

**Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning
of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee
22nd meeting held on Tuesday, 09 December 2008
from 10:00 to 12:00
in Arts 160 (Council Room)**

Present: M. Mendelson (Chair), J. Clark, A. Costopoulos, J. Everett, S. Franke, R. Harris, A. Jaeger, M. Kreiswirth, M. McIntosh, H. Sleiman, D. Starke-Meyerring, Y. Steinert, S. Tran, C. Weston, A. Ippersiel (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: B. Baker, A. De Motta, S. Kanfi, T. Kirby, J. Luker, L. Lorenzino, C. Urbain

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

2. Approval of minutes of SCTL meeting held on 28 October 2008

The minutes were approved as circulated.

3. Membership list 2008-09

4. Business arising from minutes of previous meetings

- ***Lifetime Teaching Award (C. Weston):***

An initial draft was presented at the last SCTL meeting which was then brought to APG by the Chair and Director of TLS. As a result of the discussion at APG, two changes were made to the document:

- 1) The title of the award was changed to the McGill University Lifetime Award for Teaching Excellence.
- 2) Reference the value of the award to read: "This unique form of recognition brings with it a monetary award".

Action: The corrected document will go to APC.

5. Use of clickers for exams: (J. Everett)

TL.08-12-07

SCTL asked the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) Subcommittee on Academic Integrity to consider whether there were compromises to examination academic integrity with use of clickers technology.

The Chair of CSA submitted a memo on the use of "clickers" in quizzes and examinations which "states that the Committee on Student Affairs recommends that clickers not be permitted for use in quizzes and examinations".

Currently, a revised document prepared by TLS presented the pedagogical and technological issues related to the use of clickers for exams.

Discussion focused on whether the clickers should be restricted from all types of quizzes or whether the concern was more about their use for graded forms of evaluation.

Action: The recommendation will be revised to "recommends that clickers not be used for graded quizzes and examinations."

Action: The CSA memo, with the TLS “Use of Clickers” document as an addendum will go forward to APC.

6. Regular Reports:

a) Dean of Students: (J. Everett)

- **Advising update:** The academic mission statement went to APC where it was slightly modified. It is on the Senate agenda for January 21, 2009.
- **Training modules** for faculty advisers are being developed and will share best practices. There will also be advising websites with FAQs. These are helpful tools for staff.
- **Credit limits:** The question is whether it really is a reduced course load if a student in probationary standing has to take 14 credits. The idea of a reduced course load is to give the student time to do good work on 4 courses. This will be discussed further in CSA.
- **Hidden pre-requisites:** Most faculties don't talk about recommendations re: waivers for pre-requisites. What information is given to students about replacing credits for the program? The recommendation is that all faculties should look at how they handle their waivers for pre-requisites and decide how they want to handle this. This will be raised at CSA to sensitize people.
- **Nomination of second (or associate) examiners** for formal final examinations: There is no University-wide policy. A proposal will be brought to APC. CSA has developed a recommendation for policy to determine who should be nominated as a second examiner. It is proposed that the co-examiner be familiar with the exam before submission in case the examiner cannot be present at the exam. TAs could be available on site but the examiner must be reachable.

Comments/questions:

- Is there any data to suggest that perhaps problems with course selection are result of not showing up at orientation? Are there statistics on orientation? The First Year Office has statistics and there should also be statistics for individual faculties.
- One suggestion was that orientations could be put on COOL and made available to those who couldn't attend.
- The student representative mentioned that Orientation takes place in August when new students are busy moving into their dorms. They haven't quite understood about their email accounts etc.
- It is possible that timing is a problem; perhaps the orientation in August is too early.

b) Teaching and Learning Services: (C. Weston)

- **TLSWG Principles for Designing Supportive Campus Environments** – tabled to next meeting
- **Learning to Teach Workshop (Nov 8)**
C. Weston (Director of TLS) and M. Kreiswirth (Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) gave an update of the Learning to Teach Workshop that was offered to graduate students on Saturday November 8, 2008. There were 264 graduate students in attendance at the workshop (42% were currently Teaching Assistants). The evaluations were positive: 93% of students polled said that the workshop met their expectations and 90% said that it was good for their careers.

The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies stated that this is a work in progress. The goal is to make this workshop available to all graduate students. This is part of a number of workshops being planned in collaboration with TLS to provide graduate students with

different skills beyond the knowledge of a particular program. Some of these workshops will be offered this year; some will be in future years.

7. Tour de Table

The Chair explained the relationship between agenda item 7 (Tour de Table) and item 8 (Mechanisms to raise SCTL issues in the University). At the last meeting, the question of how to bring forward SCTL issues to the University was raised. This should be a two-way street: SCTL issues should be brought forward to the University and SCTL members should bring to the Committee information about teaching and learning initiatives taking place within their respective Faculties. So, at least once a semester, there will be a “tour de table” at which SCTL Faculty representatives, service units and students will report on teaching and learning projects and where there might be possibilities for collaboration.

Below are highlights of the reports:

A. Costopoulos (Faculty of Arts):

- **Physical Plant initiatives:** On the 1st floor in Leacock, spaces have been created that serve as lounges as well as meeting rooms for TAs and students; a model classroom was created in Leacock as well as new computer labs in the Ferrier Building,
- **Administration:** Faculty of Arts has undertaken review/reform of interdisciplinary programs. These were growing ad hoc and were unsupervised. The committee made 12 recommendations for the design and running of these interdisciplinary programs to ensure that the programs are viable in the long term.
- **Teaching:** 1) The Dean of Arts committed significant funding to First Year seminars to build the first year experience through seminars and the Arts Legacy. 2) For more advanced students, there is an internship program in which a major effort was made to find organizations that recruit interns. 3) In September for the first time, there was an orientation specifically for sessional lecturers where they were told about problems they might encounter and who to contact concerning these problems. This has made a difference in the number of grievances brought to the Associate Dean.

D. Starke-Myerring (Education):

- The Faculty of Education is struggling with space issues. The Faculty will be moving into a new building in the near future and will be able to accommodate all TAs.
- Doctoral education: The Faculty is offering a series of seminars called the *ABCs of PhD* which is a cross-faculty initiative. Subjects covered include research methods, writing as research and various issues that students encounter. This provides an opportunity to talk across disciplines in Education.
- Teacher education program: The Faculty has carved out more space in the program for community service learning. Students can be placed in the community besides teaching in schools.

Y. Steinert (Medicine):

- A study was conducted entitled *Faculty Development: Field of Dreams*. According to the 16 participants from the hospital setting, the reasons they do not attend faculty development sessions are lack of protected time and a feeling of lack of direction. Clinical teachers are not told what is expected.
- This study led to a new program: A new Faculty wide symposium will be given in February 2009 for newly hired faculty, around 200 in the last 2 years.

- The Simulation Centre has been used for advanced clinical teaching skills. In a new initiative, standardized students were used for teaching faculty. Lessons learned were phenomenal. This is a new avenue to explore with TLS.
- Medical students can now take electives in teaching and learning.

A. Jaeger (Continuing Education):

- Continuing Education recently held its semi-annual breakfast for its instructors, most of whom are sessionals. They talked about academic issues, demonstrated clickers, and shared information about the teaching of courses. These face to face discussions facilitate transmission of information, exchange of ideas and experience as well as develop an “esprit de corps”.

J. Clark (Engineering):

- The Faculty of Engineering Teaching and Learning Committee met last week. They are planning a TA training seminar for next September and discussed what should be included in it.
- They are also concerned about how to raise course evaluation response rates.
- The Faculty of Engineering has a new Career Placement Centre that is located in the Frank Dawson Adams entrance. They have increased the number of internships. They are also working on increasing exchanges and trying to make sure that these exchanges are sound from an educational viewpoint.
- As part of the Provost’s 1.5% reallocation, the Faculty of Engineering has teamed up with Management and Law to work together with a local company, Future Electronics, to create an interdisciplinary design experience. There will be groups of 10 students each beginning next September. This will involve students working in teams to develop an industrial product. For the Engineering students, this will comprise their required Capstone Design experience.
- The Faculty will be forming a Faculty Design committee to make the capstone design courses uniform across departments and to improve project management in Engineering programs.

S. Franke (CIO):

- **Advising:** In cooperation with Enrolment Services, they will revamp the web delivery of calendars. This includes reusable portions and tool kit. Take advantage of search and tagging techniques.
- **Space:** FAMIS is a space management database that will go live in Spring.
- **my Future** has gone live. It supports career and internship programs and is a place where TA assignments will be posted.
- **With Medicine-** curriculum accreditation – continuous form of evaluation. Evaluation of residents in clinical situations
- **New program for “IT onboarding”.** When new staff are hired, IT Customer Services (ICS) works with departmental administrative assistants and Local Area Network (LAN) administrators to ensure that they have the IT services they need before their first day of work. This is referred to as **onboarding**.
- **Evaluation of new web conferencing software** – Sharon Roy is in charge of evaluation process.

D. Harris (Science):

Among the Science Faculty’s many initiatives, three were reported. The difficulty in reporting about the Faculty as a whole is that there is no formal mechanism to make such information public.

- There is an emphasis on undergraduate research in the Faculty of Science. At end of summer, presentations are made by students at the Undergraduate Research Conference, and some of the projects are published in the McGill Science Undergraduate Research Journal (mSURJ).
- The Tomlinson Project (T-Pulse) is funded to support teaching innovations and related research. The most important ongoing project is the TA preparation workshop offered every semester. The project also funded part of last year's clicker initiative which was largely in the Biology Department.
- Over last week or so the Physics Department has conducted an online survey of its U2 and U3 students to gather information about students' perceptions of the physics programs. The survey used the SCEQ (Student course Evaluation Questionnaire) from the University of Sydney. It was introduced to the department by A. Saroyan.

Action: Bring SCEQ to this committee. Invite A. Saroyan to present it.

H. Sleiman (Science):

- COOL software for lecture recording should be more widely publicized. In addition to other features, it is possible for a professor to record a lecture from a hotel room while at a conference.

M. Kreiswirth (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies):

- Skill development workshops are not only for graduate students but also for post docs. There is a new workshop being offered on Supervision that focuses both on supervisors and supervisees. This has moved to top of his priorities for next term. (Y. Steinert mentioned that Linda Snell in the Faculty of Medicine offers workshops on supervision that may be useful for this program).
- "Program milestone" approach will replace progress tracking. Each graduate program will identify milestones for their programs (coursework, thesis proposal, comprehensive, thesis submission, etc.) and this will become part of a tracking system to monitor progress.

M. Mendelson (Office of Deputy Provost, Student Life and Learning):

- Conversations are underway about creating a coordinated Writing Centre. There are currently different writing centres providing services to undergraduates and graduates, but these efforts need to be coordinated across the University. Continuing Education, in collaboration with Arts and Education is doing an assessment of the needs of the community as well as what is currently available.
- **University Teaching Labs Workgroup (UTL)** is working toward upgrading our aging teaching labs. The constraint is resources for making changes. An excellent workshop was presented on November 21, 2008 by Rick Boswell of Queens University who led the upgrading of their Chemistry labs. Professor Boswell gave a principled presentation of issues to be considered when upgrading labs. He gave high praise for McGill's process.

8. Mechanism to raise SCTL issues in the University (M.J. Mendelson)

The Chair asked if there are ways we can more effectively communicate SCTL conversations to the University. One of the assumptions is that faculty representatives take relevant information back to their Faculty.

Comments/questions:

The concern is that the information isn't brought back formally. Guidance is needed about what to report as well as where and when.

What to report? Action items, general updates?

Where to report? Curriculum committees, departments rather than Faculties, advisory committees to Deans?

Encourage SCTL members to be on strategic committees in their faculties. What about newsletters, McGill Teaching and Learning Website?

When to report? Many of the items discussed at SCTL then move forward to APC and then Senate so we don't want to bring them up prematurely.

Action: Reflect on this.

9. Other Business- none

10. Adjourned: 11:40

Andree Ippersiel, January 23, 2009