WHAT IS THIS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT ABOUT?

The University of the Sunshine Coast in partnership with La Trobe, Edith Cowan and Griffith Universities, the University of Tasmania and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) won an Australian Learning & Teaching Council (ALTC) ‘Innovation and Development’ grant for research into experiential learning in planning education over the next two years. The project addresses academic standards and the assessment and promotion of student learning, particularly in practice settings.

Experiential learning includes activities described in various ways, such as service, practice, outreach, engagement, ‘cooperative’ education, and workplace or work integrated learning broaden students’ learning experiences through exposure to real planning issues and practice both inside and outside of the university. This project recognises that students learn about real world experience from a wide range of activities including field trips, guest lectures, role plays, and design studios among others.

How can this project enhance teaching practice and student learning?

This two year project will develop an integrated package of resources to support delivery of good practice experiential learning in Australian tertiary planning education, which will in turn, contribute to improved student learning outcomes. The package will include: sample student experiential learning tasks, assessment tools, case studies, and benchmarking tools. This package will be a resource for all planning schools that want to improve or try different styles of experiential learning than those already being applied.

What has the project team done so far?

A baseline survey - We have undertaken a survey of all accredited Australian and New Zealand University planning schools to determine the extent to which experiential learning is used through different activities, any tools and techniques used in assessing these experiential learning tasks, and the extent to which experiential learning is evaluated as part of the program. This baseline data will be used to gauge the current use and practice of experiential learning in planning schools.

We would like to thank all those planning lecturers that responded to the survey so far. The feedback indicates that many lecturers are already enthusiastic about experiential learning. To date there are still some gaps in the survey. If you wish to be part of the project and have missed reminders through RePlan, please contact Christine Slade (cslade@usc.edu.au) for a copy of the survey to be sent to you.

Applying principles for course improvement - The project team is refining a set of principles of best practice experiential learning and using this information to trial changes in their own courses during Semester 2, 2012 and Semester 1, 2013.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

We will present the results of the baseline survey at the September 2012 ANZAPS conference hosted by La Trobe University in Bendigo.

The team is also developing a website on which we will place our newsletters, updates, teaching materials, and references as information becomes available over the next two years. The website may also provide an opportunity for practice-based learning exchanges.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION Please contact Christine Slade, email cslade@usc.edu.au