

**Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning
of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee
24th meeting held on Tuesday, 03 March 2009**

**from 10:00 to 12:00
James Administration Building – room 310**

Present: M. Mendelson (Chair), J. Clark, D. Donnelly, J. Everett, S. Franke, R. Harris, A. Jaeger, S. Kanfi, M. Kreiswirth, L. Lorenzino, J. Luker, M. McIntosh, C. Urbain, C. Weston, A. Ippersiel (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: A. Costopoulos, A. De Motta, D. Starke-Meyerring, H. Sleiman, Y. Steinert, S. Tran

The Chair welcomed Dr. Danielle Donnelly, Department of Plant Science.

1. Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was approved as circulated.

2. Approval of minutes of SCTL meeting held on 03 February 2009

The minutes were approved as circulated.

3. Business arising from minutes of previous meeting

There is no business arising from the previous meeting

4. Regular Reports:

a) CIO Report - Student laptop guidelines:

Sylvia Franke presented the draft University Guidelines for Student-Owned Laptops. The covering memo (TL 09-03-13) to the SCTL committee explained that “these draft guidelines are devised to ensure that the new prevalence of student-owned laptops on campus is considered in McGill’s pedagogical, physical and financial planning”.

Implicitly the university has accommodated and supported student owned laptops. There was a need for the University to be explicit, particularly for the TLSWG. The Academic Computing Working Group was established by the TLSWG to discuss a variety of issues related to the use of computers in labs and classrooms, including the issue of student laptops. These draft guidelines are a result of these discussions.

The CIO briefly presented the guidelines (TL 09-03-14) and commented on them:

1. Student ownership requirements: McGill will not establish a university wide mandatory student owned laptop program. It is beyond the time to do this since currently 82% of first year students have laptops and this will probably be over 90% next year. However, some disciplines may wish to have such a program so a process is recommended for such situations.

2. Laptop standards: The University has established minimum standards that will continue to be revised. A new initiative is that the University will select recommended laptops on an annual basis to ensure student affordability and sustainability.

3. Laptop lending: They are working in partnership with the Library who has a great model for lending. Details of the program will be posted by the Office of the CIO and the Library on an annual basis.

4. Laptop software: The CIO will stay alert to purchasing software licenses that include students. They hope to grow in this area.

5 & 6 Laptops in the classroom and in teaching labs: The TLSWG should explicitly consider less hardware and more software solutions. The principle is to adopt the more cost effective and greener approaches. The less hardware we deploy, the better.

7. Laptops for exams: This is a growing possibility. However when this is used it must be recognized that the technology can fail. There must always be a Plan B.

8. Laptops in public places: This usage should be considered.

9. Laptop support levels: There is a commitment that they will continue to support laptops.

The ensuing discussion focused on four topics:

- **Laptop Standards**

The Dean of Students asked if information about laptops should be included in the calendar information that is sent to prospective students. Will there be guidelines about lead time, application time (high school or CEGEP graduation)? Would it be possible to guarantee that a certain model would be current for two years?

S. Franke responded that although it would be a good idea to recommend models to students, it would be difficult to guarantee them for 2 years. However, we would try to identify the best functions. She added that we would also like to identify innovative disposal models. A single model that is greener is preferable to multiple models.

A. Jaeger asked if categories of users and laptop needs as well as price points will be taken into consideration (e.g. Art would need certain level; Engineering needs more capacity).

S. Frank responded that it is difficult to make recommendations for a model as the model evaluated in January may not be the model available in September. The vendor reserves the right to replace one model with another. The type of computer will vary from year to year with the needs of the disciplines as well as the market. We need to ensure that affordability is not the sole criteria and that capacity is also taken into consideration.

M. McIntosh added that we should make it explicit that some students get through for years effectively without their own laptops. Incoming students might be deterred or stressed if they think they must have a laptop to be successful at McGill.

He also asked if we were considering PCs or Macs? Not all classroom projectors support Macs. S. Franke will take his point about projectors. In general, it is recognized that 30% of students come in with Macs.

S. Khanfi asked if software would be recommended as well as hardware. S. Franke responded that at this time, only hardware would be recommended.

- **Guidelines for using laptops in the classroom:**

The Dean of Students asked whether a set of guidelines or etiquette of laptop use in the classroom would be prepared.

M. Kreiswirth added that there is a difference between: a) setting standards for purchase and b) uses to which it will be put. Perhaps there are technical solutions such as turning off the wireless in the classroom which should be considered to reduce web surfing during class.

S. Franke responded that given that McGill has recently completed its wireless network a technical solution such as turning off the wireless, would not be the desired approach. It isn't wise to turn off wireless access in classrooms. Internet is ubiquitous; we should be able to make the decisions ourselves about how to use it effectively. Pedagogical guidelines for use would be preferable.

S. Franke then asked who should be developing these pedagogical guidelines, and suggested that this would likely be the SCTL. There seemed to be agreement that SCTL should look at guidelines for use.

- **Use of laptops in exams:**

D. Donnelly questioned the use of laptops for exams. S. Franke responded that Law is the only group; they are a small but enthusiastic group. There was agreement that students like to use laptops for exams as they are more accustomed to typing than writing; however, this approach is not scalable. McGill is investigating but has not yet found an acceptable solution.

S. Franke added that the issue is whether it is a wireless solution or solution on student owned laptops – huge amount of staff time and high stress for students.

- **Open source software:**

The issue of the availability of quality open source software was raised. Would like University to support this approach and encourage students to take this approach when possible. There is an operational committee that advises the CIO and ICS-IT customer service is doing an evaluation of open source options. Downside – University of Montreal has a concern about the reliability on PowerPoint.

A. Jaeger added that we need to be careful that open source provides the necessary functionality (e.g. open office – could not do as many things with PowerPoint).

Related issue – hardware- manufacturers provide laptops running software.

S. Kanfi added that if only 5% of students do not have laptops, this should be taken into consideration when planning decisions related to:

- a. open source,
- b. availability of less expensive,
- c. laptop lending? Is it enough to cover that 5% of students?

S. Franke added that huge numbers of laptops are commandeered during exam period – we need to be able to adapt to needs.

ACTION: The CIO will circulate the statistics on student loans of laptops and how long the loan period is.

Next steps: The CIO will be discussing this topic with the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) before the end of the year. She also intends to hold a blog-style commenting opportunity for the university at large over the coming weeks.

ACTION: Post minutes of this discussion to the University community on the blog. As well, a merged version of the documents presented (cover letter and draft guidelines) will be posted and circulated to SCTL.

b) TLS Report (C. Weston):

- **TLSWG –priorities for 2009-2010:** At the February 3rd SCTL meeting, Professor Weston had shared the principles that informed the TLSWG decisions for classroom renovations and also talked about SCALE Up (Student Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs). SCALE UP classrooms all share certain features such as tables to facilitate group interactions; white boards (glass) around the room and/or for each group; teacher station near the center of the room and networked laptop computers. The budget for renovations has been approved for 2009 -2010 and there will be two SCALE UP classrooms: Education 627 will hold 80 seats and Burnside 511 will have 40 seats.
- **Nexus: “Sowing the Seeds of Inquiry”.** The launch of the Nexus Between Teaching and Research will take place on Thursday March 5 from 4:00 to 5:30 in the Redpath Museum. Mick Healey is the keynote speaker from the University of Gloucestershire who developed the quadrant framework presented earlier at SCTL. There will also be a panel of four McGill professors who will give a brief case and then their students will describe how it impacts them. This will be followed on Friday by a lecture in the morning (10:00 to 11:30) in McLennan Library and a one-on-one workshop with professors in the afternoon.
- **Graduate Student Initiatives: Learning to Teach Day – March 15th.** The 3rd annual event will take place on Sunday March 15th. There are currently 250 students registered. There is a slight change to the format in that there are 2 main streams to choose from: 1) Assessing learning (grades) and 2) Instructional strategies. Associate Provost M. Kreiswirth mentioned that this is a small part of a larger suite of skills/professional development to comply with best practices across institutions such as teaching, writing, presentation skills, ethics etc. They are now starting on graduate student supervision workshops and are collaborating with many units.
- 40 students are attending the workshop for the second time. This could be an indication of the need for something more substantial. Assoc Dean Kreiswirth wants to get larger proportion of graduate students involved.

5. Other business:

Implications of undergraduate involvement in research on the University.

The implications of undergraduate involvement in research on the University arose at a meeting with H el ene David, Associate Deputy Minister (MELS), related to the mission specificity of Universities in Quebec. She was very interested that undergraduates participate in research and asked about the implications for the University on a wide range of issues such as funding, space, workload, and research.

Purpose of discussion at SCTL is to brainstorm the implications of involving undergraduate students in research with regards to funding, space, research recognition and workload. This will contribute to developing a response for her:

- **Funding:** in labs, need to buy equipment, supplies etc to support undergraduates in labs. D. Donnelly- need to make it mandatory from faculties – department doesn't absorb the cost for these students. Faculty members have to absorb extra work. More money would help a lot.
- **Space:** classrooms may need to change.
- **Research:** J. Everett asked if the breakdown should be by sector/discipline. Tri council. Bring in what is being done in interdisciplinarity. M. Mendelson suggested an augment in USRA – NSERC program. Science faculties have program in summer to augment USRA. M. Kreiswirth – summer – Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) is working with Science to put forward BSC/MSc degree. Captures the very best of our students: start research earlier, get out quicker. Undergraduate research is critical part of this. D. Donnelly added that currently this is often done as special topics – often have to assign to graduate students. Not taking proper care of them. Undergraduate group of students –have a special topic- work experience – no money for research. Also pressure to flip MSc to PhD.
- **Recognition:** C. Weston has been working with panelists for Nexus launch (pairs of professors and students). Professors will discuss how they are working with undergrads to get them involved in research. A recurring issue in these conversations has been the amount of time required to involve students in this kind of work, and the lack of recognition given to professors for this commitment. If we ask professors to do this, how can we ensure that they get recognition? It may not be reflected in workload or other means for merit or tenure.

J. Clark added that we need to get the word out to students that opportunities are available. Recognition (tenure committee for Engineering and Music – supervision of research with undergrads – also lumped with grad supervision). Engineering had augmented USRAs –some foreign students aren't eligible.

Outcomes- get work done – encourages students to go to graduate school. Students have better idea what research is and what their professor does.

J. Luker – crucial engagement point for students

M. Kreiswirth - research management /supervise - post docs want more than anyone else. Not taking proper care of them. BSC- Guidelines and regulations could be applied across the University.

- **Workload** (including supervision): M. Kreiswirth commented that we don't have clear sense of workload across the University now; particularly talking about supervision. GPS is communicating about supervisory guidelines. There is no agreement on what constitutes supervision. Left to individual departments. What does workload entail? Touchy subject. If we are committed to increased graduate enrolment it entails supervisory increase.

M. Mendelson - this is not place to discuss workload

C. Weston- It is the place to discuss policies such as those related to Teaching Portfolio. This is a place where recognition for nexus type work could be explicitly included.

M. Kreiswirth - Faculty Matters- 92 Chairs – no agreement. How do you recognize for tenure and merit? Standards for requirement of supervision

Next step: brief 2 page memo outlining concerns and issues.

Next steps (C Weston) – extra pressure on Faculties – workload for faculty members.

Meeting adjourned: 11:15

Andree Ippersiel March 17, 2009