

**Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning
of the Academic Policy Committee
29th meeting held on Tuesday, 27 April 2010**

**10:00 to 12:00
Education Building, room 627**

Present: J. Clark, A. Costopoulos, J. Ellis, J. Everett, D. Harris, I. Henderson, A. Jaeger, S. Komarova, F. Labeau, R. Zereik, Y. Steinert (Acting Chair), N. St-Pierre (Secretary), C. Urbain, C. Weston

Regrets: R. Dooley, M. Kilgour, A. Lebedev, D. Levasseur, M. Mendelson, H. Weiler

Guests: G. Franco, E. Sarigollu, M. Slapcoff, P. Smith, P-A. Vungoc, L. Winer

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with one revision:

Item 7 was renamed: Report from *Nexus between teaching and research/scholarship*

2. Approval of the minutes from 9 March 2010

The minutes were approved as circulated.

3. Business arising from the previous minutes

Referring to the previous meeting, J. Clark asked if requiring students to complete course evaluations before releasing their final grades was under consideration.

Dr. Winer confirmed that this had been discussed by the Course Evaluation Working Group. At this time, the working group has decided not to make completing course evaluations mandatory. It was felt that if students are required to complete the evaluations before having access to their grades, then they would have to be allowed to complete them after their final exams, if they had not already done so, in order to be able to see their grades.

4. Proposal for a pilot project to extend the course evaluation period – For approval

Guest: Laura Winer, Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Services

The pilot project was presented to STL members for approval. A discussion ensued, with the following issues being highlighted:

- Dr. Winer confirmed that units participating are Religious Studies, two departments in the Faculty of Education and four departments in FAES. All members of the Course Evaluation Advisory Group were offered the opportunity, and the decision to participate or not was made at the Faculty level. The Religious Studies representative added that as many of their professors consider the final exams to be part of the course, they are very enthusiastic about this project and are looking forward to the results.

- All evaluations in participating courses will have two questions added:
 1. Have you completed all of the work (including the final examination, if any) for this course?
 2. Have you received your final mark for this course?
- There was some concern that failing students might complete negative evaluations or that students would focus primarily on their final exams in the evaluations. Dr. Winer assured the members that the literature does not support either of these concerns. It was noted that one of the added benefits would include instructors receiving feedback about their examinations.

A formal motion to approve the pilot project was put forward and adopted unanimously by STL. The pilot will now be forwarded to APC for consideration and approval.

5. Report from the Working Group on Mobile Computer and Communications Devices in the Classroom

Guest: Laura Winer, Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Services

The report was presented to STL members. A discussion ensued, with the following issues being highlighted:

- The original mandate of the working group on laptops was expanded to include all mobile computing and communications devices.
- Guidelines being drafted will be universal in nature and consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, the Policy on the Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources, and the Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities.
- The guidelines will also address audio and video recordings. Some instructors are concerned that their wishes are not being respected, and the guidelines will offer insight on ways to handle these situations.
- The guidelines will suggest three options: usage under certain specified conditions, permitted as long as they are not disruptive in the course, or not allowed at all. It will be suggested that instructors provide a rationale for their choice, especially if they choose to ban these devices.
- It was noted that the guidelines will be fleshed out and situational examples will be included.

The Acting Chair thanked Dr. Winer for her presentations and suggested that she consult with the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) on the next step to move this dossier forward.

6. Report from *Nexus between teaching and research/scholarship*

Guest: Marcy Slapcoff, Educational Developer, Teaching and Learning Services

M. Slapcoff presented a short history of the Nexus project and briefly introduced this year's activities: the Inquiry Network, the Nexus video, the planned website highlighting inspired teaching, and the upcoming seminar on research and teaching.

Ms. Slapcoff noted that most members of the Inquiry Network are very enthusiastic and are looking forward to continuing their work in the Fall. It was noted, however, that there are no representatives from the Faculty of Arts on the Network.

The Acting Chair congratulated Ms. Slapcoff on the progress of the project.

7. Draft University Student Assessment Policy

Guests: Dr. Emine Sarigollu, Chair, ESAAC Work Group on Examination Regulations
Dr. Phil Smith, Academic Planning Officer, Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)

Dr. Sarigollu presented the draft policy to STL members. It was noted that this is a first attempt at unifying the various examinations policies into a cohesive whole. A discussion ensued, with the following issues being highlighted:

- It was noted that section 3.8 indicates that an associate examiner will be appointed for the general assessment of a course. The Religious Studies representative pointed out that this could impose an undue burden on smaller units with fewer resources.
- A communication strategy will be needed to address section 3.2.1. It was suggested that the Associate Deans (Student Affairs) would be the appropriate people to communicate these guidelines within the faculties.
- It was suggested that “shall” should be replaced by “should” throughout the document.

The Acting Chair thanked Drs. Sarigollu and Smith and congratulated the work group on their progress.

8. Other business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.