Business School.

Agenda

Attendance:

Present: Norbert Pachler (Chair) from item 5. Su White (SW, chair for items 1-4), John Traxler (JT), Nigel Ecclesfield (NE).

Apologies were received from Brenda Bannan (BB), Patrick Carmichael, Maren Deepwell (MD), Thom Cochrane, Laura Czerniewicz, Lesley Gourlay, Rachel Harris, Barbara Newland, Caroline Steel and Jane Seale.

In attendance: John Slater (jbs)

2. Membership:

The committee received the membership given at RC01. They welcomed Thom Cochrane (Auckland University of Technology) to the committee.

It was noted that each member should keep ALT informed of any subsequent change in title, role or email and let jbs know of any changes. In addition, members should check their entry on the ALT website at <http://www.alt.ac.uk/about-alt/who-we-are/operational-committees/research-committee> and send to jbs any changes (including expansions) and a new (and sensible) photo if the current one is either not present or not current. (This is a standing item for all ALT committees).

The committee received paper RC02 which gave guidance to members about governance of ALT and the role of the RC and other related matters.

3. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 09/05/2013 by Blackboard Collaborate (RC03) were formally approved and would now be made final minutes on the website.

4. Matters arising:

The committee received paper RC04 and noted that there were no other matters arising.

(4.6) Progress on Policy Board and pre meeting (Policy Round Table):

Action: jbs to circulate the URL for MO slides

Done: It is available at <http://www.slideshare.net/MartinOliver>

(4.7) Proposal for an RC session to introduce the research day on 11th Sept:

Action: Other volunteers to help shape and deliver this session to contact jbs, preferably before end May 2013.

Done: NE volunteered and was also involved in the similarly structured FEALday on 10th Sept. LG was involved. Martin Oliver gave the introduction and he and LG were involved in the talk on why papers get rejected. SW was a member of the panel judging the best paper.

It was also felt that ALT should consider a doctoral consortium day which could be partially on line and which could be subsidised through RM scholarships etc. It was important that the full range of doctorates was covered in modes of learning and in scope of thesis.

It was also suggested that the how to get yourself published session at Rday might be repeated in 2014 and recorded and then become a resource. It would continue to be useful over time.

(4.8) RC and CAL 14:

Action: Anyone wanting to take on this role please contact jbs to take forward.

Action NP and jbs to lead at CX and get a decision on the way forward for ALT.

Done: NP volunteered but in the event the conference will not happen - the publisher pulled the plug. CAL has come back to us again asking for a joint event, possibly round ALTC2014.

(4.9) Practitioner Researchers:

Action: NE and jbs to meet, progress actions with MD, and report back.

Done: The meeting took place and actions identified. This is now awaiting other actions and activities in the FEAL area. NE undertook to report back, possibly with a paper, to the next meeting

5. Report on FEALday and Rday at ALTC and discussion of the future.

NE reported that FEALday had been a considerable success. Attendances had been high, the FELTAG session had been very constructive and potentially influential and the quality of the papers delivered high. With a number of initiatives and funding opportunities it was an increasingly important area and so FEALday should be repeated.

NE and jbs reported that Rday had also had higher quality papers than in the past. It was suggested that in future the research papers should be handled through a journal mechanism with a relevant special issue which would then allow those authors that wanted, suitably encouraged, to present at the conference if they were attending. This might include virtual presentation.

Overall the conference had been a success with excellent feedback. The committee welcomed future initiatives to have more of the conference electronically available.

6. Report on the Policy Round Table and Policy Board.

The committee received paper RC05 (Draft Green paper resulting from the Round Table) and NP and NE verbal report on the policy board from those there.

Any comments on RC05 should be sent to jbs.

There was some discussion of Jeff Haywood's presentation to the Policy Board outlining Edinburgh's motive for being involved and the likely shape of their "MOOC holding" in the future. This led to discussion of MOOCs and the impact that they had had on senior management in universities. This in turn led to the need for ALT to continue to engage subject communities – we should not automatically be advocates for a centralist model of how technology in Learning and Teaching should be supported. One possibility was subject based SIGs with perhaps an initial experiment with one or two.

This in turn led to some discussion of the growing divide between leading edge LT research and actual deployment and perhaps its inevitability. ALT should be a powerful force in continuing to ensure dialogue.

It was important to ensure that the “poor and disengaged” were not disadvantaged by such developments as MOOCs which seemed to favour the knowledgeable rich and famous sites.

7. FELTAG and FE/AL funding.

NE reported on developments and possible futures. All was not yet clear but there would be funds of at least £1M available through JISC for innovative activities in the near future.

8. Progress on plan in 2012/3 and plan for 2013/4.

Paper RC06 was noted – it seemed that we had made good progress in meeting the things in the RC plan, devised in response to a uniformisation of committee structures agenda. However, it seemed that plans were no longer required in the light of the strategy revision. Accordingly, this one would now be allowed to lapse, in line with other committees.

9. Working with partners.

Paper RC07 was considered. It was decided that other organisations should be encouraged to propose pre-conference workshops for ALTC which could help with attendance for both. There was no special brief for CAL however.

It was hoped to have the long awaited meeting with HEA over CMALT and the UKPSF in the very near future. However, this has been true for some while.

The committee considered briefly the list of possible collaborations with ascilite and SLOAN. It approved in principle of the developments in the paper and suggested a more substantive agenda at the next meeting when there would be more time and key members might be present.

10. RC Activities in 2013/4 and possible input to the ALT strategy:

Discussion prior to the afternoon session. RC followed the procedure outlined and contributed to the relevant documents with a section about its future role. The following points were felt to be important. RC08 was input to this discussion.

It was important to promote professional engagement with research questions. Practitioners need to develop fully informed perspectives.

RC could help with reputation building in every sense. RC and its members and community had a real role to play in helping to give ALT credibility. This applied to internationalisation as well as reputational standing aspects.

Inclusivity in everything was an important principle.

Developing and promoting ethics for LT was important and could take a variety of forms.

It was felt that there was a real need to continue to question and provide and examine evidence. One had to beware of the commercial lurker in apparently free discussions who did not declare an interest (and the non commercial ones too). RC should be a force for making sure that evidence was sought and used fairly and equitably.

RC could take a role as a panel that got more involved in other ALT structures. The "to and from" standing agenda on committee agenda was not working from our point of view. It may be better to have actual attendance at other committees to provide appropriate research input and to identify the need for evidence which then could be discussed by the committee. As most meetings were not f2f this was not onerous.

Similarly it was felt that not all SIGs were reaching their full potential. More RC involvement in SIGs and then pulling together and reporting back would be a good model. A follow up to WRH2S4P based on SIGs with RC help could possibly result.

11. Any other business:

Members were reminded that the CLL initiative was currently in its second year and that ALT would probably have to provide consultants. RC members should consider volunteering when the call came.

12. Dates of next three meetings.

Feb 6th 2014 (conference call), May 15th 2014 (if required, conference call).

October 15th 2014 (very provisional date, f2f four way all day meeting).

Conf calls start at 11.00 (UK) and finish by 13.00 UK time at the latest.