

Application for Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence – Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning

I am writing this support statement in my capacity as the former Program Director of the Bachelor of Design program, and as Course Convenor and one of the Cluster Leaders in SDES4101 Design Studio Project. I am very familiar with Leong's role as Cluster Leader in the popular topic Design for Health (Semesters 1 and 2, 2014), later changed to Health & Wellbeing (Semester 1, 2015) to reflect the diversity of projects and increased popularity of the topic.

Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field

Leong is a consummate academic and designer who is passionate about his expertise in visual communication. This is evidenced in the meticulous manner which he develops curricula and resources for the course SDES4101. Each academic adopts specific strategies for online and face-to-face teaching and learning depending on the studio discipline and students' needs.

In 2001 Leong wrote and taught the inaugural online course in visual communication on the Omnium platform. He received a 2002 Pro-Vice Chancellor's Award for Innovative Teaching and Educational Technology (ITET3) Fellowship to research and develop strategies for engaging students in online learning. Leong designed and developed three online courses in visual communication which are currently offered as electives: ADAD9001 Graphics & Contemporary Society, SDES2173 Envisioning Identity, and SDES4205 Design & Visualising Data. Upon returning to undergraduate teaching in 2014, Leong adapted readily to the Moodle platform for online teaching. Leong understands the potentials and limitations of Moodle, and harnesses the features which support the curricula and resources for SDES4101. This is exemplified by Leong's achievement in adopting Moodle to manage and organise the weekly lecture topics, activities and resources in a clear and easily accessible manner. A student who missed attending studio can log on to Moodle and follow simply the well-organised weekly lecture topics, activities and resources. Students often comment positively about Leong's command in visual communication as demonstrated by the breadth and depth of knowledge in the field through his design experience and industry links, established research in HIV/AIDS intervention campaigns, and continuing research in visual communication and national experience, and information design. Leong informs and engages by creating resources which address contemporary social, political and ethical issues via smartly designed and visually stimulating resources in Moodle with links to a rich array of content including current and topical news clips, journal articles, chapters, websites, audio programs, video clips and archive collections.

Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

Leong's approach to teaching and learning is informed by his continuing objective to engage students in developing a passion for visual communication. He applies a variety of teaching methods to scaffold the learning and teaching process by supporting students, and in turn help them create supporting networks among students. Leong achieves by being very efficient at organising and managing a structured weekly program of lecture topics and activities, and he selects teaching methods appropriate for the learning activity, e.g. large group learning to motivate general discussions; small group learning to build confidence, support and trust; collaborative learning for working in pairs or teams, and consultations for individuals or pairs of students. As mentioned above, Leong takes care and pride in producing a rich variety of resources which are visually and intellectually stimulating to motivate and inspire students. Leong includes contemporary social and political issues in his lectures or tutorial discussions to stimulate and motivate students in examining design from critical perspectives. Leong comes across as a disciplined teacher, but students have respect for him because of his passion for visual communication, and his mission to motivate and inspire students who choose to develop expertise and excellence in visual communication.

Leong is notoriously low key and reticent in talking about his achievement and contribution to teaching and learning. This is a timely opportunity for the Faculty and School to recognise Leong's achievement in outstanding contribution to student learning and mentoring of staff in learning and teaching.