

**Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning
of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee**

**Minutes of the 17th meeting, held on Monday, 03 December 2007,
from 11:00 to 12:30 in Room MS 23 McLennan Library Building**

Present: A. Angus, J. Clark, A. Costopoulos, J. Everett, S. Franke, d. Harris, A. Jaeger, J. Luker, C. Urbain, C. Weston, A. Ippersiel (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: M. J. Mendelson (Chair), M. Kreiswirth, K. Oberer, D. Starke-Meyerring, H. Sleiman, Y. Steinert, S. Tran, J. Wapnick,

Guests: S. Roy (CCS) Item 4a ;

1. Adoption of the agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted as circulated.

2. Membership list for 2007-2008.

A question was raised concerning the composition of SCTL. This will be checked before next meeting.

3. Approval of minutes of the SCTL meeting held on 25th September 2007

The minutes were approved.

4. Business arising from minutes of previous meetings

a) TLS/T-Pulse (Re) Design

There are 19 faculty and 4,000 (2,800 unique) students taking part in this project, using Student Response Systems (SRS) in large Science classrooms. Data is still being gathered but the response is extremely positive from both faculty and students. Eighty percent of students responded that they are encouraged to come to class and that they are more engaged.

Action: It is suggested that the assessment of the project include an analysis of course evaluations and grades.

b) McGill Teaching and Learning Section page.

This section page went live at the end of November. It is linked to existing documentation on other websites. Now that it is live, faculties should make sure that their information is accurate on their web pages that are linked to this section page.

5. Course Evaluation Policy (TL.07-12-02 Draft 14- 28 Nov 2007)

The Course Evaluation Policy was discussed at the November 7th Senate meeting. It was also discussed in separate meetings with MAUT Senate Caucus and a representative of the TA union. The MAUT comments were integrated into the draft received by SCTL. This committee discussed the two comments suggested by the TA representative.

- 1) under Purpose (statement 6). The TA union wanted to add item d) *help teaching assistants improve their teaching abilities*. The committee did not accept this change since it was felt that this did not fit under the definition of **primary** purpose of course evaluations.
- 2) under Content (statement 14). The TA union wanted to insert a comment between the two existing sentences: "*Instructors shall share results of TA questions with TAs as one of the ways to help them improve teaching abilities. See Appendix for recommended TA questions*". This was approved by the SCTL committee.

In the discussion that ensued, there were two minor changes that the committee felt would clarify statements 13 and 14 (under Content section). They felt that “instructor specific” and “TA specific” would add clarity to the two sentences below:

#13. Students should not have to respond to more than three (3) **instructor specific** questions for each instructor.

#14. Students should not have to respond to more than three (3) **TA specific** questions for each teaching assistant.

Students are uneasy with on line course evaluations due to the sense that records can be traced. Is it possible to change the system so that records don't exist? Is there any way to communicate to the students that the process is anonymous?

Action: The CIO will verify that there is no link between the two data bases.

Action: TLS will follow up with professors and department that had high response rates to learn what strategies they used to accomplish this.

Action: SSMU will go into classrooms and deliver the message about anonymity

After discussion, the committee decided that additional information had to be added to the top of every course evaluation questionnaire (please see required statements #22): *“Course evaluations are completely anonymous. Moreover, summary results are not available to an instructor until the final grades for the course have been submitted”*.

With these changes, the committee unanimously approved the Course Evaluation Policy.

6. Report on Nexus between Research and Teaching – TL.07-12-01

The report of the Working Group on the Nexus between Research and Teaching was presented by the Chair, Sharon Roy. The workgroup proposed 7 broad recommendations as well as recommending the establishment of a task force to implement these recommendations and assess the effectiveness with which they are carried out.

SCTL endorsed the report

Action: The names of the committee members are missing from the report and should be included. These are David Burns, Victor Chisholm, Andre Costopoulos, Peter Radziszewski, Sharon Roy, Doreen Starke-Meyerring, Yvonne Steinert, Marcia J. Waterway and Cynthia Weston.

Action: Strike a task force that will work more specifically on implementing the recommendations The task force should be composed of representatives from each faculty. The Chair of the Nexus Working Group stated that those who participated in preparing the report would be interested in continuing work on this initiative.

Action: Bring the Report back to next meeting to decide to whom it should be sent.

7. Other business

8 Adjournment: 12:30 p.m.