

**Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning  
of the Academic Policy Committee  
25th meeting held on Tuesday, 08 September 2009**

**10:00 to 12:00**

**James Administration Building – room 310**

**Present:** M. Mendelson (Chair), J. Clark, J. Everett, S. Franke, A. Jaeger, J. Luker, C. Weston, N. St-Pierre (Secretary), F. Labeau, Y. Steinert, H. Weiler

**Regrets:** A. Costopoulos, A. De Motta, D. Harris, T. Kirby, L. Lorenzino, H. Sleiman, S. Tran, C. Urbain, PGSS representative, SSMU representative

**1. Introduction of new members and review of mandate**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the members to this first meeting of the SCTL for the academic year. The Chair invited the members to introduce themselves. He then distributed the membership list and the Subcommittee's mandate and reviewed it with the members. The Chair pointed out that SCTL, as a subcommittee of the Academic Policy Committee (APC), functions as an administrative body. Although it is not policy driven, the work of the subcommittee is directly linked to teaching and learning initiatives and its recommendations to the APC are of tremendous import.

**2. Adoption of the agenda.**

The agenda was approved as distributed.

**3. Approval of minutes of SCTL meeting held on 03 March 2009**

The minutes were approved as distributed.

**4. Business arising from minutes of previous meeting:**

- a) Pedagogical guidelines for the use of laptops in classrooms:** Discussion on what exactly the guidelines should address followed with the primary concerns being how can the professors control the ways in which students are using laptops in their classrooms; do professors have the authority to instruct students to turn off their laptops (yes); and how this apparent lack of class management could lead to negative evaluations for the professors. S. Franke pointed out that this issue was originally raised by students who felt professors should be managing the situation better. F. Labeau interjected that he was not sure this discussion was needed if the end result would simply be a statement to students indicating that use of computers could be a distraction.

Under the aegis of TLS, a working group will be established to develop guidelines for professors. These guidelines should address pedagogical issues in a way that encourages the students to develop their technical skills while not being a distraction to other students or professors. Although the membership will need to be defined, the working group should invite the participation of instructors whose students use personal laptops during their lectures, students,

the Dean of Students or Associate Dean as well as representation from the Committee on Student Affairs (should the working group address disciplinary issues). A. Jaeger suggested that the working group begin the discussion by reviewing the *Code of Professional Conduct in the Classroom* produced by the Desautels Faculty of Management (<http://www.mcgill.ca/desautels/resources/building-admin/code-conduct/>).

## 5. Regular Reports:

- a) **CIO Report:** Highlights include web collaborative software; screen sharing software; Drupal platform for [www.mcgill.ca](http://www.mcgill.ca); recording lectures and presentations from laptops or desktops; pandemic preparedness (including tips and tricks to working at home and collaborative classroom experience) and collaboration with Public Affairs to develop guidelines regarding emergency broadcasts; automated notification system; public display panels; classroom support, software licenses; e-Calendar pilot project; Teaching and Learning Spaces Working Group, *myCourses*; and IT security awareness campaign. It should be noted that a brief synopsis of each project was distributed to the members.

C. Weston congratulated the CIO on the breadth of projects undertaken. The CIO was then invited to present the report to the Teaching and Learning Spaces Working Group on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The CIO accepted the invitation and, responding to an inquiry regarding dissemination of the information, suggested that a version of the report could be included in the *FYI Newsletter*. **Action item:** C. Weston will link the newsletter to the TLSWG page once the newsletter is issued.

Y. Steinert asked if there was another way to keep the McGill Community up-to-date on activities such as those listed above. She added that had she not attended the meeting she would not be aware of the activities. It would be important for the community to know what the various offices are doing. S. Franke suggested subscribing to *FYI*; as well she would raise the issue with Public Affairs and see what they recommended.

H. Weiler asked if public display panels would be installed at Mac Campus. S. Franke responded that individual building Directors need to request the panels. M. Mendelson asked who owned the panels. S. Franke responded that although central funds are used for the initial upgrade to the technology, each unit is responsible for funding the installation and subsequent maintenance.

- b) **Dean of Students:** Highlights include the launch of the Advising Web Page in May. Information on the web page includes FAQs for students, resources for advisors, and a directory of advisors. The pilot project “Ask an Advisor” has been extended (originally scheduled for two months) and so far, 120 queries mainly from U1 and U2 students have been received. At this time, most queries are being referred to the appropriate faculties or websites for consultations within 48 hours of being received. However, the Dean of Students would like to get the faculties involved and have an “Ask an Advisor” link on their pages as well. The Dean will be consulting the Subcommittee on Student Advising for recommendations on how to funnel the questions to the faculties directly and yet maintain the 48-hour turnaround. S. Franke commented that although funneling back to the faculties would be a great idea, there would be a loss of control regarding the turnaround time. However, she suggested that the Dean look into systems such as the ticketing system currently used by Enrolment Services and Security that track the turnaround time as well as assess who and what questions are being asked.

The Dean also mentioned that a mentoring project is being developed but that it is in the early stages.

C. Weston inquired if the *Fairplay* document had received distribution to the community at-large. The Dean responded that no, but that every student was given a copy with their ID cards.

Y. Steinert again brought up the issue of communicating. C. Weston suggested that the information be posted on the SCTL web page. It was also suggested that the information be sent out to faculty by email or in a newsletter of some kind. The concern regarding emails or newsletters is that a fair amount of non-critical information is also included and that professors might be tempted to ignore it. M. Mendelson added that sometimes the information is forwarded to Deans and Chairs only because it is difficult to keep track of faculty lecturers and sessionals. It would be up to the Chairs and Deans to forward the information on to their faculty members.

M. Mendelson suggested that the Dean of Students work with R. Wiltshire in his office to schedule an official launch of the Advising web page.

- c) **Executive Director Student Services:** Highlights include the completion of the department strategic plan and the establishment of goals and values. They are:
- Raising the profile of student services on campus, provincially, nationally and internationally with the Executive Director's participation in the U21 proposal to create best practices for student services;
  - Enhancing staff excellence by developing a cohesive team of 250 people, recognition of staff and updated job descriptions;
  - Campus collaboration;
  - Responsiveness and accountability by developing an assessment system and co-curricular transcripts (the transcript would include participation in non-academic activities);
  - Sustainability (financial, social and environmental).

Several projects that have come out of the strategic plan are integrated orientation and terms of reference for an innovation fund. J. Luker added that she would be hosting tours of the Brown Building to increase visibility of Student Services. There are also several collaborative projects being discussed: with DAR (need-based fellowships), Enrolment Services (student-leadership) and SEDE (part-time positions for advising, racism and family-care).

- d) **Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:** Highlights include the development of a professional skills program for graduate students (*Skillsets*) and the completing of the eTheses project. All theses must be submitted electronically. This project will be expanded to include drafts within the next year or so. It was also noted that over 1000 students attend last week's orientation event at Thompson House.
- e) **Student Life and Learning:** Three issues of particular relevance were noted:

- 1) Support for writing: Since the closing of the Writing Centre by the Faculty of Education, courses have been offered by Continuing Education. However, Dean Potter has established a working group to determine how best to offer this support. The working group is expected to recommend that non-disciplinary writing courses be centrally offered. The working group will also recommend ways in which this can be accomplished. It should be noted that the working group is only reviewing writing support as it applies to English. Support for writing in French will be addressed at a later.
- 2) International education: The international student exchange program is coordinated through the office of the Deputy Provost; however, most exchange agreements are unit based and no formal program exists. The Deputy Provost is looking at various experiences and would like to identify services that can be offered centrally. He would also like to establish an international exchange network that would bring together those involved from the various units. Y. Steinert asked if the application deadline can be pushed back? The Deputy Provost responded that last year, there was a staggered deadline with more students applying by the second date.
- 3) Approaching end of academic review: The Deputy Provost explained that we have completed the three-year review of all academic programs; unfortunately, the results were unsatisfactory. No common parameters were developed and the program reviews were independent of the faculty and departmental reviews. It was decided to return to unit-based reviews. The parameters will be developed over this academic year with a proposal being brought forward to Senate at the end of the year. The Deputy Provost added that although Crepuq lightened their oversight, in the end they did not agree with our processes. Y. Steinert asked if SCTL would be involved in reviewing the parameters. The Deputy Provost responded that APC would most likely be developing the parameters but SCTL should be consulted on pedagogical issues.

**f) TLS Report:**

- 1) Nexus Project Update: highlighted activities included the establishment of the inquiry network, the development of professor profiles online, a documentary, a university-wide symposium, a lecture series and a pilot project with the Department of Geography.
- 2) SRS Clickers: statistical highlights are:
  - 2007-2008: 5300 students; now 7300 students use clickers
  - 2007-2008: clickers were used in 47 courses; 2008-2009: clickers are used in 73 courses in 8 faculties
  - 2007-2008: 49 instructors used clickers; 2008-2009: 50 instructors but courses with students who already have clickers were specifically targeted
  - 12 new instructors have signed up for the September workshops.

Y. Steinert asked if a more complete evaluation could be obtained. The Director promised to provide. J. Everett asked what size of classes were using clickers? The Director responded that it varied from 50 (minimum) to 600 (maximum). M. Mendelson asked if professors are feeling pressured to use clickers? The Director responded that no, it is completely voluntary. She added that most of the evaluations received have been positive although a few have indicated that no change in discernable learning has been observed. Students however feel more engaged.
- 3) Teaching and Learning Space Working Group: Both Active Learning Classrooms opened last week: Burnside 511, which primarily hosts Geography courses, and Education 627 which hosts a variety of courses from 5 different faculties. TLS worked with the

professors over the summer to re-design their courses and are currently evaluating their impact. The assessment will be brought to SCTL for review.

Note: it was suggested that SCTL meet in one of the ALC classrooms during the academic year and the Secretary will see if this can be scheduled.

- 4) Conceptualization of teaching support: A group comprised of TLS, NCS, ICS and CCS meets regularly to develop pro-active support for professors in their classrooms and optimize operational support. One recommendation, which was to send an email to professors indicating the various resources for assistance in so-called problematic classrooms, was very well received.

## **6. Other business**

The Chair encouraged members to suggest issues that should be addressed by the Subcommittee. The secretary will ensure that this is communicated to members who were not able to attend the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 11:45am

Nancy St-Pierre, September 8, 2009